



## Conceptual Site Plan Review Report

Project Name: 3445 Washington Boulevard, APAH/American Legion  
Applicant: APAH  
Representative: Matthew J. Weinstein, Esq.  
CPHD Staff Lead: Peter Schulz

Staff Meeting with Applicant: June 8, 2018  
Report Issued: June 8, 2018

### **Site Information**

Location: 3445 Washington Boulevard. North side of Washington Boulevard. (RPC #15086011)

Site Area: 58,250 s.f. (surveyed). 56,092 s.f. (tax records).

Property Owner: Arlington Post No. 139 Department of Virginia The American Legion

GLUP Designation: "Service Commercial" and "Semi-Public". However, in November 2017 the County Board approved a request to advertise a change to the GLUP to "Medium" Office-Apartment-Hotel concurrent with a rezoning or site plan application. Note 27 on the GLUP: *"This area is subject to further planning guidance as provided in the "Washington Boulevard and Kirkwood Road Special GLUP Study and Concept Plan," adopted by the County Board on 11/18/17."*

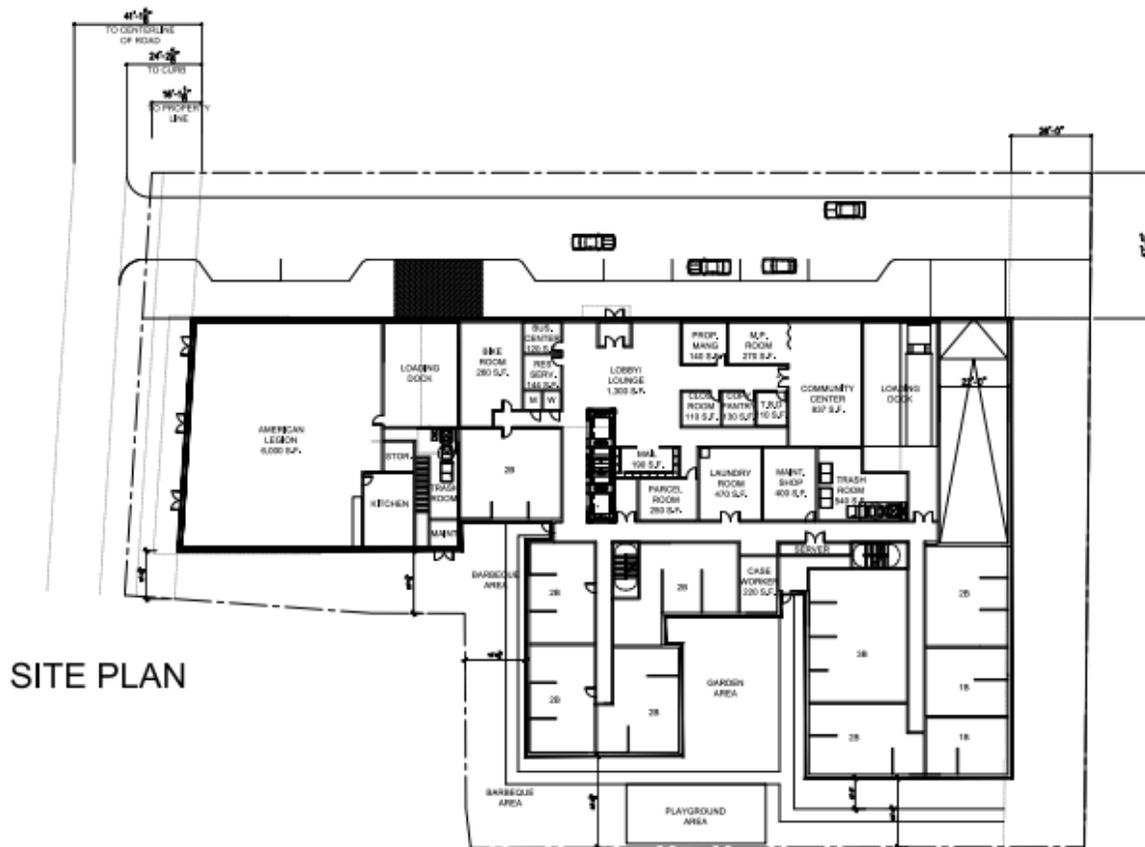
Sector/Area Plan: *"Washington Boulevard and Kirkwood Road Special GLUP Study and Concept Plan,"* adopted by the County Board on 11/18/17.

