

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC)  
Staff Report for:  
**Marbella Apartments (Site Plan #463)**

There are multiple ways to provide feedback and input on the proposal, County Staff is happy to accept comments in any form. Please use any method listed below.

**Mail-in Comments:**

Arlington County Planning Division  
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Arlington, VA 22201

**Contact Staff:**

*Contact the Arlington County Planning Staff reviewing this project either by phone or email*

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**Contact the SPRC Chairs**

*The SPRC Chair is a member of the Planning Commission and conducts all SPRC meetings*

Elizabeth Morton

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**SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE  
MEETING AGENDA**

**DATE:** October 25, 2021  
**TIME:** 7:00 – 9:00 pm EST  
**PLACE:** Virtual – Microsoft Teams Meeting

**SPRC STAFF COORDINATOR:** Matthew Pfeiffer

**Item 1. Marbella Apartments** **7:00pm–9:00pm**  
(RPC#s 17-033-006, -009, -016, -017)  
Planning Commission and County Board meetings to be determined.  
*Michael Cullen (CPHD Staff)*

The Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) is comprised of Planning Commission members, representatives from other relevant commissions and several appointed citizens. The SPRC reviews all site plans and major site plan amendments requests, which are submitted to the County Board and the Planning Commission for consideration. The major responsibilities of the SPRC are the following:

1. Review site plan or major site plan amendment requests in detail.
2. Advise the Planning Commission by recommending the appropriate action in regard to a specific plan and any conditions, which it might determine to be necessary or appropriate.
3. Provide a forum by which interested citizens, civic associations and neighborhood conservation committees can review and comment on a particular plan, or the effects that the proposed project might have on the neighborhood.

The complete application and drawings are available for review in the on the County's Webpage at:  
<https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/1300-1305-n-pierce-st/>

For more information on the Arlington County Planning Commission, go to their web site  
<http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/>

For more information on the Site Plan public review process, go to the Arlington County Planning Division's web site on Development Proposals/Site Plans  
[http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Planning/applications/site\\_plans/CPHDPlanningApplicationsSite\\_plansMain.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Planning/applications/site_plans/CPHDPlanningApplicationsSite_plansMain.aspx)

To view the current Site Plan Review Committee schedule, go to the web site  
<http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/sprc/>

**Marbella Apartments (SP #463)**  
(RPC#s 17-033-006, -009, -016, -017)

**Public Review and Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) Process:**

1. Online Engagement Opportunity: October 4 – October 13, 2021
  - Topics:
    - Land Use/Zoning
    - Building form and height
    - Architecture
    - Transportation and streetscapes
    - Tree canopy and landscaping
    - Other/construction/community benefits
  
2. Virtual SPRC Meeting #1 – October 25, 2021
  - A. Introductions
  - B. SPRC Discussion Topics:
    - a. Affordable housing
    - b. Transition to lower density residential (building height, massing, setbacks)
    - c. Building architecture
  - C. Wrap-up
  - D. Public Comment
  
3. Virtual SPRC Meeting #2 – November 22, 2021
  - A. Introductions
  - B. SPRC Discussion Topics:
    - a. Project updates
    - b. Open space, tree canopy and landscaping
    - c. Streetscapes and pedestrian experience
      - i. Pedestrian network and experience
      - ii. Site circulation and vehicle movements
      - iii. Street sections
    - d. Parking
    - e. Community benefits/green building program/construction/other
  - C. Wrap-up
  - D. Public Comment

## **Glossary of Terms:**

Area Median Income (AMI): The income at which half of the families of a particular household size have incomes higher and half have incomes lower.

By-Right Development: May be approved administratively in the respective zoning district subject to all other applicable requirements of this zoning ordinance. Is not required to seek approval by the County Board.

Density: The ratio of a particular use given the area of land. Density measures the intensity of a given land use.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): The gross floor area of all buildings on a lot divided by the lot area.

General Land Use Plan (GLUP): The GLUP is the primary policy guide for future development in the County. The GLUP establishes the overall character, extent and location of various land uses.

Gross Floor Area: Gross floor area is the sum of the area of the horizontal surface of the several floors of a building measured from the exterior faces of exterior walls, to include all floor area not defined as gross parking area.

Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP): A type of Site Plan; to permit the coordinated development of sites of more than twenty (20) acres in area, or a smaller area as authorized and accepted by the County Manager, the County Board may approve a Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP) in the form of a general plan for land uses, public facilities, transportation, and utilities.

Zoning Ordinance (ACZO): County adopted ordinance that regulates the use and development standards of all land located within the County. There are various zoning districts within the zoning ordinance and each district sets the standards for development. Examples of such requirements are: maximum heights, required parking, required setbacks, density, etc.

**Project Updates:** The applicant has revised the proposed project design in response to Online Engagement feedback, SPRC discussion, and staff comments to date, as shown in their detailed presentation submitted for the second SPRC meeting on November 22. Design changes are shown in the applicant video presentation (also available as standalone presentation slides). A brief overview of some of the changes made to-date include:

**Phase 1 (Site A) – West Building**

- Revised building sculpting and architecture on all sides, including:
  - N. Queen Street – recessed middle tower mass above garage levels; set back garage base along the street with additional landscape area; and reconfigured parking and loading entrance alignment with a revised street tree spacing
  - North frontage/Lisa Court Townhouses – reduced building height with multiple step-downs; replaced resident terrace above parking structure podium with inaccessible green roof area
- Relocated pedestrian walkway to the south side of the building adjacent to above-grade transformers

**Phase 2 (Site B) – East Building**

- Revised building architecture and massing (including mu on all sides, including:
  - N. Ode Street – slight building setback along most of Ode Street frontage; additional landscaping with full second row of trees
  - N. Pierce Street – new residential lobby alignment; improved public access to plaza fronting lobby entrance

**Figure 0: Proposed Plan Revisions**



**SUMMARY:** The applicant, Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH), proposes to redevelop the site (“Marbella Apartments”) and construct two new multifamily residential towers with a senior housing component and 100% of the units committed as Affordable Dwelling Units.

