

**Design Advisory Panel – Concept Plan
7201 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda, MD
March 11, 2026**

I. Introduction

7201 Wisconsin Operator, LLC (the “Applicant”) is submitting this application to receive input from the Design Advisory Panel (“DAP”) on the Concept Plan for the property located at 7201 Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Bethesda, Maryland (the “Property”). The Property is located in the northeast quadrant of Wisconsin Avenue and Willow Lane and is bounded by Wisconsin Avenue on the west; Willow Lane on the south; 7235 Wisconsin Avenue on the north; and both 7222 47th Street and 4609 Willow Lane on the east. As a former office building seeking conversion to residential use, the Applicant is eligible for and pursuing the Expedited Approval Plan process under Ordinance No. 25-03. Later in this process, the Applicant will have an additional opportunity to receive input from the DAP on the Site Plan proposed for the Property.

The Applicant proposes to redevelop the Property with a cohesive, mixed-use development consisting of ground floor retail and multi-family residential units, including amenities (the “Project”). As detailed herein, the Project incorporates critical Bethesda Downtown Plan (the “Sector Plan”) recommendations and meets the intent and objectives of the Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines (“Design Guidelines”). The Project represents an innovative opportunity to redevelop an underutilized office building to address the area’s housing needs and reintegrate the Property as a vibrant area of Wisconsin Avenue.

II. Property Description

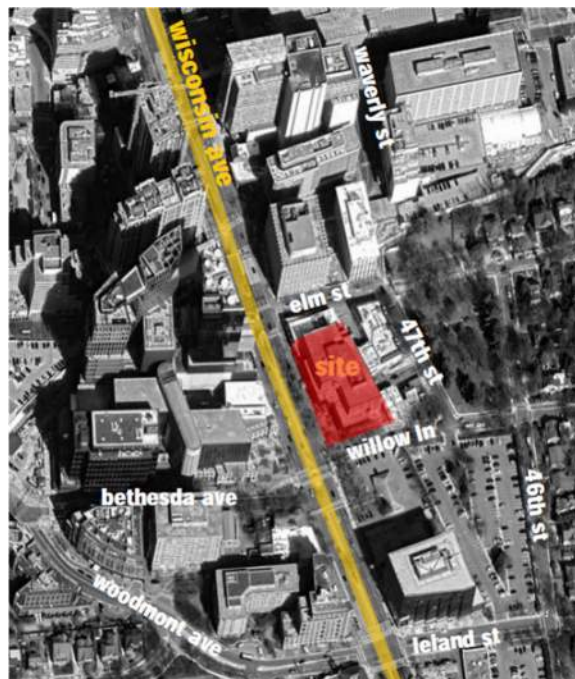


Figure 1: Context map showing the location of the Property. The Project fronts Wisconsin Avenue to the west.

The Property is located within the Sector Plan’s designated Wisconsin Avenue Corridor and totals approximately 34,435 square feet in net land area. The Property is zoned CR 5.0 (C 5.0, R 4.75, H 250) within the Bethesda Overlay Zone. The improvement on the Property includes office space, retail, and an underground parking garage. The Project plans to maintain the existing underground parking, demolish the current building and replace with a modern new build.



Figure 2: Existing conditions of the Property. The existing building consists primarily of brick with relatively uniform fenestration around the building aside from some variation on the southwest corner.

The Property is proximate to the Capital Crescent Trail and future Purple Line to the north, Wisconsin Avenue to the west, a mix of residential and commercial uses to the east, and commercial use to the south. Elm Street Urban Park is nearby, located further east of the Property. South of the Property across Willow Lane is the Farm Women’s Market, which is currently a single building with surface parking, but has sketch plan approval (Sketch Plan No. 320190030) for a mixed-use development that includes construction of the Farm Women’s Market Civic Green. The Project’s location presents an exciting opportunity to reactivate the Wisconsin Avenue frontage and provide a high-density residential development that is connected to vibrant public spaces.

III. Proposed Development

The Project represents an opportunity to transform a pivotal street corner on Wisconsin Avenue. The highlights of the Project include:

- Activating Wisconsin Avenue and the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor by modernizing and upgrading the streetscape along the frontage of the Property; and
- Providing new housing and retail uses in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor within walking distance of the Purple Line and WMATA Red Line stations.

As noted, the Project is located within the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor, identified in the Sector Plan as the main artery through the center of Downtown Bethesda. The Project promotes several of the goals and recommendations of both the Sector Plan, discussed further in Section V of this Statement, and the Design Guidelines, with the most notable detailed in Section VI of this Statement.

IV. Project Design and Architectural Narrative

The current building at the Property was built in 1984, so the Project provides for the redevelopment of a first-generation office building that will continue the evolution of this area of Downtown Bethesda with quality designed buildings, in compliance with the various recommendations of the Bethesda Design Guidelines.

The Project proposes a contemporary building, carefully articulated and designed to break down its massing into visually engaging components, providing alternating tower step-backs for the building as its height increases. To distinguish this Project from other taller buildings to the north of the Property, the Concept Plan proposes expressing the full height of tower in the middle of the block instead of at the corner.



Figure 3: Preliminary renderings of the Project detailing a unique design element that will anchor the southwestern corner of the tower.

Architecturally, the Project features unique geometry on the building’s Wisconsin Avenue frontage along with varying tower heights as the footprint reduces in size and the building gets taller. On its southwestern corner, the building will incorporate a unique design element point when approaching downtown via Wisconsin Avenue. The base of the building will include transparent façades to activate the space and encourage visual connections to enhance the pedestrian realm.

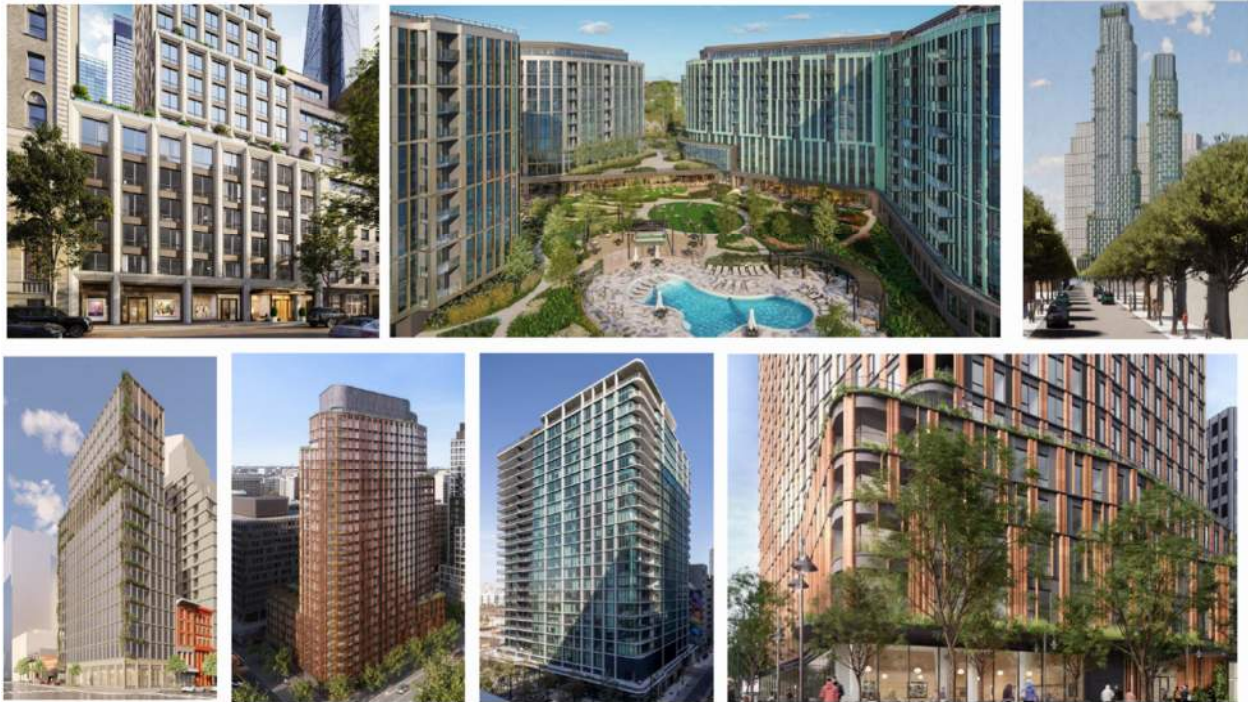


Figure 4: Precedent building imagery inspiring the architectural design of the Project.

The proposed mixed-use development will offer diverse housing types – from studios to multi-bedroom dwelling units – alongside amenity and retail uses to contribute to the Sector Plan’s broader goals of enhanced connectivity, walkable neighborhoods, diverse housing options, and improved urban design and streetscapes.

The Project incorporates a ground-floor retail space on the corner across from the planned Farm Women’s Market Civic Green to extend activation and engagement within the pedestrian realm within the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor. In addition to the corner retail space, the Project also proposes lobby and amenity spaces, a portion of which may be retail depending on market demand. With the change to shopping needs post-pandemic, only a portion of the ground floor is committed to retail space, but the remaining portions of the ground floor will be activated and designed to engage pedestrians nonetheless. In total, the Project proposes approximately 4,200 square feet of potential additional retail space. With a continuous street edge along the build-to line, the retail, lobby, and amenity spaces will maintain an active building edge for pedestrian engagement.

Residential amenities will be curated to enhance community engagement and include a rooftop amenity and terraces. The existing multi-level underground parking facility will serve the residences and retail uses.



Figure 5: Proposed rendering showcasing Wisconsin Avenue and Willow Lane frontages. The Project will reactivate the Wisconsin and Willow Lane streetscapes with attractive retail and residential amenity space, plus adaptively reuse the existing underground parking garage for residents and retail visitors.

V. Sector Plan Conformance

Again, the Property is located within the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor, which the Sector Plan identifies as the main artery through the center of Downtown Bethesda and a critical focus area for improved access, mobility, and pedestrian safety due to the existing Bethesda Metrorail Station and future Purple Line and bus rapid transit (“BRT”) options.

The Sector Plan recognizes that the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor is primarily a commercial area and envisions the corridor as a symbolic downtown center that will reflect the overall identity of Bethesda and character of adjacent neighborhoods through innovative building designs and active public spaces. The Project, as a transitional mixed-use development, demonstrates harmony between a modern building that will reintegrate into the Wisconsin Avenue frontage and connect with nearby public spaces such as the Farm Women’s Market Civic Green and Elm Street Urban Park.

The Sector Plan recommends an emphasis on mixed land uses that are focused on employment and high-density residential. The Project directly advances this recommendation by providing a high-density residential development that includes various unit designs, including 17.77% moderately priced dwelling units (“MPDU”). The Sector Plan also recommends new civic gathering spaces, including the Farm Women’s Market Civic Green. As the neighboring property to the future civic green, this Project intends its design to complement and connect with the public space through streetscape improvements and ground floor activation.

In furtherance of this connection between the Project and future civic green, the Project also addresses urban design recommendations of the Sector Plan. The Sector Plan recommends providing a planting and furnishing buffer between sidewalks and street traffic along with ensuring a clear pedestrian pathway to create a green, active, and walkable sidewalk that balances pedestrian and retail activity with vehicular and BRT traffic. The Project advances this recommendation by providing street trees and additional plantings, with further details to be developed at site plan.

The Sector Plan also recommends providing varied building articulation, such as step-backs, glazing, and material changes. The Project accounts for this recommendation by employing step-backs to provide a human-scaled building edge along the street, especially the Property’s Willow Lane frontage. The proposed building also includes undulating tower step-backs at approximately the fourth, twenty-second, and twenty-sixth floors. In this way, the step-backs create a visual transition from the higher intensity commercial roadway that is Wisconsin Avenue with lower heights facing Willow Lane, fostering compatibility with the surrounding area. Meanwhile, the wings proposed on the eastern side of the building serve to break up the eastern façade, which reduces the building’s massing as it is viewed from the neighboring residential developed across 47th Street.

Accordingly, the Concept Plan is consistent with the land use and urban design recommendations of the Sector Plan and reflects the exact type of redevelopment envisioned for Wisconsin Avenue Corridor.

VI. Design Guidelines Compliance

The Project carefully aligns with and exceeds the Bethesda Downtown Design Guidelines through targeted adherence and intentional application of design principles and alternative menu strategies:

2.1.10 Canopy Corridors

The Project demonstrates evolving urban design, where in the 1980s, large pocket parks were prevalent but received limited use in practice. Now, the Project proposes to bring the building closer to the street along Wisconsin Avenue while also providing an enhanced streetscape. Meanwhile, where the Project abuts Willow Lane, which is a canopy corridor, the Project participates in enhancing the streetscape in accordance with the Design Guidelines by providing a six-foot planting zone and nine-foot pedestrian through zone with an additional seven to ten feet of frontage zone to provide additional space for potential green area. Such elements contribute to a vibrant canopy corridor that enhances pedestrian comfort, safety, and street-level aesthetics, meeting the intent of the Guidelines.

2.3.3 Servicing, Access, and Parking

The Project's service and parking strategy integrates vehicular access, pedestrian safety, and urban design. Subject to the approval of the adjacent property owner, the Project proposes to close off the existing alley curb cut on Willow Lane so as not to increase the total number of curb cuts on Willow Lane. From Willow Lane, there will be two curb cuts, including maintenance of the existing curb cut for access to the existing underground parking and a new curb cut for loading. This design avoids the need for any curb cuts on Wisconsin Avenue, avoiding any disruption to Wisconsin Avenue altogether and positioning the vehicular access entrances in a way that does not visually detract from Wisconsin Avenue as a major commercial corridor. The below grade parking will serve the residents and retail users.

2.4.1: Compatibility

The Project is designed to be compatible with the existing character and scale of the area. Specifically, it proposes ground-floor retail (or other similarly activated ground-floor space) that will maintain the character of small-scale retail streets. The building is also designed with staggered step-backed upper floors such that the pedestrian experience is continued along the sidewalk of a low to mid-rise building edge. Finally, increased landscaping in the frontage zone and planting/furnishing zone will provide a transition to the surrounding neighborhood.

2.4.2 Base: Building Placement

The building is designed on a base that is expressed in different areas, including between two and six stories along Wisconsin Avenue and two and four stories on Willow Lane. The main entrance to the building, located mid-block, is designed to anchor the building. A base expression in the architecture is provided to differentiate the rest of the ground floor from the main building entrance. This design helps frame the street and provides a compatible scale at the street level on both Wisconsin Avenue and Willow Lane.

2.4.3 Base: Street Activation

The Project prioritizes active, engaging ground floors with retail space and the residential lobby and amenity areas prominently facing Wisconsin Avenue and the portion of the building that wraps Willow Lane. This transparency and activation significantly enrich the pedestrian experience, providing opportunities for interaction and human-scale detailing at street level. In an effort to engage the entire block, the Wisconsin Avenue frontage will also feature the main entrance located at mid-block.

2.4.4 Base: Variation and Articulation

The Project employs multiple articulation strategies, including a base that varies between two and six stories, the undulating frontage along Wisconsin Avenue at the entrance, and the rounded corner treatment at Wisconsin Avenue and Willow Lane. Additional variation is provided in base height and articulation along with the transparent façades for the lobby, retail, and amenity spaces. Plane changes in the base also create breaks and shadow lines. Overall, these variations help break up the mass and provide visual interest to the building.

2.4.5 Corner Treatments

The building is designed with a continuous building wall from the front entrance south to the corner of the building, which anchors the building at the corner and signals its presence at the pedestrian level. The building will have a strong corner treatment that is elevated to appear as if it is floating from the corner's base, distinguishing the corner of the building from the rest of its architecture. The corner treatment features a curved component that highlights the distinctive geometry and design of the building at this location. This unique design element on the southwestern corner of the building will increase visual interest, especially as you approach downtown on Wisconsin Avenue.



Figure 6: Precedent building imagery inspiring the unique design element for the building's proposed corner treatment.

2.4.6 Tower: Separation Distance

The minimum separation distance recommended by the Design Guidelines is 22.5 to 30 feet from side property lines. The tower component of the Project is setback 22 and 25 feet from the 7235 Wisconsin Avenue property line to the north to accommodate a generous setback in the event the 7235 Wisconsin Avenue property redevelops in the future.