Existing Zoning: "C-2" and "R-5"

Proposed Zoning: "C-O-2.5".

Context Map



Site Layout:Project Information

Potential Other  
Applications:

GLUP Change to “Medium” Office-Apartment-Hotel; Rezoning to “C-O-2.5”

Proposal:

A new site plan for a seven-story (maximum height of 85 feet) multi-family building with **160 dwelling units**, incorporating a new **6,000 s.f.** ground floor meeting space for the **American Legion post**. All dwelling units are proposed to be affordable. The developer proposes 64 parking spaces (.4 spaces per unit) for the residential use, and 20 parking spaces for the American Legion use (1 space/300 s.f.).

Density:

The “C-O-2.5” zoning district permits multi-family dwelling units at a density of up to 115 units per acre, and all other permitted uses at up to a 2.5 FAR. The proposed residential density is **124 units/acre**. The developer proposes 12 units of bonus density for the provision of on-site affordable housing. The proposed density for the American Legion club use is 2.75 FAR.

Modifications: Residential parking spaces reduced to .4 spaces/unit; bonus density for LEED Commercial; bonus density for on-site affordable housing.

### **Preliminary Staff Comments**

***Guidance from the ["Washington Boulevard and Kirkwood Road Special GLUP Study and Concept Plan"](#):***

Maximum Height: 6-7 stories, up to 70-80 feet. Stepping down to four (45 feet) and three stories (35 feet) at northwest side where adjacent to single-family. (p.53) Heights are inclusive of bonuses.

Land Use: Residential/Office/Hotel. Retail or retail equivalent on ground floor Washington Boulevard. (p.54)

Site Circulation: Vehicular access on west side of site, lining up with existing connection across Washington Boulevard to the south. Vehicular access continues, when YMCA and adjacent sites redevelop, north to 13<sup>th</sup> Street N. and east to Kirkwood Road. No vehicular connection to 12<sup>th</sup> Road N. North/South Pedestrian/bike connection at west of site, east/west pedestrian bike connection at rear (north) of site in conjunction with YMCA redevelopment, ped/bike connection to 12<sup>th</sup> Road N.

### ***Conformance with GLUP Study Principles***

Below is a brief analysis of the proposed development's consistency with the Concept Plan's principles.

**Principle 1:** Evolve the area's automobile-oriented development pattern into a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use place through high-quality redevelopment that contributes positively to its surroundings.

- *Analysis: The proposal is consistent with Principle 1 as it includes a medium-density building with a mixture of residential and institutional uses.*

**Principle 2:** Locate, design, and sculpt new buildings to achieve deliberate and harmonious transitions between potential mid-rise, mixed-use development and adjoining single-family residences; and

**Principle 11:** Design projects that leverage the area's existing topography and organize building height and density to continue a development pattern where density and height transition down towards the low residential neighborhood in a sensible way.

- *Analysis: The proposal provides a vehicular access road on the western portion of the site, providing a buffer between the proposed building and the single-family residences to the northwest of the property. This transition is further emphasized with the building stepback at the northwest of the building starting at floor 5, however the stepback should be reduced from four floors to three floors to align with the Building Height and Form Concept Map.*

Principle 4: Enhance the pedestrian streetscape and experience along Washington Boulevard with ground floor retail and other activating uses, including potential retention of existing neighborhood businesses, amenities, and civic institutions.

- *Analysis:* Washington Boulevard is designated as a Type B Arterial Street (Primarily Urban Mixed Use) in the Master Transportation Plan, which calls for 10' to 16' sidewalks plus a 6' landscape and furniture zone. The proposal includes 10' sidewalks with a 6' landscape/furniture zone which is consistent with the Master Transportation Plan and thus consistent with Principle 4.

*The proposed building is consistent with this principle as it has a ground floor height of 17.5', promoting a strong pedestrian scale for the ground floor uses. Additionally, the proposed development would retain the existing American Legion organization in the new building, retaining an existing civic institution.*

Principle 5: Provide the appropriate amount of on-site parking for the density and programs associated with new development projects and strongly encourage any structures parking to be below grade.

- *Analysis:* The proposal includes a fully below-grade parking garage with an undetermined number of parking spaces.

Principle 6: Balance the creation of new streets and/or alleys to add connectivity and circulation across the block, mitigate against adverse traffic impacts, respect the area's overall topography, and avoid creating excessive asphalt and impermeable surfaces at grade.

- *Analysis:* The proposal conceptually shows a pedestrian/bicycle connection along the western and northern portions of the site, aligning with the study's Circulation and Public Space Concept Map.