Additional proposal details about the new site plan project include:

- Two residential towers on noncontiguous project sites, labeled Site A and Site B, divided into two phases:
  - Phase 1 (Site B):
    - 325 units (132 senior units + 193 units)
    - 339,887 sf GFA (6.6 FAR)
    - 12-stories (129’ building height)
    - 163 parking spaces (0.5 spaces/unit)
  - Phase 2 (Site A):
    - 236 units
    - 268,736 sf GFA (6.5 FAR)
    - 12-stories (121’ building height)
    - 118 parking spaces (0.5 spaces/unit)
- Requested Zoning Modifications
  - Bonus height
  - Bonus density
  - Reduced residential parking
  - Density exclusions

**BACKGROUND:** The 92,862 sq. ft. (2.13 acres) project area, comprised of the western Phase 1 (Site A) and eastern Phase 2 (Site B) sites on noncontiguous parcels approximately 0.94 and 1.2 acres in size, respectively, is located at 1300 and 1305 N. Pierce Street, in the Radnor/Fort Myer Heights neighborhood north of Joint Base Myer–Henderson Hall. The site is comprised of two properties on the east and west sides of N. Pierce Street that are occupied by Marbella Apartments, an existing low-rise garden-style apartment complex. The sites are bordered by N. Queen Street to the west and N. Ode Street to the east, and several low- and mid-rise multifamily residential buildings surround the site.

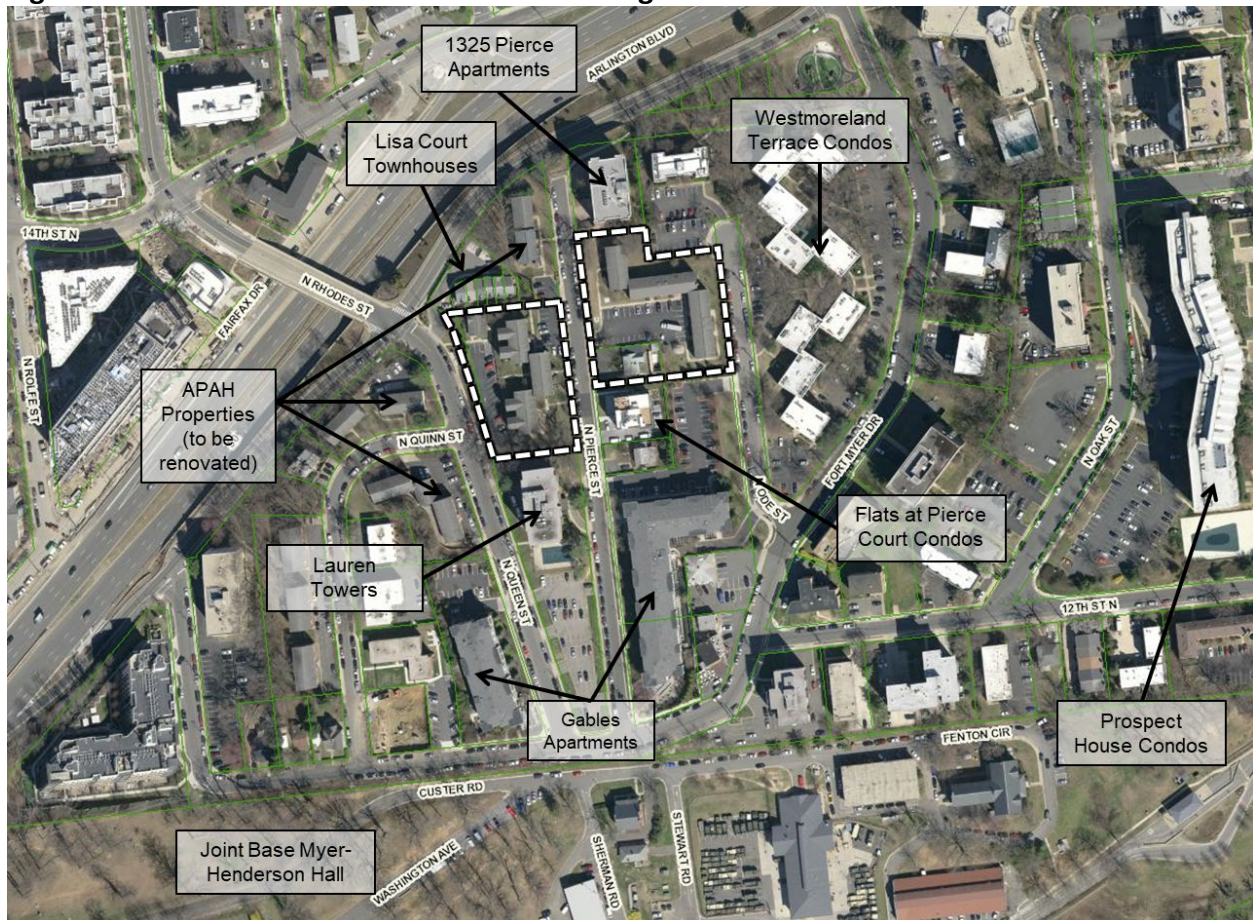
**The following provides additional information about the site and location:**

[Existing Zoning:](#) “RA6-15” Multiple-family Dwelling District

[General Land Use Plan \(GLUP\) Designation:](#) “Medium” Residential (Up to 37-72 units per acre)

[Neighborhood:](#) The subject site is within the Radnor/Fort Myer Heights Civic Association (RAFOM) boundary.

**Figure 1: Aerial View of the Site and Surrounding Area**



**Existing Development:**

Marbella Apartments: The existing Marbella Apartments property, built approximately between 1942 – 1947 and formerly known as Briarcliff Manor, consists of twelve two-story brick, walk-up garden apartment buildings and spans three blocks (approximately 3.5 acres), bordered by Arlington Boulevard, N. Quinn Street, and N. Ode Street. APAH acquired the property in 2011, and the subject site plan application affects most of the property on N. Pierce Street. The remaining Marbella Apartments properties owned by APAH are not subject to this site plan application, and the applicant has stated that these properties are planned for renovation.

Neighborhood: The neighborhood is comprised of varied housing types and styles as shown in Figure 2 below, ranging from scattered single family and townhouse units, to low-rise garden apartments, 5-8 story mid-rise multifamily buildings, and the 11-story Prospect House building located on N. Oak Street to the east. Topography across the area varies significantly with steep changes in elevation between N. Queen Street and N. Pierce Street and along Arlington Boulevard. The Phase 1 site is bordered by N. Ode Street and the Westmoreland Terrace Condos to the east, 1325 Apartments to the north, and the Flats at Pierce Court Condos - and

the Gables Apartments parking lot - to the south. The Phase 2 site is bordered by North Queen Street and remaining Marbella Apartments to the west, the Lisa Court Townhouses to the north, and Lauren Towers apartments to the south.

