

**GROSVENOR-STRATHMORE METRO STATION**



**MANDATORY REFERRAL APPLICATION  
NORTH BETHESDA, MD**

**Submission by:  
Fivesquares JDA at Grosvenor Metro, LLC  
On behalf of  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority**

In accordance with Section III of the Mandatory Referral Guidelines, the summary chart below lists the Drawings and Documents submitted in support of this Mandatory Referral Application.

<b>Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station Mandatory Referral Application List of Drawings and Documents</b>			
<i>Item No.</i>	<i>Item Description</i>	<i>MR Section III</i>	<i>File Name for Upload to MNCPPC</i>
1	Mandatory Referral Written Narrative	Section III (1)	01-DESC-MR2018XXXX
2	Mandatory Referral Local Area Map	Section III (2)	02-LOCAL-MR2018XXXX
3	Mandatory Referral Cover Sheet	Section III (3)	03-MRPLAN-MR2018XXXX-001
4	Mandatory Referral Approvals	Section III (3)	03-MRPLAN-MR2018XXXX-002
5	Mandatory Referral Site Plan	Section III (3)	03-MRPLAN-MR2018XXXX-003
6	Color-Coded Utility Plan	Section III (4)	04-UTIL-MR2018XXXX-001
7	Vehicle Circulation Plan	Section III (5)	05-CIRC-MR2018XXXX-001
8	Bike and Pedestrian Circulation Plan	Section III (5)	05-CIRC-MR2018XXXX-002
	Approved NRI / FSD Plan	Section III (6)	NOT APPLICABLE
	Special Protection Area/Water Quality Plan	Section III (7)	NOT APPLICABLE
9	Preliminary Forest Conservation Plans - Cover	Section III (8)	08-FCP-MR2018XXXX-001
10	Composite Final FCP	Section III (8)	08-FCP-MR2018XXXX-002
11	Detailed Final FCP (Previous L-4)	Section III (8)	08-FCP-MR2018XXXX-003
12	Detailed Final FCP (Previous L-5)	Section III (8)	08-FCP-MR2018XXXX-004
13	Final FCP Details	Section III (8)	08-FCP-MR2018XXXX-005
14	Preliminary Stormwater Management Concept Plan	Section III (10)	09-SWM-MR2018XXXX-001
15	Preliminary Stormwater Management Concept Drainage Map	Section III (10)	09-SWM-MR2018XXXX-002
16	Landscaping and Lighting Plan	Section III (11)	10-LL-MR2018XXXX-001
	Noise Compliance Statement	Section III (13)	NOT APPLICABLE
17	Architectural Drawing - Life Safety Plans	Section III (14)	12-ARCH-MR2018XXXX-001
18	Architectural Drawing - Ground Tier Plan	Section III (14)	12-ARCH-MR2018XXXX-002
19	Architectural Drawing - Second Tier Plan	Section III (14)	12-ARCH-MR2018XXXX-003
20	Architectural Drawing - Third and Fifth Tier Plan	Section III (14)	12-ARCH-MR2018XXXX-004
21	Architectural Drawing - Fourth Tier Plan	Section III (14)	12-ARCH-MR2018XXXX-005
22	Architectural Drawing - Top Tier Plan	Section III (14)	12-ARCH-MR2018XXXX-006
23	Architectural Drawing - Elevation Views	Section III (14)	12-ARCH-MR2018XXXX-007
24	Architectural Drawing - Building Sections	Section III (14)	12-ARCH-MR2018XXXX-008
25	Traffic Impact Statement	Section III (15)	13-TIS-MR2018XXXX
26	Overall Concept Plan		15-CNCPT-MR2018XXXX-001
27	Existing Conditions Plan		16-EXIST-MR2018XXXX-001
28	Fire Access Plan		16-FIRE-MR2018XXXX-001
29	WMATA Authorization Letter for MNCPPC		16-LOA-MNCPPC-MR2018XXXX
30	Tree Variance Letter		16-VAR-MR2018XXXX
31	Mandatory Referral Application		16-MR-APP-MR2018XXXX
32	Forest Conservation Plan Application		16-FCP-APP-MR2018XXXX

