



VIA EMAIL

January 13, 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 December 15, 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 continue to consider both Town and County-wide contexts as we refine the LMA elements. As such, we have made some additional 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 December 15, 2022 letter below:

**Building Height**

We understand the Town is concerned that meeting (and in many cases exceeding) the County’s compatibility standards is insufficient for building heights to be compatible with the surrounding community. While we do not entirely concur with this assessment, as requested, we have made considerable modifications to the proposed building configuration to accommodate and respect the Town’s concerns.

In specific:

- As requested, the perimeter of the outward-facing portions of the buildings on the west and south sides of the property have been reduced to a maximum of four stories.
- As recommended, the western wing of the central building has been increased (to three stories) to shepherd a small portion of the above density reduction but given the complexity of the communal ground floor uses, this is the maximum practical height this building can go.



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- As requested, the outward-facing wings of Building C1 (located in the southeast corner of the property) have both been reduced to four stories plus roof.
- As requested, Building A1 (located in the northwest corner of the property) has been modified with the northwesternmost wing reduced to three stories plus roof above the garage and the western portion of the five-story area reduced to four stories plus roof.
- Additionally, the northern-facing portion of Building B2 (located in the northeast corner of the property) has been reduced to four stories plus roof.

These adjustments (and previous ones) to building height have been considerable and we want to stress that while understandably not necessarily of primary concern to the Town, the reduction in project density resulting from these height modifications, especially in light of current economic pressures, puts the project as a whole on precarious fiscal footing and in jeopardy of not being able to support the breadth of public amenities and benefits envisioned for the project.

Also as requested, we have included the cell tower antenna in the associated imagery that will be relocated on the Property. While the final design will need to be coordinated with the individual providers, we have included as close a representation as we can determine at this time.

Per above, we believe we have addressed all of the Town's requested modifications on this topic and have updated the Building Height Diagram, Site Sections, and associated perspective imagery to illustrate these refinements.

### **Public Paths**

While we continue to 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 requested, we have omitted a direct pathway connection between Woodside Place and Connecticut Avenue and updated the associated exhibits (and Binding Elements) accordingly.

### **Parking**

The proposed number of parking spaces is in compliance with the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance (below the maximum and well above the minimum parking required) and provided in a sufficient ratio relative to similar Corso properties. As such, we firmly believe that more than adequate parking will be provided on-site to meet the parking demand. Regardless, we have commissioned a new Parking Demand Analysis to be conducted by Wells and Associates. The Parking Demand Analysis will include, as specifically outlined in your letter, the number of employees coming daily who are expected to drive, the number of residents who are expected to have cars, and the number of visitors expected on peak days of visitation. We have begun work on this task, but it will take some time to gather and analyze all of the relevant data. As such, we have added a binding element to this effect.

Notwithstanding, we remain committed to ensuring there are no Corso Chevy Chase residents, staff, and/or guests parking on Town streets and we remain open to exploring any enforcement methods, including zoned parking, to curb clutter on Town streets should it be an issue in the future.



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### **Traffic**

In their recent correspondence, Montgomery County Transportation Staff has confirmed that, “a *traffic impact study per the LATR guidelines is not required...[given that] the total net new person trips would be fewer than 50 in both peak hours.*” Planning Staff has therefore confirmed that the Project does “*not require further transportation impact analysis.*” As such, given LATR standards (which take into account the former property use), we believe a LATR analysis will not produce a meaningful analysis and won’t specifically address the Project’s impact on the material area of concern - the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Taylor Street (at the entrance to the property).

As such, we have commissioned a new Comprehensive Vehicular Site Access Study to be conducted by Wells and Associates that includes, at a minimum, review of the existing roadway, intersection geometrics, and speed limits, compilation of existing vehicle turning movement and pedestrian counts, evaluation of collision data for the most recent three-year period, forecasted future traffic volumes based upon the existing traffic counts and proposed program, and a signal warrant analysis. This will give us all the best picture of how the current existing conditions will respond to the project program, not just in relation to the former use of the property.

We also have begun on this task, but it too will take some time to gather and analyze all of the relevant data, and as such have added a binding element to this effect.

### **Trees and Forest Conservation Area**

As recommended in your letter, we expect the County will evaluate any requested tree variances to be assessed based on hardship according to applicable State and County law. In addition, we will comply with the Town’s Urban Forest Ordinance and seek applicable variances thereof, noting as also stated in your letter, it would not be possible to develop the land with an underground garage without the removal of some significant trees.

Please also note, since our last correspondence, we have engaged a Cene Ketcham, an ISA Certified Arborist and Maryland Licensed Tree Expert with Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. to assist in crafting applicable tree save plans and oversee site activities adjacent to trees where excavation is to occur as the project moves forward.

### **Project Phasing**

Per your request, we have added an additional “Aerial – West” view to show the conceptual layout buildings in Phase I only and prior to Phase II construction.

### **Stormwater Management**

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.



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We believe we have made great progress in addressing the Town's requests and remain committed to collaborating throughout the next step(s) in this process.

Best Regards,

Grant Epstein  
*President*  
Community Three

cc: Grace Bogdan, AICP, Montgomery County Planning Department