**Figure 2: Neighborhood Context**



Lisa Court Townhouses – View from Queen Street



Marbella Building to Remain – View from Pierce St.



Westmoreland Terrace – View from Ode Street



Flats at Pierce Court – View from Pierce Street



Lauren Towers – View from Pierce Street

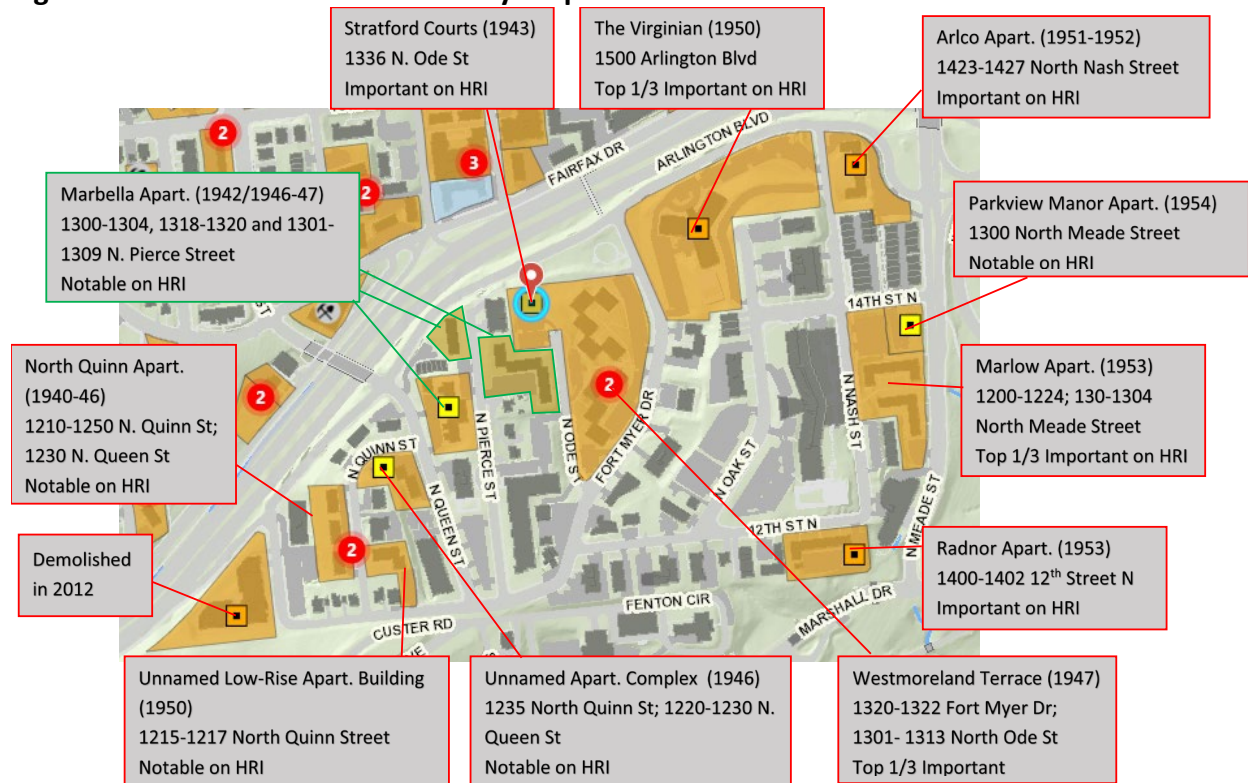


Prospect House – View from Oak Street



**Historic Preservation:** The project area is located in an unplanned area of Arlington County. To the east of the project area is Arlington Ridge Park/Iwo Jima Memorial and to the south is Fort Myer, both listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The project area does not contain any Local Historic Districts. The Marbella Apartments is ranked in the Notable category in the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). Concerning Notable properties, the County will strive to protect and promote the reuse of those properties ranked as Notable. There are many other HRI properties near the project site that are garden style apartments. Northwest of the project site is Stratford Courts (1943), which is located at 1336 N. Ode Street and is ranked as Important in the HRI, and Westmoreland Terrace (1947), located at 1320-1322 Fort Myer Drive and 1301- 1313 North Ode Street, which is ranked in the Top Third Important in the HRI. Both properties are condominiums. Concerning Important properties, the County will strive to protect and promote the reuse of those properties ranked as Top Third Important and Important. The County will collaborate with owners of Top Third Important and Important properties to preserve the buildings’ historical and material integrity to the maximum extent possible. The County will require that new development proposals affecting Top Third Important and Important properties be reviewed by the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB). All of the HRI properties in this area are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Figure 3: Historic Resources Inventory Map**



**Development Potential:** The following provides a statistical summary of the development potential for the site area.

District	Density Allowed/Typical Use	Maximum Development
Total Site Area: 92,862 sf (2.1 acres)		
<b>Existing Zoning</b>		
"RA6-15" By-Right	Multiple-family (900 sf per dwelling unit) Maximum height (feet) Maximum height (stories)	103 units 60 6
"RA6-15" Site Plan *Per Section 12.3.7	Multiple-family (60 units per acre) Maximum height (feet) Approximate FAR (1085 sf per dwelling unit)	127 units 70 1.48 FAR
"RA6-15" Site Plan *Per Section 15.5.9	Multiple-family (no maximum density) Maximum height (feet)	N/A 130

**Proposed Development:** The applicant, Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH), proposes to redevelop the site ("Marbella Apartments") and construct two new multifamily residential towers with a senior housing component and 100% of the units committed as Affordable Dwelling Units.

Additional proposal details about the new site plan project include:

- Two residential towers on noncontiguous project sites, labeled Site A and Site B, divided into two phases:
  - Phase 1 (Site A):
    - 234 units<sup>1</sup>
    - 268,736 sf GFA (6.5 FAR)
    - 12-stories (121' building height)
    - 118 parking spaces (0.5 spaces/unit)
  - Phase 2 (Site B):
    - 321 units (125 senior units + 196 units)<sup>1</sup>
    - 339,887 sf GFA (6.6 FAR)
    - 12-stories (129' building height)
    - 163 parking spaces (0.5 spaces/unit)
- Proposed modifications for:
  - Bonus building height
  - Additional density as provided under the Zoning Ordinance
  - Required residential parking (0.5 spaces per unit)
  - Density exclusions

<sup>1</sup> Updated unit counts as provided in the November 22, 2021 presentation by KGD Architecture. Other specific values related to GFA, parking spaces, etc., to be updated with revised 4.1 plan filing.