## **Mandatory Referral Written Narrative Grosvenor – Strathmore Metro Station**

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority ("WMATA"), through Fivesquares JDA at Grosvenor Metro, LLC ("Fivesquares"), hereby submits these Mandatory Referral exhibits in connection with various site improvements to the existing 6-story garage and Kiss & Ride and removal of the surface parking lot on the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station site (collectively, the "Mandatory Referral Project").

### **I. Background**

WMATA is the fee simple owner of the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station site, which is approximately 14.5 acres located east of the intersection of Rockville Pike and Tuckerman Lane in North Bethesda, MD ("the Property").<sup>1</sup> WMATA has selected Fivesquares to develop the portion of the Property not used for transit purposes. The Property is currently improved with a 6-story structured parking garage, a bus loop and related facilities, a Kiss & Ride with short term parking, and a surface parking lot that serves as commuter parking for the adjacent Metro Station.

This Mandatory Referral package addresses only the WMATA-related public improvements described below. The broader (and private) Strathmore Square redevelopment will be processed as a separate application(s) and subject to future review by M-NCPPC.

### **II. Prior Approvals**

WMATA has made various improvements to the Property over the years. The existing garage and forest conservation plan were approved in 2001 through Mandatory Referral Case No. MR-2000201.

### **III. Project Details**

#### **A. Site Location and Surroundings**

The Property is bordered on the north and east by Tuckerman Lane and is just south and east of the intersection of Tuckerman Lane and Rockville Pike. Fronting the Property to the north is the Music Center at Strathmore. Directly abutting the Property to the west is Rockville Pike; the Metro Station itself is located immediately east of Rockville Pike in the same north-south orientation. Fronting the Property to the south are various multi-family residential developments.

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<sup>1</sup> The Property is known as Parcel P428 (Tax Account No. 04-00055028). WMATA is not subject to Chapter 50 subdivision requirements. A garage and other infrastructure facilities already are located on the Property.

And fronting the Property on the east side of Tuckerman Lane are single-family homes, buffered from the site by a stream valley and a large forested area, condominium residential units, and a private school known as the Academy of Holy Cross.

The Property currently is developed with the Metro Station itself, including a bus facility and Kiss & Ride, and a large structured parking garage and expansive surface parking lot that both serve as commuter parking for the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station.

B. Hours of Operation and Types of Uses

The WMATA parking garage is a 24-hour operating facility. The Metro Station and bus facilities operate generally between the hours of 5:30am and 11pm. The current uses on the Property consist of public infrastructure and facilities. No change to the existing use is planned.

C. Conformance with County Plan

The project is consistent with the County's General Plan, other functional plans, and public plans or programs for the area. The Property has been rezoned to CR 3.0, C-0.5, R-2.75, H-300' in connection with the *2017 Approved and Adopted Grosvenor Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan* (the "Minor Master Plan") and Sectional Map Amendment H-127.<sup>2</sup> Section 59-3.1.6 of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance ("Zoning Ordinance") indicates that Structured Parking is a permitted use in the CR zone.

The Mandatory Referral Project is in substantial conformance with the goals and objectives of the Minor Master Plan, including the improvements to WMATA's facilities. The modifications proposed in this Mandatory Referral Project are necessary to implement the private Strathmore Square redevelopment. As such, this Mandatory Referral Project takes an important first step towards implementing the overall goals and objectives of the Minor Master Plan.

In the near-term, the proposed modifications will achieve the following Minor Master Plan goals:

- Enhance bicycle amenities at the Metro Site; and
- Reduce and slow untreated stormwater runoff to improve water quality in surrounding streams and creeks.

