

# Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

## Submission Form (Revised March 2020)

### PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	7749 Old Georgetown Road
File Number(s)	
Project Address	7749 - 7755 Old Georgetown Road and adjacent St. Elmo Parcels

Plan Type     Concept Plan         Sketch Plan         Site Plan         Consultation w/o Plan

### APPLICANT TEAM

	Name	Phone	Email
Primary Contact	David Cerniglia	301-913-9610	cerniglia@stonebridge.us.com
Architect	Chris Huffer, SK+I		
Landscape Architect	Mike Goodman, VIKA		

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

	Zone	Proposed Height	Proposed Density (SF/FAR)	Requested BOZ Density (SF/FAR)	MPDU %
Project Data	CR-5, C-5, R-5, H-175	175	246,000 sf	89,165 sf	15
Proposed Land Uses	Multi-Family Residential and Retail				

### DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL SUBMISSION PROCESS & REQUIREMENTS

1. Schedule a Design Advisory Panel review date with the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.
2. At least two weeks prior to the scheduled Panel meeting, provide via email to the Design Advisory Panel Liaison the completed Submission Form and required drawings in PDF format. Incomplete applications will be returned for revision. **Applications deemed incomplete by the Liaison may result in the loss of the scheduled meeting date if not returned complete within the above time frame.**
3. Concept Plan and Sketch Plan applications must include the following, at a minimum:
  - Property location plan showing three-block context radius
  - Illustrative site plan showing two-block context radius
  - Perspective images of all building faces from a 3-D model that show the proposal in the built context, as well as with nearby buildings approved by the Planning Board. (Bring the 3-D model to the Panel review.)
  - 3-D building massing diagrams illustrating:
    - both strict conformance with the design guidelines and the proposed design, indicating where the proposal does not conform and how the alternative treatments meet the intent of the guidelines
    - the maximum standard method of development density on site
    - the maximum mapped density on site
  - Precedent images showing scale, architectural character, materiality, etc. (Concept & Sketch Plans only).

Except as noted, Site Plan applications must include all of the above, as well as, at a minimum:

- Floor plans for parking level(s), ground floor, typical floor, roof, and unique conditions
- Building/site sections showing full adjacent street sections with opposite building face
- Elevations for each façade
- Key perspective views expressing character of the building elevations and streetscape.



## DESIGN GUIDELINES CONFORMANCE

The primary goal of the DAP is to provide advice and recommendations that will heighten design excellence and improve the quality of architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture in Downtown Bethesda. Simple compliance with the numerical standards in the Design Guidelines does not in itself achieve Design Excellence.

STREET TYPE(S): Urban Boulevard and Downtown Mixed Use

	Recommended	Provided	Alternative Compliance?
Sidewalk Zone Urban Boulevard / Downtown Mixed Use			
Planting/Furnishing Zone	UB-6-10ft, DMU-5-8ft	UB-7ft, DMU-7ft	
Pedestrian Though Zone	UB-10-20ft, DMU-8-12ft	UB-10ft, DMU-8ft	
Frontage Zone	UB-0-10ft, DMU-0-7ft	UB-8ft, DMU-0ft	
Building Placement Urban Boulevard / Downtown Mixed Use			
Build-to Line (from street curb)	UB-25-30ft, DMU-15-20ft	UB-25ft, DMU-15ft	
Building Form Urban Boulevard / Downtown Mixed Use			
Base Height	UB-35-70ft, DMU-35-70ft	UB-66ft, DMU-66ft	
Step-Back	UB-10-15ft, DMU-10-15ft	UB-4'-8'-3", DMU-4'-8'-3"	alt. methods

DOES THE PROJECT INCLUDE A THROUGH-BLOCK CONNECTION OR TRAIL?

Yes  No

- If yes, please provide sectional diagrams demonstrating conformance with Section 2.1.9 of the Guidelines

DOES THE PROJECT INCLUDE A SECTOR-PLAN RECOMMENDED PARK OR OPEN SPACE?

Yes  No

- If yes, please provide diagrams demonstrating conformance with Section 2.2 of the Guidelines

### BUILDING FORM

	Recommended	Provided	Alternative Compliance?
Tower			
Separation Distance	45-60'	18-22.5'	Alt. Methods
Step-Back	Per Street Type	4-8' on both street types	Alt. Methods
Bulk Reduction Methods	limiting tower floor plate, unique geometry, varying tower height, modulate and articulate facades, limiting apparent face		

IS THE PROJECT LOCATED IN A DISTRICT IDENTIFIED IN CHAPTER 3 OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

Yes  No

- If yes, please provide diagrams demonstrating conformance with the District-Specific Guidelines

EXCEPTIONAL DESIGN POINTS REQUESTED (MIN: 10, MAX: 30): 30

- 10 Points: Generally consistent with the Design Guidelines and meets four of the CR Guideline Criteria
- 20 Points: Superlative design that in a uniquely compelling way meets the Design Guidelines or overcomes a significant site or similar constraint; a top example of design within Montgomery County
- 30 Points: Singular design that exemplifies the highest intent of the Design Guidelines and may be considered a top example of design within the Mid-Atlantic region



**7749 Old Georgetown Road, Site Plan No. 820240090**  
**Design Advisory Panel Submittal**

**I. Brief Project Description and Urban Design Concept**

Stonebridge (the "Applicant") is seeking approval for development of a mixed-use project with up to 240,000 square feet of multi-family residential uses (including 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units, or "MPDUs"), up to 6,000 square feet of ground-floor retail uses, underground parking, and private amenities (the "Project"). As part of the pending Site Plan (820240090) and Preliminary Plan (120240070) applications, the Applicant contemplates up to 270 multi-family dwelling units. The Project will be located on ±0.43 acres of tract area, comprising several assembled parcels that front on Old Georgetown Road and St. Elmo Avenue, in the Woodmont Triangle District (as defined in the Approved and Adopted Downtown Bethesda Sector Plan – "Sector Plan") of Downtown Bethesda (the "Property"). The Property is zoned CR-5.0, C-5.0, R-5.0, H-175 within the Bethesda Overlay Zone.

The assembled Property is improved with several underutilized retail and office buildings that frame the prominent intersection of Old Georgetown Road and St. Elmo Avenue. The Property has proximity to a mix of commercial, civic, and recreational uses, including a mix of retail uses in the Woodmont Triangle District to the northeast, Bethesda Elementary School to the west, the Garden Plaza office building to the southwest, and Connie Morella Library and Caroline Freeland Urban Park to the south along Arlington Road. Several mixed-use residential high-rise buildings are located to the east along St. Elmo Avenue, including the St. Elmo Apartments project presently under construction. This Project will continue the trend of replacing underutilized commercial uses with a more urban, transit-oriented development that enhances the public realm and economic competitiveness of the Bethesda CBD.

The Project promotes a number of the goals and recommendations of the Sector Plan, with the most notable being the following: creating visually distinctive buildings, improved and enhanced intersections, and providing integrated retail and residential uses. The goal of the Project is to create a focal point when entering Bethesda that uses a unique, articulated, and integrated "chevron" design to create a visually distinctive building. The articulated façade is developed to break down the building into visually appealing proportions that promote the ideal base, middle, top design concept. The "chevron" breaks down the scale of the building, connects planes and layers from top to bottom, provides setbacks, recess and helps maximize views toward the northwest. All this together ties the building into the visual public realm and enhances the pedestrian experience. The Montgomery County Planning Board approved the Sketch Plan (320240010, the "Sketch Plan") on December 14, 2023, and this Site Plan submission advances the design of the Project.

**II. Alternative Treatments**

The Project is located on a small, narrow corner property that is directly adjacent to a 4-story parking garage and 12-story tower to the south. The size and depth of the Property adversely impacts the developable area of the Project when strictly applying the Design Guidelines. The

goal for the Project is to find an alternative way to break down the scale of the building by utilizing the guidelines and form a human-scaled building that is creative, integrated, and connected. In order to design a building that is connected from bottom to top, create a base, middle, and top massing and proportion, and seamlessly integrate indoor and outdoor spaces, the Project is utilizing several of the recommended methods to reduce bulk and create a unique, timeless, and iconic building, including: limiting tower footprint, use of unique geometry, varying tower heights, modulating and articulating the façade, and limiting apparent face. The Design Advisory Panel (“DAP”) provided favorable recommendations at the time of Sketch Plan, and the Applicant has advanced the design of the Project to incorporate a modified tower separation design, as described in greater detail below.

### Reduced Tower Separation Distance

Section 2.4.6 of the Design Guidelines provides that “buildings ... with limited property size/width/depth may reduce tower separation...” and notes that “varied geometry in a building’s upper floors, and façade modulation between buildings can also be used as methods to increase the perception of tower and separation and allow access to light and air.” (Design Guidelines, p. 74). As discussed above, the Property contains limited property width which substantially impairs the Applicant’s ability to both provide 22.5 feet of tower separation and achieve a floorplate that provides for the quantity and quality of units that is necessary to meet market and underwriting requirements. As an alternative treatment, the Applicant is proposing a varying tower separation distance from 18’-0” to 22’-6”. In an effort to provide access to more light and air, viewsheds to Old Georgetown Road and to unify the building design, the Site Plan carries the dynamic chevron design around from the St. Elmo Avenue and Old Georgetown Road elevations onto the east Elevation. This varied geometry not only unites the building but also creates a “top” by providing setbacks at the 16th floor on the east Side. By providing this setback, a much larger proportion of the façade provides a separation distance of 22’-6” helping to reduce the perception of tower bulk and emphasizes the tower separation. Additionally, to allow access to light and air, the building utilizes differing geometry to provide the required 22’-6” tower separation along the southwest building frontage on Old Georgetown Road.

### **III. Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Requested and Brief Description**

The Applicant is seeking 30 public benefit points for design excellence on the basis that the Project satisfies and achieves the six identified criteria in the CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines. The Applicant’s justification for 30 public benefit points is as follows:

#### ***Providing innovative solutions in response to the immediate context***

Due to the Project’s prominent corner location, the St. Elmo Ave. and Old Georgetown Rd. facades will be featured prominently as you enter Downtown Bethesda from the North and West. With this in mind, the Project focuses on activating both of those facades with a unique, articulated, interwoven design that wraps the building, creates a base, middle, and top proportion,

and culminates in expressing a tower at the corner. Creating a tall visual element at the corner anchors the corner and establishes this intersection as the Gateway coming into Bethesda. Tall, 18-foot retail space will be featured prominently at the corner at this location to promote transparency and activity, enhancing the pedestrian experience at this gateway to the vibrant Woodmont Triangle District. Because of its location at the corner, the garage entrance and loading are located as far away as possible up St. Elmo. Ave. to alleviate any congestion issues and favor the pedestrian experience. The remainder of the ground floor will be populated with the Project's residential lobby and amenity spaces to further support visual connections and encourage activity along the street.

### ***Creating a sense of place and serves as a landmark***

The Project is located at the four-way intersection of Old Georgetown Rd., Wilson Ln., St. Elmo Ave., and Arlington Rd., and the Project features prominently as you enter Bethesda from the North and West. The highly visible St. Elmo Ave. façade is designed to be a highly interwoven and integrated façade using unique design elements that break the building down into the base, middle, and top proportion and seamlessly extend to the corner to create a tower element that anchors the corner of this highly visible intersection. Because of the height of this project and the lower heights of the buildings to the north, this unique façade will be a visual landmark as you approach from the North. The architecture blends throughout the building and creates an overall proportion that connects the Project from top to bottom, using unique and innovative forms and architecture, and that breaks down into a pedestrian scale at the ground floor, creating a sense of place and destination at this gateway intersection of the Bethesda CBD.

### ***Enhancing the public realm in a distinct and original manner***

The high visibility and location of the Property promotes the Project as a destination landmark of Downtown Bethesda, serving as a visual beacon and gateway into the Woodmont Triangle District. Using unique and distinctive architecture not only helps enhance the public realm, but using a design concept that connects the Project from top to bottom anchors the whole building to the street and promotes the pedestrian experience.

### ***Introducing materials, forms or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way***

The Project features an interwoven "chevron" design that integrates setbacks, recesses, and balconies and creates a layered façade that expresses a proportional top, middle, and base for the Project. This design is unique to the area and utilizes many of the recommended guidelines to reduce the bulk of the building in a whole new and innovative way, while still achieving the

overall design goals of the guidelines. Using different materials and colors to help emphasize these moves will further elevate the form and massing of the Project.

***Designing compact, infill development so living, working and shopping environments are more pleasurable and desirable on a site.***

As mentioned above, the Project sits on a compact site that limits the building footprint because of its adjacency to its neighbors and the intersection. The architecture is highly articulated from top to bottom to connect the building to the public realm and promote the pedestrian experience. Integrated balconies throughout the façade and outdoor rooftop amenity space encourages an active indoor and outdoor building experience. The Project is a mixed-use building featuring commercial space at the prominent corner, which is flanked on either side by the Project's residential lobby and amenity space. Integrating all those uses with views toward the streets will encourage activation and activity throughout the day.

***Integrating low-impact development methods into the overall design of the site and building beyond green building or site requirements***

The Project is located in the high-performance area of the BOZ, and the building will strive to integrate low-impact development methods into the Project. The “chevron” helps provide additional daylighting into the unit by angling towards the west while the unique geometry of this element also helps provide additional shadows and shading that will help the building with solar heat gain. The Project is meeting the required 35% green cover through use of intensive green roof and tree canopy. In addition to integrated private balconies, the Project will also include a large outdoor amenity space at the roof to enhance the indoor/outdoor experience.

**IV. Conclusion**

This Site Plan submission to the DAP addresses how the massing and overall site design of the Project meets the intent and goals of the Design Guidelines. The submission also demonstrates how the updated design of the Project complies with the Exceptional Design public benefit points criteria.



