



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Christopher R. Conklin
Director

December 23, 2022

Mr. Rob Robinson
City of Gaithersburg
31 S. Summit Avenue,
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

RE: Rezoning & Sketch Plan No. Z-9444-2022
Lakeforest Mall Redevelopment

Dear Mr. Robinson:

We have completed our review of the rezoning and sketch plans submitted to us by the City via email on November 21, 2022 and have the following comments to be addressed in the subsequent Site or Schematic Development Plan (SDP) submission.

Significant Comments

1. Lakeforest Transit Center Relocation: Over the last several months, we have been working collaboratively with the City of Gaithersburg on the Lakeforest Mall Redevelopment, and particularly on the relocation of the existing Lakeforest Transit Center. The Transit Center is an important part of our overall transit network and not only connects the surrounding community to the Ride On system, but also provides a much-needed transfer location between upcounty routes. In addition, it will be critical to the MD 355 Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, which is expected to be complete by 2028. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the applicant's sketch plan and are particularly happy to see that the City and the Applicant are embracing transit as central to the development plan.
 - A. The relocation of the transit center closer to Frederick Road (MD-355) and in a more central location within the development on the parcel labeled "F" appears to be a suitable and appropriate location for the facilities, and we are looking forward to working with the Developer on a potential public-private partnership to incorporate the transit center into a

Office of the Director

101 Monroe Street 10th Floor · Rockville Maryland 20850 · 240-777-7170 · 240-777-7178 FAX

www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Located one block west of the Rockville Metro Station

mixed-use building. The suitability of the site will be further assessed and confirmed during refinement of the SDP, expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2023. The developer has agreed to collaborate with MCDOT to establish the transit center configuration during this phase of design. The County supports this location for the transit center and looks forward to working with the applicant on the design and operational details.

- B. Transit Center access will also need to be coordinated with building and parking service and entrance points. We request there be consideration of providing transit priority (both signal priority and bus lanes) on streets surrounding and accessing the transit center, in order to facilitate safe and efficient circulation by all users.
- C. The applicant should consider the following Transit Center Features, and we look forward to working with them on these and other details:
 - i. Development above the site
 - ii. Use of public right of way for transit operations and passenger facilities
 - iii. Details of the off-street facility to achieve the following objectives
 - Architecturally appealing
 - Well-ventilated
 - Easy to clean & maintain
 - Electric bus charging capabilities
 - Sufficient capacity and efficient operations
 - Activated through retail, building entrances/exits, windows, etc. Should not feel enclosed, industrial, claustrophobic.
 - Reduce need for additional turning movements, circuitous routing.
 - iv. Adjacent streets with Kiss & Ride access.
 - v. Bike Parking Facility.
 - vi. Micromobility accommodations.
- D. We believe signal-controlled intersections and additional pedestrian crossing opportunities will be needed on the major streets bordering the proposed development, including Lost Knife, Russell, Odendhal and Montgomery Village. In the vicinity of the transit center, a mid-block protected pedestrian crossing may be needed on Russell Avenue. We understand that the SDP will provide more information regarding traffic control at proposed intersections. If a signal is warranted, then we recommend the applicant install the traffic signal. The timing of installation shall be determined with the SDP.

- E. Accommodate pedestrian and bicycle routes from area neighborhoods to Parcel F in order to facilitate non-auto access to transit.
 - F. The applicant shall coordinate with Mr. Corey Pitts, Bus Rapid Transit Manager, regarding the Transit Center layout and proposed access points. Mr. Pitts may be reached at 240-777-7217 or at Corey.Pitts@montgomerycountymd.gov.
2. Montgomery Village Avenue (MD-124): We defer to Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) for any improvements along Montgomery Village Avenue (MD-124) frontage but note that County master plans call for sidepaths along the site frontage as well as bus lanes.
3. Lost Knife Road (County roadway):
- A. Improvements to the public right of way as part of this development will be determined at the SDP stage based on a review of the information requested in this letter.
 - B. The applicant shall show the frontage improvements on the SDP including the bike lanes to comply with the Montgomery Planning's Montgomery Village Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Guide. Considering the development to be in the close vicinity of South Lake Elementary School and the future residents who will likely walk their kids to school, the improvements will reduce the pedestrian crossing distance and therefore will enhance pedestrian safety.
 - C. MCDOT has a High Injury Network safety study planned along Lost Knife Road beginning early 2023 which will be completed by April 2023. We will have recommendations based on that study and would request the applicant consider those improvements be completed as part of this redevelopment.
 - D. We recommend the following roadway section as a template per the [Complete Streets Design Guide](#) but may have changes based on the High Injury Network safety study: [Lost Knife - Lakeforest – Streetmix \(site frontage shown on the left side\)](#)



4. Russell Avenue (City roadway):

- A. We defer to City of Gaithersburg for any improvements along the site frontage, but respectfully request consideration be given to on-street BRT stations and separated bike accommodations to facilitate access between the transit center, nearby communities, and the MARC station. We welcome the opportunity to work with the City and applicant on the interaction of the transit center with Russell Avenue.

