

November 2, 2018

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Christopher Leswing, Director, Building and Planning Department

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 9 Presidential Boulevard, Bala Cynwyd, LD# 3812, Ward 9.

Proposal

The applicant, James S. Ettelson, Esquire, on behalf of Commerce Pursuit Capital, LP, is seeking Preliminary Plan approval to:

- Demolish the existing office building;
- Construct a four-story, mixed-use building containing 12,649 square feet of ground floor commercial space, 173 apartments, and 229 parking spaces contained in two levels of structured/below grade parking and surface parking;
- Install a pool and surrounding pool deck;
- Install a fenced in dog park;
- Install two public gathering spaces along Presidential Boulevard;
- Install a six-foot-wide landscaped verge, an eight-foot-wide multi-purpose path, a two-foot wide hardscaped verge and an eight-foot-wide pedestrian way along Presidential Boulevard;
- Maintain two access driveways onto Presidential Boulevard and provide a shared vehicular access point to 1 Presidential Boulevard; and
- Install two underground stormwater management systems.

The proposal is illustrated on the attached 32-sheet plan set prepared by BL Companies dated September 10, 2018. The following additional documents were also submitted:

1. A traffic impact study prepared by TPD, Inc. dated October 11, 2018.
2. Architectural elevations and renderings prepared by Meyer Architecture and Design dated October 19, 2018.
3. A site plan showing a shared access easement with 1 Presidential Boulevard.
4. A plan showing the public gathering space prepared by SALT Design Studio dated September 10, 2018.
5. A plan showing the materials palette prepared by SALT Design Studio dated September 10, 2018.

Proposed Unit Count

Unit Type	Unit Count
Studio	39
One Bedroom	39
One Bedroom with Den	76
Two Bedroom	19
Total	173

Background

A Tentative Sketch Plan was approved by the Board of Commissioners on July 2018. As part of that approval the Board granted relief to the applicant from Natural Features Code Sections 101-5.C.1 & 2 to disturb slopes between 15% and 25%, and 25% and greater for the construction of the building and associated improvements. The Township Engineer determined that the impacted slopes are all man-made. That relief carries over to the Preliminary Plan.

Conditional Use

On June 20, 2018 the Board of Commissioners approved a Conditional Use request under §155-217.D.(1)(d) to permit a second driveway access onto Presidential Boulevard. The RCA permits a second curb cut by conditional use when it facilitates a shared parking arrangement. The Board imposed the following condition:

1. A shared use agreement documenting where and how parking will be shared with the property at 1 Presidential Boulevard shall be included with the Preliminary Plan submission, and the plans shall show where the shared access will occur.

Property Description & History

The property is currently improved with an office building that contains 26,584 gross square feet that was constructed in the mid-1950s. The property is accessed via two driveways from Presidential Boulevard. The rear of the property is wooded and drops sharply towards the Schuylkill Expressway (I-76) exit ramp.



Montgomery County Planning Commission Review

The County review letter is attached. The County indicated that they are generally in support of mixed use development along Presidential Boulevard and did not have any specific comments on the proposal.

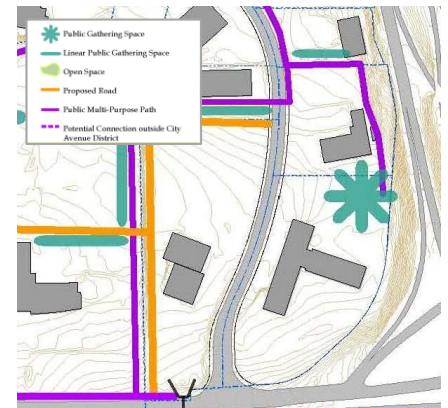
Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)

The EAC reviewed the plans at their October 23, 2018 meeting and recommended that the applicant use native species or locally adaptive species. The EAC also suggested that the applicant mirror the species on the street frontage along the remainder of the site.

Official Map

The Official Map was formally amended by Board of Commissioners during the Tentative Sketch Plan as follows to better integrate the proposed amenities into the overall district:

- *A public multipurpose path is proposed along the entire frontage of Presidential Boulevard.*
- *Public Gathering Spaces are provided along the front and sides of the proposed building.*
- *An urban garden with a sidewalk is proposed in the northwest corner of the site.*



Under the MPC, the Official Map may be amended by the approval of a land development application without requiring further action.