**Figure 4: Proposed Site Layout<sup>2</sup>**



The following table sets forth the preliminary statistical summary for the proposed site plan (#463):

<b>SP #463 Marbella Apartments</b>	
<b>SITE AREA</b>	92,862 sf 2.1 acres
<b>Density</b>	
Proposed Residential GFA (Total)	608,620 sf
Proposed Residential Dwelling Units (Total) <sup>3</sup>	555
Proposed FAR (Total)	6.55
Phase 1: Proposed Residential GFA	268,733
Phase 1: Proposed Residential Dwelling Units <sup>3</sup>	234
Phase 1: Proposed FAR	6.5
Phase 2: Proposed Residential GFA	339,887 sf
Phase 2: Proposed Residential Dwelling Units <sup>3</sup>	321
Phase 2: Proposed FAR	6.6
Proposed Exclusions	N/A

<sup>2</sup> Revised per November 22, 2021 presentation by KGD Architecture.

<sup>3</sup> Updated unit counts as provided in the November 22, 2021 presentation by KGD Architecture. Other specific values related to GFA, parking spaces, etc., to be updated with revised 4.1 plan filing.

<b>SP #463 Marbella Apartments</b>	
Proposed Density (units per acre)	268
<b>Green Building</b>	
Earthcraft Certification	Gold
Bonus Density	sf
<b>Building Height</b>	
Phase 1: Average Site Elevation Above Sea Level	171 ft
Phase 2: Average Site Elevation Above Sea Level	164 ft
Phase 1: Main Roof Height (above average grade)	130 ft
Phase 1: Mechanical Penthouse Height	20 ft
Phase 1: Number of Stories	12
Phase 2: Main Roof Height (above average grade)	130 ft
Phase 2: Mechanical Penthouse Height	20 ft
Phase 2: Number of Stories	12
Max. Permitted Bldg. Height <sup>4</sup>	130 feet
<b>Parking</b>	
Total Number of Spaces	281
Phase 1: Total Number of Spaces	163
Phase 1: Compact Spaces	9
Phase 1: Compact Ratio	5.5%
Phase 2: Total Number of Spaces	118
Phase 2: Compact Spaces	3
Phase 2: Compact Ratio	2.5%
Residential Visitor Spaces	N/A
Minimum Required Residential Parking Ratio	1.125 spaces/unit
Proposed Residential Ratio	0.5 spaces/unit
Proposed Visitor Parking Ratio <sup>5</sup>	N/A

**DISCUSSION:**

**Adopted Plans and Policies:** The following regulations, plans, and guiding documents are applicable to development on this site:

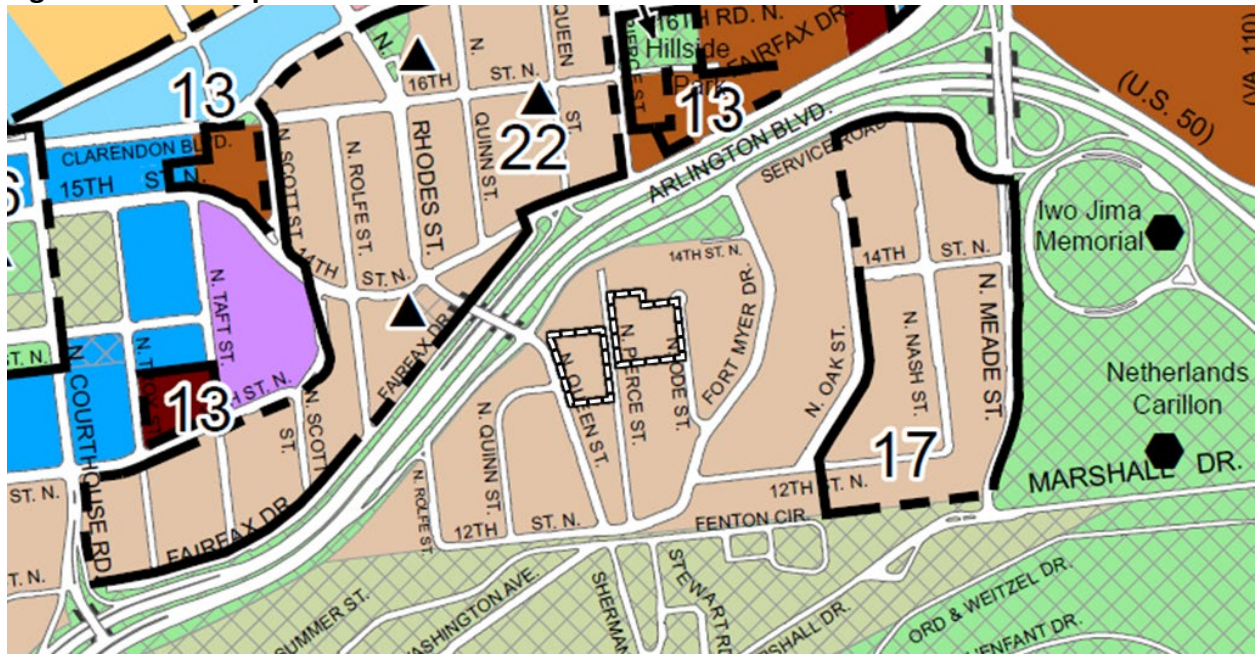
- General Land Use Plan (GLUP)
- "RA6-15" Zoning Ordinance Regulations
- 1982 County Board resolution on views from the National Mall
- Master Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP)
- Historic Resources Inventory (HRI)

<sup>4</sup> The County Board may approve additional height of 60 feet above that provided in ACZO Section 12.3.7, exclusive of mechanical penthouses.

<sup>5</sup> Included in total residential parking ratio tabulation.

GLUP: The site is designated “Medium” Residential, which outlines a base density range of up to 37-72 dwelling units per acre. The site is not located within a special planning area or subject to a special GLUP study.