7749 Old Georgetown Road

SK+I STONEBRIDGE



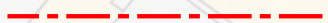
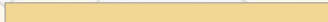
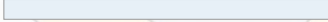

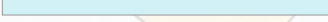







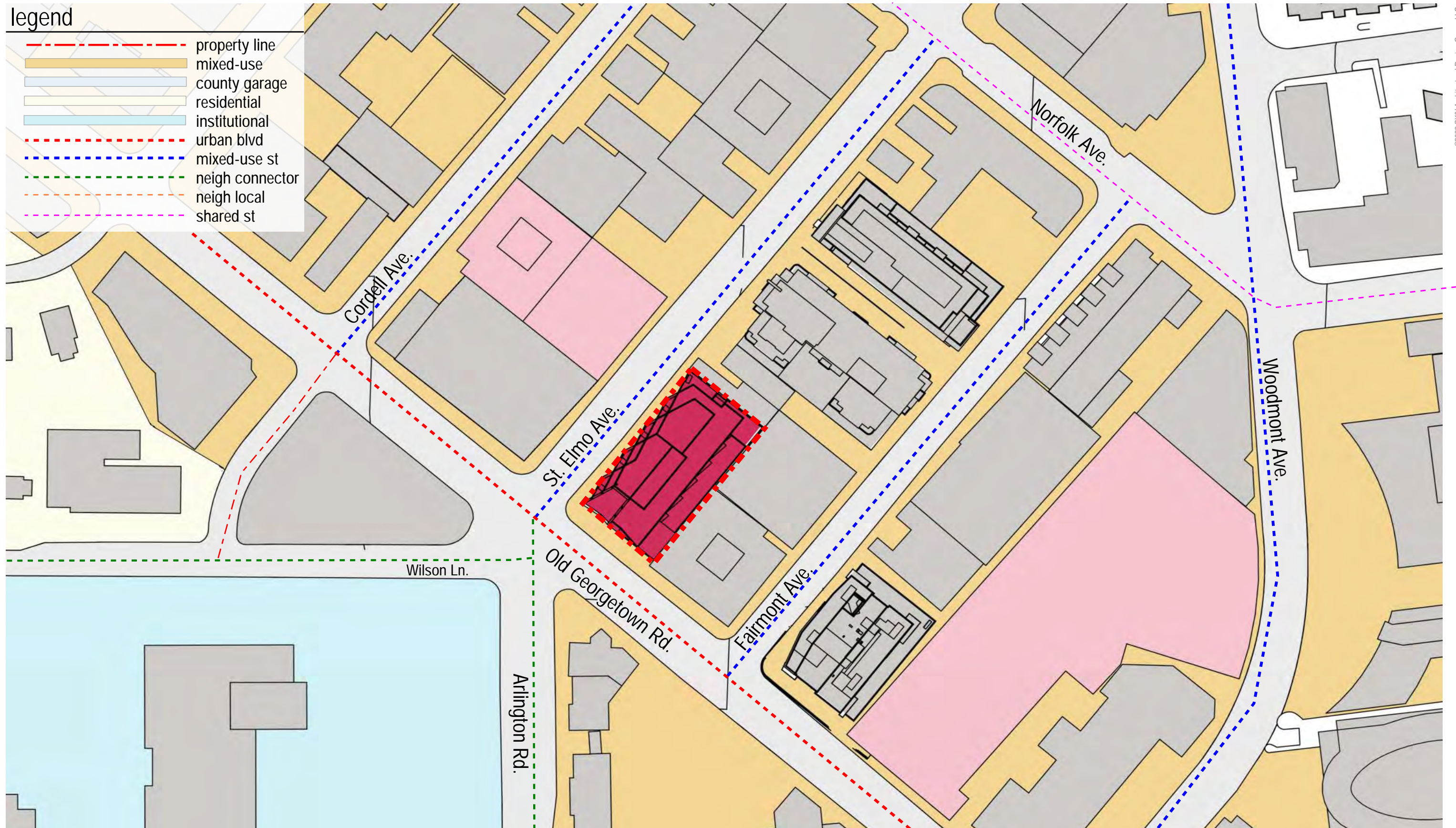
©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





**legend**

-  property line
-  mixed-use
-  county garage
-  residential
-  institutional
-  urban blvd
-  mixed-use st
-  neigh connector
-  neigh local
-  shared st



©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.







view from wilson lane



view across intersection at old georgetown road & st. elmo avenue



view across old georgetown road



view across st. elmo avenue



view across st. elmo avenue



view across st. elmo avenue



view across st. elmo avenue

©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





## design goals

- achieve the design goals of the bethesda plan and provide a dynamic, sustainable, and inclusive signature address through:

- building placement
- street activation
- base variation and articulation
- corner treatment
- reduction of bulk
- tower top design

- create a signature residential tower that is scaled, approachable, engages and enhances the pedestrian experience, and becomes an iconic moment when entering downtown bethesda from the north and the west





©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





### 2.1.2 Urban Boulevard

Urban Boulevards typically carry a significant amount of pedestrian, bus and vehicular traffic, and connect to major transit nodes. These streets are predominantly lined by high-rise buildings with a mix of commercial and residential uses. Examples of Urban Boulevards include Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road.

**Intent: Building and sidewalk design along Urban Boulevards should ensure both efficient pedestrian flow and comfort despite the prominence of large-scale buildings and streets.**

**Table 2.01: Urban Boulevard**

**Sidewalk Zones**

- A. Planting/Furnishing Zone: 6- 10 ft.
- B. Pedestrian Through Zone: 10- 20 ft.
- C. Frontage Zone\*: 0- 10 ft.

**Building Placement**

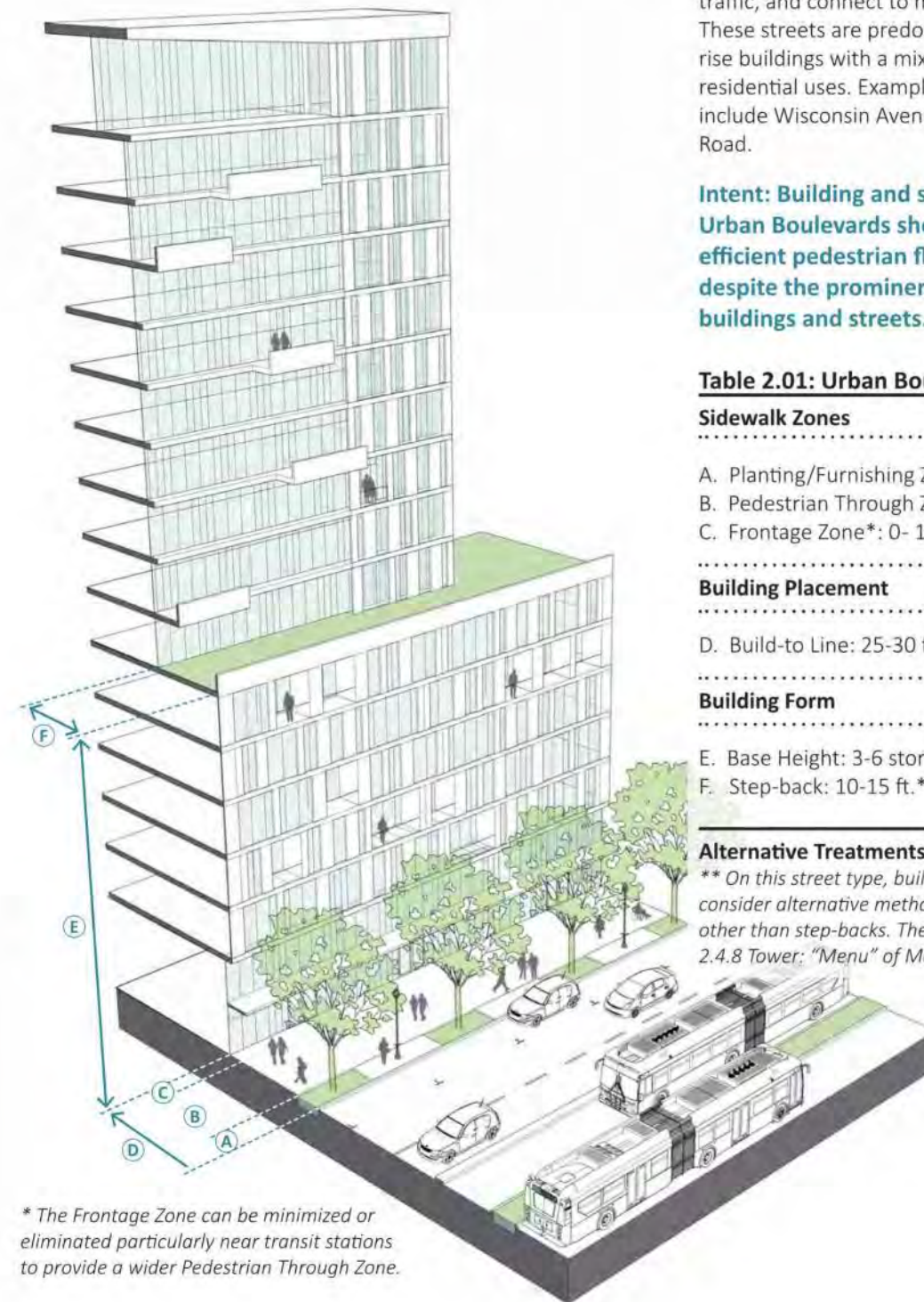
- D. Build-to Line: 25-30 ft. from street curb

**Building Form**

- E. Base Height: 3-6 stories (35-70 ft.)
- F. Step-back: 10-15 ft.\*\*

**Alternative Treatments**

\*\* On this street type, buildings under 120 ft. may consider alternative methods to reduce tower bulk other than step-backs. These are outlined in Section 2.4.8 Tower: "Menu" of Methods to Reduce Bulk.



\* The Frontage Zone can be minimized or eliminated particularly near transit stations to provide a wider Pedestrian Through Zone.





### 2.1.3 Downtown Mixed-Use Street

Downtown Mixed-Use Streets typically accommodate high levels of pedestrian activity with frequent parking turnover, as well as loading and service access needs for local businesses and multi-unit residential buildings. These streets are predominantly lined by mid- to high-rise buildings with a mix of commercial and residential uses. Examples of Downtown Mixed-Use Streets include Woodmont Avenue and most streets in the Downtown Bethesda core and Woodmont Triangle District.

**Intent: Building and sidewalk designs along Downtown Mixed-Use Streets should create a vibrant environment that accommodates the diverse needs of businesses, residents and visitors. Sidewalks should balance ease of walkability for continuous pedestrian flow with space for outdoor uses.**

**Table 2.02: Downtown Mixed-Use Street**

**Sidewalk Zones**

- A. Planting/Furnishing Zone: 5 - 8 ft.
- B. Pedestrian Through Zone: 8 - 12 ft.
- C. Frontage Zone\*: 0 - 7 ft.

**Building Placement**

- D. Build-to Line: 15- 20 ft. from street curb

**Building Form**

- E. Base Height: 3-6 stories (35-70 ft.)
- F. Step-back: 10-15 ft.\*\*

**Alternative Treatments**

\*\* On this street type, buildings under 120 ft. may consider alternative methods to reduce tower bulk other than step-backs. These are outlined in Section 2.4.8 Tower: "Menu" of Methods to Reduce Bulk.



\* The Frontage Zone can be minimized or eliminated to provide a wider Pedestrian Through Zone in areas with heavy foot traffic.





### 2.1.10 Canopy Corridors

**Intent:** The Canopy Corridor recommendations in the Sector Plan aim to create green corridors that connect parks, trails, stream buffers and the denser forest networks beyond the Bethesda boundaries.

The canopy corridors align with the recommended bike priority streets where continuous streetscape improvements are most likely. Though bicycle and pedestrian facilities are the priority on these streets, tree canopy is also a crucial element to enhance shade, attractiveness and comfort to encourage people to walk and bike throughout the downtown.

**Guidelines:**

trees facing southwest to receive adequate sunlight

appropriate plant species planted along corridor enhancing sidewalk condition

sidewalk width designed to provide maximum canopy coverage and volume

- A. Prioritize street tree planting along existing and proposed bicycle networks to expand linear green corridors.
- B. Use appropriate plant species that will thrive in various site conditions and climates. Species should be a combination of native and locally adaptive species lessening water demand while providing biological benefits.
- C. Provide soil volumes for canopy trees of no less than 600 cubic feet, as recommended in the Sector Plan. This volume may be achieved through amended soil panels, and where possible, utilize street tree panels for greater soil volumes.
- D. Design buildings to allow streets to receive sufficient sunlight to maintain healthy trees along these corridors.
- E. Provide the maximum sidewalk width possible to allow for larger canopy, and consider opportunities for double rows of trees.
- F. Include additional locations for trees on both private and public property, right-of-way and medians wherever possible.



ST. ELMO AVE



GREEN COVER TABULATION	
<b>GREEN COVER REQUIRED</b>	
NET TRACT AREA	19,000 SF
GREEN COVER	x 35%
GREEN COVER REQUIRED	6,650 SF
<b>GREEN COVER PROVIDED</b>	
ROOF	2,017 SF
PENTHOUSE	2,682 SF
LEVEL 7	1,763 SF
GROUND FLOOR	180 SF
GREEN COVER PROVIDED	6,651 SF

### 2.3.2 Green Cover

**Intent:** The green cover guidelines are intended to increase overall tree canopy cover, expand green corridors, reduce heat island effect, improve air quality and carbon sequestration capacity and improve ecological biodiversity. See the Sector Plan Section 2.4.1 Urban Green.

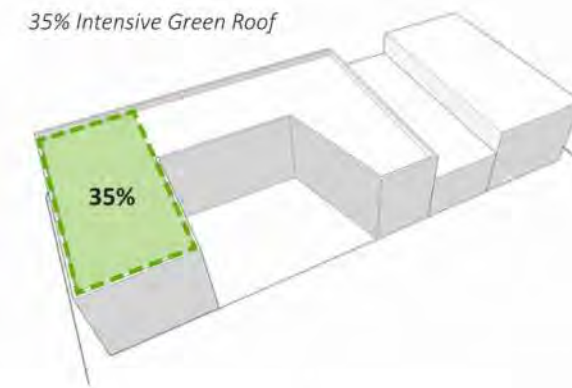
**Guidelines:**

On private property, provide a minimum of 35 percent\* green cover, which may include singularly or a combination of the following:

- A. Intensive green roof (6 inches or deeper) on 35 percent of rooftop.
- B. Tree canopy cover on 35 percent of landscape.
- C. A combination of tree canopy and intensive green roof for a total green cover of 35 percent or greater.