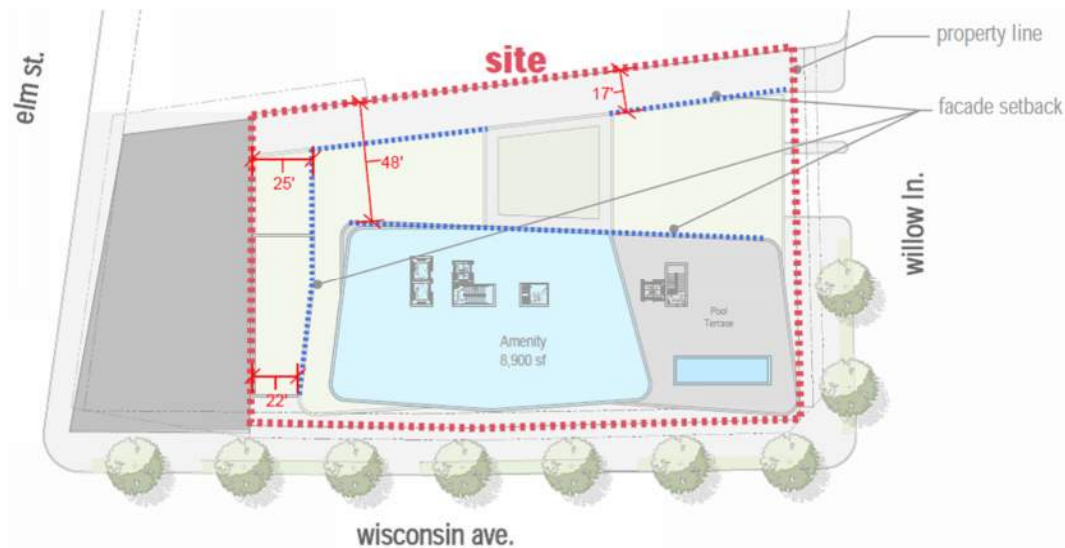


Figure 7: Preliminary layout for upper floors, showing distances of 22' and 25' from the side property line.

2.4.7 Tower: Step-Back

The Project employs step-backs to provide a human-scaled building edge along the street, especially the Property's Willow Lane frontage. The proposed building also includes undulating tower step-backs at approximately the second, sixth, twenty-second, and twenty-sixth floors along both Wisconsin Avenue and Willow Lane. In this way, the step-backs create a visual transition from the higher intensity commercial roadway that is Wisconsin Avenue with lower heights facing Willow Lane, fostering compatibility with the surrounding area.



Figure 8: Preliminary renderings of the proposed building demonstrating the wings on the eastern side of the building.

The wings proposed on the eastern side of the building serve to break up the eastern façade, which reduces the building’s massing as it is viewed from the neighboring residential developed across 47th Street.

2.4.8 Tower: Methods to Reduce Bulk

The Project employs various architectural methods to reduce perceived building bulk, such as unique geometry, limiting the apparent face of the building, and varying tower heights where the footprint reduces in size as the building gets taller. The lower towers are also set back to limit the façade presence while balcony slots articulate the façade and emphasize the slender quality of the main tower.

2.4.9 Top: Tower Top

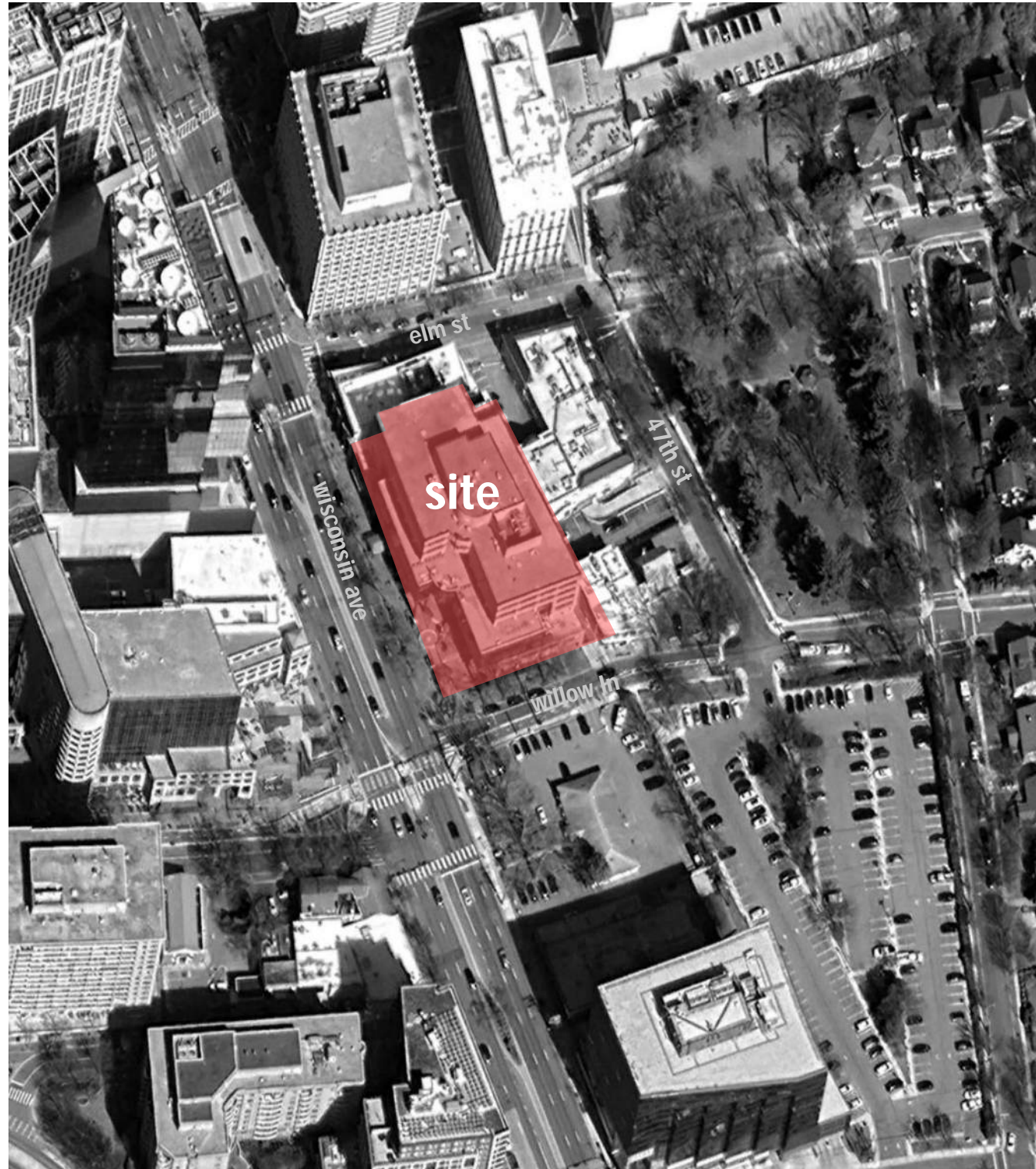
The design of the building includes a two-story tower top or “cap” that will introduce additional variation to the Bethesda skyline. The articulation from below the tower is expressed through the tower top along with rooftop amenity spaces and mechanical enclosure focused along the street corner to contribute to this expressive tower top.

2.4.11 Bird-Safe Design

Bird-safe practices are integrated into the building’s façade design. Strategic architectural projections, balcony placements, varied façade depths, and material transitions significantly reduce reflective surfaces and mitigate collision risks. The building plans to employ various techniques considered best practices in bird-safe urban design, such as differentiated textures, façade patterns, overhangs, and recessed balconies.

VII. Conclusion

The Applicant is excited to contribute this newly designed building to this area of Downtown Bethesda in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor. The Applicant has strategically incorporated the recommendations and objectives of both the Sector Plan and the Design Guidelines to inform design and make this a truly transformational development for Downtown Bethesda. We look forward to presenting the Project to the DAP.



7201 wisconsin ave

bethesda advisory panel presentation

site location
7201 wisconsin ave
bethesda, md 20814

developer
the pinkard Group

land use counsel
lerch, early & brewer, chtd.

architect
sk + i architecture





view from corner of wisconsin ave and willow ln



view from wisconsin ave



view from willow ln



view from corner of wisconsin ave and elm st



view from elm st



view from willow ln

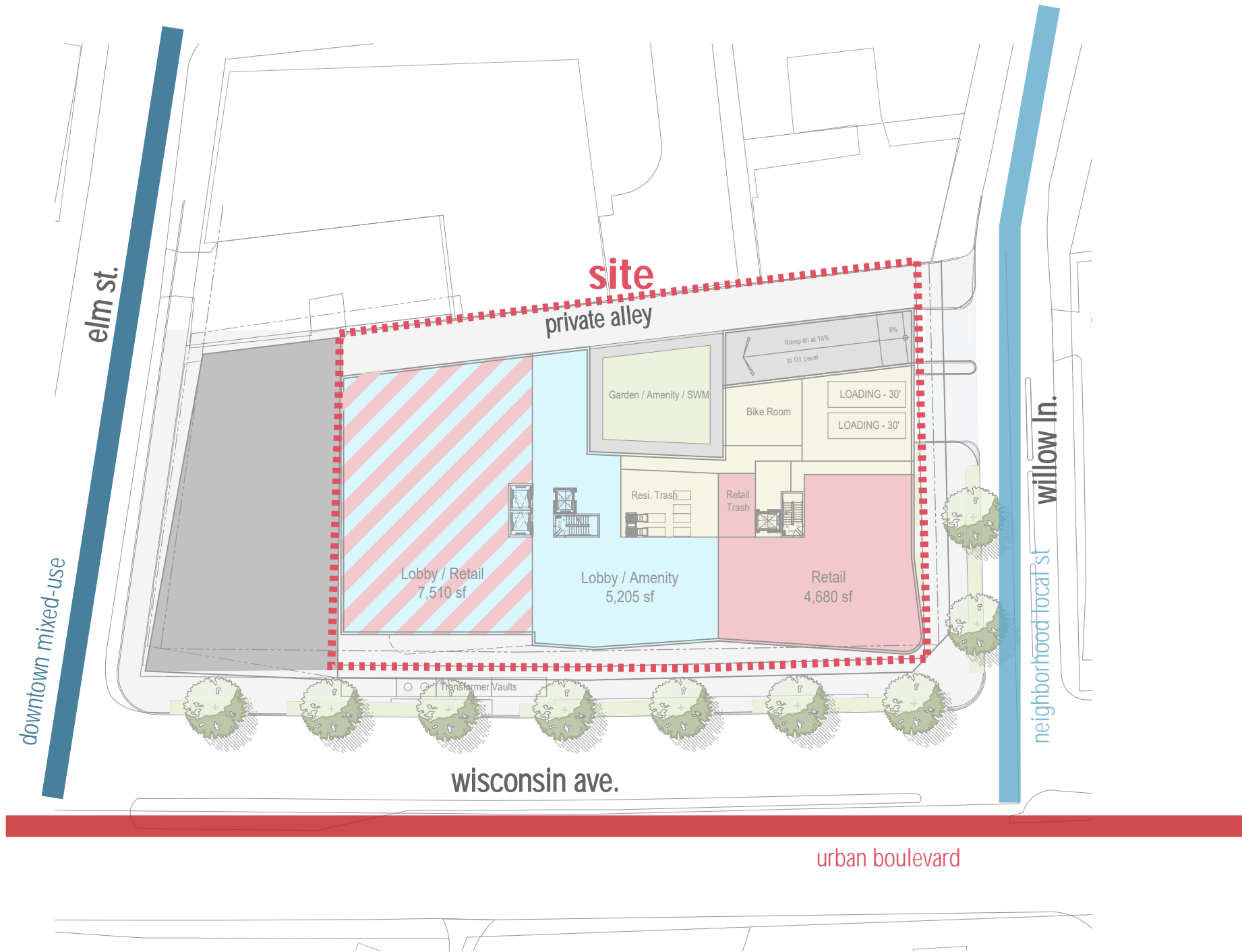


Figure 2.10: Recommended Retail Nodes



Figure 2.01: Street Types

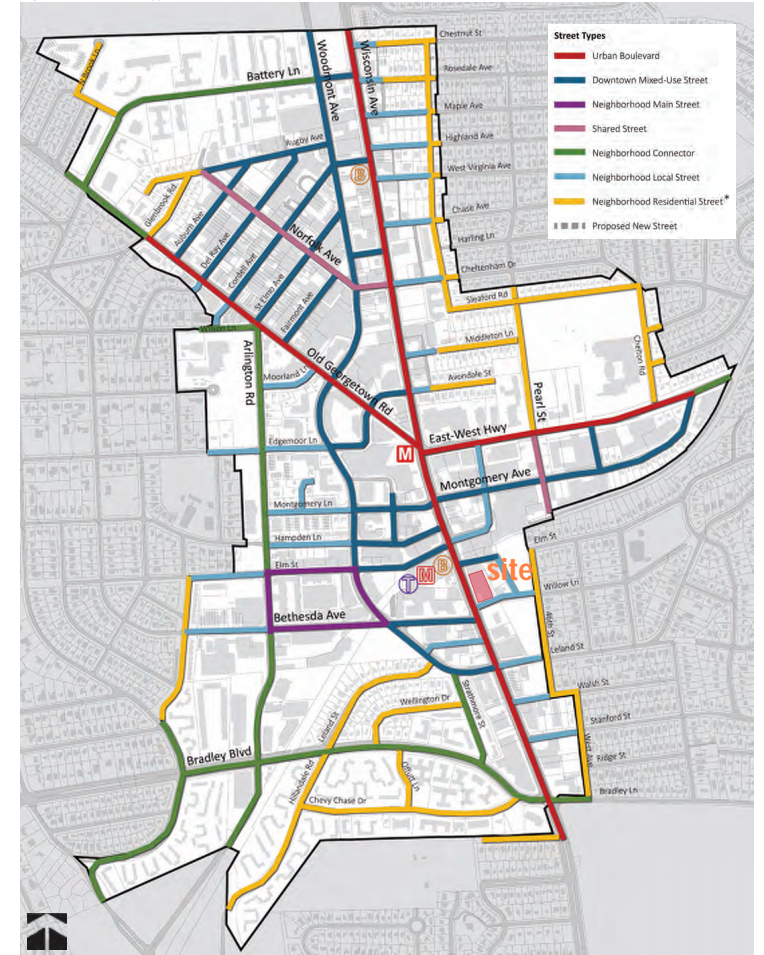
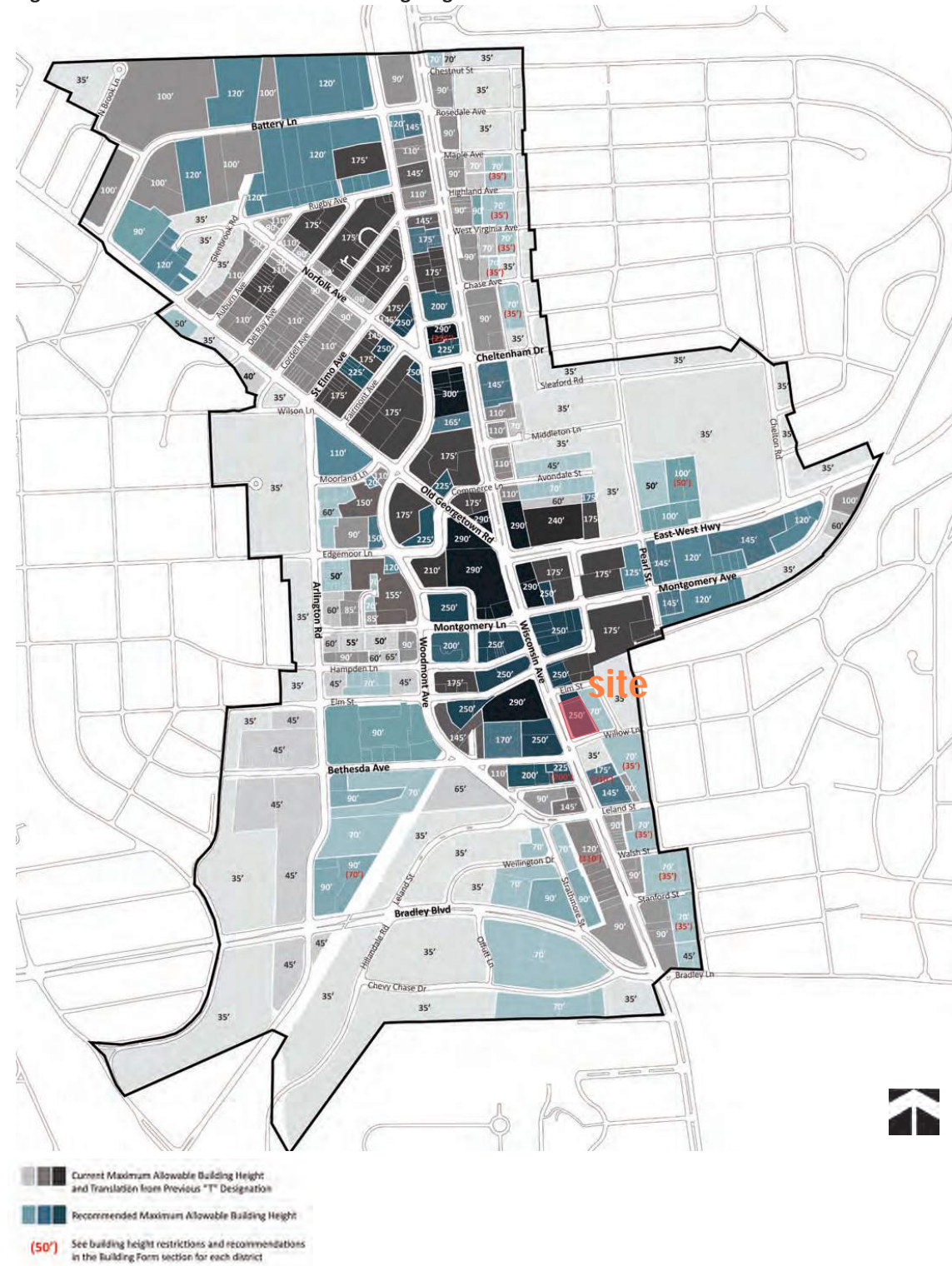
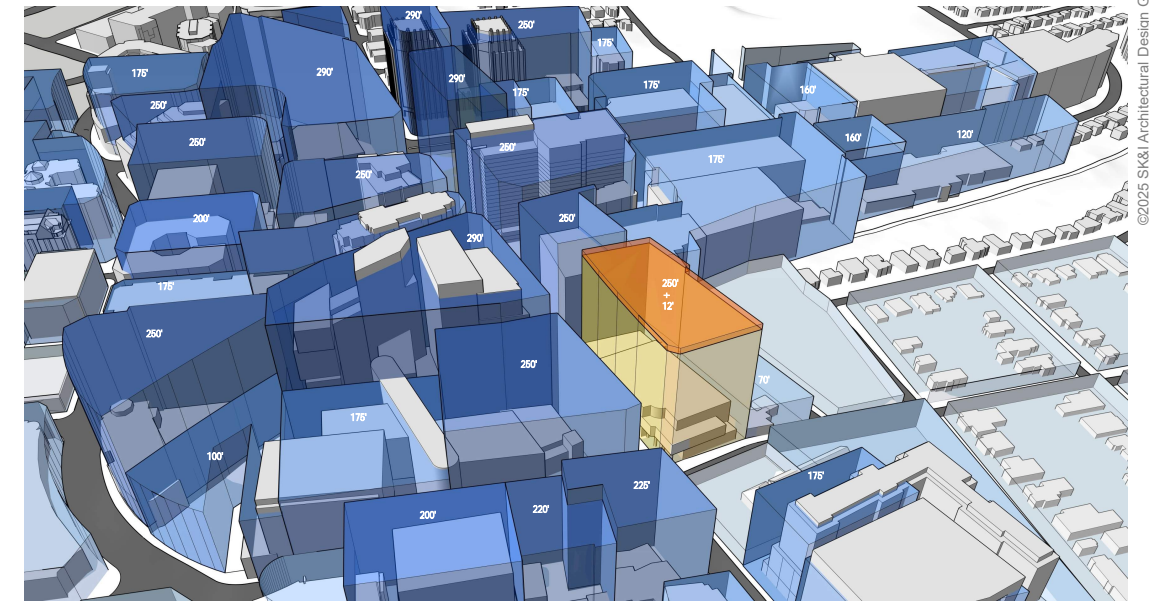