Principle 8: Capitalize on opportunities to achieve a diverse mix of market rate and committed affordable housing units near the Virginia Square and Clarendon areas.

- *Analysis:* The proposed development is consistent with Principle 8 as residential units are 100% affordable.

Principle 9: Support the modernization of important civic and community institution facilities that continue their long-established presence in the area, recognizing that this may include joint-venture redevelopment projects with outside partners.

- *Analysis:* The proposed development includes a 6,000 sq. ft. commercial space dedicated for use by an existing community institution, the American Legion veterans' organization.

Principle 10: Preserve, respect and enhance the historic integrity and site conditions of the Ball Family Burial Grounds, while improving public visibility and access to the site.

- *Analysis:* While the proposed development is not contiguous to the Ball Family Burial Grounds, the east elevation and grounds of the development would be highly visible from

*the western edge of the cemetery. In particular, the location of the playground area may fail to respect/enhance the site conditions or provide improved public visibility of the historic resource.*

**Principle 15:** Design all sides of buildings thoughtfully so that they enhance the pedestrian experience while still accommodating parking and loading access points where needed.

- *Analysis:* The south elevation includes active uses along the streetscape, however the north elevation includes a large blank wall.

### ***Land Use/Density***

1. Building height adjacent to single-family properties on 12<sup>th</sup> Road must be reduced to 3 stories/35 feet as per GLUP study height map (page 53).
2. Height of building at Washington Boulevard (85 feet) exceeds the GLUP study maximum of 80 feet (maximum height is an absolute cap that includes bonus density). Please reduce, or justify need for additional height.
3. Will American Legion only be LEED certified? Will the residential building be LEED, Earthcraft, or other? Even if APAH will not need bonus density from LEED, some sort of certification would be good.
4. Applicant will request bonus density for on-site affordable housing. When filing the site plan application, the information required in Zoning Ordinance Section 15.5.9.A.2. must be provided.
5. The American Legion use will require filing of an application and County Board approval of a new use permit for a “membership club” or “lodge” (see page 7-3 of the Zoning Ordinance). The American Legion currently has a use permit for the existing club (U-2365-83-3), which would expire when the existing building is demolished. The Zoning Ordinance also requires that such clubs must not be operated primarily for commercial gain (Section 12.5.13).
6. Be aware in design/fit out of new American Legion space, that if special events continue to be held there, to soundproof it from adjacent residences, including the residences inside the building.

### ***Urban Design/Landscape***

1. Increase use of masonry on the facades, particularly those facing Washington and the new side street. Fiber cement panels should be used sparingly (if at all) on the primary facades. Refer to Principle 15 of the GLUP Study (“Design all sides of buildings thoughtfully so that they enhance the pedestrian experience...”)
2. The facades of the building read as incredibly flat - please explore options to provide some relief (strong expression line above the ground story, cornice/expression line at the roof line, brise soleils, etc.)

3. The ends of the wings that face directly onto the cemetery should be treated with the same care and design consideration as those facing streets. Explore ways to introduce more openings/fenestration, particularly at the ground level.
4. The loading dock for the American Legion (with its curb cut and access across the sidewalk) is disruptive to the pedestrian flow. Either consolidate it with the residential loading dock, or drastically reduce the size of the space and design it for curbside loading (i.e. remove the vehicular curb).
5. Provide detail for Washington Boulevard streetscape, including clear path dimensions. Show how this project upholds the guiding principles of the Washington-Kirkwood Special GLUP+ Study, i.e. making it a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Show lighting, street furniture, bike racks, tree pits and plantings areas.
6. Provide street trees with continuous soil panels and open tree pits of 5x12 or 4x16.
7. Sheet A1: Are there actually 3 front doors?
8. How will this project contribute to the goal of 25% tree canopy coverage within the Washington-Kirkwood block?
9. Some of the renderings show trees in the area where Pham's Car Care Center building and surface parking lot currently exist. Are there plans for this parking and/or building to be demolished? If not, it should be shown accurately in plans and renderings.
10. Explore ways to reduce impervious paving and manage stormwater via green infrastructure.
11. One of the goals of the GLUP study was to strengthen the pedestrian and bicycle connection from the GMU campus across to this site. Make sure to plan for this and other intersection improvements as the design evolves.
12. Will there be screening of the site by landscaping or fences/walls from the adjacent single-family homes?