Figure 5: GLUP Map



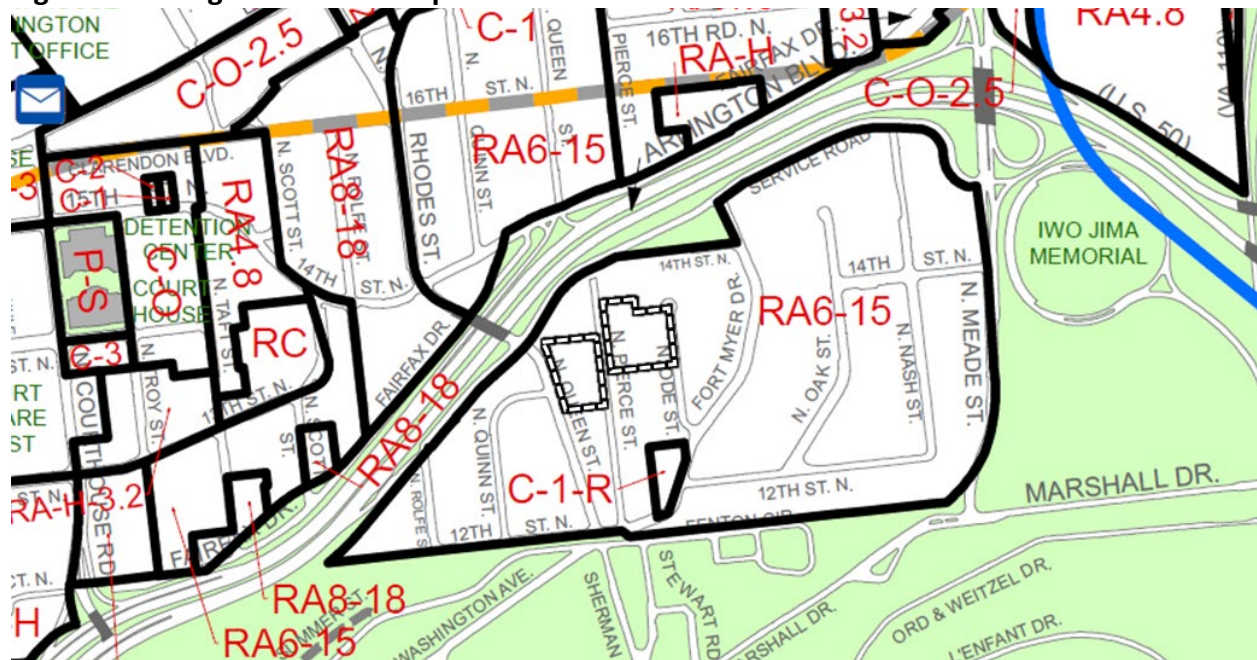
Land Use Designation*	Range of Density/Typical Use	Zoning**
<b>Residential</b>		
Low	1-10 units per acre	R-20, R-10, R-10T, R-8, R-6, R-5
Low	11-15 units per acre	R2-7, R15-30T
Low-Medium	16-36 units per acre	R15-30T, RA14-26, RA8-18
Medium	Up to 37-72 units per acre	RA7-16, RA6-15, RA-H
High-Medium	Up to 3.24 F.A.R. (Floor Area Ratio) Residential	RA-4.8
High	Up to 4.8 F.A.R. Residential Up to 3.8 F.A.R. Hotel	RA-H-3.2, C-O Rosslyn

Zoning: The site is zoned RA6-15 multiple-family dwelling district and the applicant does not propose a rezoning of the site. This district corresponds with the Medium Residential GLUP designation and allows for multifamily buildings up to 60-feet in height under by-right development, or buildings up to 70-feet in height through special exception site plan approval subject to Section 12.3.7 of the Zoning Ordinance for low- and moderate-income housing. Up to 60 additional feet of building height may be permitted under Section 15.5.9 for projects with 100% commitments to low- and moderate-income housing, provided that: *“The applicant’s site layout and proposed building heights have been designed in a manner to establish effective transitions to lower density residential neighborhoods”* using the following mitigation strategies:

- Site Topography,

- Landscaping,
- Architectural Façade Treatments,
- Graduated Building Heights,
- Increased Setbacks, or
- Other Similar Measures

Figure 6: Zoning Boundaries Map



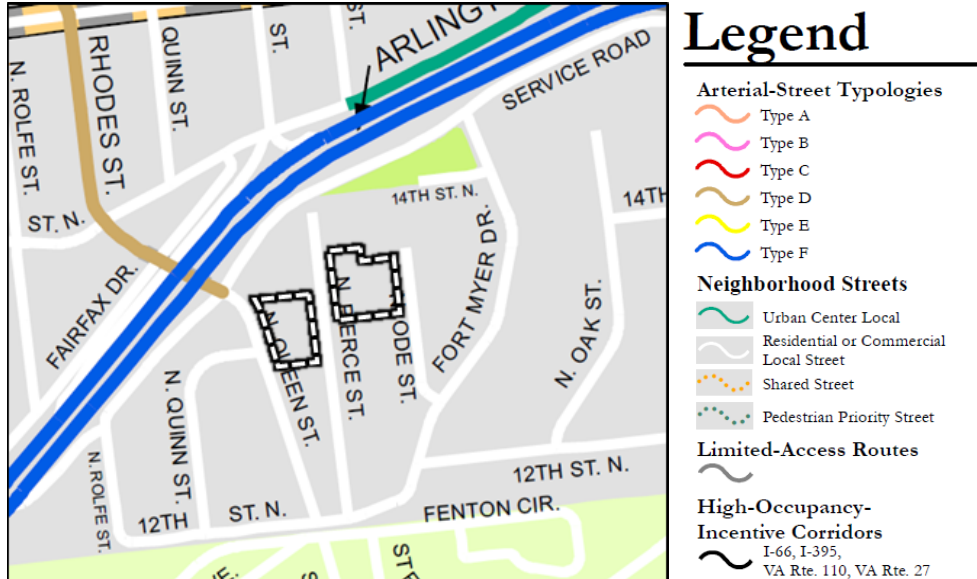
1982 County Board resolution on views from the National Mall: The site is also located along the National Capital Mall Axis and is subject to a 1982 County Board resolution on views from the National Mall that calls for minimizing visual impacts from the Mall area. The resolution seeks to “maintain approved building heights within the basic site plan heights specified in the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance” and discourage “the use of bonus provisions for height except in clearly appropriate circumstances.” The resolution does not identify appropriate circumstances for bonus height provisions; however, it does recommend use of “neutral and non-reflective facades to minimize their visual impact from the Mall area” for high rise structures.

Multifamily Reinvestment Study (MRS): There is also a County-wide study underway known as the Multifamily Reinvestment Study, which will seek to continue work started under the previous Housing Conservation District study to address the housing challenges facing unplanned multifamily areas in RA zoning districts; however, it should be noted that the MRS is in early planning stages for community engagement, and no timeline for draft policy recommendations has been established.