Figure 2.19: Recommended Maximum Building Heights

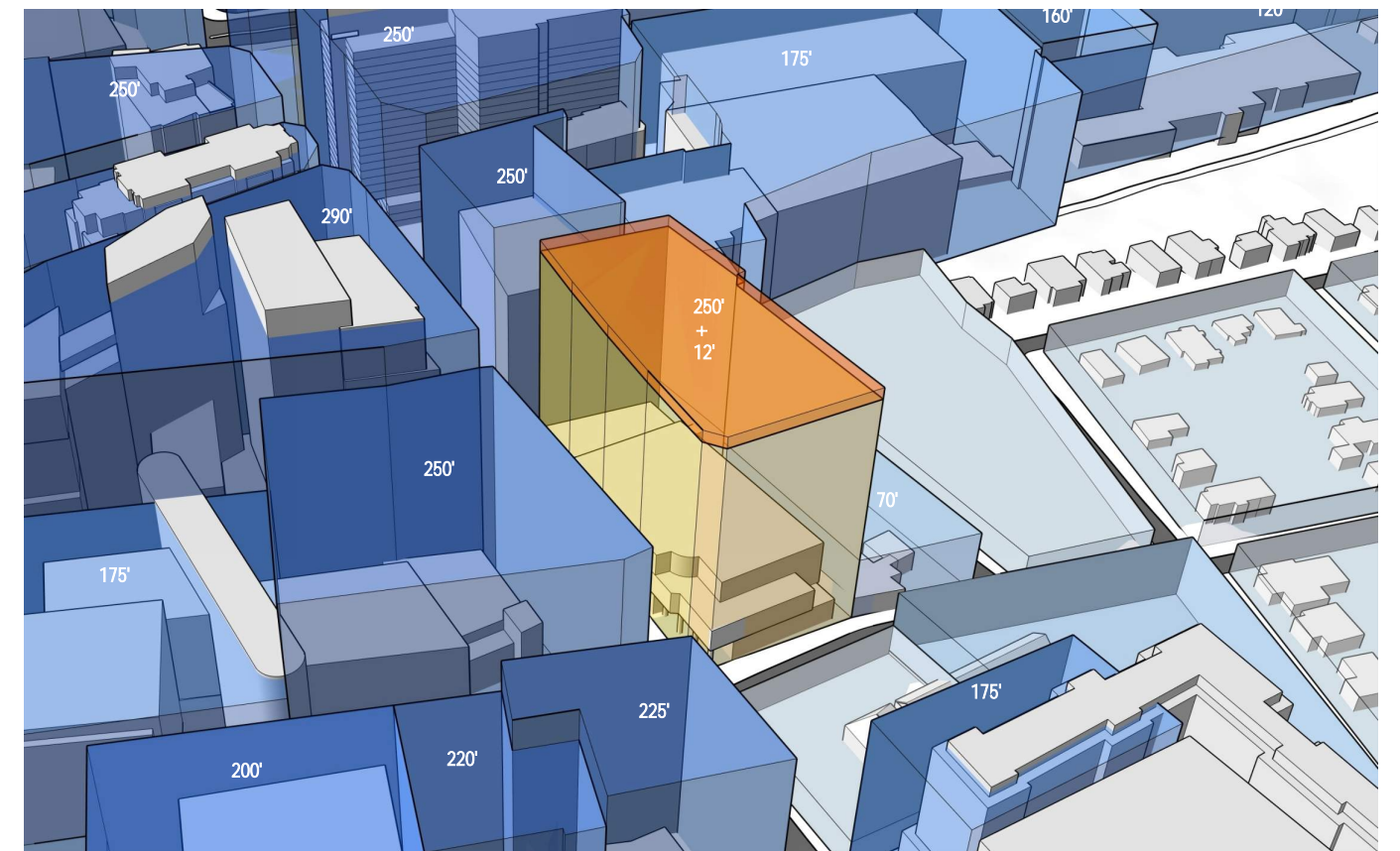


BETHESDA DOWNTOWN PLAN | MAY 2017 71

CR-5,
C-5,R-4.75,
H-250



allowable building heights - south aerial

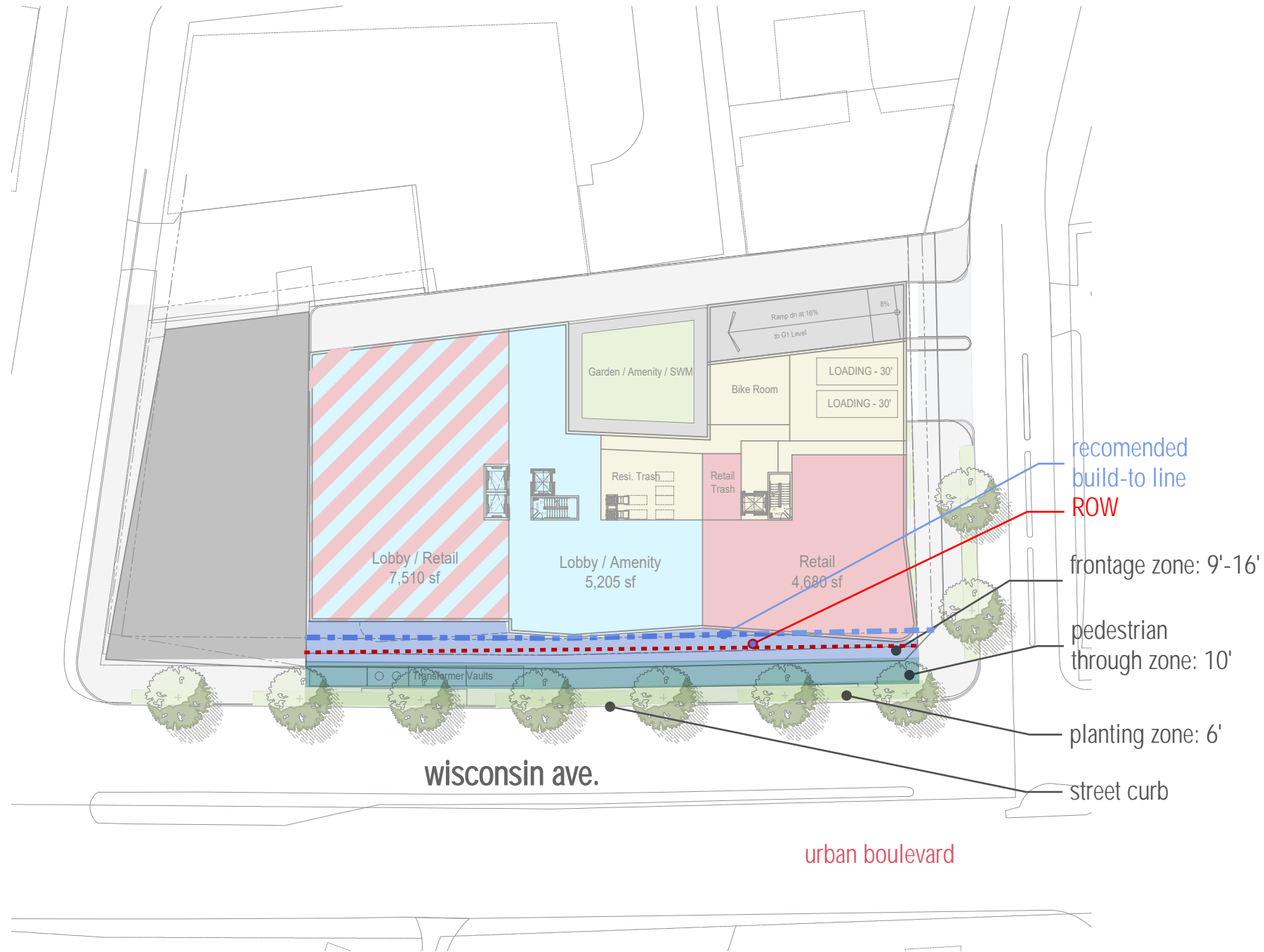


allowable building heights enlarged

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design goals

- achieve the design goals of the bethesda plan and provide a dynamic, sustainable, and inclusive address
- promote a diversified mix of housing in downtown through office use conversion to mixed-use multi-family development
- beautify downtown through greening and improved streetscapes
- add residential density immediately adjacent to public transportation and reduce vehicle miles traveled in the region
- 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 south



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.

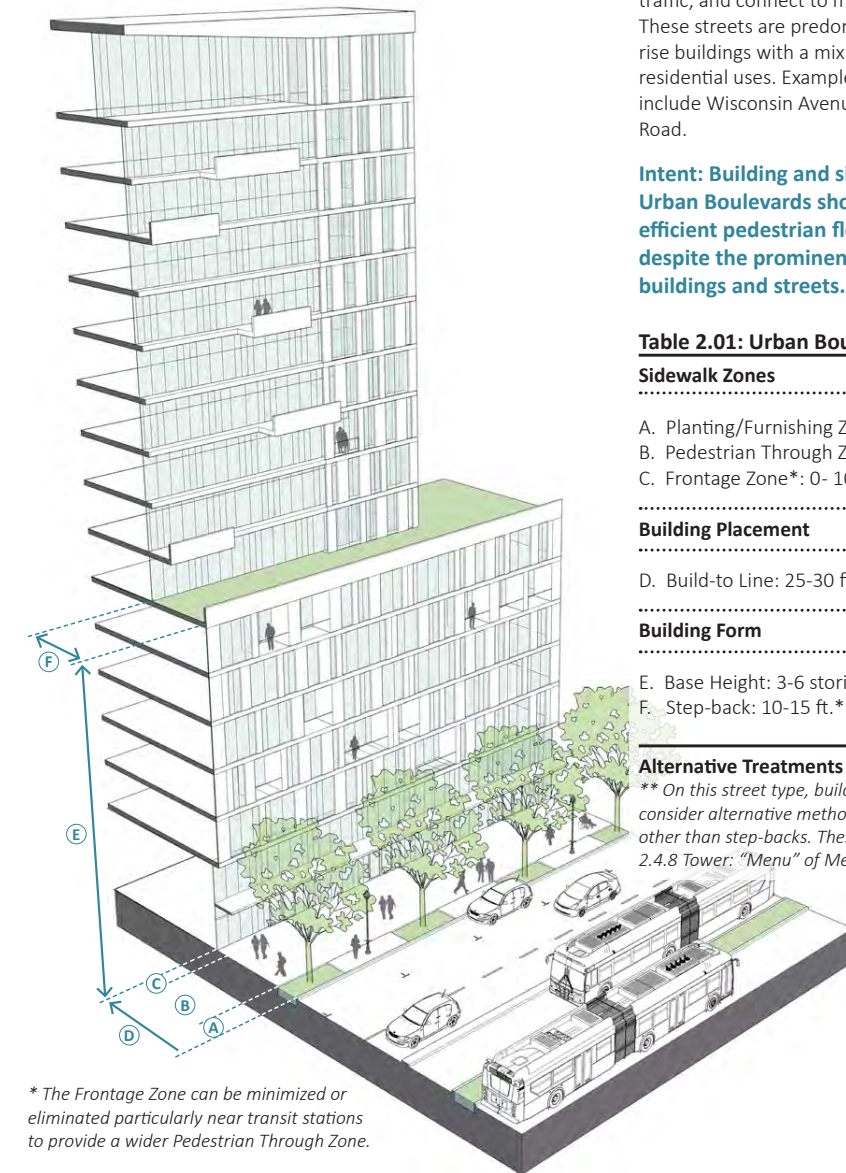
Intent: Building and sidewalk design along Urban Boulevards should ensure both efficient pedestrian flow and comfort despite the prominence of large-scale buildings and streets.