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<sup>2</sup> The Public Hearing before the Montgomery County Council for the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan Sectional Map Amendment H-127 occurred on March 20, 2018, and the final action by the Council approving H-127 occurred on April 10, 2018 (Resolution No 18-1085).

D. Pedestrian and Bicycle Impact Statement

WMATA plans to construct a large bike station (approximately 20' wide by 80' long) on the western end of the Property, near the entrance to the Metro Station.

The Traffic Impact Statement discusses Pedestrian and Bicycle design and is being submitted concurrently with this written narrative.

E. Roadway Section

There is no new roadway proposed for the Mandatory Referral Project except for an additional exit from the existing parking garage. As noted in Section IV.2 below, the typical road section for the Mandatory Referral Project meets WMATA's standards as well as Montgomery County's applicable standards.

F. Historic Work Permit status

The Property is not designated historic in the Minor Master Plan, the Locational Atlas or National Register, nor are there any historic structures located on the Property.

G. Phasing Schedule or Plan

The improvements described in Section IV below will be constructed in one phase.

Other improvements by Fivesquares that are not part of this Mandatory Referral Project are contemplated and will be submitted to M-NCPPC at a future date.

H. Land Ownership

WMATA owns the Property and will continue to own the Property (except for any portion that may be sold pursuant to an agreement between WMATA and Fivesquares, but the portion that may be sold will not include WMATA's transit-related facilities, including the parking garage).

I. Funding Source

The Mandatory Referral Project will be funded by WMATA.

J. Impacts to Parkland and Mitigation

The project does not impact land owned by M-NCPPC or any public parkland.

K. LEED Status

LEED no longer certifies parking garages. Thus, there are no LEED certification requirements for the Mandatory Referral Project. An alternative Green Garage Certification Program administered by the US Green Building Council, the same organization that operates LEED, will be pursued.

**IV. Project Description**

An overall Concept Plan for the entire Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station as contained in the Minor Master Plan Amendment is included in this submission for information purposes. This Mandatory Referral submission is limited to the following proposed modifications:

1. Parking Garage Expansions/ Reconfiguration and Removal of Surface Parking Lot.

The Property currently provides a total of 1,892 parking spaces in a six-level structure parking garage and surface parking lot (not including Kiss & Ride spaces). The existing surface parking lot (which provides approximately 408 spaces) is located in the future redevelopment area on the Property. Thus, in anticipation of the Strathmore Square redevelopment, WMATA plans to remove the existing surface parking lot.

WMATA plans to expand the existing parking garage to accommodate the parking spaces that will be displaced by the removal of the surface parking lot to ensure adequate commuter parking remains available on-site. Additions to the existing parking garage are proposed on the southern and western façades. Additionally, the interior layout of the garage may be reconfigured. These improvements will result in approximately 414 more parking spaces in the garage, bringing the total parking on-site, after removal of the surface parking lot, to 1898 spaces (again not including the short term Kiss & Ride spaces), an increase of six parking spaces.

2. Improved Circulation

The location of the existing vehicular access points will remain unchanged with this submission. The broader (and private) Strathmore Square development will be processed as a separate application(s) and subject to future review by M-NCPPC. The future application(s) will include a new internal street consistent with the recommendations of the Minor Master Plan. There is a new proposed exit from the garage that, if and when M-NCPPC approves the private

Strathmore Square development, will allow traffic to turn right from the garage expansion and exit towards Tuckerman Lane South over a new internal road to be built as part of that development per the Minor Master Plan. The current Mandatory Referral Project incorporates this new exit and includes a temporary exit configuration to accommodate this new exit via the existing garage access road until the future internal street is constructed. The typical road section for the Mandatory Referral Project meets WMATA's standards as contained in its Station Site and Access Planning Manual, as well as Montgomery County's standards for fire access and road section standards (*i.e.*, for a minor urban arterial road).