Master Transportation Plan (MTP): The MTP identifies all local streets in the neighborhood as Residential Local Streets; however, N. Rhodes Street is identified as a Type D – Primarily Garden

Apartments and Townhouse Neighborhoods Arterial prior to becoming N. Queen Street south of Arlington Boulevard.

**Figure 7: Master Transportation Plan Map**



**Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP):** The 2004 Urban Forestry Master Plan identifies a 15% tree canopy coverage goal for central business districts and a 25% tree canopy coverage goal for urban residential areas.

**Historic Resources Inventory (HRI):** The Marbella Apartments development is identified as a “Notable” garden apartment complex in the Phase 1 HRI from June 2011. Notable resources are defined as a property with “historic elements related to County’s history, but lack sufficient historic context, integrity, and/or significance compared to Essential and Important.” The HRI promotes preservation of Notable buildings and properties but does not call for review by the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB), unlike “Important” or “Essential” buildings or properties.

**Density and Uses:** The total proposed density is approximately 268 dwelling units per acre at 6.55 FAR, which exceeds the RA6-15 Zoning District’s maximum density of approximately 48 dwelling units per acre (900 sf per dwelling unit). Additional density above 48 dwelling units per acre is permitted under Section 12.3.7 of the ACZO at up to 60 dwelling units per acre; however, Section 15.5.9 of the ACZO allows up to 60 feet of additional building height for fully affordable projects and density is effectively limited by the building envelope. For the subject site, maximum density under by-right development in the RA6-15 district is limited to approximately 103 units, whereas with a market-rate site plan approval a project could achieve 127 units at a 70-foot building height. Utilizing the bonus height provision for 100% affordable projects building height is limited to 130-feet but, with no density limitation, allows for a 337% increase in density over a market rate site plan project that may be achieved only if the project is designed in a manner so that it transitions effectively to the neighborhood.

Proposed residential units include one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units, as shown in the table below.

**Unit Mix**

Type	1-Bedroom	2- Bedroom	3-Bedroom	Total
Phase 1 Units	148	142	35	325
Phase 2 Units	46	139	51	236
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>561</b>

**Site Design**

Each building is oriented around central courtyards, both of which are located on or along N. Pierce Street. The ground floor space around the courtyards is primarily occupied by residential amenity areas, including multipurpose and community rooms. The primary residential entrances for both buildings, including a leasing office in the Phase 1 building, are also located on N. Pierce Street. The Phase 2 buildings includes a secondary lobby entrance on N. Queen Street.

The project proposes two new pedestrian walkways across each site; one connecting N. Ode Street to N. Pierce Street on the south side of the Phase 1 building (terminating in a proposed crosswalk across N. Pierce Street), and one connecting N. Pierce Street to N. Queen Street on the north side of the Phase 2 building. Due to the grade change between each street, both walkways will include steps and not be accessible paths. The Phase I building divides service entrances with loading access on N. Pierce Street and parking garage access on N. Ode Street. For the Phase II building, the project proposes consolidated parking and loading entrances, with two curb cuts side by side, on N. Queen Street.

**Building Form, Height, and Architecture:**

Both Section 15.5.9 of the Zoning Ordinance and the 1982 resolution on views from the National Mall identify architectural treatments as a mitigation for bonus building height. Each tower distinguishes the top 2-3 stories of the building with a contrasting façade material. In the Phase I building a lighter brick color is shown, while in Phase II a darker brick color is used. Building lobbies are each two floors in height, while the bottom floors of each building are distinguished by contrasting building materials, window fenestration, and horizontal banding distinguishing the middle floors above.

The project proposes two twelve story buildings, each of which focus building taper down to 11- and 10-stories along N. Pierce Street and the northern property lines, with slight building step-backs above the bottom 1-2 floors on portions of each building footprint. Graduated building heights and setbacks are two key mitigation criteria outlined in the Section 15.5.9 provision for bonus building height; however, those criteria are not defined or detailed beyond the language provided in the ACZO. To that end, staff will provide supplemental analysis during



the public review period of this project that may be used to evaluate building transitions to lower density neighborhoods during consideration of additional building height in RA districts.

**Figure 8A: Existing Condition and Proposed Rendering – view from N. Queen Street (looking southeast)**



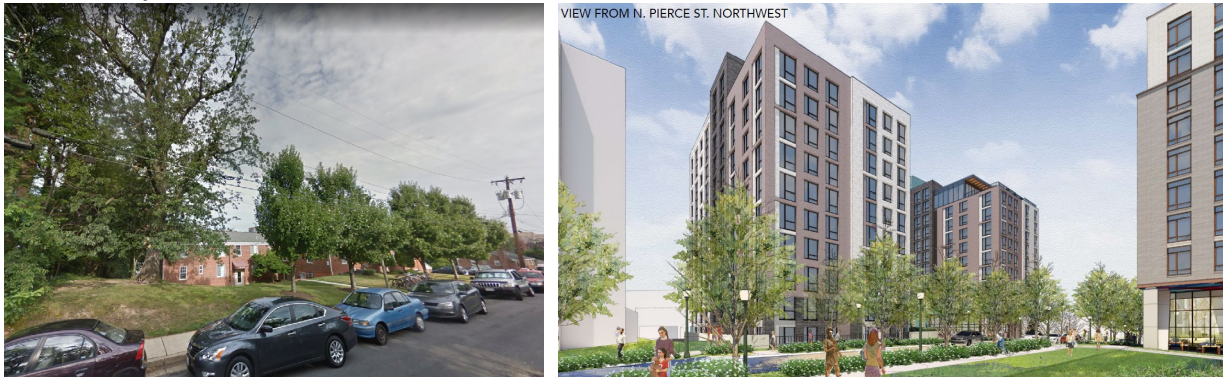
**Figure 8B: Existing Condition and Proposed Rendering – view from remaining Marbella Apartments (looking northeast)**



**Figure 8C: Existing Condition and Proposed Rendering – view from N. Pierce Street (looking northeast)**



**Figure 8D: Existing Condition and Proposed Rendering – view from N. Pierce Street (looking northwest)**



**Figure 8E: Existing Condition and Proposed Rendering – view from Westmoreland Terrace (looking southwest)**



**Building Height Analysis:** To help implement the mitigation strategies for additional building height under Section 15.5.9, staff have completed a preliminary building height analysis of the Marbella Apartments project that outlines the following elements in an area-wide context: existing building heights, properties with building heights below the maximum permitted by-right, age of existing buildings, Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) status, property ownership type, slope analysis, surface parking inventory, existing setback line patterns, and an assessment of whether properties may be more or less likely to change (which includes considerations for: zoning, existing height, parcel size, age of improvements, property ownership, underutilized parking areas, infill potential, topography, and historic character). Through this analysis, staff has identified “priority transition frontages” – shown below in Figure 9 – that seek to focus on greater implementation of mitigation tools from Section 15.5.9.