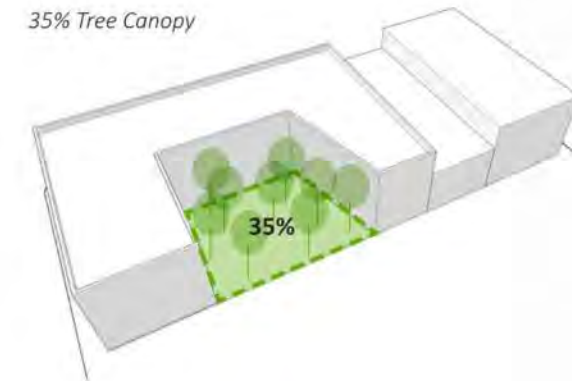
*\* If on-site energy generation requires the use of the roof or open space, accommodations for these features may alter the 35 percent minimum green cover requirement.*

35% Intensive Green Roof



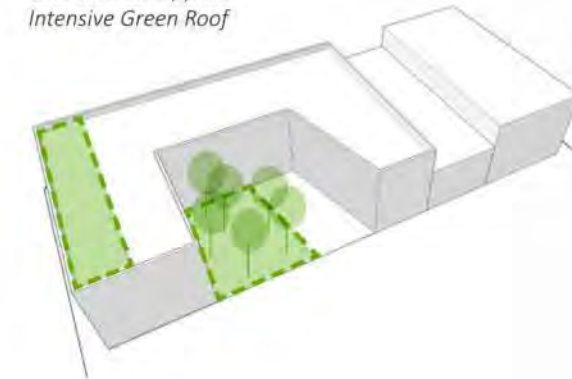
OR

35% Tree Canopy



OR

35% Tree Canopy and Intensive Green Roof







### 2.3.3 Servicing, Access and Parking

**Intent:** Loading, servicing and parking should be designed to minimize conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists and reduce the visual impacts of vehicle access and parking on the Public Realm. Site design should prioritize the public sidewalk and bikeways over private vehicular crossings.

#### Guidelines:

- A. Line the ground floor of structured parking with retail or other uses with transparency to maintain an active building edge. Where active uses are infeasible, avoid exposed parking floors along the street through measures outlined in the Zoning Ordinance *Section 6.2.9.D.1 Structured Parking Requirements*.
- B. Design exterior of the garage portion of the building to be compatible with the rest of the building facade, in order to enhance the overall architectural quality of the building.
- C. Provide a continuous, level and clearly delineated Pedestrian Through Zone across driveways to encourage drivers to yield to pedestrians. Consider applying the same materials across these vehicle access points as the sidewalk, such as brick pavers.
- D. Locate loading and servicing within the interior of a building at the rear whenever possible. Service alleys are also recommended where setbacks are required from the side or rear property lines for building code.
- E. Avoid placing entries to loading docks, service areas and parking garages on neighborhood residential streets when alternative access is feasible.
- F. Minimize the width and height of driveways and vehicular entrances. Where possible, combine loading dock and garage access.
- G. Screen vehicle and servicing access areas and trash storage with landscaping or other vertical elements, and design vehicle access doors to incorporate high-quality materials and finishes that are consistent with the building.
- H. Vehicle access points should not be located adjacent to a public open space other than through-block connections.
- I. Coordinate location of access points with adjacent and confronting properties where possible to ensure a comfortable sidewalk environment and limited conflicts.
- J. Provide loading spaces for pick-up and drop-off where feasible to reduce idling in the travel lane.
- K. Design structured parking floors to be flexible for future retrofit to other uses where possible.
- L. Ensure continuous tree canopy along service areas and lay-by areas to the greatest extent feasible.
- M. While not recommended in Downtown Bethesda, surface parking should be designed according to the following:
  - Locate the parking on the back of the building, with the building fronting the primary streets and sidewalks.
  - For interim lots, design the parking to provide flexibility for temporary events such as pop-up events and public gatherings to maintain an active street edge. See *Section 2.5 Creative Placemaking*.

#### Servicing Operations:

The dense urban grid presents both challenges and opportunities for loading and trash collection. Without alleys, trucks and other delivery vehicles have to make complex maneuvers on the streets to access the buildings' loading areas where they exist or simply operate from the streets themselves when the buildings they serve don't have off-street loading facilities. When trucks must access buildings from streets, especially high volume corridors, the loading areas create conflicts with pedestrians. When loading





## 2.4.2 Base: Building Placement

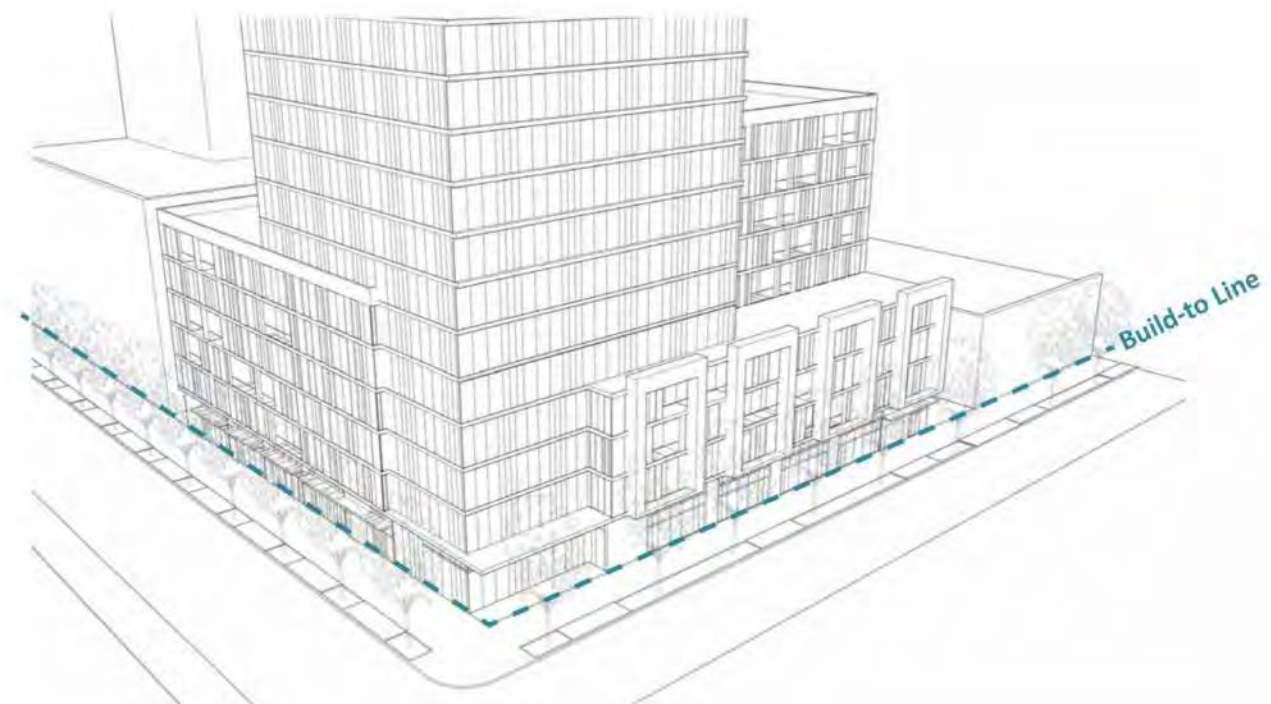
**Intent:** To create a continuous street wall to frame the sidewalk and create a more comfortable outdoor room for pedestrians to encourage walking throughout the downtown.

**Guidelines:**

- A. Place the facade of the building base along the recommended build-to-line to create a continuous street edge.
- B. Buildings taller than 200 feet that do not step back the upper floors should have a build-to-line of at least 20-30 feet.
- C. Where existing building lines for adjacent properties are set back more than the recommended build-to-line, buildings may be placed to align with this existing building line as long as it is within 5 feet of the recommended build-to line.
- D. Exceptions to the building placement guidelines include through-block connections and open spaces recommended in the sector plan, entrances and articulation for architectural interest.



*The building base of Eleven 55 Ripley in Silver Spring creates a continuous edge along the sidewalk at a low-rise scale.  
Source: Shalom Baranes Associates Architects*







### 2.4.3 Base: Street Activation

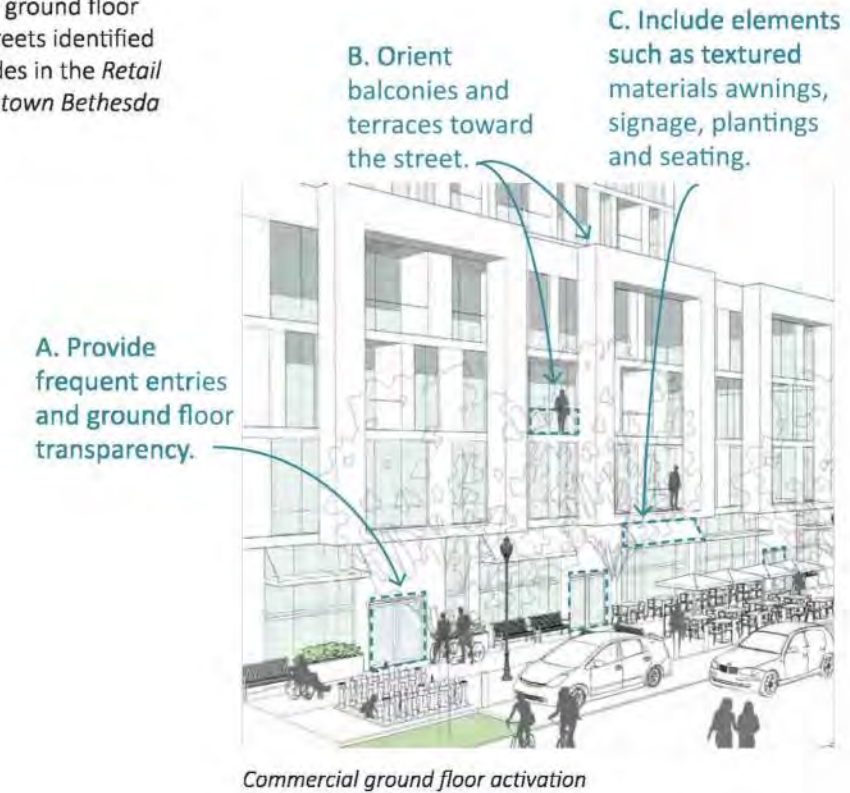
**Intent:** To encourage pedestrian activity by providing ground-floor and base design elements that engage with the sidewalk environment.

**Guidelines:**

- A. Provide frequent entries, transparency and operable walls where possible to encourage visual and physical connections between the ground floor and the public sidewalk. Avoid long blank walls along the sidewalk.
- B. Orient private balconies and terraces toward the street to encourage an interface between the private and public realms and to create eyes on the street.
- C. Include elements such as textured materials, awnings, plantings, signage and seating to create a visually engaging and inviting building edge to frame the sidewalk and create stopping points to relax, gather and socialize.
- D. Place particular focus on active ground floor design along the portions of streets identified as the recommended retail nodes in the *Retail Planning Strategy for the Downtown Bethesda Plan*.



Operable walls that open to the street, along with various materials and textures, create an inviting and visually-engaging sidewalk environment for pedestrians.  
Source: David Baker Architects







plane changes create breaks and shadow lines

transparent facades at lobby, retail, and amenity to encourage visual connections

### 2.4.4 Base: Variation and Articulation

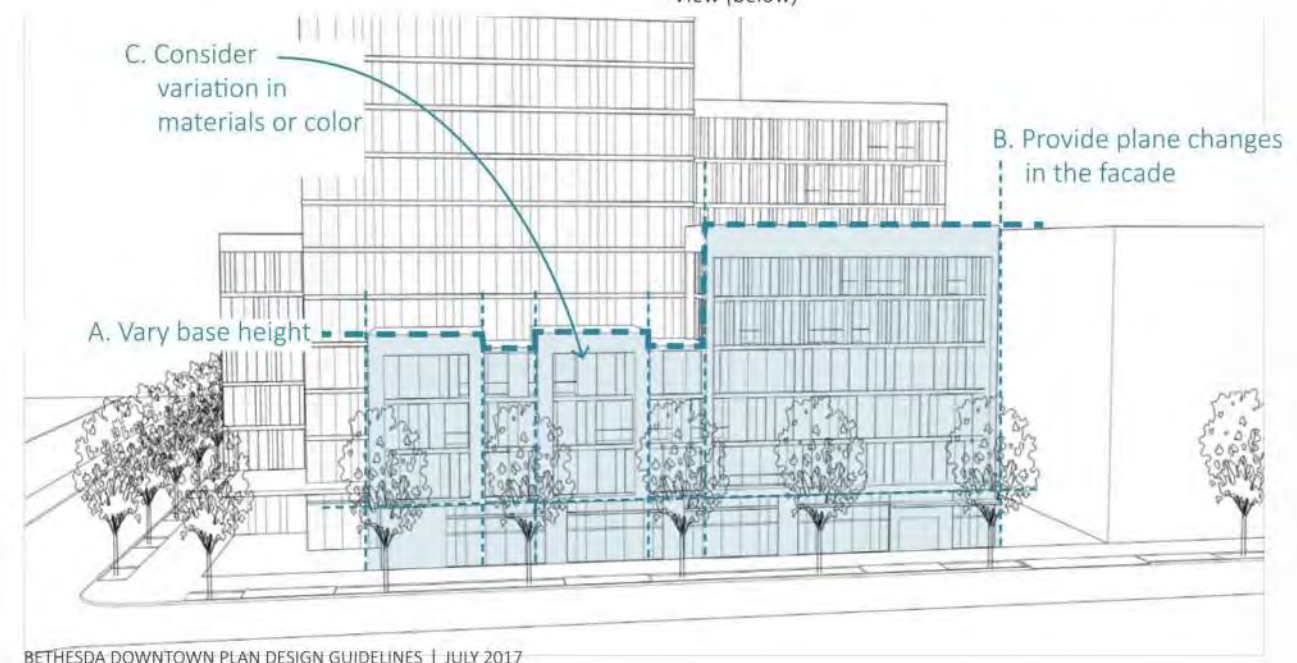
**Intent:** To ensure that facades are not exceedingly long, uninterrupted and rigidly uniform. These variations break up the mass of large buildings, add visual interest and promote human-scaled lower stories to relate to pedestrians.