### 3. Reconfiguration of the Kiss and Ride

The Property also provides Kiss & Ride spaces for users of the Metro Station, spanning almost the full length of the western Property boundary. The southern portion of the Kiss & Ride spaces, which are not heavily used, will be displaced by the future private Strathmore Square redevelopment. Therefore, WMATA plans to reconfigure the remaining portion of the Kiss & Ride area. Following completion of the proposed modifications, a total of 75 Kiss & Ride spaces will remain on-site, as compared to 80 existing today. (The net result will be that the overall commuter parking availability at the Metro Station will remain essentially unchanged, with six long-term spaces added and five short-term spaces removed.)

### 4. Public Art

The Property currently includes an Arts Walk, which is located along the western perimeter of the parking garage, beneath a covered canopy. Minor modifications to the Arts Walk are required to accommodate the proposed garage expansions, and additional enhancements are proposed to improve access to the Arts Walk for pedestrians. Specifically, the canopy will be removed, the vertical elevation will be lowered, the pathway and existing artwork will be reconfigured and lighting and signage improvements will be added for improved visibility of the Arts Walk for Strathmore patrons, commuters, and pedestrians in general. Although the existing canopy will be removed, the proposed western garage expansion has been designed to extend over the Arts Walk to provide even better protection from the natural elements for patrons walking in the area. The existing art will be removed during construction and relocated in the same general vicinity after completion of construction.

### 5. Bike Station Building

WMATA plans to construct a large bike station (approximately 20' wide by 80' long) on the western end of the Property, near the entrance to the Metro Station. The bike station will provide approximately 100 bicycle parking spaces on the Property and will be located entirely beneath a covered canopy to provide protection for bicycles from the natural elements.

## 6. Associated Storm Drain and Stormwater Management

There is an existing stormwater management pond on-site at the southern end of the Property. Stormwater is currently conveyed via a closed system (storm drain pipe) to the pond, which ultimately discharges to Rock Creek. In connection with the modifications described herein, WMATA plans improvements to the existing storm drain system and to provide stormwater management per current regulations.

Applicable requirements under Chapter 19 of the Montgomery County Code will be addressed in the Stormwater Management Concept Plan to be submitted to the Department of Permitting Services. The concept stormwater management plan incorporates the State's / County's Environmental Site Design to the Maximum Extent Practicable, according to the latest revision to Chapter 5 of the MDE Stormwater Management Design Manual. The proposed development includes treatment via two (2) micro-bio retentions (planter-type) located adjacent to the parking garage, two (2) micro-bio retentions (at-grade facilities) located along Tuckerman Lane, and two (2) underground stormwater management storage and treatment systems located beneath the Kiss & Ride parking area. Ultimately, the proposed stormwater management system will allow for the removal of the less-efficient existing pond.

## **V. Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation**

The Property is subject to the requirements of Chapter 22A of the Montgomery County Code. A Natural Resources Inventory/ Forest Stand Delineation No. 4-19990610 was prepared for the Property and approved by M-NCPPC on November 20, 1998. In connection with the previous Mandatory Referral review (No. MR-00201), a Forest Conservation Plan was approved for the Property. The previous Forest Conservation Plan required approximately 1.74 acres of existing forest on the Property to be placed in a Forest Conservation Easement and 1.40 acres of reforestation was to occur offsite. The modifications proposed by this Mandatory Referral do not trigger any additional Forest Conservation requirements.

It has recently come to WMATA's attention that the previously required Forest Conservation Easement was not recorded in the County's land records. Additionally, at some point over the past 17+ years, a portion of the Forest Conservation Easement area was cleared (approximately 0.11 acres) to accommodate the construction of a stairway leading from the sidewalk along Tuckerman Lane to the commuter parking lot.

