



December 5, 2022

Mr. Barney Rush
Mayor, Town of Chevy Chase
4301 Willow Lane
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Re: *Corso Chevy Chase – LMA Application*

Mr. Mayor:

We are in receipt of your November 10, 2022 letter to Grace Bogdan, AICP of the Montgomery County Planning Department pertaining to the Local Map Amendment (LMA) Submission of the Corso Chevy Chase redevelopment. We have had an initial meeting with County staff regarding the LMA Submission and have made good progress towards understanding County-wide planning goals related to the redevelopment. As the LMA review process moves forward, we will continue to consider both Town and County-wide contexts to refine LMA elements and as such, we have made some modification to the LMA Submission and included the related documents with this letter.

In addition, we have included here individual responses to the items highlighted in your November 10, 2022 letter:

Building Height

We have included with the updated LMA Submission a series of site sections, which include references to the County’s compatibility standards. These standards provide a baseline measurement method for compatibility relative to neighboring properties. As illustrated, the proposed building heights comply with these standards, and in many cases, greatly exceed them.

Regardless of the regulatory standards, we believe the proposed configuration and arrangement of buildings and setbacks is compatible with its surrounding context. As such, we have prepared a Building Height Diagram which highlights the arrangement of building heights on the property and the implemented compatibility setback strategy. In general, portions of buildings most visually impactful are 4-stories (along portions of Thornapple Street, Connecticut Avenue, and the southern property line), with 5-story portions located inward to the property. We have also included several new perspective views of this configuration in context during winter and summer months.



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Paths

While we understand the desire to prohibit pedestrian access to Connecticut Avenue from Meadow Lane through the Corso Chevy Chase property, we believe it is in the best interest of Corso Chevy Chase residents, as well as the greater community, that the pedestrian circulation system be as comprehensive as possible. As such, we believe the pedestrian circulation system, as proposed, meets this intent and affords the greatest use and safety in this location.

Parking

There is no intention to have any Corso Chevy Chase residents, staff, and/or guests park on Town streets. We have utilized data from similar Corso properties to reasonably and accurately determine the number of parking spaces that will be required for the Corso Chevy Chase redevelopment.

For example, at Corso Atlanta, which includes a similar mix of uses, there is a 1.18 parking space per unit ratio provided. With this ratio, no parking occurs on neighborhood streets and the parking garage is never full, including on holidays. At Corso Chevy Chase, we have proposed slightly more parking capacity with 545 parking spaces (including 42 tandem spaces) for 450 units, which results in a 1.21 parking space per unit ratio. We will continue to monitor the actual usage at Corso Chevy Chase (and other Galerie Living properties) in the event a different strategy needs to be explored.

From a regulatory perspective, while not as predictive, the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance sets maximum and minimum parking standards. For Corso Chevy Chase's uses, the Ordinance requires a minimum of 323 spaces and a maximum of 528 spaces. Corso Chevy Chase is providing very close to the maximum number of spaces (and exceeds the maximum when counting tandem spaces) set by the Ordinance.

Regardless, we are certainly open to exploring any enforcement methods, including zoned parking, to curb clutter on Town streets should it be an issue in the future.

Stormwater Management

The reference to a "Stormwater Strategy Plan" in the submitted Land Use Report was erroneous. It should have stated "Stormwater Strategy." This nomenclature has accordingly been updated in the text of the Land Use Report. As previously committed, the Town (and its engineer) will be provided any stormwater calculations/physical plans when there is something material to review, beyond illustrative concepts.

Building Materials

We concur that EFIS is not the most suitable exterior building material for use at Corso Chevy Chase and have added a restriction to this effect to the applicable binding element on the Floating Zone Plan.



Fencing

While there is no disagreement that fencing should be shown on the Certified Site Plan, the configuration of fencing is a County requirement of a Site Plan Submission, and therefore we believe does not necessitate a binding element to that effect as part of the LMA Submission. Regardless, and to provide some clarity at this stage, we have included a Fencing Diagram Exhibit which illustrates the location and character of the fencing at Corso Chevy Chase. We will continue to refine these elements as the design evolves and look forward to feedback from the Town, when available.

Exterior Lighting

The use of the word “minimization” was intended to grant flexibility to the lighting design at this stage, knowing that design of the pedestrian network will be refined during the Site Plan process and safety (including the use of lighting) will be a material component of that design. A Site Lighting Plan will be included as part of the Site Plan submission, and we will certainly incorporate feedback from the Town (and adjacent neighbors) on its components at the appropriate time.

Commercial Space and Use

We appreciate and support collaboratively crafting the commercial use program to benefit both Corso Chevy Chase residents and the local community. We feel details related to this concept are more appropriately handled as part of a separate Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and Corso Chevy Chase, rather than as part of the LMA process, and we look forward to discussing the concept in detail at that time.

Again, we look forward to continuing to collaborate throughout the next step(s) in this process.

Best Regards,

Grant Epstein
President
Community Three

cc: Grace Bogdan, AICP, Montgomery County Planning Department