**Guidelines:**

- A. Vary base height up to the maximum height designated by the street type. This variation should respond to the street character and typical widths, heights and modulation of existing buildings to create a contextually sensitive building wall along the street.
- B. Provide plane changes in the facade that create significant vertical and horizontal breaks, and shadow lines on the facade.
- C. Consider variation in building materials or color to add texture to lower floors most visible to those at pedestrian level.
- D. Avoid cantilevering the majority of the building mass over the Frontage Zone, public sidewalk or public open space to prevent interfering with street trees and blocking access to sunlight and sky views for pedestrians.



Building bases with variation in height and articulation can break up a large building, and can also reflect the modulation and character of adjacent structures.  
Source: Hariri Pontarini Architects (above), Google Street View (below)



BETHESDA DOWNTOWN PLAN DESIGN GUIDELINES | JULY 2017





signature corner tower design provides focal point when approaching downtown from the north and from the west

corner condition allows for set-backs to occur

building tower full height expressed on important street corner

transparent facades at base with retail at corner to activate space

### 2.4.5 Corner Treatments

**Intent:** To anchor and frame street intersections with a continuous building wall or unique design features.

**Guidelines:**

- A. Provide signature design elements on prominent corners or intersections as focal points. These prominent locations include sites adjacent to open spaces, with the tallest building heights and buildings that terminate major view corridors such as East-West Highway, Norfolk Avenue, Old Georgetown Road and Bethesda Avenue.
- B. The full height of tall buildings may be expressed at corners, as a way to provide variation and increased verticality on buildings with tower step-backs.
- C. Establish block corners with architectural articulation and activating uses. While market forces will dictate actual locations where retail operations are feasible, anchoring key block corners by including activating uses such as retail is encouraged.

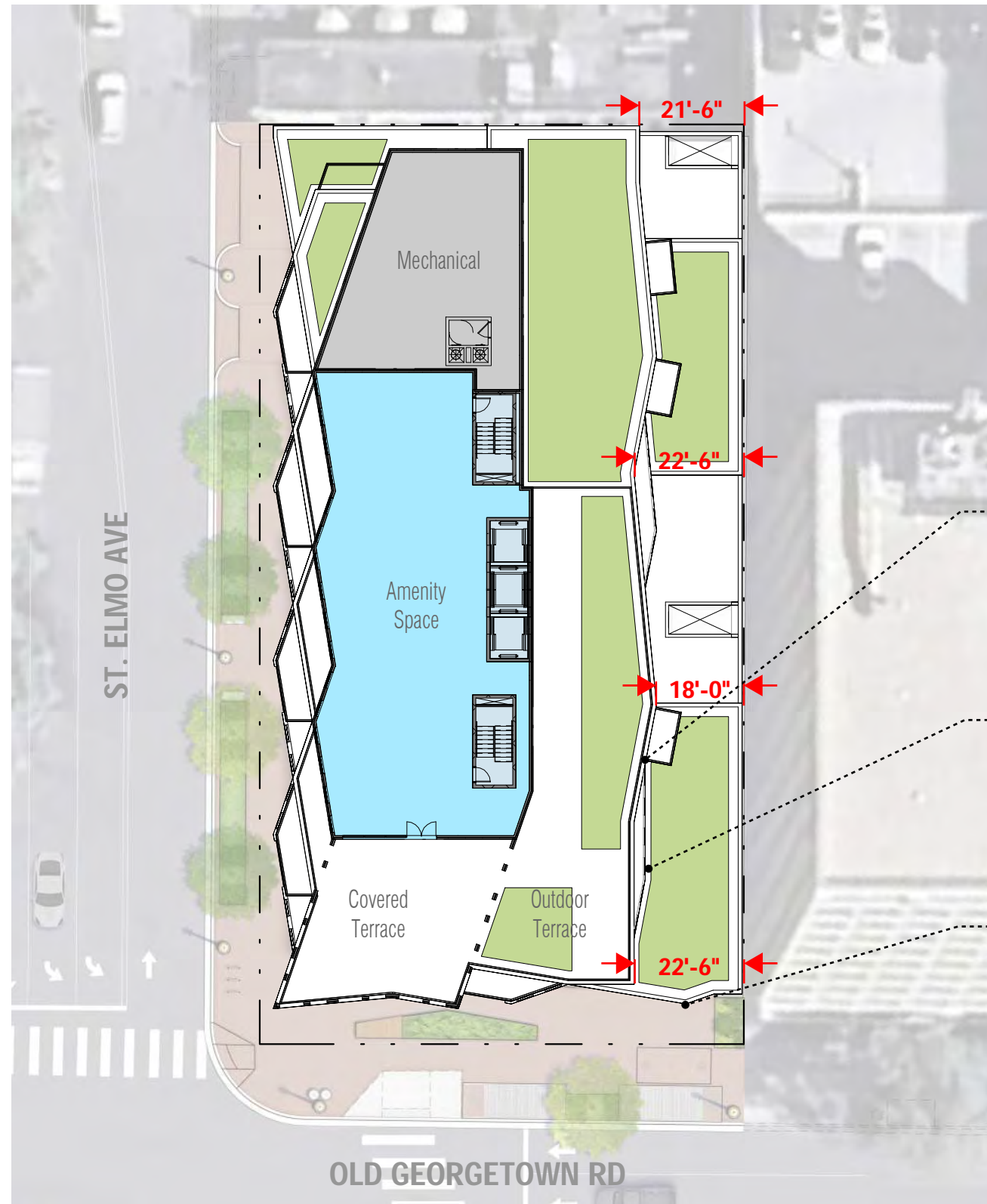


*This innovative design treatment articulates the building and creates an intersection focal point.*  
Source: OMA



*The curved corner along this major Bethesda Row intersection enhances pedestrian flow and provides an active ground floor.*





### 2.4.6 Tower: Separation Distance

**Intent:** To allow access to light and air, limit the impact of shadows on the public realm and reduce the extent of large blank walls as new buildings develop at or near the property line.

**Guidelines:**

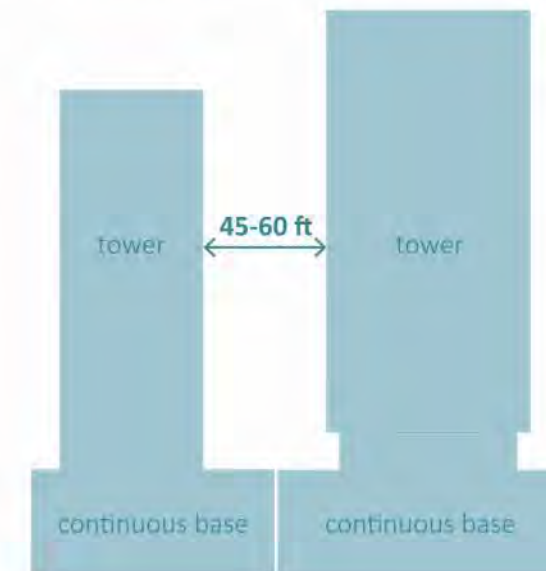
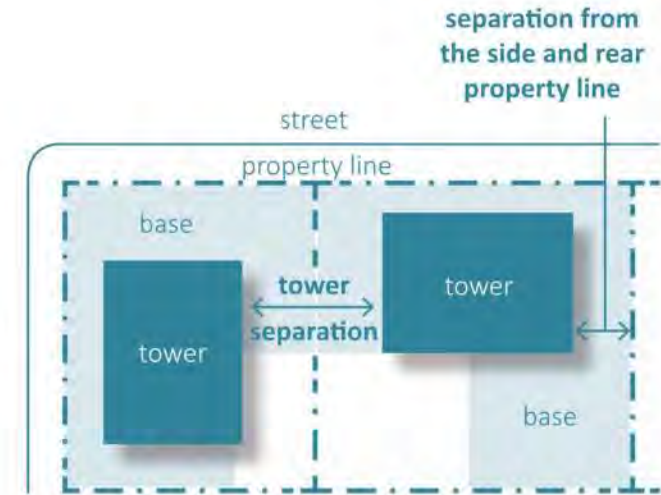
- A. Separate tower floors at least 45 to 60 feet (22.5 to 30 feet from the side and rear property lines).
- B. Provide a continuous building base along the lower floors.
- C. Avoid building towers to the property line creating expansive blank party walls that are imposing on the pedestrian environment.

**Alternative Treatments:**

Buildings below 120 feet or with limited property size/width/depth may reduce tower separation or consider party walls. If party walls are necessary, mitigate their visual impact with elements such as public art, lighting, texture and/or patterning that provide visual interest and are appropriate to the context and architecture of the building.

Where existing neighboring building towers are built to or close to the property line, new development should aim to achieve the total tower separation where possible. However, at a minimum, the new building tower levels should provide the separation distance indicated in *Guideline 2.4.6 A* from the side and rear property lines, except where building to the lot line could better address an existing blank wall condition.

Varied geometry in a building's upper floors, and facade modulation between buildings can also be used as methods to increase the perception of tower separation and allow access to light and air.







### 2.4.7 Tower: Step-Back

**Intent:** To provide a human-scaled building edge along the street that enhances pedestrian comfort and access to sky views. In districts with mostly low to mid-rise buildings, the step-back enables new tall buildings to better relate to existing context and maintain a similar street character.

**Guidelines:**

- A. Retain a tower step-back across the majority of the building frontage. The building's full height may be expressed to the ground on important corners, to mark primary entryways or to balance the massing composition with vertical elements.
- B. Encourage undulating, curved or angled tower step-backs if the average step-back meets the guidelines for the street type. This expressive geometry can increase visual interest on prominent sites near major open spaces and corners.
- C. Allow balconies to encroach in the step-back if they do not significantly add to the perceived bulk and mass of the building's upper floors.

**Alternative Treatments:**

Though step-backs are one of the preferred methods to reduce tower bulk, especially on small neighborhood street types, alternative methods are outlined in *Section 2.4.8 Tower: "Menu" of Methods to Reduce Bulk*. These alternative methods particularly apply to buildings lower than 90-120 feet as noted in *Section 2.1 Street Types*, or to sites with limited size or property depth from the street.

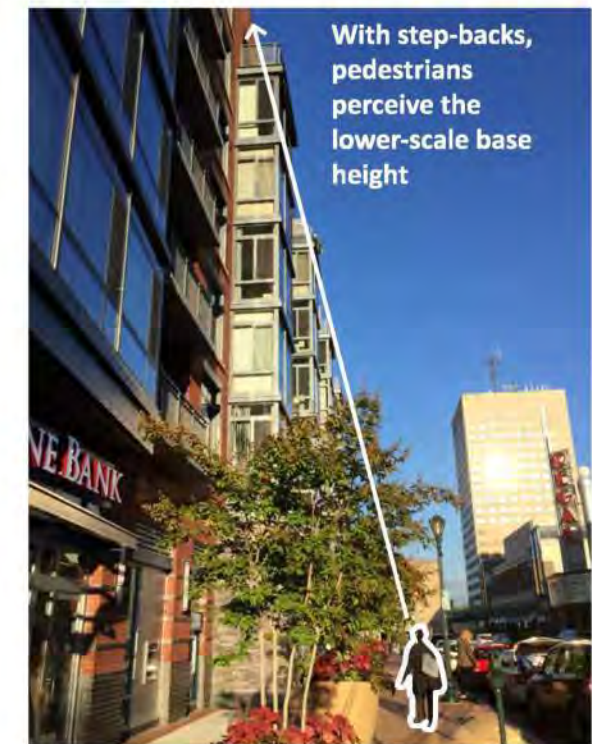
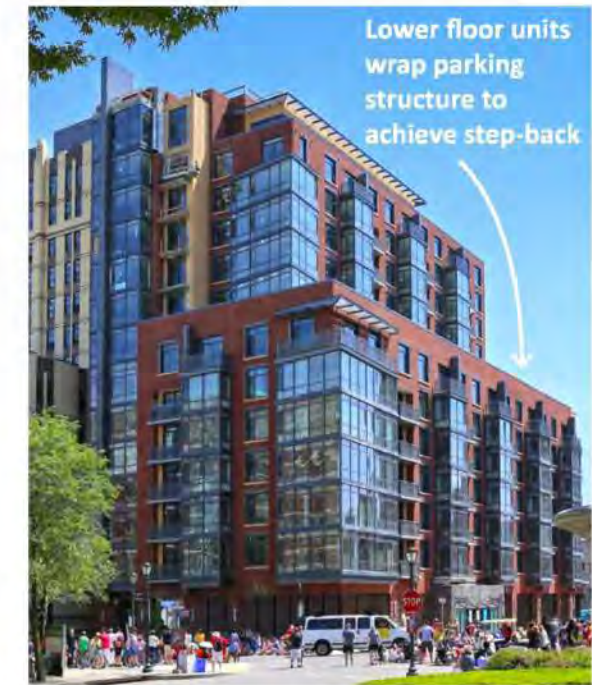
In cases where a step-back is not provided, another method to relate to the context of adjacent building heights and base conditions is with a change of materials or clear regulating lines.

4'-8' setback

0-8" setback

tower step-backs across majority of building frontage

angled tower step-backs increase visual interest



This residential development in Rockville illustrates the relationship between the pedestrian and the building step-back.

Source: The Upton (above)





unique chevron geometry adds visual interest and reduces perceived bulk of upper floors

tower setback

varying heights of facade elements helps to scale back building as rises

angled facades and plane changes provide dynamic views and allow for balconies

angled facades help to limit apparent face of building and reduce perceived bulk

### 2.4.8 Tower: "Menu" of Methods to Reduce Bulk

**Intent:** Downtown Bethesda is an important location in Montgomery County for increased building heights to accommodate future growth. However, collectively, buildings at taller heights can be an imposing presence on the public realm by casting large shadows, limiting sky views and creating an uncomfortable scale for pedestrians.

#### A. Limit Tower Floor Plate

Reduced tower floor plates limit shadows on the public realm and allow access to sky view while also improving the quality of the building's indoor environment.



#### B. Use Unique Geometry

Varied geometry adds visual interest and helps to reduce the perceived bulk of a building's upper floors. Angled and curved facades allow a building to be viewed dynamically from different vantage points. They can enhance privacy between towers in close proximity by directing views away from nearby windows.



#### C. Vary Tower Heights

Whether creating a large development with several towers, or an infill development between multiple existing towers, variation in building height can reduce the imposing massing of several large structures built adjacent to each other.