5. Proposed Street Three:

- A. We generally defer to the City of Gaithersburg for the roadway cross section and alignment.
- B. We recommend Separated Bike Lanes along Street Three to connect the Transit Center with the surrounding bike network, residents, the elementary school serving the site, and other potential future developments such as the Montgomery County Fairgrounds. We look forward to working with the applicant and the City on the design of bike lanes on streets adjacent to the transit center in order to coordinate transit and bike operations.
- C. The proposed centerline of the street at the intersection with Lost Knife Road shall align with existing centerline of Contour Road.
- D. The applicant shall be responsible for the modifying the existing traffic signal including the Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) and pedestrian related improvements at the intersection with Lost Knife Road. Since the proposed development will alter or impact existing County maintained transportation system management components (i.e., traffic signals, signal poles, handboxes, surveillance cameras, etc.) or communication component (i.e., traffic signal interconnect, fiber optic lines, etc.), please contact Mr. Kamal Hamud of our Transportation Systems Engineering Team at (240) 777-2190 or at kamal.hamud@montgomerycountymd.gov for proper executing procedures. All costs associated with such relocations and modifications shall be the responsibility of the applicant.

- 6. There are existing bus stops located along the site frontage which should be shown on the Plans. Any relocation/impacts/improvements to the existing bus stops to incorporate improvements along the public right-of-way should be coordinated with Mr. Wayne Miller of our Division of Transit Services to coordinate improvements mentioned above to the RideOn bus facilities in the vicinity of this project. Mr. Miller may be contacted at Wayne.Miller2@montgomerycountymd.gov or at 240-777-5836.

Standard Comments

1. Applicant should be mindful that Montgomery County's Complete Streets and Code/Regulations updates were approved, and County streets shall comply with them.
2. The proposed street parking along County streets should be at a minimum 35-ft away from all street intersections per Sec 31-17.
3. Show all existing topographic details (paving, storm drainage, driveways adjacent and opposite the site, sidewalks and/or bikeways, utilities, rights of way and easements, etc.) on the SDP.
4. Ensure ADA ramps are provided on-site, including for any ADA parking spaces along County roads.
5. Submit storm drainage and/or flood plain studies, with computations for any portion of the subject site that drains to the Montgomery County public storm drain system. Analyze the capacity of the existing public storm drain system and the impact of the additional runoff. If the proposed subdivision is adjacent to a closed section street, include spread computations in the impact analysis.
6. Submit a completed, executed MCDOT Sight Distances Evaluation certification form, for all existing and proposed site entrances onto County-maintained roads, for our review and approval.
7. Design all driveways and alleys onto County roads to be at-grade with sidewalks and bikeways, dropping down to street level between the sidewalks / bikeways and roadway.
8. Upgrade pedestrian facilities at County intersections along the site frontage and at adjacent intersections to comply with current ADA standards.
9. Ensure there are no obstructions or impedances along Walkways and Bikeways along County roads. Identify any utility appurtenances and vaults along County roads and ensure that they are ADA accessible. Grates are prohibited in areas along County roads where walking users are expected. Private utility vaults are not allowed in County rights-of-way per County Code Section 49-
10. The applicant needs to submit a truck circulation plan for review by MCDPS for access to county public right-of-way.
11. Ensure curve radii along County roads are as small as practicable to accommodate target design vehicles as per the Complete Streets Design Guide, without intrusion into bicycle or pedestrian travel ways.
12. We suggest that the site provide bike racks along streets throughout the site to ensure patrons and visitors to the area's uses have convenient locations for bike parking, reducing the likelihood of inappropriate bike parking.

13. We suggest that the site include accommodations for micromobility (e.g., shared e-scooters and e-bikes) throughout the site, including corrals to facilitate safe and orderly parking that does not disrupt pedestrian or vehicular circulation.
14. We suggest that secure Bike Rooms be conveniently located within office and residential buildings & include repair stations. Some uses may also benefit from lockers & showers. Secure Bike Rooms should be accessible by all uses generating long-term bike parking needs.
15. Submit a Traffic Impact Study if required, for our review.
16. Forest Conservation Easements are NOT ALLOWED to overlap any easement.
17. No steps, stoops, transformers, electrical vaults, balconies or retaining walls for the development are allowed in county right-of-way. No door swings into county ROW.
18. If the proposed development will alter any existing County street lights, signing, and/or pavement markings, please contact Mr. Dan Sanayi of our Traffic Engineering Design and Operations Section at yazdan.sanayi@montgomerycountymd.gov or at (240) 777-2190 for proper executing procedures. All costs associated with such relocations shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
19. Permit and bond is required for county maintained public rights-of-way prior to approval of the record plat.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this preliminary plan. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact me for this project at deepak.somarajan@montgomerycountymd.gov or at (240) 777-7170.

Sincerely,

Deepak Somarajan

Deepak Somarajan, Engineer III
Development Review Team
Office to Transportation Policy

Mr. Rob Robinson
Lakeforest Mall Redevelopment
December 23, 2022
Page 7

cc: Correspondence folder FY 2023

cc-e: Christopher Conklin	MCDOT Director
Tim Cupples	MCDOT Act. Deputy Director
Greg Ossont	MCDGS Deputy Director
Joana Conklin	MCDGS Director's Office
Atiq Panjshiri	MCDPS RWPR
Sam Farhadi	MCDPS RWPR
Philip Mclaughlin	MCDOT DTS
Wayne Miller	MCDOT DTS
Deanna Archey	MCDOT DTS
Corey Pitts	MCDOT DTE
Sandra Brecher	MCDOT CSS
Michael Paylor	MCDOT DTEO
Mark Terry	MCDOT DTEO
Kamal Hamud	MCDOT DTEO
Dan Sanayi	MCDOT DTEO
Eric Sideras	MCDOT DTEO
Gary Erenrich	MCDOT OTP
Andrew Bossi	MCDOT OTP
Rebecca Torma	MCDOT OTP