Through this process, tailored to the Marbella Apartments project, staff has identified guiding principles that may also be used to guide site transitions for multifamily development to adjacent lower density neighborhoods in other parts of Arlington. These principles conclude:

- The purpose of the bonus height provision in Section 15.5.9 is to promote low- and moderate-income housing that achieves the goals of the Affordable Housing Master Plan
- All building frontages should be evaluated, and the tools identified in Section 15.5.9.A.3.2 should be considered for a given building frontage to establish effective transitions to lower density residential areas
- Priority Transition Frontages should be identified through building height analysis, and should include implementation of more intensive mitigation strategies, including:
  - Prioritize building separation in relation to neighboring buildings of lesser heights
  - Prioritize building setbacks and/or step-backs to establish scale in relation to adjacent street frontages
  - Prioritize tree plantings between the sidewalk and building face to soften scale at ground level

**Figure 9: Building Height Analysis Priority Transition Frontages**



Building Height Transition – Precedent Examples: Staff reviewed a number of projects that can serve as examples of appropriate transition to lower density residential typologies through design, with common elements including building tower step-backs at the 3rd or 4th floors, greater building separation through location of an interior alley or street, and implementation

of lower density residential unit types along project edges that front lower density areas. Examples of approved or built projects that illustrate appropriate building transition strategies are listed below and shown in Figure 10:

- Union on Queen (SP #425; zoned “RA6-15”) - 1520 North Pierce Street
- Sedona|Slate (SP #412; zoned “RA-4.8”) – 1510 Clarendon Boulevard
- Terwilliger Place / American Legion (SP #446; zoned “C-O-2.5”) – 3445 Washington Boulevard
- 11th and Vermont Site (SP #447; zoned “R-C”) – 1031 N. Vermont Street
- The Monroe at Virginia Square (SP #378; zoned “R-C”) – 3625 10th St N.

**Figure 10: Building Height Transition – Precedent Examples**



**Sustainable Design:** The building is proposed to be designed to achieve an Earthcraft “Gold” certification, but is not seeking any additional density under the [Green Building Density Incentive Program](#). However, the applicant has noted plans for other sustainability elements including:

- Energy Star appliances
- Green roofs
- Rooftop mounted solar panel arrays
- Electric vehicle charging stations

**Transportation:** The site is located within a mile of both the Rosslyn and Court House Metro Stations and is well served by multi-modal transportation options. The two portions of the proposed development, Site A and Site B, are bound by Arlington Boulevard (US 50) to the north, North Ode Street to the east and North Queen Street to the west. Site A and Site B are separated by North Pierce Street. North Pierce and North Ode Street are both dead end streets. The Master Transportation Plan (MTP) classifies North Ode, North Queen, and North Pierce Streets as Residential Local Neighborhood Streets.

**Streets:** The project proposes to maintain the existing street and lane configurations of the streets in the site vicinity. No road improvements are identified or proposed.

**Sidewalk and Pedestrian Circulation:** The project proposes to improve the sidewalks around the site frontages as shown in the table below.

**Figure 11: Existing and Proposed Sidewalks**

Street Name	Section	Existing SW Width	Proposed SW Width
N. Queen St.	East side	< 5'	6'
N. Pierce St.	East and West sides	< 5'	6'
N. Ode St.	West side	< 5'	6'

The project also proposes mid-block pedestrian paths on both sites: south of the Site A building connecting N. Queen and N. Pierce Streets; and south of the Site B building connecting N. Pierce and N. Ode Streets. A proposed crosswalk with receiving accessible ramps will connect the two sites across N. Pierce Street.

**Figure 12: Proposed Pedestrian Connections**



**Bicycle Facilities:** An on-street bicycle path is provided on Arlington Boulevard (Route 50). The site is also served by an existing Capital Bikeshare station on N. Queen that is to remain with the development of the project. Additional stations are at Arlington Boulevard and Fort Myer Drive and at the Iwo Jima Memoria/Meade and 14<sup>th</sup> St. N. intersection.

Bicycle parking for the project is proposed to include:

- Phase 1 (Site A) – 96 Class I secure bicycle parking spaces in the P2 level of the garage and eight (8) exterior visitor spaces located on west side of N. Pierce Street near the front entrance.
- Phase 2 (Site B) – 130 Class I secure bicycle parking spaces in the P2 level of the garage and twelve (12) exterior visitor spaces located on east side of N. Pierce Street near the front entrance and near a secondary entrance on N. Ode Street.

**Transit:** The Rosslyn and Court House Metro Stations are located within a mile from the site with access to the Blue (Rosslyn), Orange, and Silver lines. The site is also served by bus (Art 61/Metrobus 4A) and car sharing opportunities.

**Multimodal Transportation Analysis & Trip Generation:** A Multimodal Transportation Analysis (MMTA) dated May 13, 2021 was submitted by the applicant, prepared by Wells + Associates. The analysis assessed the impact of the development on the adjacent street and transportation network. The analysis concluded that the project would generate approximately 91 AM peak

hour total trips, 102 PM peak hour total trips, and a total of 1,223 total daily trips. It was assumed that approximately 42% of the trips would be made by modes other than a signal occupancy vehicle (walk, bike and transit trips). Staff continues to review the MMTA, with additional information to be provided in the final staff report for the project.

**Parking and Loading:** The project proposes a total of 163 parking spaces for 325 residential units for a residential parking ratio of 0.50 spaces per unit, which is within the guidelines established by the County Board in its 2017 “Off-Street Parking Guidelines for Multi-Family Residential Projects.”

Access to the proposed parking garages for both parking and loading will be from N. Queen Street for Site A and from N. Pierce Street for Site B. Additional parking access will also be provided on N. Ode Street for Site B.

**Reduced Parking Guidance:** The site is located within the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor study area for the Off-Street Parking Guidelines for Multi-Family Residential Projects Approved by Special Exception in the Rosslyn-Ballston and Richmond Highway Metro Corridors (“Residential Parking Guidelines”), approved in 2017, which identifies specific parking requirements based on housing affordability and distance to Metro as provided below for reference and comparison purposes.