#### D. Modulate and Articulate Facades

Techniques to break up large facades and reduce perceived building bulk include shifts in massing to allow for upper floor terraces, green roofs and balconies; changes in facade planes; and varied fins, frames and mullions to add depth to glass facades.



#### E. Vary Tower Placement and Orientation

Similar to variation in tower height, variation in tower placement and orientation can increase perceived separation between towers, reduce the perceived imposing massing of several adjacent towers and increase privacy by orienting views in different directions.



#### F. Limit Apparent Face

The apparent face is the length of a facade plane that is unbroken by vertical changes in depth. Limiting this length reduces the perceived bulk of a long building facade.







unique design of tower top provides iconic, welcoming image when approaching downtown

open architecture at top corner reduces perceived bulk of tower

rooftop amenity spaces contribute to expressive tower top and continue angled facade design from below

### 2.4.9 Top: Tower Top

**Intent:** The building top or cap contributes to the skyline, adding visual interest and shaping the image of Bethesda from afar. Tower tops should be carefully considered on prominent sites, including those with the tallest building heights, locations adjacent to major public open spaces and those that terminate views.

#### Guidelines:

- A. Encourage unique design of tower tops that can enhance the image of Bethesda as an innovative downtown, welcoming new businesses, residents and visitors.
- B. Taper tower tops where possible to reduce the perceived bulk of tall buildings.
- C. Integrate energy efficiency into the design of tower tops, including solar panels and passive heating and cooling elements.
- D. Consider the views of the rooftop composition from adjacent buildings when designing building tops.
- E. Not all tall buildings should have a sculptural top. However, mechanical penthouses and rooftop amenity spaces should in all cases be designed to harmonize with the overall building composition.
- F. Enclosures for rooftop amenity spaces should either contribute to the creation of expressive tops, or otherwise be set back from the roof line and limited to a portion of the roof area so as to not be perceived from surrounding streets and public spaces.



*This curved and tapered top adds a unique element to the skyline.*



*The form of the tower top for this Pittsburgh office building is part of the energy efficient solar chimney design.  
Source: Gensler*





### 2.4.11 Bird-Safe Design

The windows, doors, and arches of buildings can be deadly obstacles for birds causing hundreds of millions of bird collisions annually. Glass is transparent to birds. Reflections of the sky, vegetation, clouds, water, and branches lure birds into the glass causing mortality and injury.

**Intent: To design glass buildings to protect local and migratory birds from deadly strikes. Integrate elements into the building and site design to warn birds before they collide.**

#### Guidelines:

##### A. Glass Coverage and Glazing

- **Patterns on Glass:** Ceramic dots, or frits, can be screened, printed, applied between layers of insulated glass to reduce transmission of light and prevent bird collisions. These can be applied in different colors and patterns to work effectively.
- **Angled Glass:** Not as effective as other strategies, angled glass at 20-40 degrees has resulted in reduced mortality.
- **Window Surfaces:** New one-way transparent opaque films and window surfaces allow sunlight to pass through windows while reducing reflectivity.

##### B. Architectural Features

- **Awnings, Louvers and Overhangs:** When designed to eliminate reflections and shadow glass these architectural features have shown to reduce bird collisions.
- **Balconies and Balustrades:** Along with providing outdoor spaces for humans, balconies and balustrades can block window reflection.
- **Opaque and Translucent Glass:** Frosted, colored, opaque, or stained glass have proven to be significantly successful bird deterrents.

##### C. Facade Treatments

- **Screens:** Screens can be integrated into facade elements without blocking view or light and are highly effective in protecting birds.

- **Grilles:** Horizontal or vertical grilles can be incorporated into the aesthetic and design of windows.
- **Shutters and Shades:** External shutters and shades of various styles and colors enhance a buildings aesthetic while reducing or eliminating reflections.

##### D. Lighting Treatments

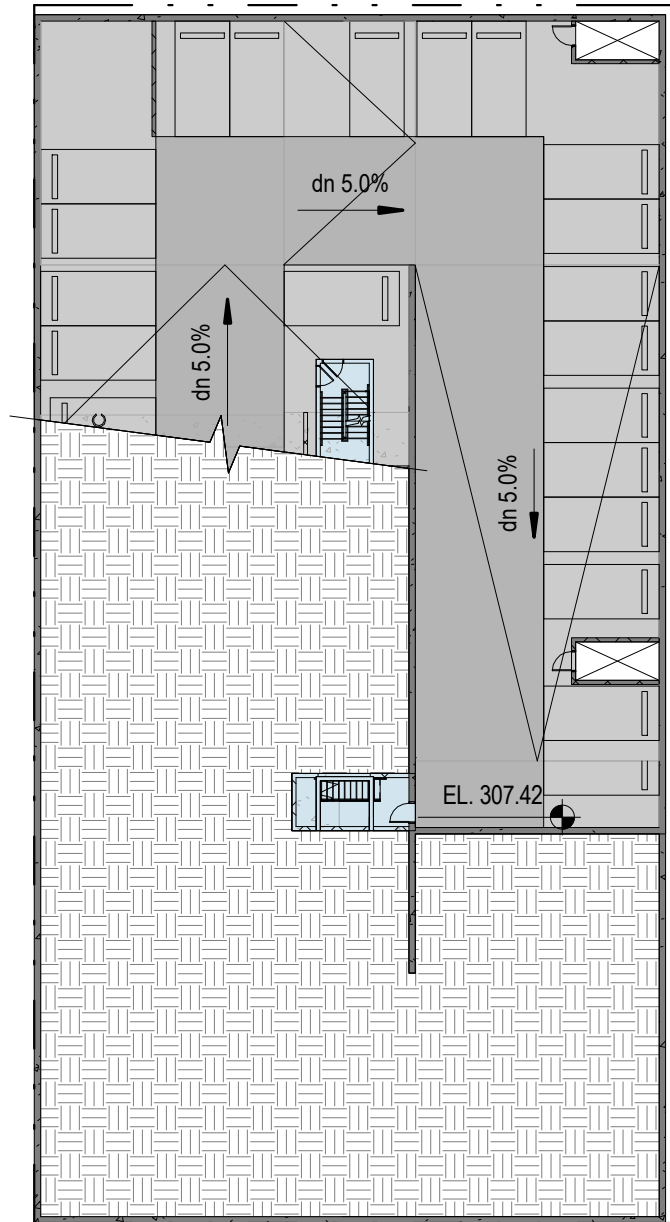
Lights disrupt birds' orientation inhibiting them from seeing their navigational markers like the stars and moon. Night lights and up lights (lights pointing upward) can entrap birds reluctant to fly from a lit area into a dark one.

- **Eliminating unnecessary lighting** is one of the easiest ways to reduce bird collisions, with the added advantage of saving energy and expense.
- **Choose down-lighting over up-lighting** to keep from directing light into the night sky.
- **Minimize perimeter and vanity lighting** and consider filters or special bulbs to reduce red wavelengths where lighting is necessary.
- **As much as possible, lights should be controlled by motion sensors.**
- **Lights Out:** Turn lights out visible from the outside during spring and fall migration periods.

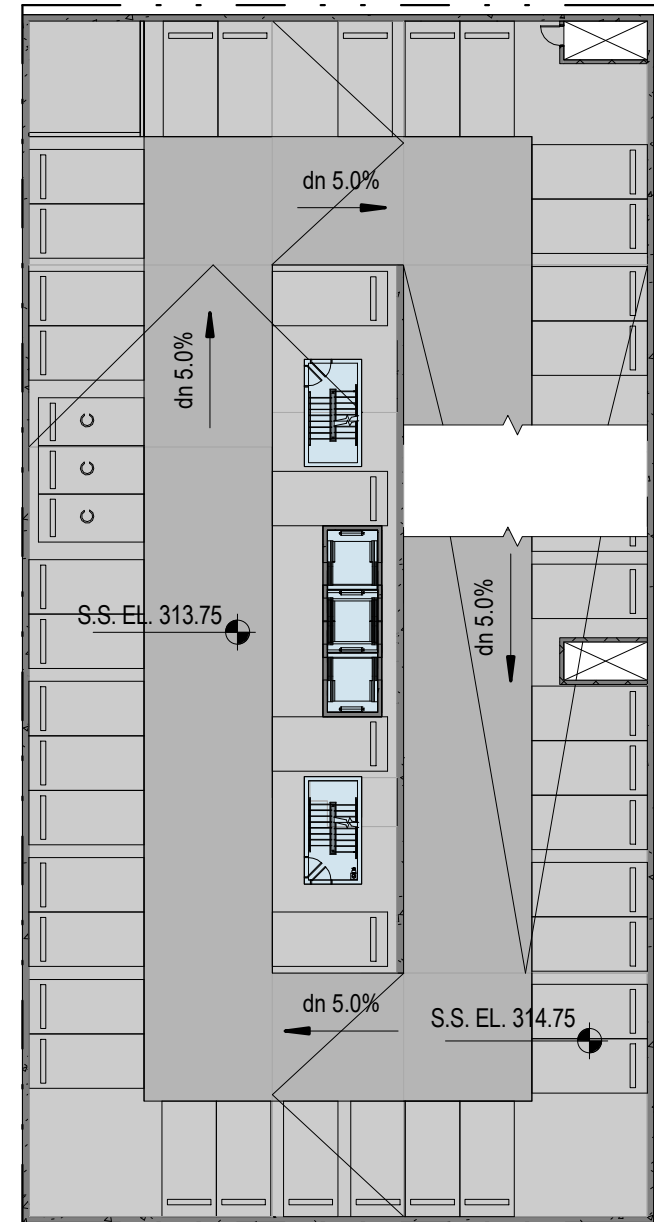
##### E. Site and Landscape Design

- **Obtain USGBC LEED Green Building Rating Points** from the category of "Bird Collision Deterrence".
- **Glass windows should not reflect nearby or site vegetation, particularly large, mature trees and water.** Where this is not feasible, use window treatments outlined above.
- **Use soil berms, furniture, landscaping, or architectural features** to prevent reflection in glazed building facades.
- **Avoid up-lighting rooftop antennas and tall equipment** as well as decorative architectural spires.