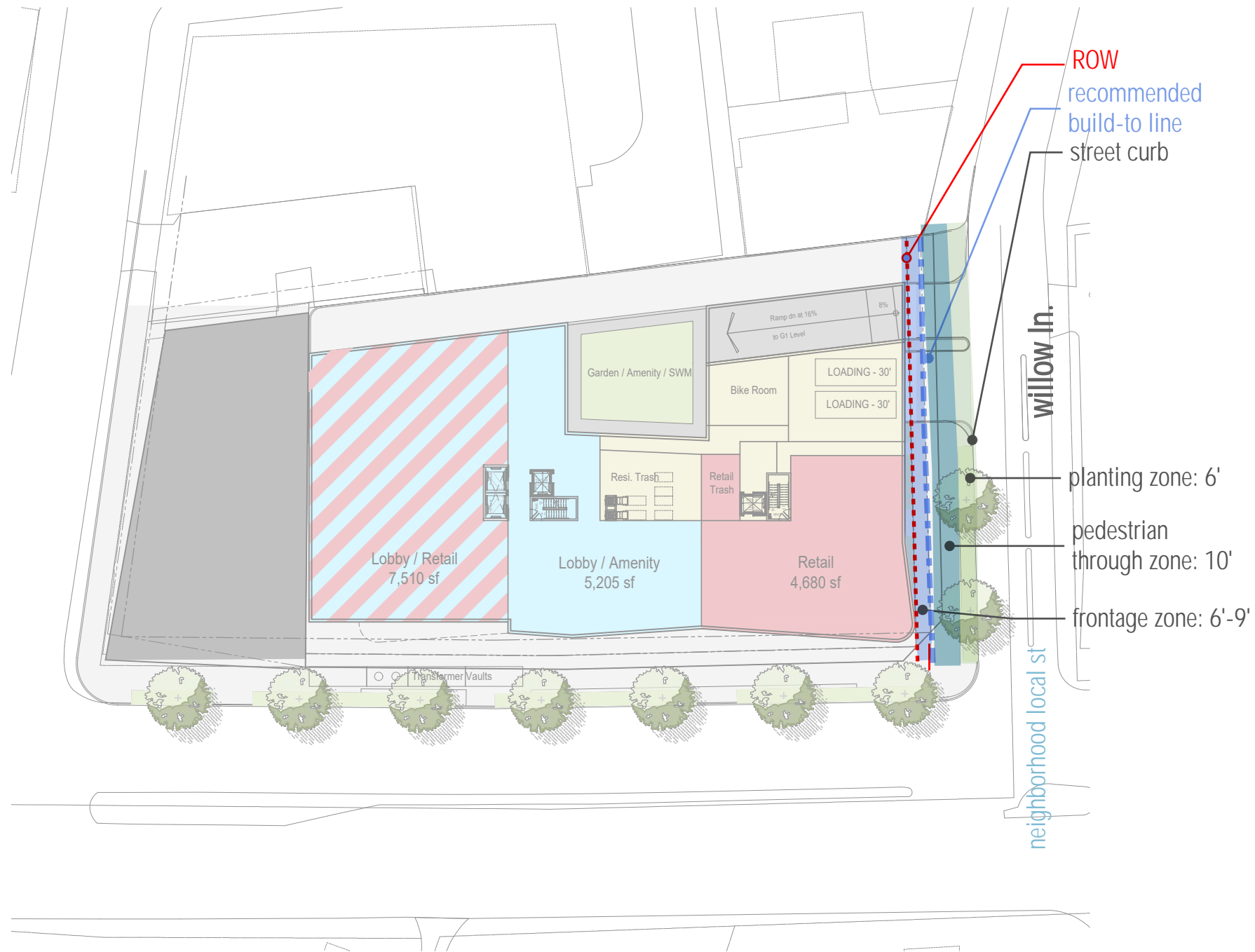
Table 2.01: Urban Boulevard

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.





2.1.7 Neighborhood Local Street

Neighborhood Local Streets are typically narrow side streets that accommodate shared bike uses, access to residential parking, on-street parking and low traffic volumes with very slow auto speeds. Sidewalks along these streets are often narrower than on other types because of the constrained street width.

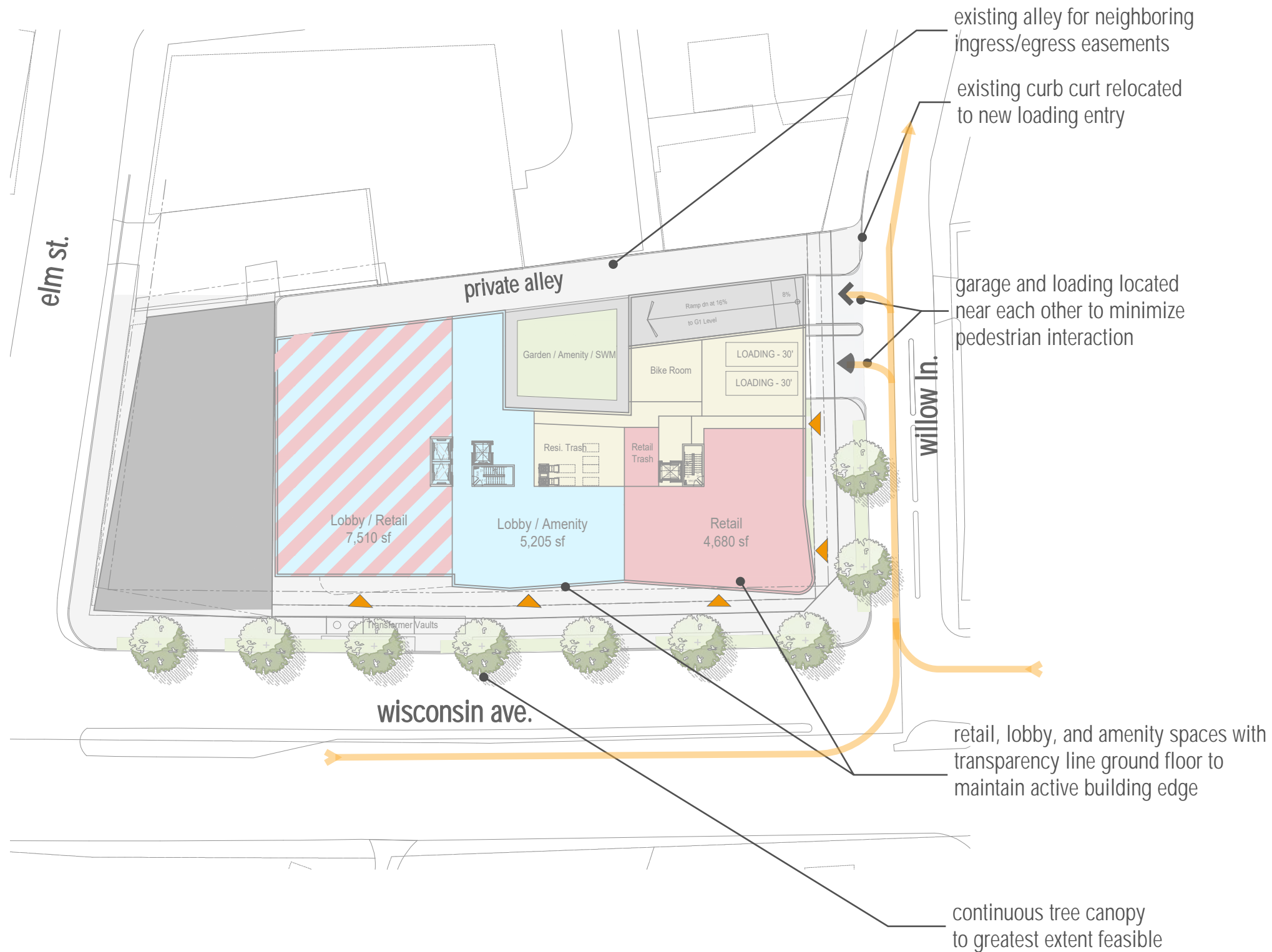
Intent: Building and sidewalk designs along Neighborhood Local Streets should provide efficient and comfortable access from the urban core to neighborhoods of low-scale buildings and detached homes. Because local streets provide a transition from the downtown core to surrounding neighborhood streets, the height of building frontages should reflect this change in scale.

Table 2.06: Neighborhood Local Street

Sidewalk Zones	
A.	Planting/Furnishing Zone: 5 - 8 ft.
B.	Pedestrian Through Zone: 6 - 10 ft.
C.	Frontage Zone: 0 - 4 ft.
Building Placement	
D.	Build-to Line: 12 - 15 ft. from street curb
Building Form	
E.	Base Height: 2 - 4 stories (25 - 50 ft.)*
F.	Step-back: 15 - 20 ft.*

* Properties on a Neighborhood Local Street confronting a Residential Detached or Residential Townhouse zone should see the Montgomery County Code Chapter 59 Section 4.1.8 Compatibility Requirements for base height and upper floor step-backs.





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

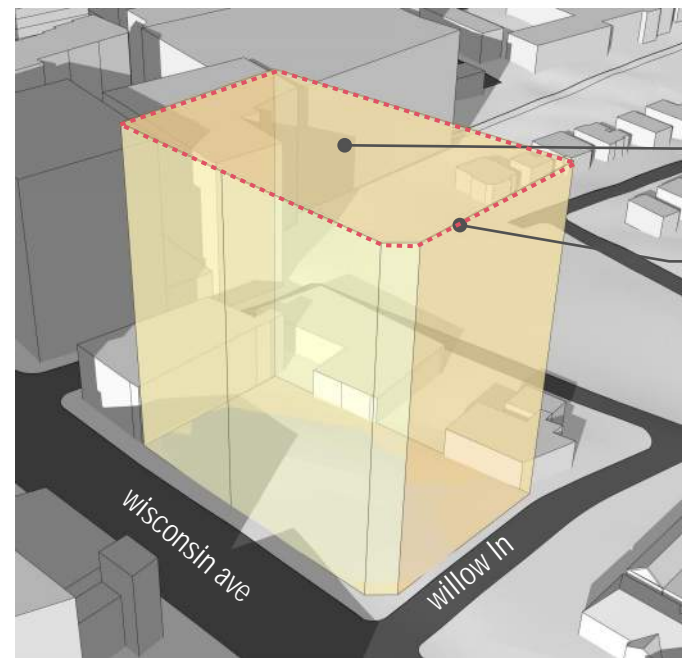
circulation

- vehicles
- loading
- building entrance
- parking entrance

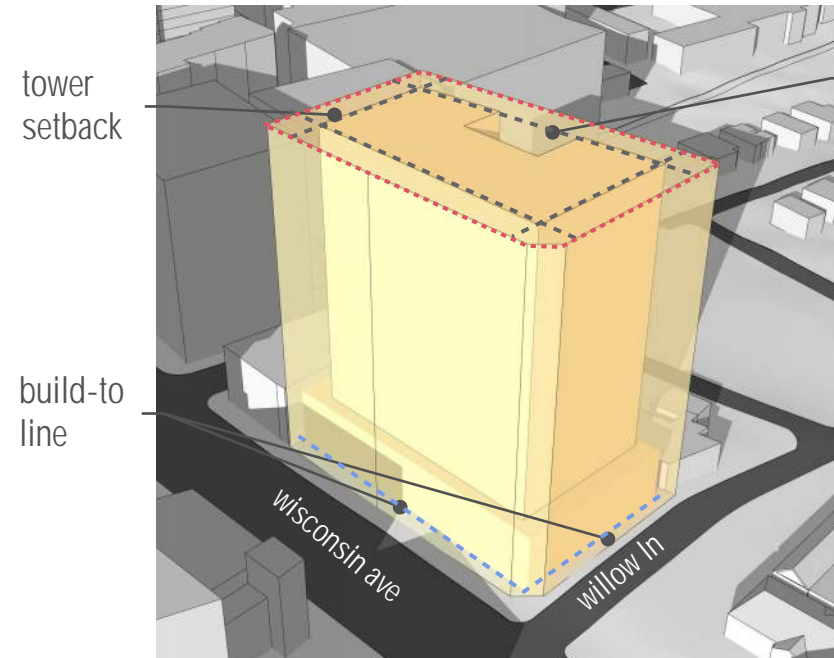




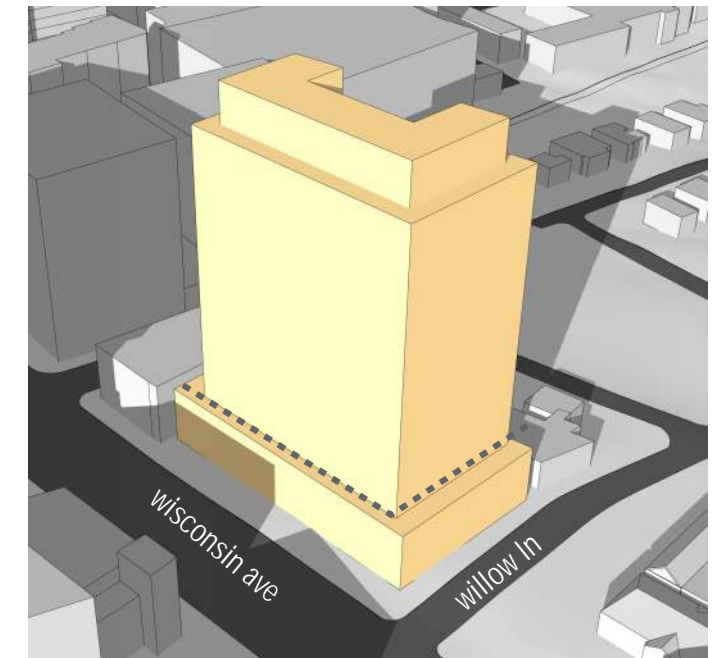
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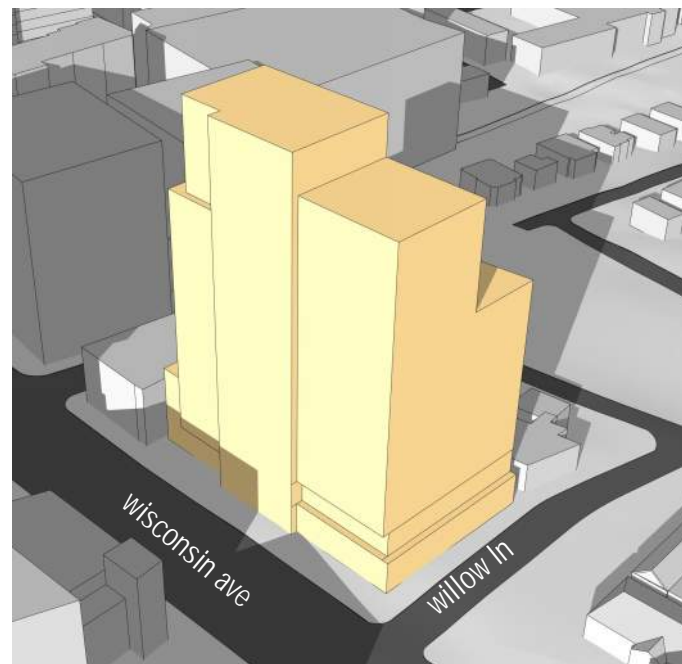
1 property line and allowable height - with bonus height



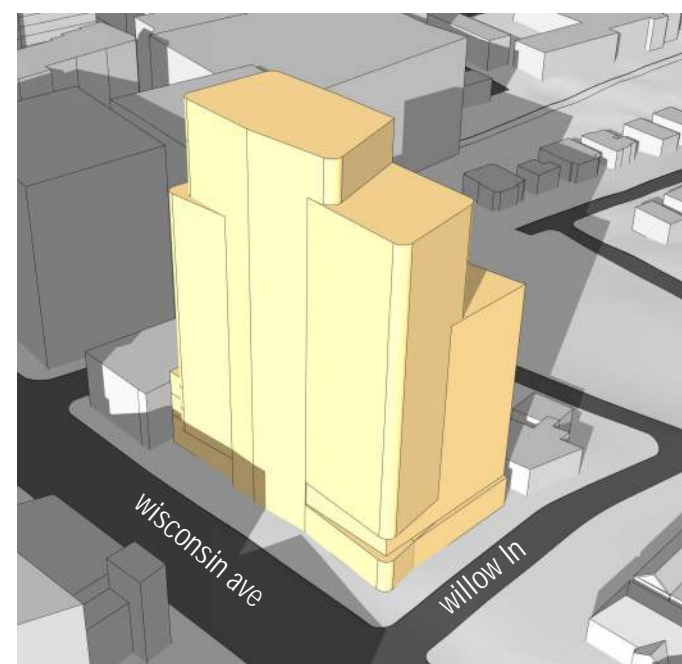
2 build-to and tower separation



3 recommended setbacks



4 base middle top and bulk reduction



5 articulation and refinement



6 massing concept



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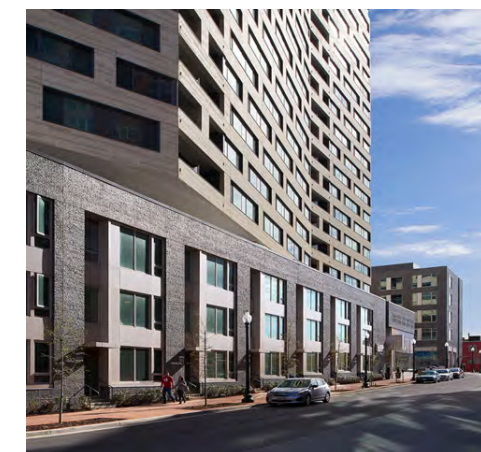
continuous street edge
along build-to line

2.4.2 Base: Building Placement

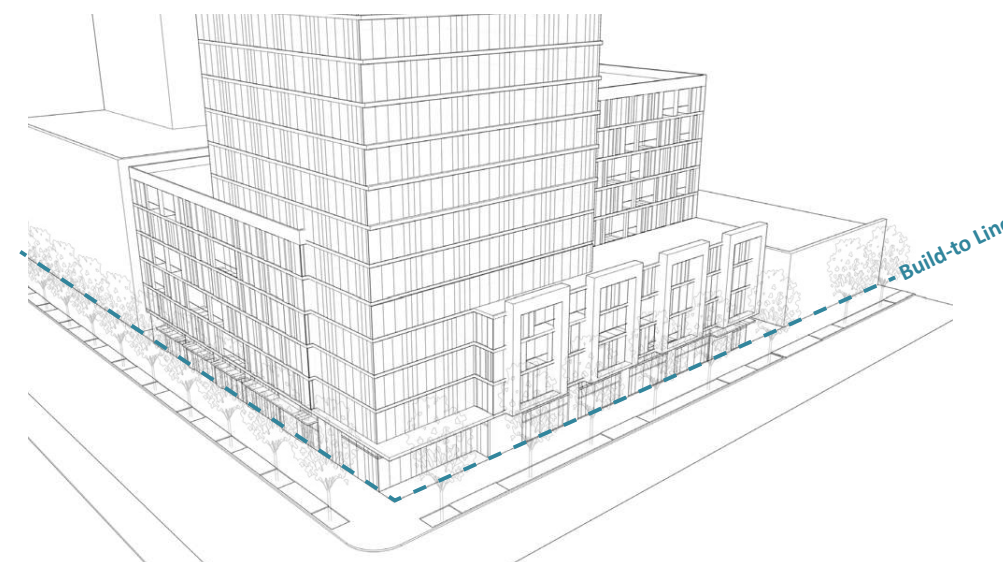
Intent: To create a continuous street wall to frame the sidewalk and create a more comfortable outdoor room for pedestrians to encourage walking throughout the downtown.

