



C. Robert Dalrymple, Esquire
bdalrymple@sgrwlaw.com
Direct Dial: 301-634-3148

Matthew M. Gordon, Esquire
mgordon@sgrwlaw.com
Direct Dial: 301-634-3150

February 26, 2025

Via Email – Councilmember.Stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov

Ms. Kate Stewart, President

And Members of the County Council
Montgomery County Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: *February 26, 2025, Public Hearing*; Bethesda Minor Master Plan Amendment (the “Minor Master Plan”); 8001 Wisconsin, LLC’s written comments in Support of the Minor Master Plan

Dear Council President Stewart and Councilmembers:

We are submitting these written comments on behalf of 8001 Wisconsin, LLC, an affiliate of B. F. Saul Real Estate Investment Trust (“Saul”) in support of the Minor Master Plan. Through various affiliates, Saul is the owner and developer and owner of several prominent sites covered by the Minor Master Plan, including its headquarters located at 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, the Garden Plaza office building located at 7700 Old Georgetown Road, the mixed-use Hampden House project that will open later this year and is located at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue with Hampden Lane and Elm Street, and the entire block framed by Wisconsin Avenue, Highland Avenue, West Virginia Avenue, and Tilbury Street known as 8001 Wisconsin Avenue (the “Property”).

The Planning Board approved Sketch Plan and Preliminary Plan applications for the Property in January of 2023, which allows for redevelopment with up to 350 multi-family units (including a minimum of 15% MPDUs), 15,000 square feet of ground-floor commercial space, and more than the requisite public open space (including a 70’-wide greenway) for the Master Plan envisioned Eastern Greenway.

Saul is in support of the Minor Master Plan as it contains policies aimed at providing a greater level of certainty which is necessary to allow for market-responsive redevelopment in Downtown Bethesda. The current hard cap in the Bethesda Overlay Zone (the “BOZ”) creates uncertainty and

{00785468;2 }

Selzer Gurvitch Rabin Wertheimer & Polott, P.C.

4416 East West Highway • Fourth Floor • Bethesda, MD 20814-4568 Phone:

(301) 986-9600 • Fax: (301) 986-1301 • Toll Free: (888) 986-9600

www.selzergurvitch.com

Bethesda Minor Master Plan Amendment Public Hearing

February 26, 2025

Page 2

additional barriers to financing redevelopment projects. The Minor Master Plan and the accompanying Zoning Text Amendment with revisions to the BOZ (the “BOZ ZTA”) represent a thoughtful and balanced approach to encouraging reinvestment in Downtown Bethesda with concomitant public benefits and amenities such as affordable housing, public open space, and public frontage improvements.

In particular, Saul appreciates the Minor Master Plan’s (and related BOZ ZTA) inclusion of a clarification to the criteria for the Park Impact Payment (“PIP”) credit when Master Plan recommended public open spaces are delivered and maintained as privately owned public spaces (often referred to as POPS). This proposed refinement to the BOZ will provide the Planning Board with the authority to reduce the amount of square footage for which a PIP must be made where a “property owner makes publicly accessible, land designated in the master plan as a recommended public open space.” This update is necessary to provide M-NCPPC and property owners with an effective and flexible option for creating the many public open spaces prioritized by the Minor Master Plan. Saul looks forward to the opportunity to continue to work with the County and other stakeholders to deliver a segment of the Eastern Greenway as privately owned public space in connection with the 8001 Wisconsin Avenue development.

We thank you for your time and consideration reviewing these written comments and are very much encouraged by the Minor Master Plan and BOZ ZTA.

Very truly yours,

**Selzer Gurvitch Rabin Wertheimer
& Polott, P.C.**

C. Robert Dalrymple

By: _____
C. Robert Dalrymple

Matthew M. Gordon

By: _____
Matthew M. Gordon

cc: Ms. Cindy Gibson
Ms. Pam Dunn
Mr. Jason Sartori
Mr. Elza Hisel-McCoy
Brian Downie, B.F. Saul