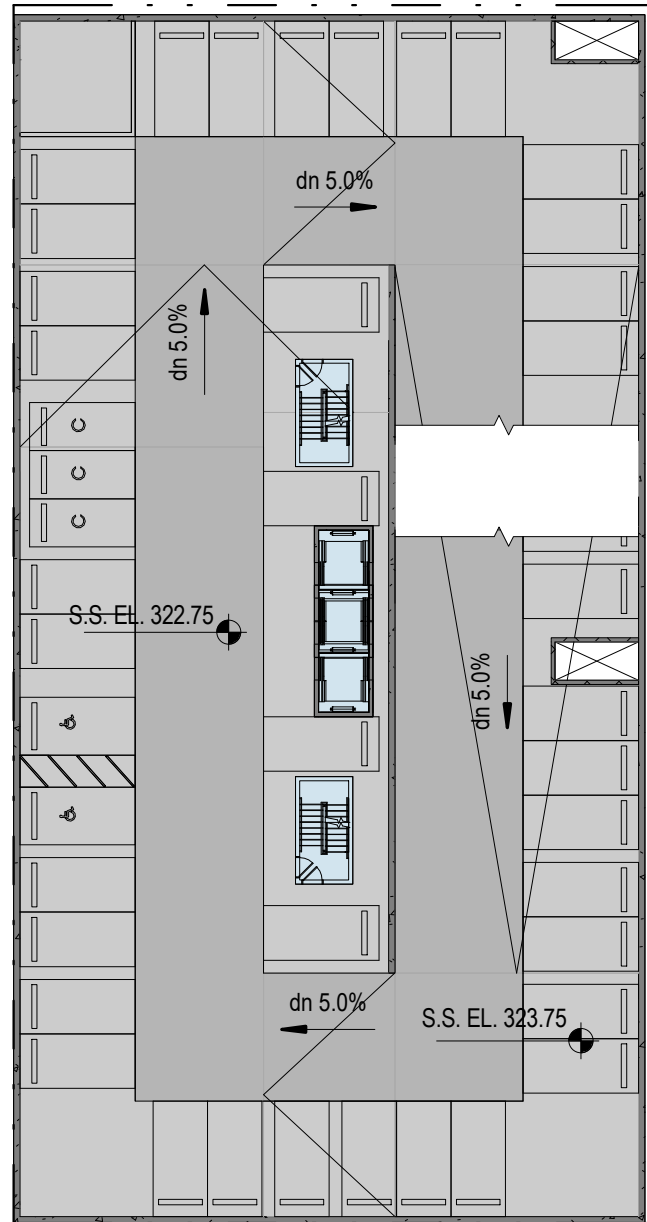


g3 partial floor plan

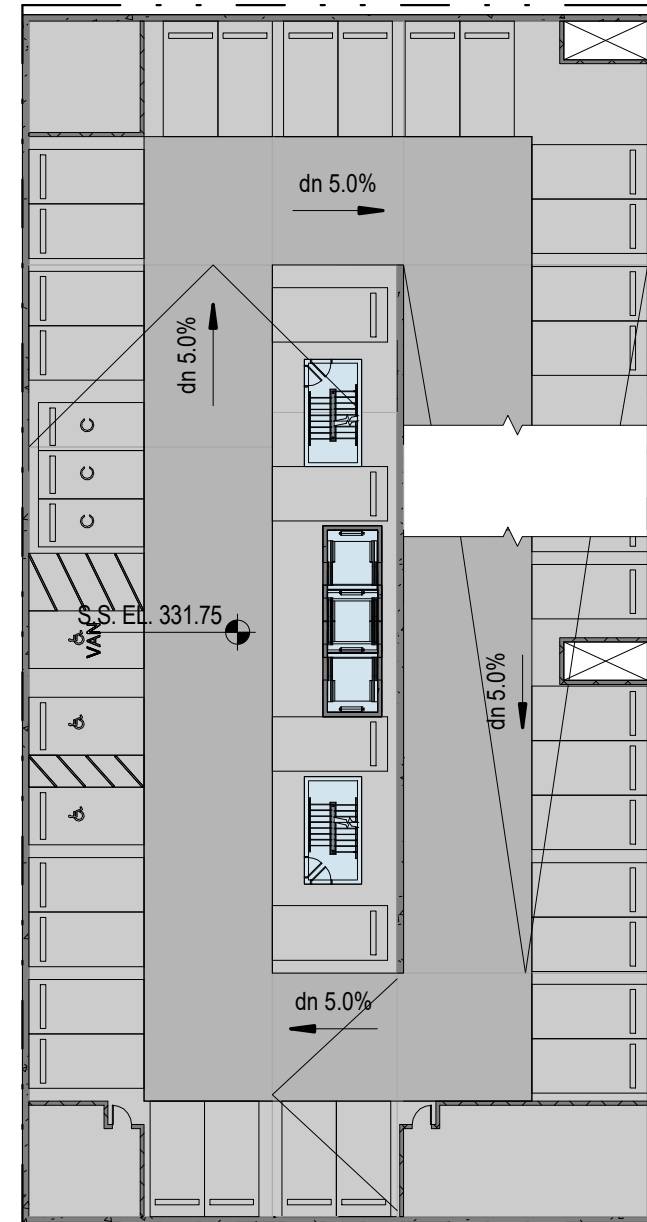


g3 floor plan



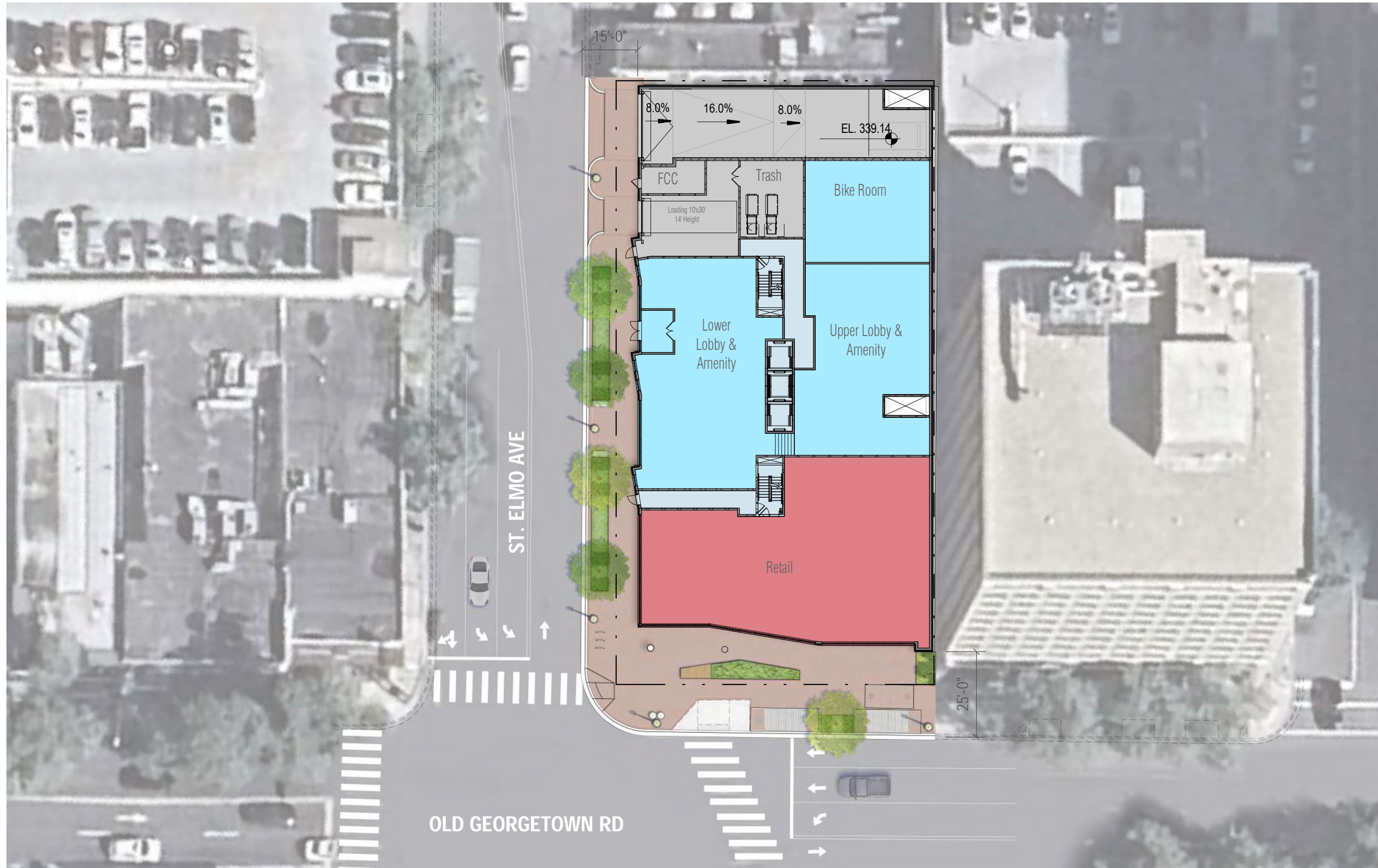


g2 floor plan



g1 floor plan

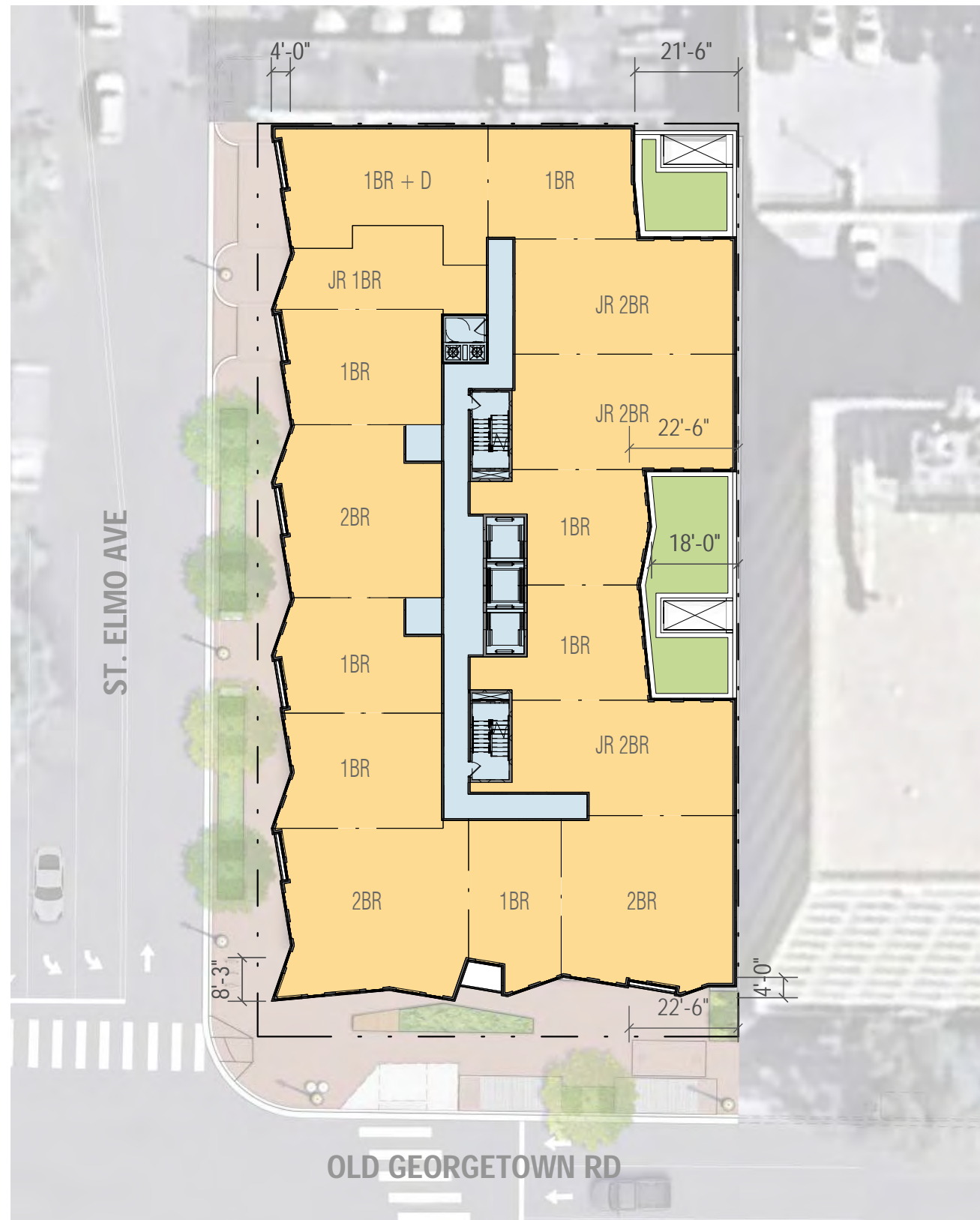




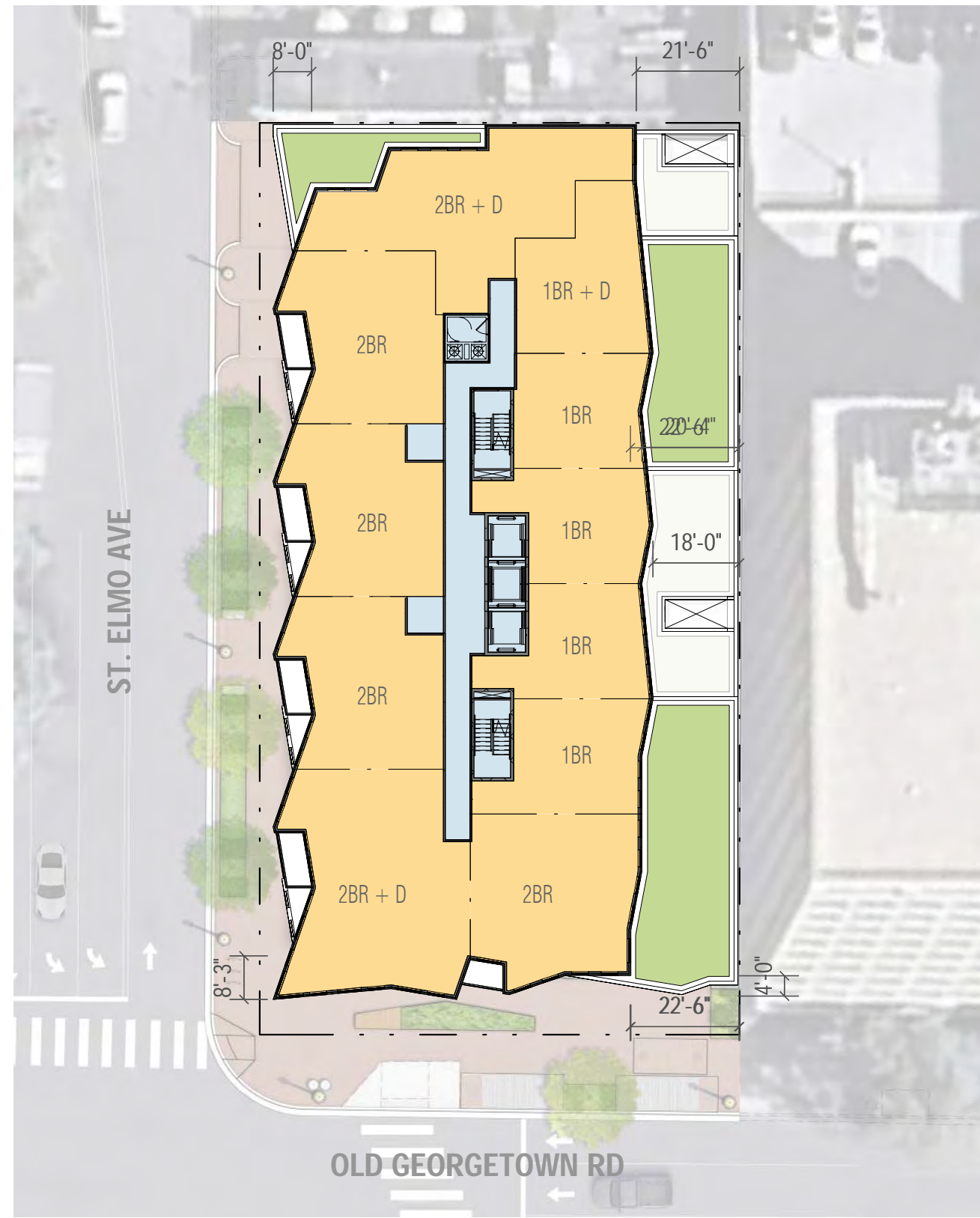
©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.