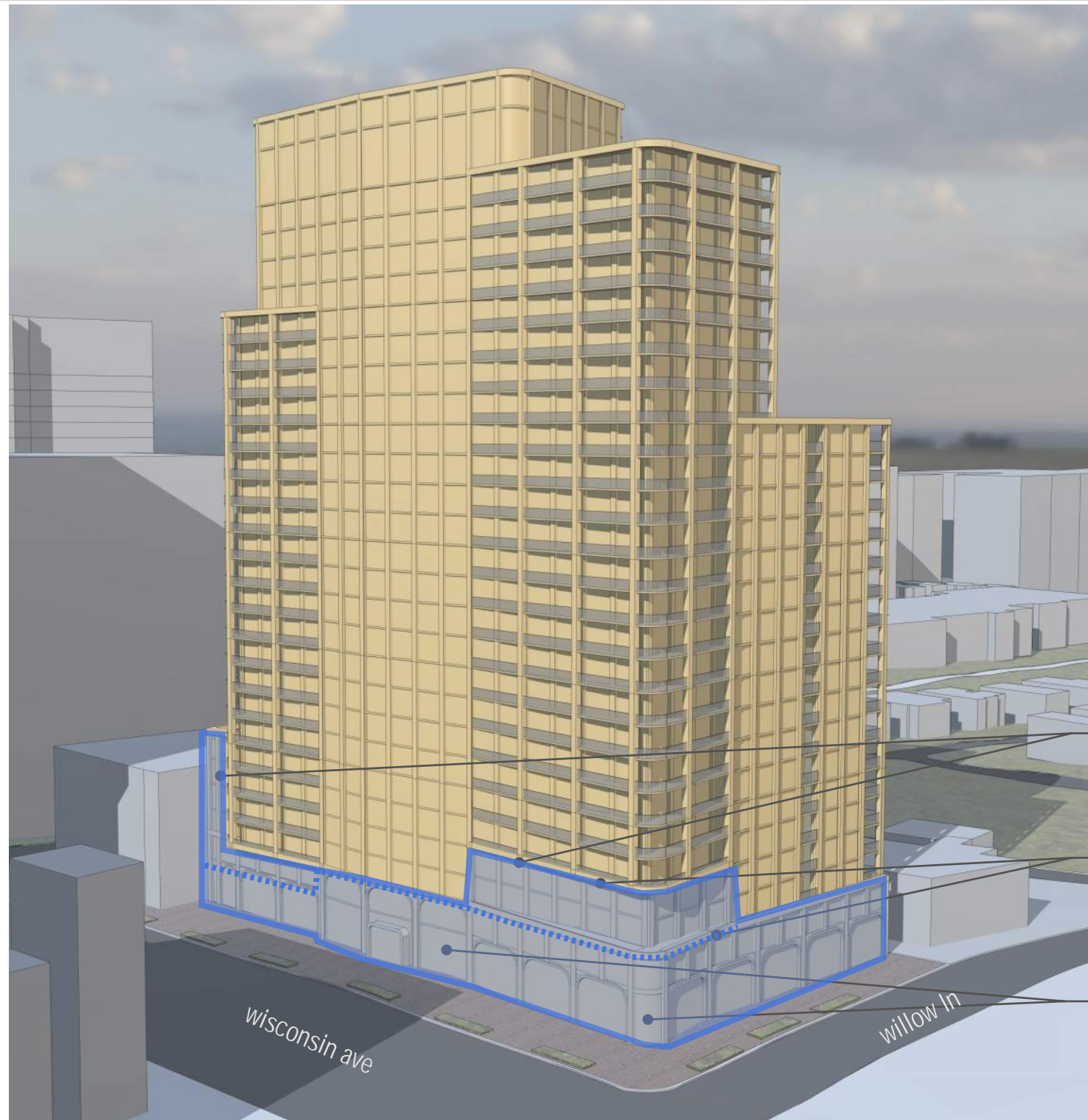
Guidelines:

- 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





plane changes create breaks and shadow lines

variation in base height and articulation

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

wisconsin ave

willow ln

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:

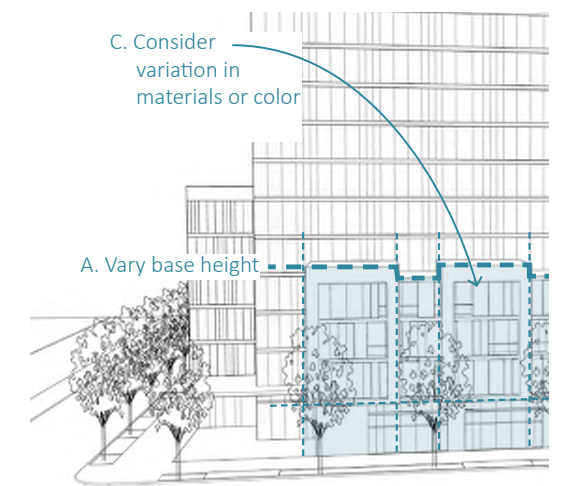
- A. Provide frequent entries, transparency and operable walls where possible to encourage visual and physical connections between the ground floor and the public sidewalk. Avoid long blank walls along the sidewalk.
- B. Orient private balconies and terraces toward the street to encourage an interface 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*.

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.





unique design element point when approaching downtown on wisconsin ave

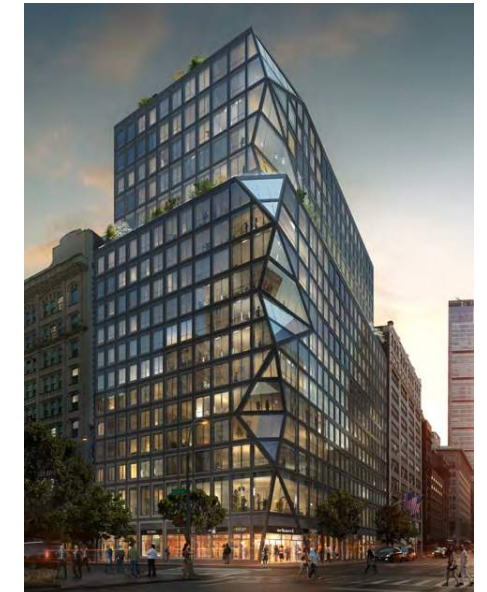
transparent facades at base with retail at corner to activate space

2.4.5 Corner Treatments

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

Guidelines:

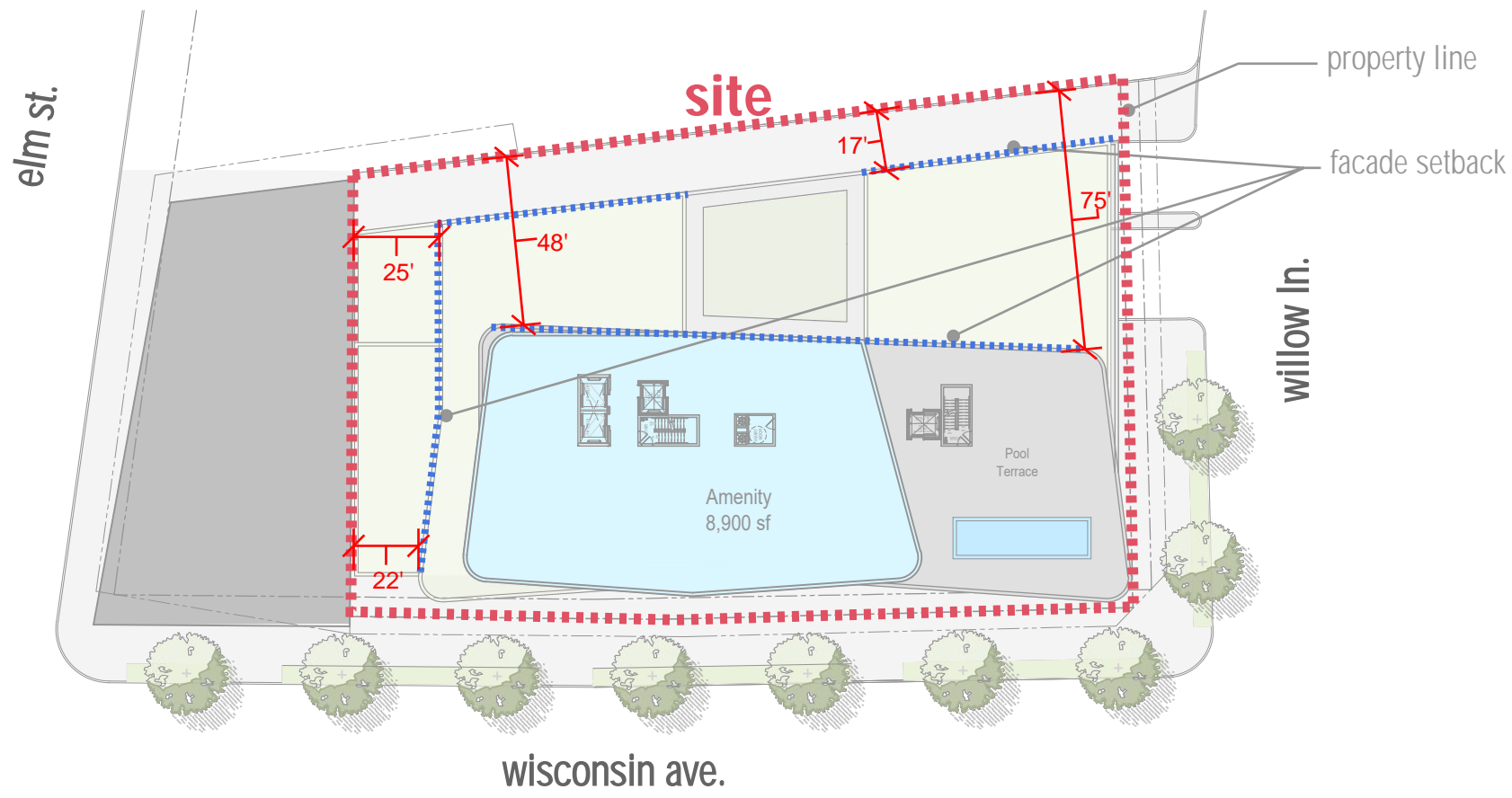
- A. Provide signature design elements on prominent corners or intersections as focal points. These prominent locations include sites adjacent to open spaces, with the tallest building heights and buildings that terminate major view corridors such as East-West Highway, Norfolk Avenue, Old Georgetown 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:

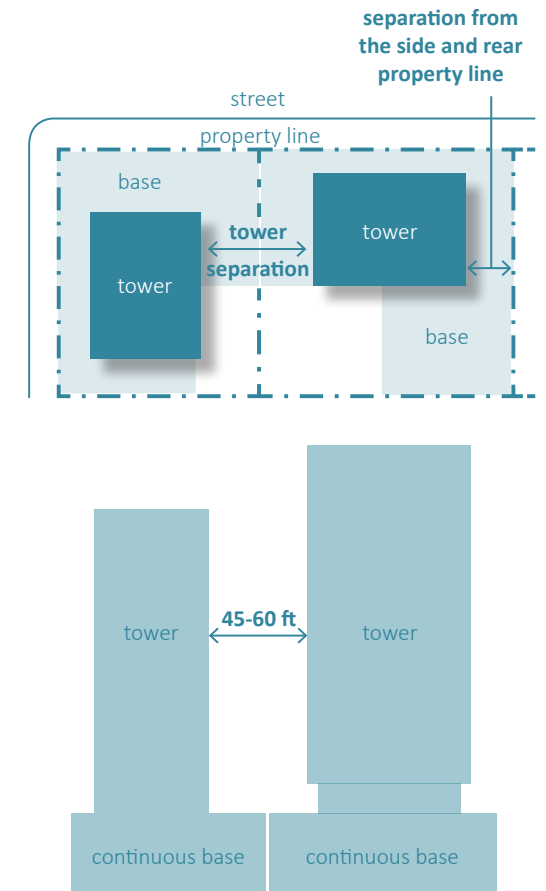
- A. Separate tower floors at least 45 to 60 feet (22.5 to 30 feet from the side and rear property lines).
- B. Provide a continuous building base along the lower floors.
- C. Avoid building towers to the property line creating expansive blank party walls that are imposing on the pedestrian environment.

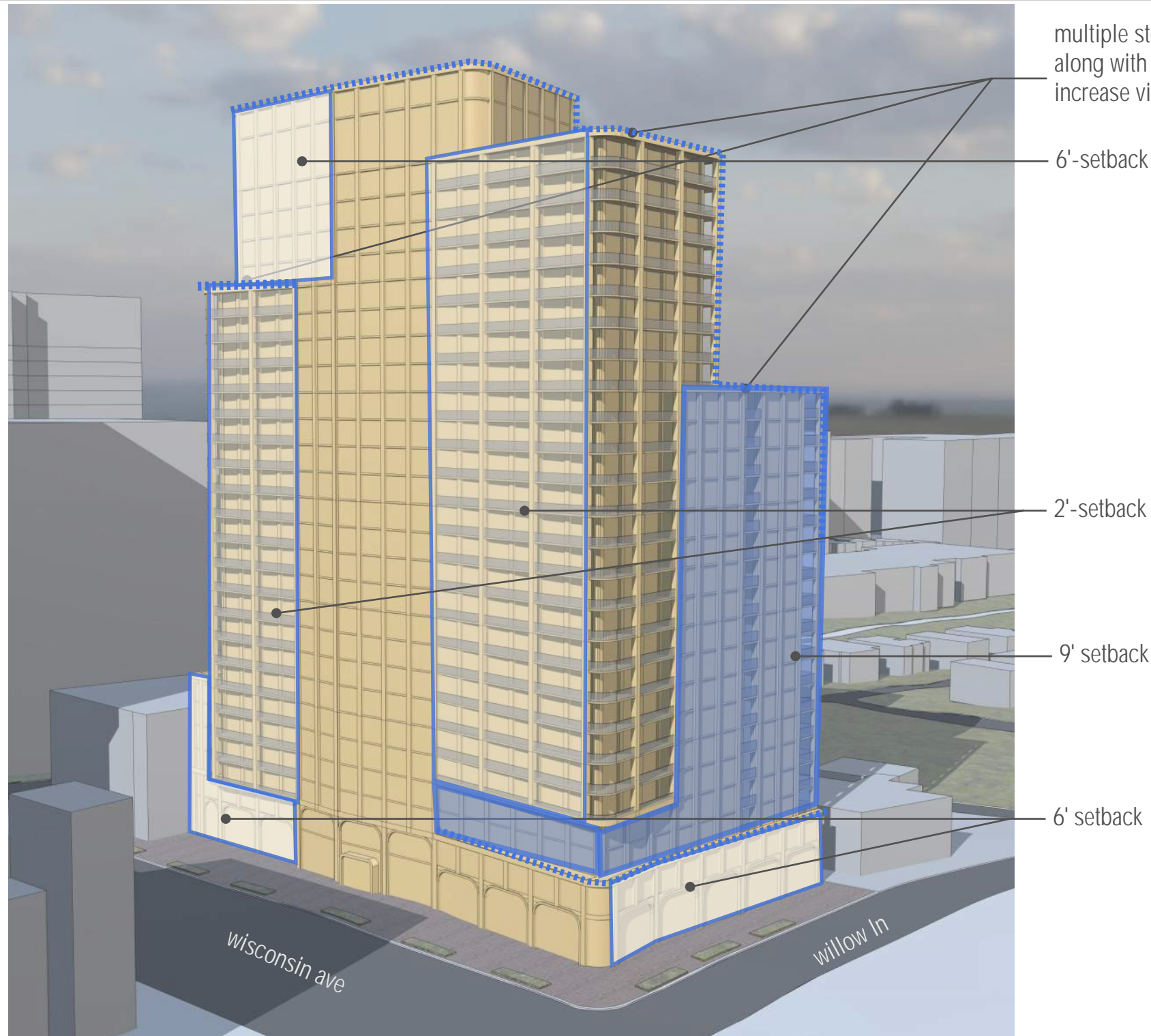
Alternative Treatments:

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.





multiple step-backs
along with balconies to
increase visual interest

6'-setback

2'-setback

9' setback

6' setback

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.