Bulk, Area & Parking Requirements

The following tables detail the bulk, area, setback, and parking requirements of the proposal:

CAD-RCA Zoning Requirements-Single Use Development		Existing	Proposed
Net Lot Area (Minimum)	N/A	2.7 acres (119,354 sq. ft.)	2.7 acres (119,354 sq. ft.)
Lot Width (Minimum)	600'	352'	352'
Building Area (Maximum)	50% Single-Use 60% Mixed-Use	8.1% (14,650 sq. ft.)	34.7% (41,416 sq. ft.)
Build to Line	20' minimum 30'-70' maximum*	+/- 124'	30'
Side Yard (Minimum)	25' minimum (structures > 48')	30'	58' & 80'
Rear Yard (Minimum)	10'	70'	83'
Impervious Surface (Maximum)	70% maximum (mixed-use)	51.2% (61,109 sq. ft.)	64.7% (77,222 sq. ft.)
Building Height	28' minimum 200' maximum	1-3 stories	60.8'
Building Separation	30'	N/A	58' & 80'
Maximum Diagonal Dimension	375'	N/A	305'
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.7 – 1.75 FAR (mixed-use) 1.71 required for proposal	NA	1.71 FAR

*Where outdoor dining or public gathering space is provided.

Parking Requirement			
	Code Requirement	Required	Proposed
Restaurant	-Base Requirement: 4 spaces /1,000 sq. ft.(12,649 sq. ft.) = 51 spaces -Per the Required Parking Table for Mixed-Use*= 49 spaces -Deduction for below grade parking: 14 – 10% ** = 44 spaces	217 spaces	229 spaces
Residential	-Base Requirement: 1.5 spaces per unit (173 units) = 260 spaces -Per the Required Parking Table for Mixed-Use*= 260 spaces -1 space per Unit for below grade parking**= 173 spaces		
Car Share Parking	4 Car Share Spaces 1 space per 50 units	0	4
Bicycle Parking	Maximum of 20 Required	0	20

*155-217.D.3 permits the required parking for new mixed-use structures within the CAD-RCA to be calculated using percentages provided in Table 6 of the Zoning Code.

**155-217.D.3 permits the required parking for non-residential uses to be reduced by 10% and required parking for residential uses to be reduced to one space per unit when a minimum of 50% of the parking required by Table 6 is located below grade. 110 parking spaces are provided below grade.

	Floor Area Ratio (FAR)			
	Amenity	Initial Increase	OSTI Increase*	Total Increase
Base FAR		0.7	-	0.7
Bonus 1	Public Gathering Space	.15	.05	0.2
Bonus 1	Residential Primary Use	0.1	0.05	0.15
Bonus 2	Mixed Use	-	0.05	0.05
Bonus 3	Structured Parking**	0.18	0.07	0.22**
Bonus 5	Transit Facility Improvement	0.05	0.05	0.1
Bonus 6	Public Multipurpose Pathway	0.15	0.05	0.2
Bonus 7	OSTI	0.2		0.2
Total FAR Permitted		1.5	0.26	1.75
Total FAR Proposed				1.71

*Zoning Code Section 155-217.E permits a density increase of 0.05-0.07 to a maximum of 0.2 when the applicant installs off-site traffic improvements or contributes to a City Avenue Transportation Services Area Fund held by the Township in accordance with §155-217E(10)(a) through (c).

**The initial density increase for structured parking is .18 plus a .7 OSTI increase. The applicant has prorated the increase for providing 88% structured parking. (217 parking spaces are required and 202 of those spaces are structured. 88% of the total permitted increase of .25 is .15.

Issues

1. Architectural Elevations

The project is subject to the Architectural Design Standards of the City Avenue District. The façades of the building that were presented during the Tentative Sketch Plan have been modified as follows to comply with the design standards:

Rear Elevation

- Seven additional ventilation grates have been added to the lowest structured parking level to provide horizontal articulation;
- The colors on the upper floors have been extended down to the exterior façade of the parking structure; and
- A bay that projects two feet from the rear façade has been added to provide vertical articulation.

Front Elevation

- The colors on the upper floors have been extended down to the first and ground floors.

West Elevation

- The colors on the upper floors have been extended down to the exterior façade of the parking structure and were changed from charcoal grey stucco to tan stucco and burgundy stucco;
- Two bays that project two feet from the rest of the façade have been added to provide the required vertical articulation.

East Elevation

- The colors on the upper floors have been extended down to the exterior façade of the parking structure;
- Three additional man doors have been added to the parking structure; and
- Two bays that project two feet from the rest of the façade have been added to provide the required vertical articulation.

The exterior of the proposed building consists of stucco variegated with five colors; charcoal grey, white, tan, blue and burgundy with a metal cornice.

Staff notes the following Code deficiencies in the elevations.

- §155-217.F.5.b.1.a states: *Vertical articulation. Vertical articulation of the building facade, including changes in building plane and materials, shall be used to create pedestrian-scale buildings. Vertical articulation may include architectural features, such as projecting bays, changes in roofline, recessed entries, balconies and other similar features. The depth of such articulation shall be a minimum of two feet zero inches. Such vertical articulation shall occur at a minimum fifty-foot interval.*

On the East and West elevations there is a 52-foot section of the middle of the building that does not comply with this section. All other sections of the building meet this standard. Staff has included a condition of approval requiring the elevation to be amended to comply with the Code.