2nd-6th floor plan

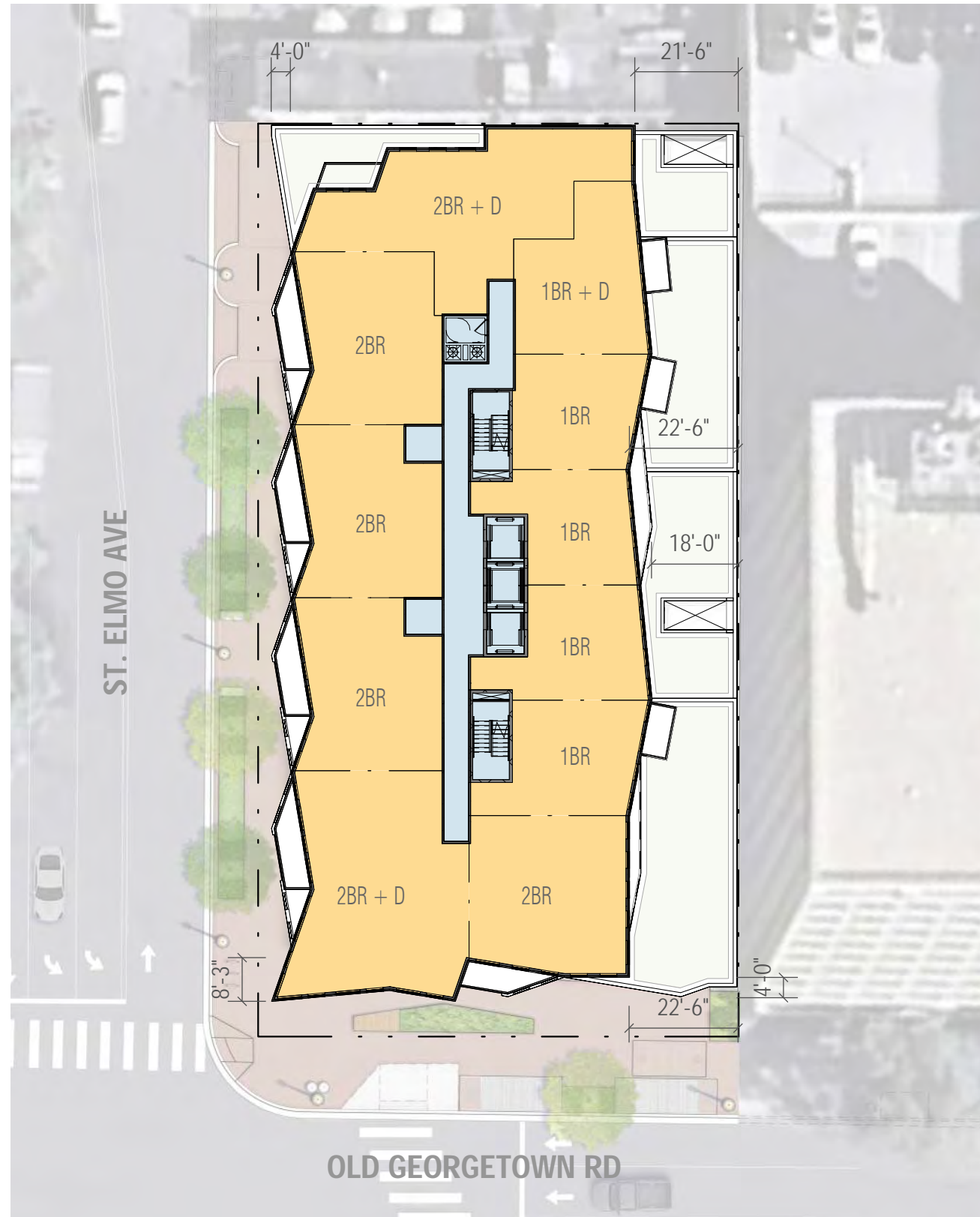


7th-15th floor plan

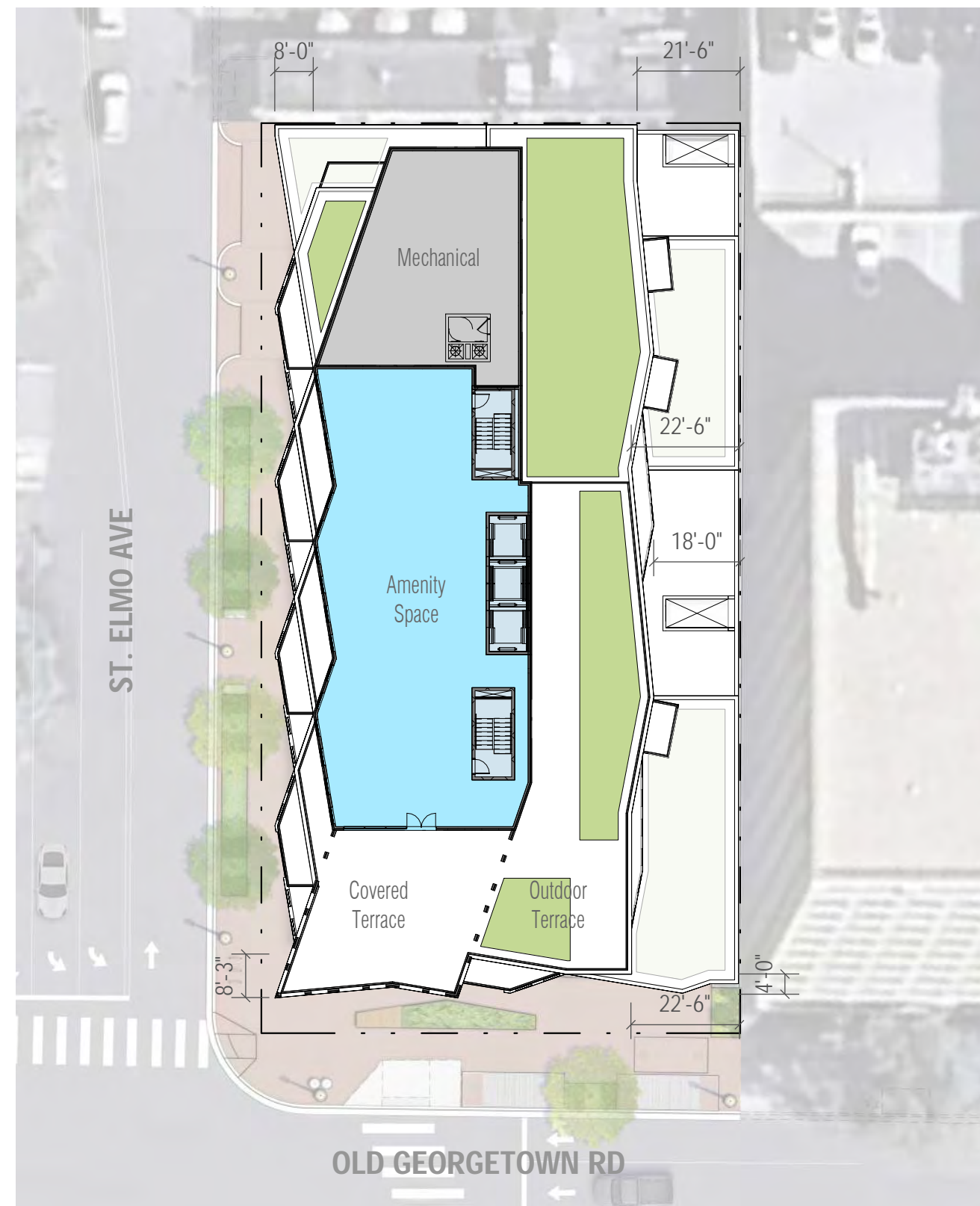
©2022 SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC.