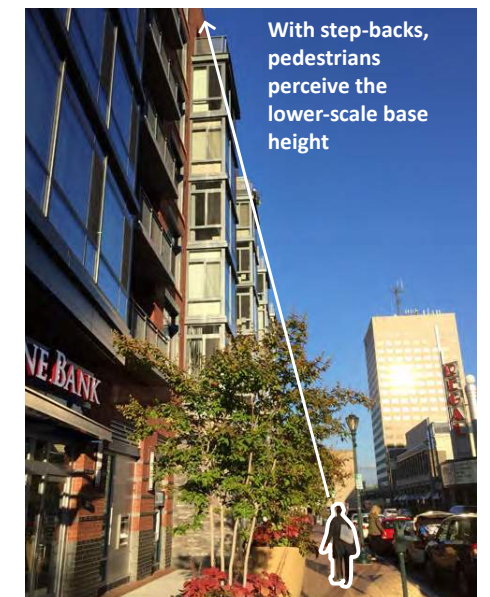
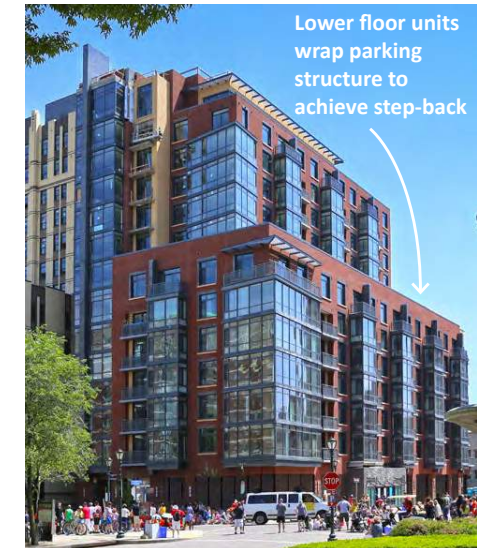
Guidelines:

- 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.



This residential development in Rockville illustrates the relationship between the pedestrian and the building step-back.
Source: The Upton (above)



varying tower heights
as the footprint
reduces in size as it
gets taller

unique geometry

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.





setback of lower tower to limit facade presence

balcony slots to articulate the facade and emphasize slenderness of the tower

There are several ways to reduce the actual bulk of a building's upper floors or to creatively reduce the perceived bulk of the building. Below is a menu of design techniques that can be used to sculpt building towers and achieve a varied skyline responsive to human scale. Every project is not required to apply every method; however, several should be used in combination to best meet the guideline intent.

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.



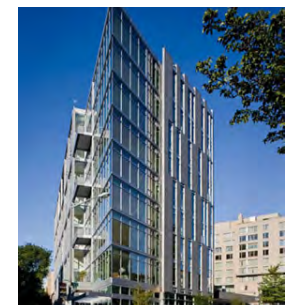
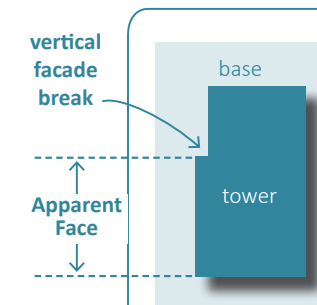
E. Vary Tower Placement and Orientation

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.





rooftop amenity spaces and mechanical enclosure focused along the street corner contributing to an expressive tower top

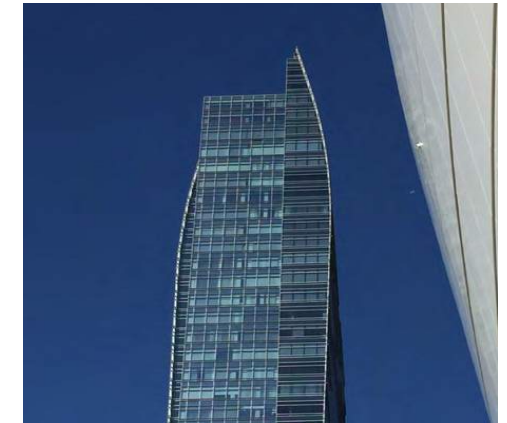
articulation from tower below expressed through tower top

2.4.9 Top: Tower Top

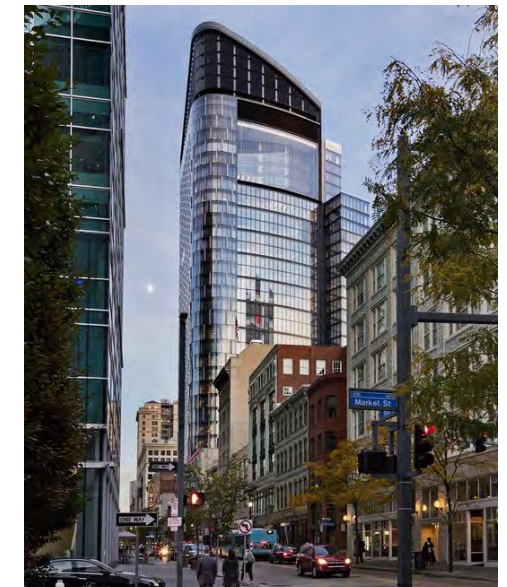
Intent: The building top or cap contributes to the skyline, adding visual interest and shaping the image of Bethesda from afar. Tower tops should be carefully considered on prominent sites, including those with the tallest building heights, locations adjacent to major public open spaces and those that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



recessed balconies

material changes

overhangs

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.

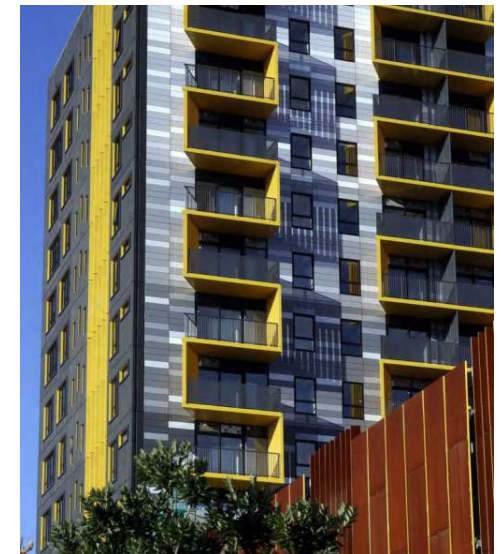
C. Facade Treatments

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



Patterns on this glass building reduce the likelihood of bird collisions.

Source: naturalimages.net



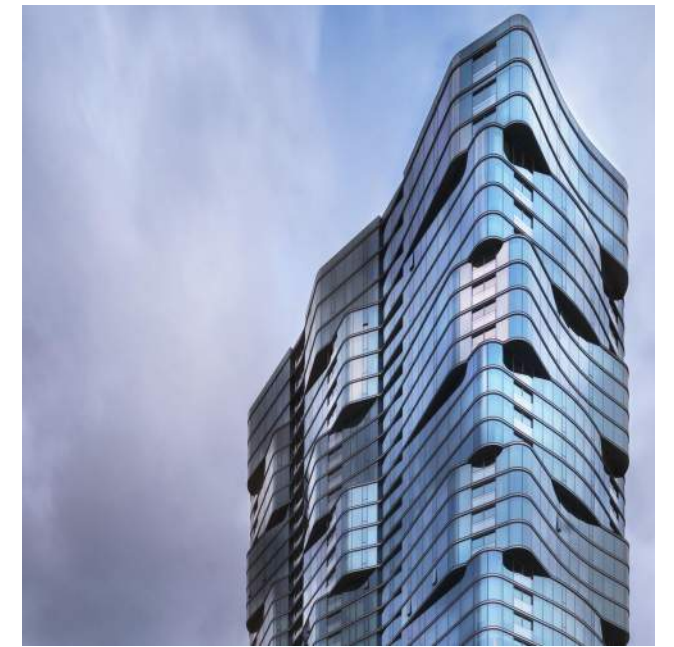
Balconies provide shadows and limit reflections on glass to deter birds.

Source: [Merchant Quarter Condominiums](#)

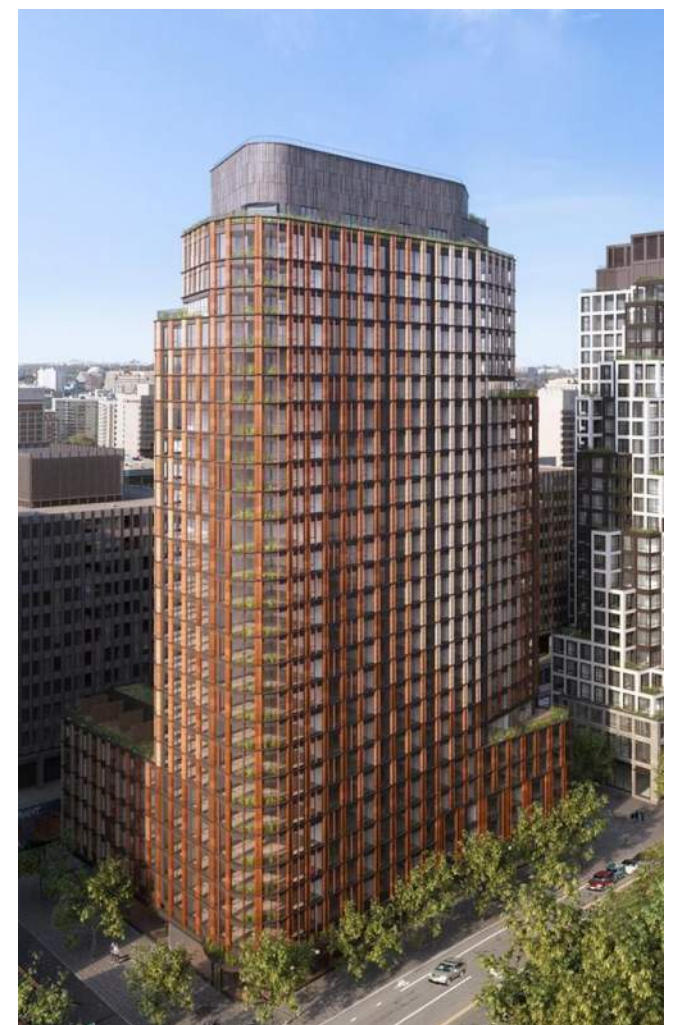


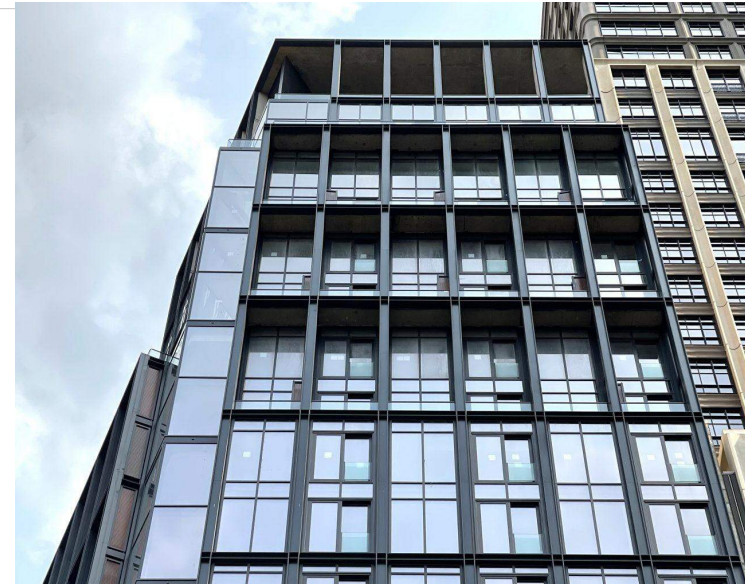
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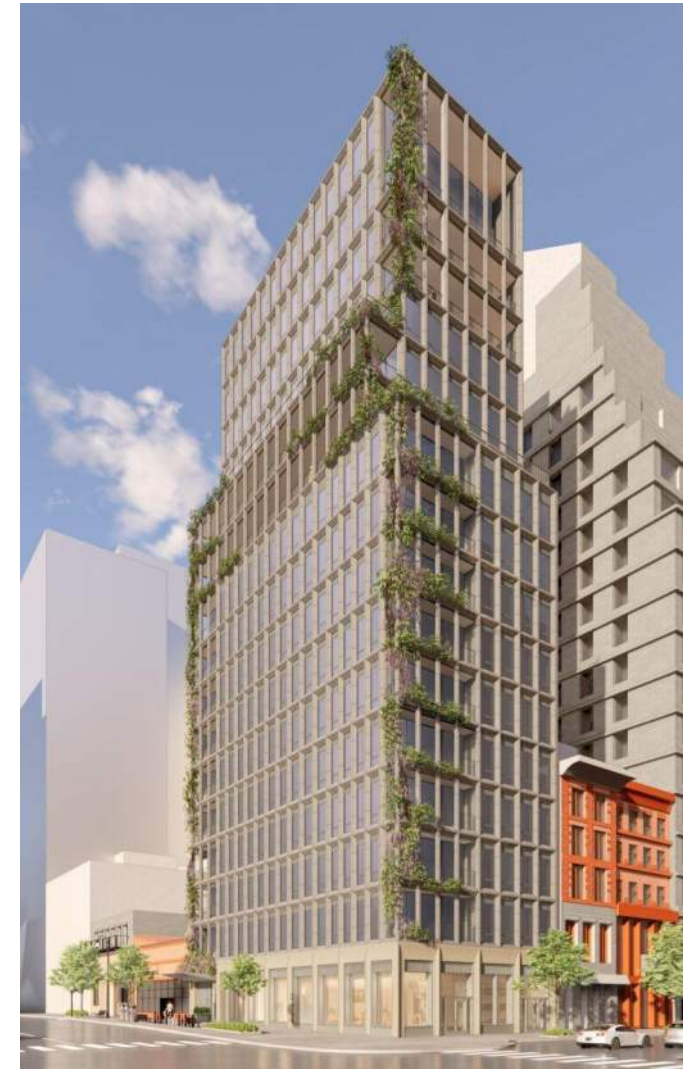