- §155-217.F.5.b.4 states: *The second story and above of primary front facades shall contain a minimum of 20% of the facade as clear windows. Glazing shall have a minimum light transmittance of 0.75.*

The applicant indicated that the second story of the primary front façade contains more than 20% clear windows but has not provided the calculation for the third through fifth floors. Calculations demonstrating that this provision is being met for the second through fifth floors shall be added to the architectural elevations.

- §155-217.F.(5)(c), *Parking structures, not wrapped at all levels with active uses states:*
[1] *Vertical articulation of the parking structure facade, including changes in building plane and materials, shall be used to create a pedestrian scale. The depth of such articulation shall be a minimum of one foot six inches and occur at a maximum sixty-foot interval.*
[2] *Horizontal architectural features of the parking structure facade, including changes in building materials, shall be used to create a pedestrian scale. The change in building material shall occur at a maximum twenty-foot interval.*

It is not clear on the renderings whether the east and west elevations and the rear façade of the parking structure contain the required horizontal and vertical articulation. The applicant should elaborate on this at the meeting and staff has included a condition requiring the elevations to be modified to provide the required articulation.

2. Stormwater Management

According to the Township Engineer's review, the current design of the permanent stormwater management system is not compliant with the Code requirements for the peak rate of runoff. As currently designed, partial relief from the Code is required. The applicant is scheduled to meet with the Township Engineer prior to the Planning Commission meeting and staff will provide an update on this issue at the meeting.

In addition, the applicant has not documented that the temporary/during construction stormwater systems provide the Code required peak rate improvements for the during construction phase. Additional analysis must be provided to quantify the temporary stormwater control measures proposed and demonstrate code compliance. In addition, the required recharge volume has not been provided as dead storage in the facilities. The dead storage volume has also not been demonstrated to empty within the required twenty-four (24) hours.

The systems must be redesigned to meet the Code required drain time limits. These items are addressed in the Township Engineer's review letter.

3. Traffic Impacts & Internal Circulation

The Township Engineer noted that the drive aisles in the parking garage do not meet the minimum recommended width of twenty-two (22') feet. In addition, further documentation is required to be submitted to verify the trip generation that will be used to calculate the traffic impact fee.

4. Landscape Plan

The proposal is subject to multiple layers of landscape requirements under the Code including the minimum planting standards in the Natural Features Code, the Greening Standards and street tree requirements in the Subdivision and Land Development Code and the landscaping requirements in the Zoning Code for the Public Gathering Space. Staff has reviewed the landscape plan as well as the design of the Public Gathering Space and our comments are included below.

The landscape plan is deficient in the plant material required for the Natural Features Code but complies with all other requirements of the Greening Standards, Public Gathering Space and street tree requirements. It is important to note that while the plan is deficient in the amount of trees and shrubs provided under the Natural Features Code, the significant landscape material that is provided to meet the other Code sections is not permitted to be counted towards the requirements so staff has provided an alternate chart showing the total amount of trees, shrubs and perennials provided on the site.

The requirements and the deficiencies under the Natural Features Code are included in the table below. The applicant shall provide the plant material that cannot be provided on-site to the Township for off-site planting. The applicant has submitted a request for relief from the Code and indicates that the proposed landscape design provides the maximum number of plantings feasible while maintaining standards for healthy and productive installation and growth. The applicant also indicated that efforts to minimize disturbance of the existing steep slopes on the property, which occupy approximately 50% of the site, further limit the number of trees and shrubs that can viably be planted on the site.

Plant Type	Required	Provided	Deficient	Surplus
Deciduous Trees	116	46	70	
Deciduous Shrubs	230	131	99	
Evergreen Trees	63	46	17	
Evergreen Shrubs	46	178		132

5. Traffic Impact Fee

This site is within the City Avenue Transportation Service Area (TSA) which was created to project the amount of future building in the district to determine what specific road improvements would be necessary to accommodate that development. Developments within the TSA are required to contribute an impact fee towards those road improvements. The fee for this district is \$1,544 for each additional afternoon peak hour trip generated by the new development. The fee is required to be paid to the Township prior to the issuance of a building permit and will be determined upon receipt of the final traffic study.

6. Recreation Lands Set Aside

The development is subject to the Dedication of Land for Recreation, Fee in Lieu ordinance, §135-50.1. This ordinance requires the applicant to either set aside 15% of the site as recreation area, or pay a fee in lieu per unit as required by Subdivision Code Section 135-50.1. The applicant has indicated that the fee in lieu will be paid for the project.

7. Action

The Planning Commission must take the following actions for this application:

- A. Provide a recommendation on the Preliminary Plan.
- B. Provide a recommendation on the following relief:
 - 1. Natural Features Code Section 101-9A, to provide some of the required plant material off-site.