**Figure 13: Minimum Parking Requirement (Spaces per Unit)**

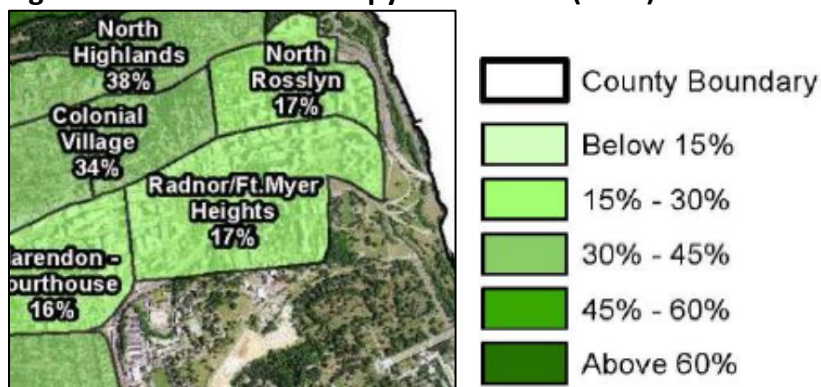
	<u>Tier 1</u>	<u>Tier 2</u>	<u>Tier 3</u>	<u>Tier 4</u>	<u>Tier 5</u>
Market-Rate Units	0.20	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.60
Committed Affordable Units @ 60% AMI (70% of market-rate minimum)	0.14	0.21	0.28	0.35	0.42
Committed Affordable Units @ 50% AMI (50% of market-rate minimum)	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.25	0.30
<i>Range for sites within a comparable distance (up to 1/2 mile) to Metro</i>					

The applicant proposes a parking ratio of 0.5 spaces per unit for each building. The Residential Parking Guidelines identify a potential minimum parking requirement of 0.4 spaces per unit for market rate development, and a minimum parking requirement of 0.28 spaces per unit for affordable housing projects limited to households earning 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or 0 spaces/unit for projects limited to households earning 40% or less of AMI. Recent affordable housing projects have been approved with significantly lower parking ratios, including most recently a parking ratio of 0.43 spaces per unit at the American Legion site on Washington Boulevard. These prior projects have varying degrees of transit accessibility, but all are generally consistent with the subject proposal.

**Tree Canopy and Landscaping**

The project proposes full redevelopment of both sites with removal of some large existing trees and all new replacement trees, including new street trees on Queen, Pierce, and Ode Streets. New tree plantings are primarily located in the building courtyards and on the north and/or south sides of each property. According to the applicant presentation for the November 22 SPRC meeting, proposed tree canopy coverage for the site is 19.1% and all replacement trees will be provided on-site. The 2017 Urban Tree Canopy Assessment identifies an existing tree canopy coverage of 17% for the Radnor/Fort Myer Heights neighborhood, as shown in Figure 14 below. The 2004 Urban Forestry Master Plan identifies a 15% tree canopy coverage goal for central business districts and a 25% tree canopy coverage goal for urban residential areas.

**Figure 14: Urban Tree Canopy Assessment (2017)**



### Community Benefits

As noted previously the project includes a 100% commitment for affordable dwelling units which permits achievement of the additional 60 feet of building height, and associated density with no limitation, under the RA6-15 zoning district. The project will also commit to achieving Earthcraft Gold certification as outlined in the site plan application, consistent with the 2020 Green Building Incentive Policy which recommends that *"Affordable Housing site plan developments not requesting bonus density are expected to meet LEED Multifamily or Midrise, or Earthcraft Gold certification to ensure residents benefit from the improved indoor air quality and energy efficiency benefits of green buildings."* Site plan projects also deliver a number of standard benefits that are required by conditions of approval, including a Public Art contribution, Utility Fund contribution, and streetscape improvements, including undergrounding of existing utilities around the site.

**Modification of Use Regulations:** The applicant requests the County Board modify the following use regulations:

Additional Height: The applicant is requesting 60 feet of additional building height as permitted under Section 15.5.9 of the ACZO, for a total building height of 130 feet for both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 buildings.



**Additional Density:** The applicant is requesting additional density above 48 units per acre under the RA6-15 zoning district and Section 12.3.7 of the ACZO, for a total density of approximately 268 units per acre as permitted under Section 15.5.9 of the ACZO.

**Required Parking Ratio:** The applicant requests a Zoning modification for the residential parking ratio. The Zoning Ordinance requires 1 1/8 parking spaces per dwelling unit, while the traditional standard parking ratio for site plan properties is one parking space per dwelling unit. The applicant is requesting a parking ratio of 0.5 spaces per unit for the Phase 1 and Phase 2 buildings each, which is above the minimum parking ratio outlined in the Residential Parking Guidelines for projects within a half mile from a Metro station entrance. The applicant has provided a multi-modal traffic impact analysis that is consistent with the provisions of the Residential Parking Guidelines.

**Figure 15: Residential Parking Guidelines – Minimum Parking Requirements for Market-Rate Units within Areas where Multi-Family Buildings are Permitted by Site Plan in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor**



**Minimum Parking Requirement  
Spaces per Unit**

	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6
Market-Rate	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6
60% of AMI	0.14	0.21	0.28	0.35	0.42
50% of AMI	0.1	0.15	0.2	0.25	0.3
40% of AMI	0	0	0	0	0

**Density Exclusions:** The applicant is requesting that 20,300 square feet of gross floor area (including 9,958 square feet in the Phase 1 building and 10,342 square feet in the Phase 2 building) be excluded from density calculations. This proposed area includes below-grade garage areas used for utility, maintenance, and exhaust purposes, and includes vertical ventilation shafts in each building.

**Outstanding Issues:** Staff has identified some design issues with the proposal that are expected to be further discussed with the applicant, and which are detailed below.

**Building Transition to Lower Density Sites** – Since the initial application submission a number of revisions have been implemented to mitigate the building mass and achieve compatibility with the neighborhood; however, staff believes additional focus should be placed on the north property frontage of the western Phase 1 building, including consideration of additional building setback from the property line and/or more significant tower step-backs. The applicant should also ensure that landscape buffer areas can be reasonably planted and maintained as shown without utility line conflicts.

Design Treatment at the Ground Level – Additional focus is needed on ground-level design treatments that affect the pedestrian experience, including details for parking and loading garage door treatments and how transformer screening will be implemented along the pedestrian path on the south side of the west Phase 1 building.

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