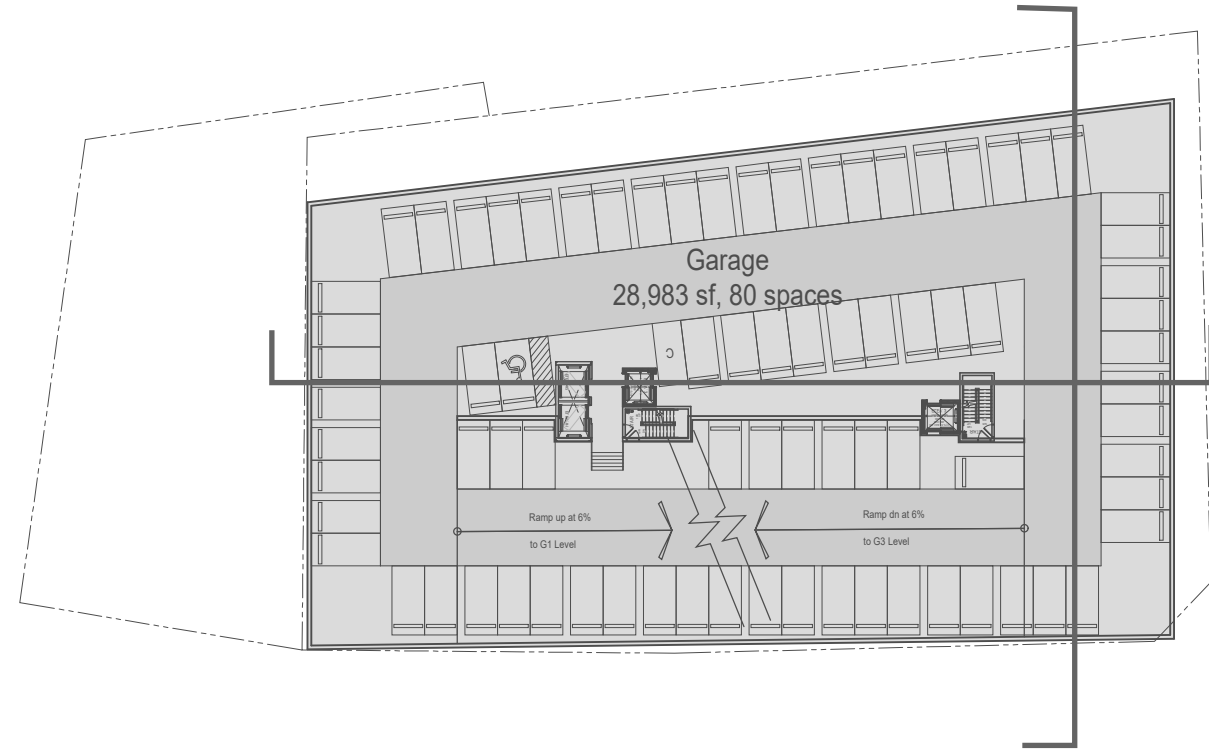
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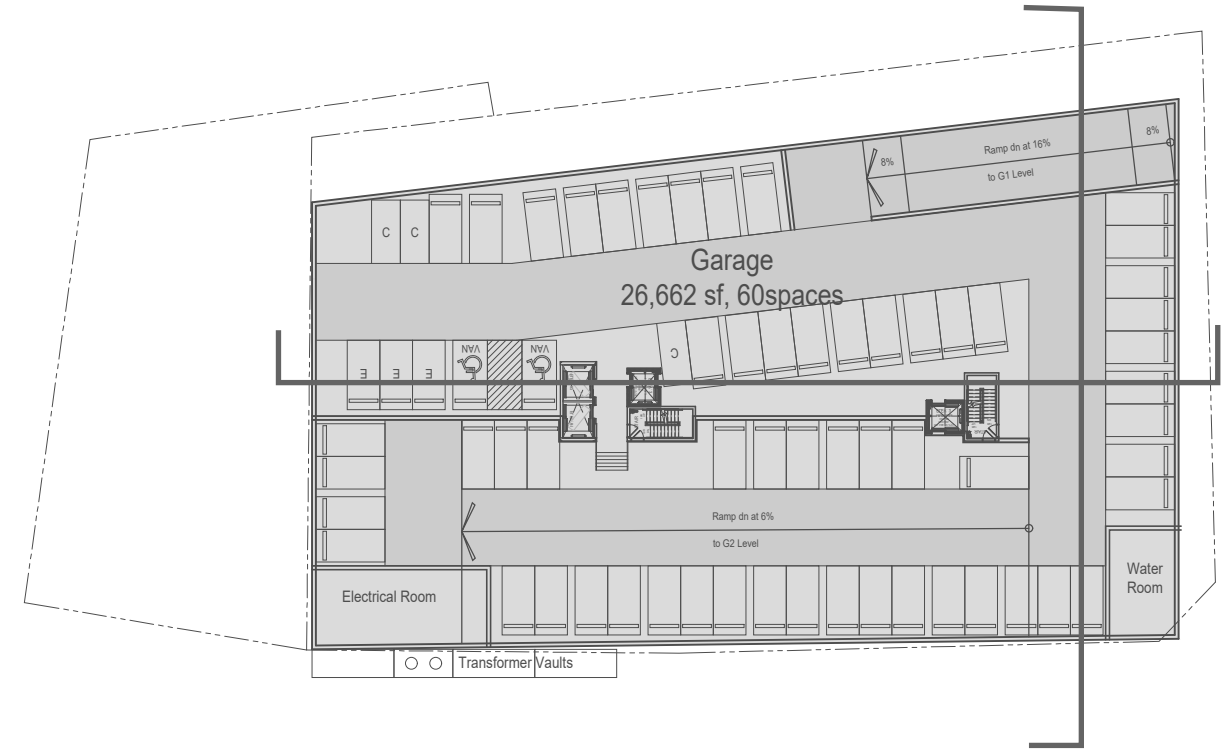


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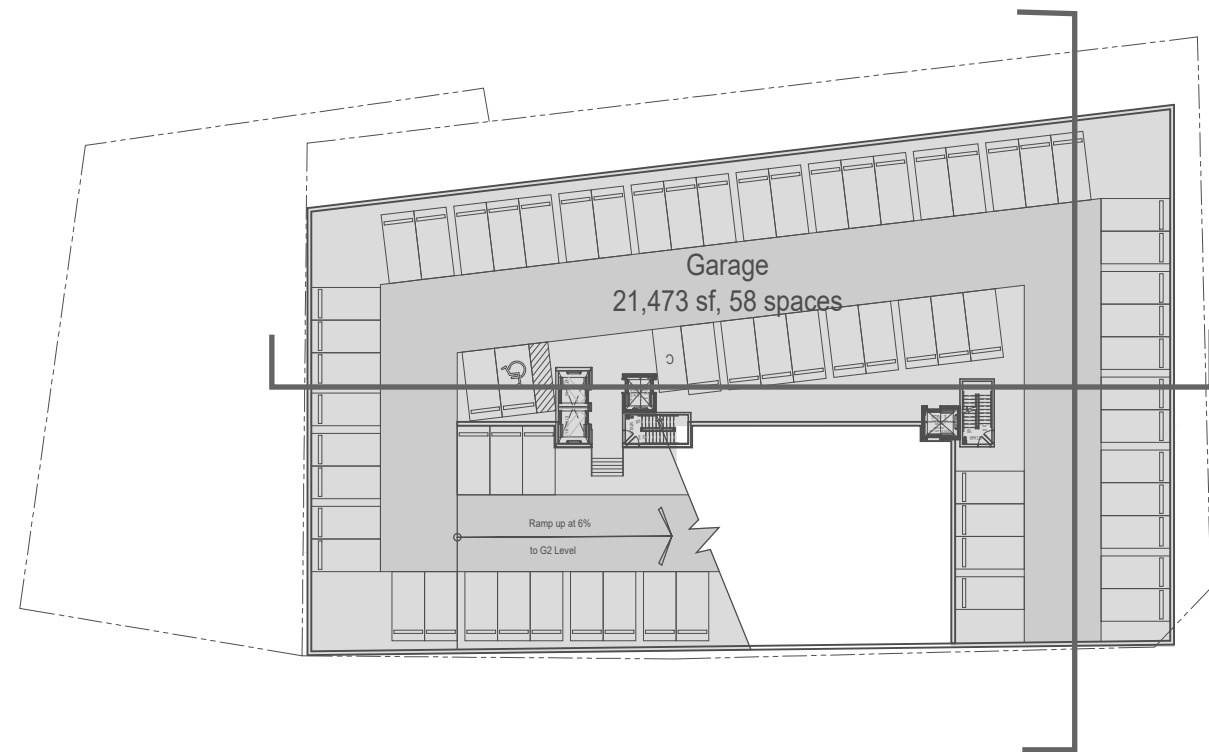