### ***Transportation/Parking***

1. Parking: The site is located outside of the defined Metro corridors in the [Off-Street Residential Parking Guidelines](#). In this location, the Zoning Ordinance requires a minimum of one and one/eighth parking spaces per dwelling unit. By site plan, the County Board may approve a modification of the required parking ratio. In market-rate multifamily site plans outside the Metro Corridors, one parking space per dwelling unit has typically been approved. Developer must provide data and information to justify a lower parking request (statistics on parking utilization at other APAH properties, information on the targeted income level of residents and typical car ownership rates, availability of on-site bicycle parking, Transportation Demand Management strategy, proximity to area transit options and bikeshare and frequency of transit service, etc.).
2. The proposed number of parking spaces is not consistent in the materials submitted.
3. GLUP Study calls for intersection improvements to pedestrian crosswalk across Washington Boulevard. Existing crosswalk signal may need to be analyzed when further development happens.

4. Proposed alley width to be 26' (not including the parking lane) to provide fire access; provide AutoTurn exhibit to show emergency vehicle circulation route
5. Sidewalk does not have to be provided on the east side of the alley with the proposed development; the alley can therefore shift to the east. Future development of the adjacent property should provide the appropriate sidewalk connection.
6. Applicable public access easements to be provided for the proposed alley on the west side as well as the proposed future alley in the northern building setback. The alley in the northern setback will only need to be constructed at the time that YMCA redevelops, however, the County will request the developer grant the southern half of the total easement as part of this site plan application (YMCA will be responsible for granting the other half).
7. Confirm that the proposed Washington Blvd. streetscape conforms to the requirements of the "Type B- Primarily Urban Mixed-Use" typology of the MTP.
8. Provide site circulation exhibits both internal to the site as well as internal to the entire block considering future buildout. Confirm that vertical and horizontal alignments are maintained.
9. See comments from Fire Marshal below. Access to 12<sup>th</sup> Road North may be necessary for emergency vehicles. Pedestrians and cyclists should be allowed access to 12<sup>th</sup> Road but no other motorized vehicles.

#### ***Fire Marshal***

1. The alley from Washington Blvd to the rear of the site would need to be 26 feet wide free and clear. Any parking would need to be added to the required 26 feet. The road is required to be 15 to 30 feet from the building. If the access road is over 150 feet long a turnaround is required. Exiting the site to N 12th Road is possible but an auto-turn would need to be competed to ensure the tower ladder can make the turn without complications. If the egress to N 12th Rd. is used and will be restricted to other vehicular traffic then a chain and Knox Lock would be the recommended method to prevent vehicles other than fire apparatus from using the exit point. Bollards were mentioned but fire does not approve bollards in these situations due to maintenance and other issues.

#### ***Historic Preservation***

1. While the subject development is not contiguous to the Ball Family Burial Grounds, to ascertain the potential for artifacts or human remains outside of the present-day boundary of the Ball Family Burial Grounds, staff strongly suggests preliminary archaeological investigations, including: prepare a historic context and conduct a GIS-based Elevation Change Analysis (as outlined in the memorandum "Archaeological context and investigations adjacent to the Ball Family Burial Grounds" dated January 25, 2018). HPP staff and Arlington County's contract archaeologist will coordinate with the applicant regarding requirements and any future investigations required based on the preliminary findings.
2. Consider how the proposed development would frame the cemetery and improve public visibility of the site.

- a. Study the relocation of the proposed playground area so that passive open space is sited closer to the vicinity of the cemetery. The active playground area may be more appropriate in the proposed location of the garden area.
3. On the renderings, remove trees on the adjacent parcel and Ball Family Burial Grounds that are outside of the subject development.

***Other***

1. [In-Building wireless system](#) is strongly encouraged, and is a high priority for the County.

**Conclusion**

The proposed development does not comply with the GLUP study with regard to building height and setbacks adjacent to 12<sup>th</sup> Road, but otherwise generally conforms to the goals of the study. Staff strongly recommends revising the site plan so that the building height and setbacks are in conformance with the plan. The proposed amount of residential parking will also be an issue during the public review process and the applicant must make a strong case to justify the proposed amount of residential parking. Also, please consider revisions to the building architecture, and pay careful attention to all facades of the building, and continue to work with Historic Preservation staff to minimize impacts on the Ball Cemetery.

***The information discussed in this report is reflective of staff comments only and should not be considered the official position of the County Manager, Arlington County Board, and/or of any Arlington County Commission or Committee.***