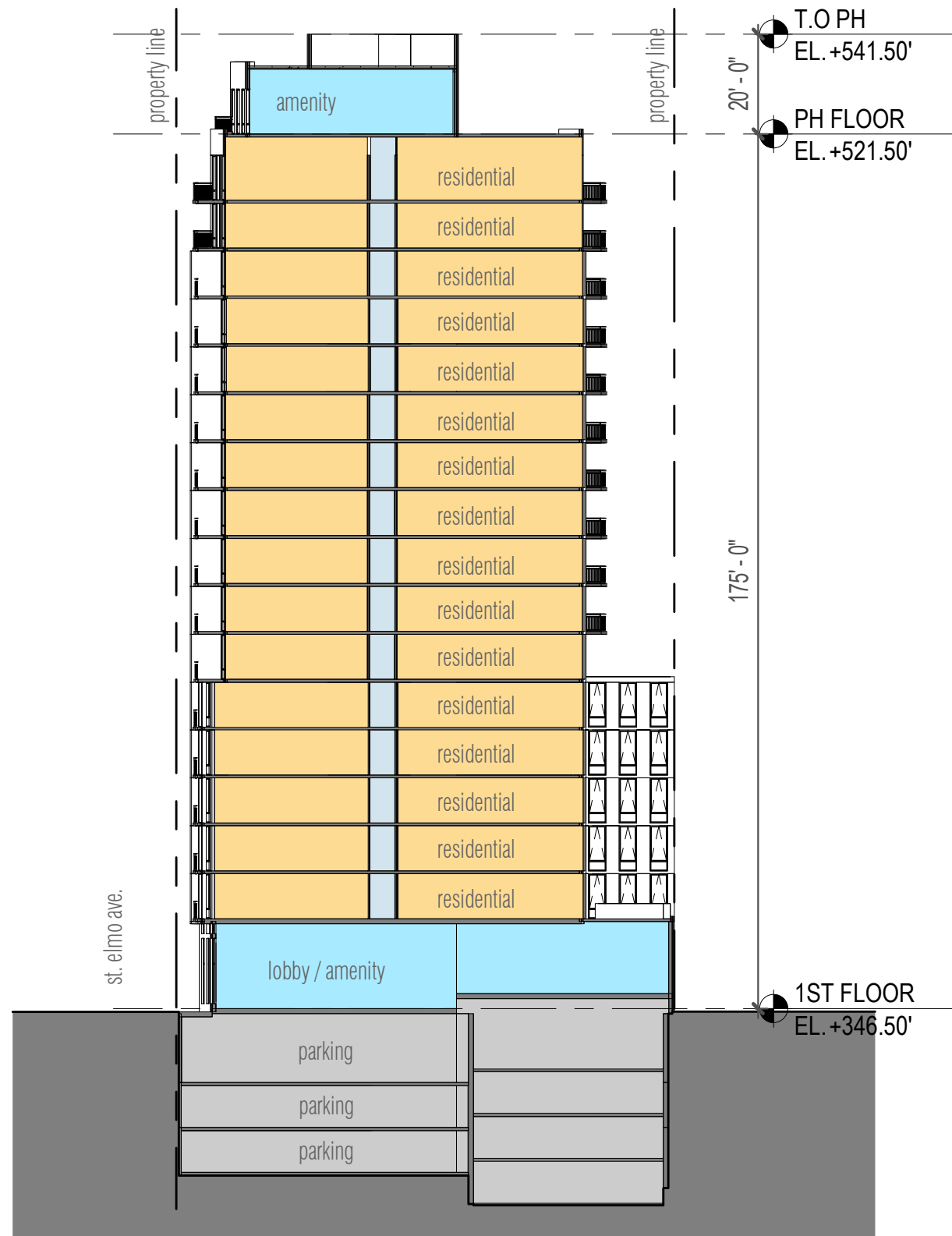


16th-17th floor plan

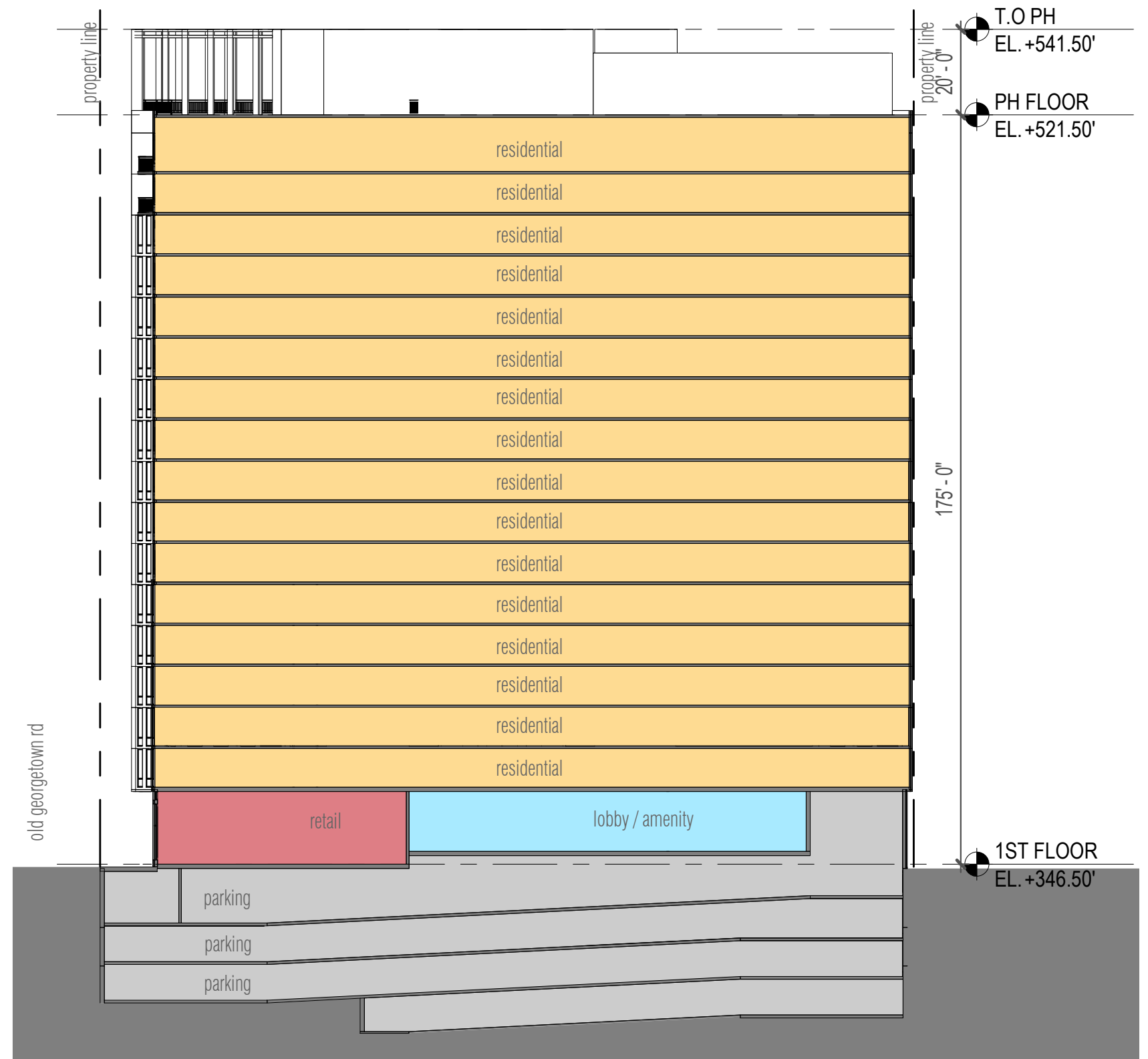


penthouse floor plan



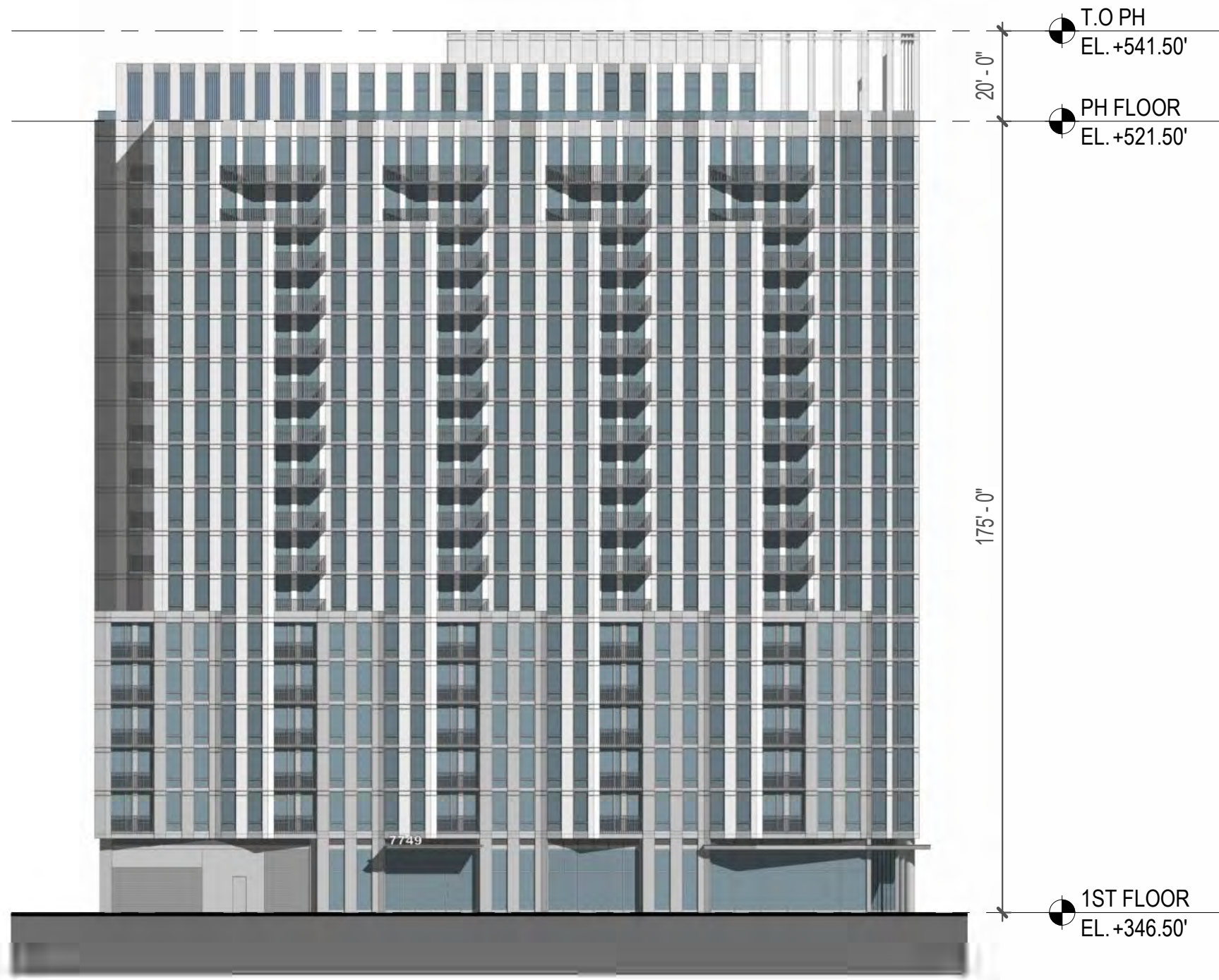


e-w section

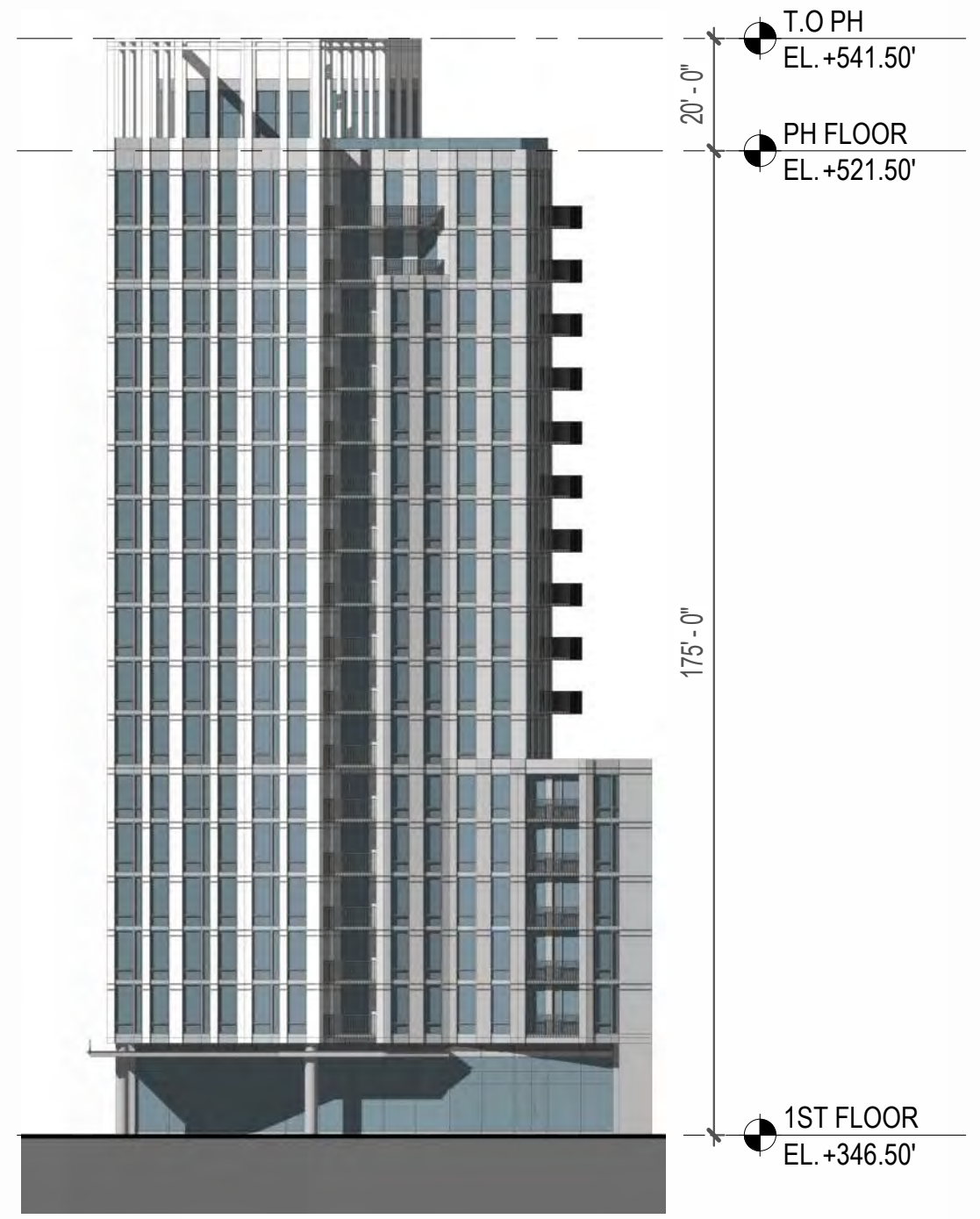


n-s section



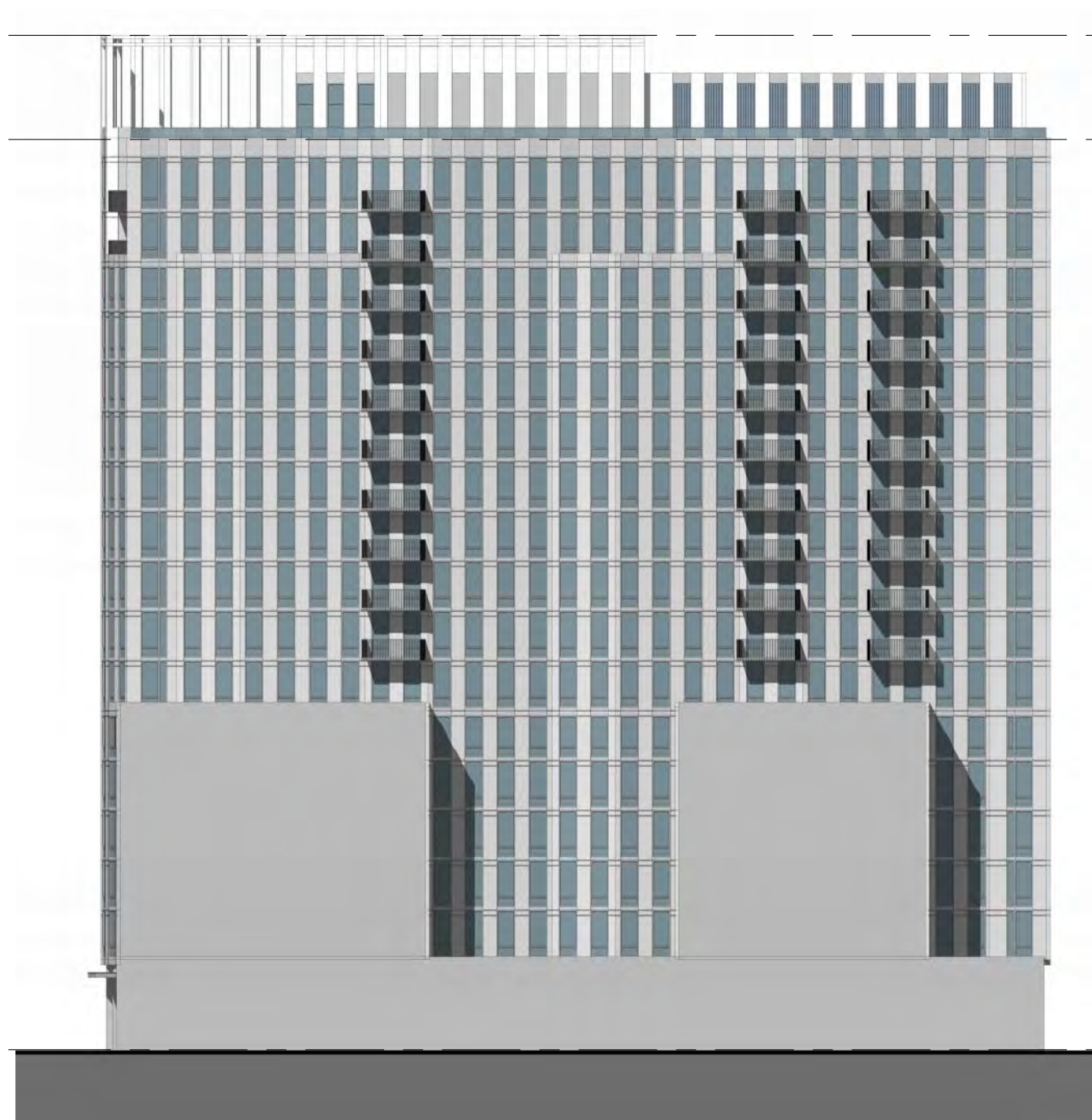


west elevation



south elevation





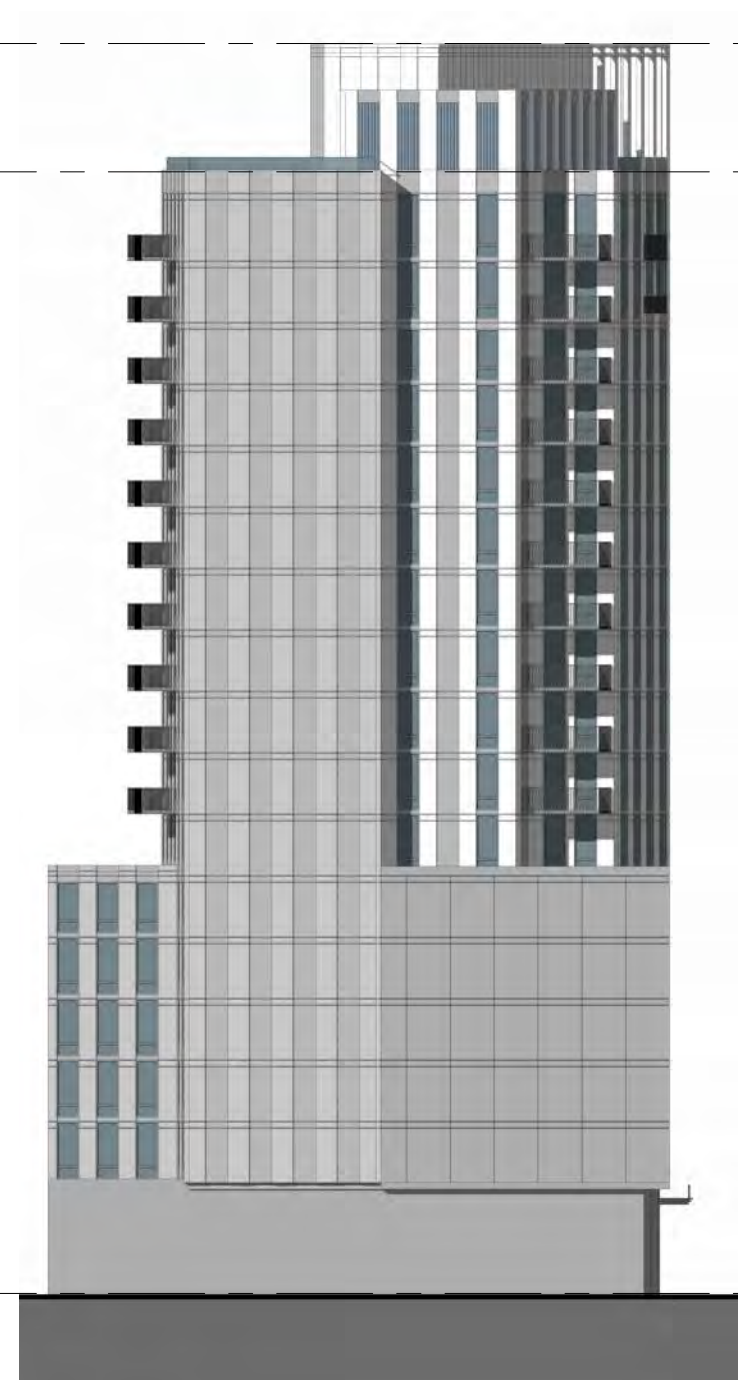
T.O PH  
EL. +541.50'

PH FLOOR  
EL. +521.50'

175' - 0"

20' - 0"

1ST FLOOR  
EL. +346.50'



T.O PH  
EL. +541.50'

PH FLOOR  
EL. +521.50'

175' - 0"

20' - 0"

1ST FLOOR  
EL. +346.50'

east elevation

north elevation