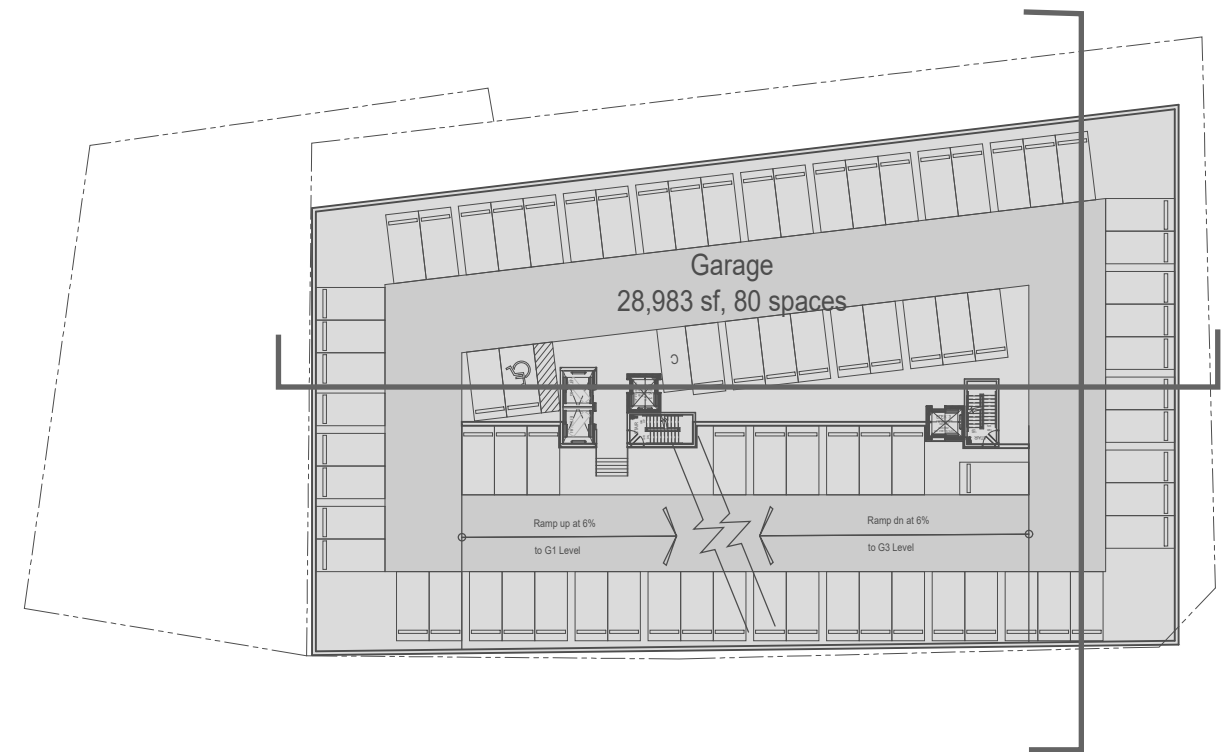
G3 Floor Plan



G1 Floor Plan

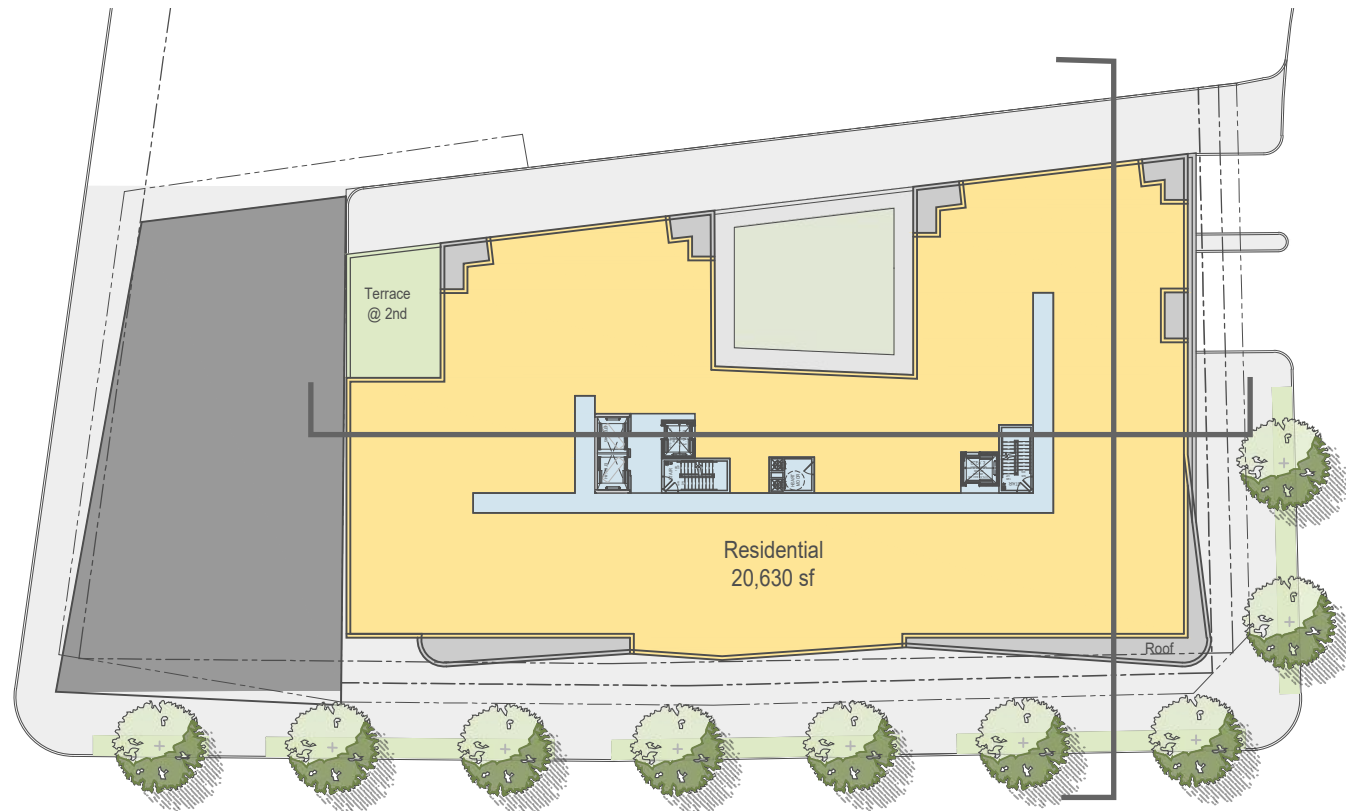


G4 Floor Plan

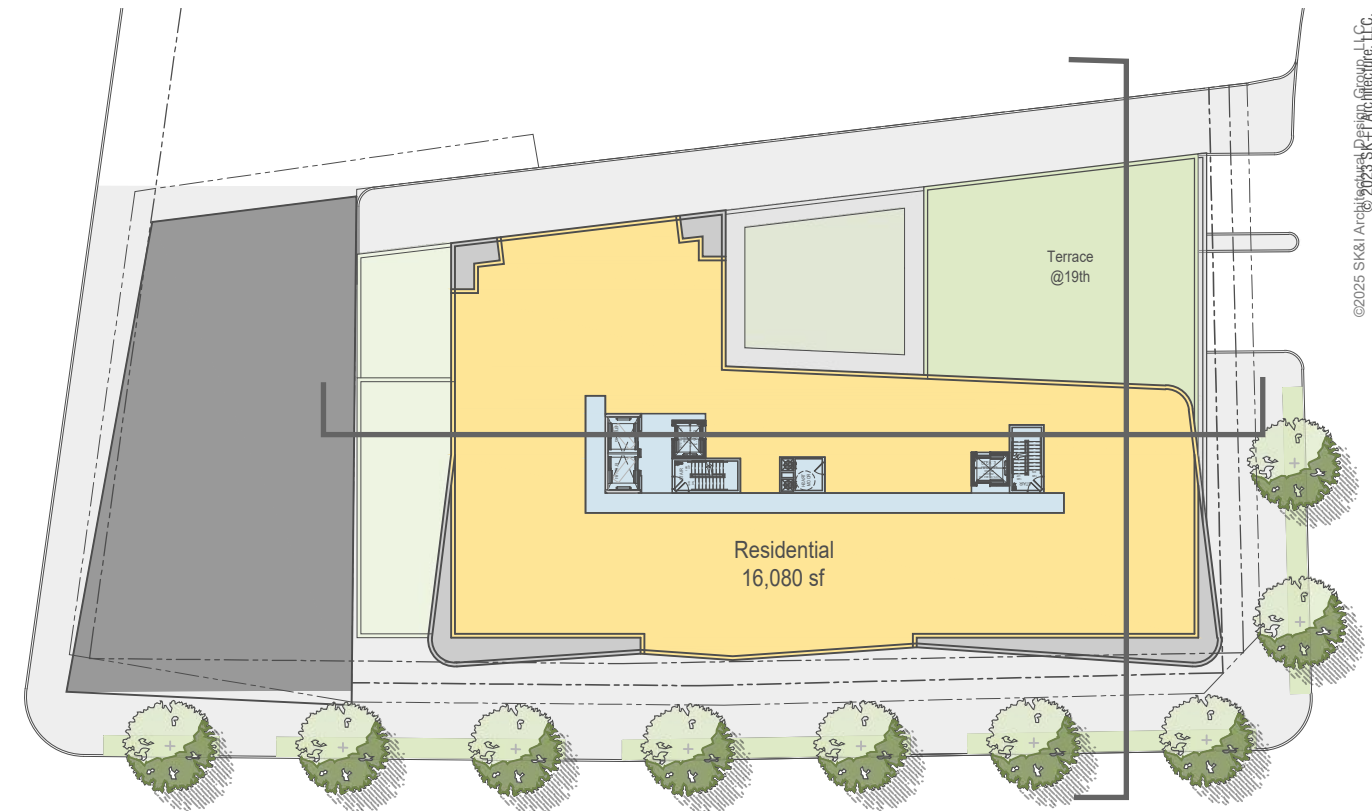


G2 Floor Plan





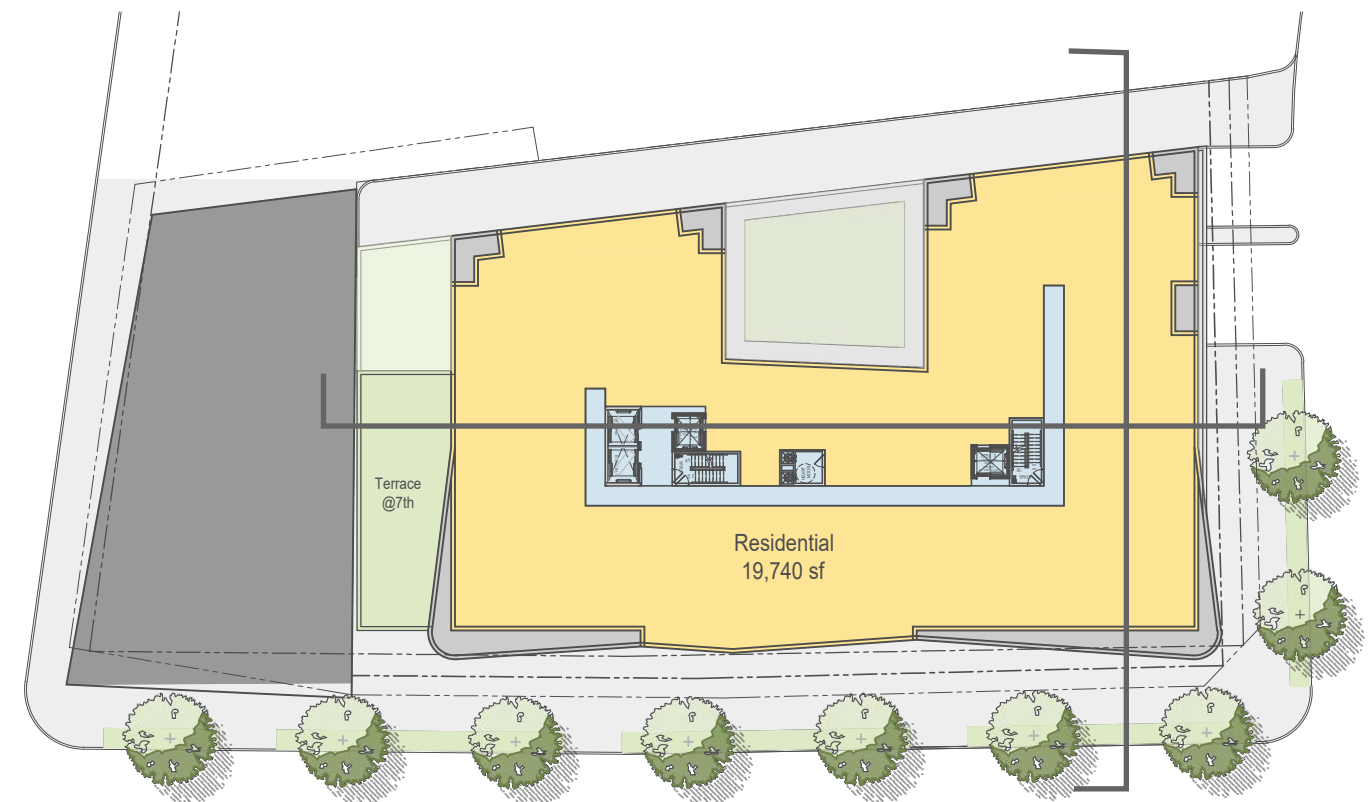
2nd-6th Floor Plan



19th - 22nd Floor Plan



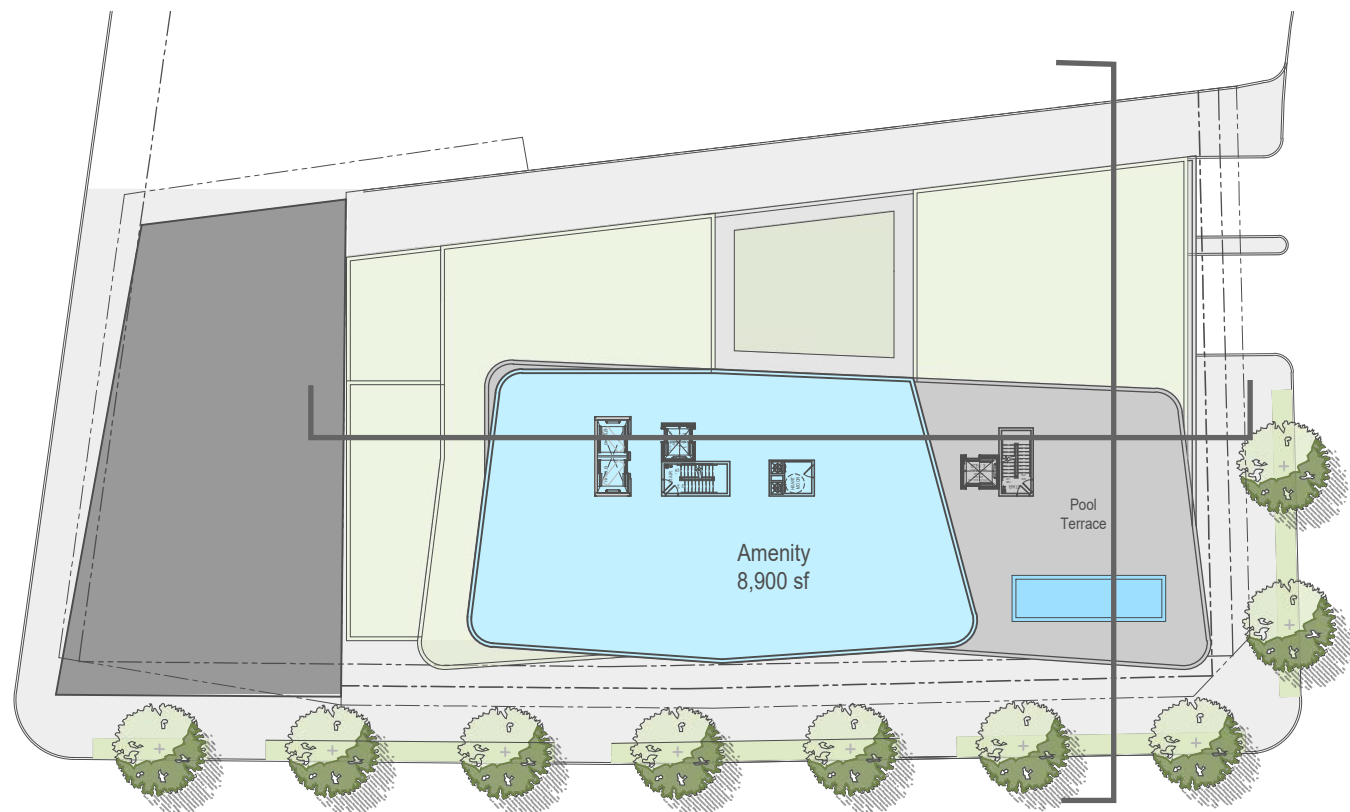
1st Floor Plan



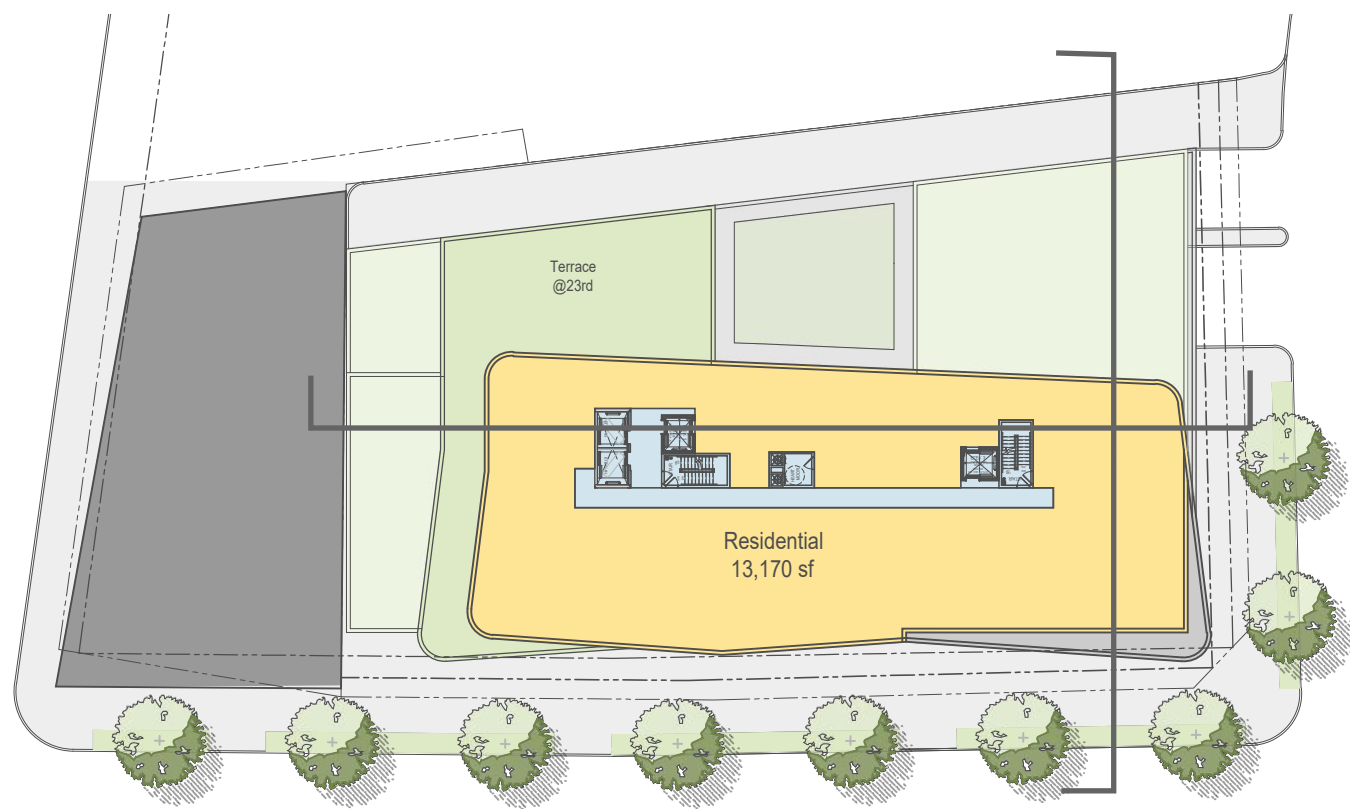
7th - 18th Floor Plan

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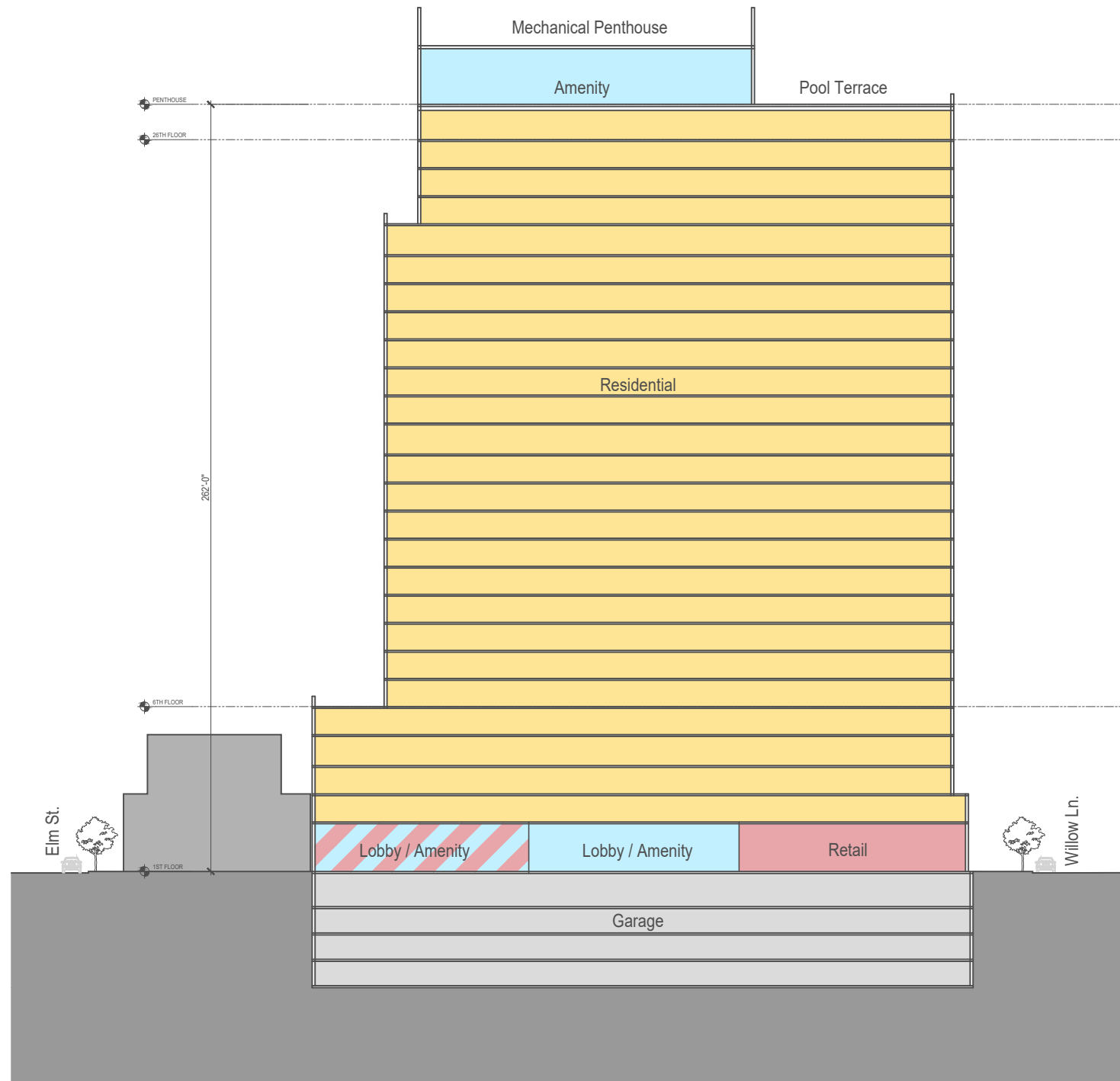


Penthouse Floor Plan



23rd-26th Floor Plan





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Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

Submission Form (Revised March 2020)

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	
File Number(s)	
Project Address	

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

APPLICANT TEAM

	Name	Phone	Email
Primary Contact			
Architect			
Landscape Architect			

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

	Zone	Proposed Height	Proposed Density (SF/FAR)	Requested BOZ Density (SF/FAR)	MPDU %
Project Data					
Proposed Land Uses					

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): _____

	Recommended	Provided	Alternative Compliance?
Sidewalk Zone			
Planting/Furnishing Zone			
Pedestrian Thorough Zone			
Frontage Zone			
Building Placement			
Build-to Line (from street curb)			
Building Form			
Base Height			
Step-Back			

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'		
Step-Back	Per Street Type		
Bulk Reduction Methods			

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): _____

- 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