Given the quality of the forest and the County's goals and objectives as expressed through the Minor Master Plan for future transit-oriented development at this location, WMATA plans to satisfy prior (for prior site work and the stairs) as well as new, future Forest Conservation requirements through either payment of a fee-in lieu or an off-site forest bank. As part of this arrangement, WMATA requests approval to release the prior Forest Conservation Easement

requirement and instead to phase the implementation/payment of the Forest Conservation requirements. As a result, because the existing forest on-site will not be removed until construction on the future private Strathmore Square redevelopment begins, this arrangement will defer payment/final compliance until such time as the forest is actually cleared.

Additionally, as shown on the Forest Conservation Plan Amendment submitted currently with this Narrative to M-NCPPC for review, there are four (4) specimen trees on-site that will be removed in connection with the proposed modifications and three (3) specimen trees that are being impacted but will remain. A Tree Variance Request is being submitted concurrently with this submission to comply with the Natural Resources Article, Title 5, Section 5-1607 of the Maryland Code that requires filing a variance to impact the critical root zone or remove trees that either have a diameter-at-breast-height of 30" or greater, or trees that are 75% of the diameter of the County champion. Mitigation for the specimen trees will be provided with on-site tree planting.

The Property is not located within a Special Protection Area. The Property contains no floodplain, protected soils, endangered species, or other natural features that would impact development.

A topographic map of the Property depicting the general physical characteristics of the site with contours at one-foot intervals and identifying slopes of 25% and greater has been provided.

## **VI. Montgomery County Noise Ordinance**

WMATA and its contractors will comply with Montgomery County's Noise Ordinance with respect to construction related activities (*e.g.*, regulated hours for construction activities). The Noise Guidelines prepared by the Environmental Planning Division of the Montgomery County Park and Planning Commission, dated June 1983, are not applicable to this project as there are no noise-sensitive land uses proposed.

## **VII. Community Outreach**

Fivesquares, together with WMATA and the Planning Board staff, undertook a sustained and multi-faceted community outreach and education effort during the recent Minor Master Plan process. The modifications proposed by this Mandatory Referral Application have been presented at and discussed with the community in those meetings.

A list of the public meetings and outreach conducted by the Montgomery County Planning Department during the Minor Master Plan process can be found on Park and Planning's website:

<http://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-2/grosvenor-strathmore-minor-master-plan-amendment/public-meetings-outreach/>

Additionally, the Applicant held a community workshop on the proposed Strathmore Square redevelopment on September 14, 2016, as well as numerous individual meetings with various stakeholders (including individual HOAs, non-profit/ community organizations, Bethesda Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce etc.).

## **VIII. Considerations for Planning Board Review**

The *2008 Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning Uniform Standards for Mandatory Referral Review* provides guidance for the Planning Board's review of mandatory referral applications, and specifically recommends consideration of the land use and planning aspects identified in this Section. The Project conforms to these land use and planning aspects, to the extent that such aspects are applicable or relevant to the Project, as described below:

### **A. Minor Master Plan Conformance**

As discussed above, the Mandatory Referral Application is in substantial conformance with and takes an important first step toward implementing the goals and objectives of the Minor Master Plan.

### **B. Zoning Ordinance Conformance**

The proposed improvements comply with the requirements of the CR Zone. As mentioned above, parking structures and related facilities are permitted in the CR Zone.

### **C. Neighborhood Compatibility**

The Mandatory Referral Project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed garage expansions are located internal to the site, on the southern and western façades of the existing garage, and therefore do not face directly on to any existing neighboring uses. Additionally, the main purpose of the garage expansion is to replace the surface parking spaces that will be displaced by the future Strathmore Square redevelopment, to ensure adequate commuter parking remains on-site, thus avoiding any negative parking impacts on the adjacent communities.

### **D. Adequacy, Safety and Efficiency of Site Design**

As discussed in detail above, the Mandatory Referral Project ensures adequate parking continues to be provided on-site and will improve the safety and efficiency of pedestrian and

vehicular circulation. The location of the existing vehicular access points will remain unchanged with this Application.

E. Compliance with County Code Chapters 22A and 19 (as applicable)

As discussed above, the Property will comply with applicable requirements of Chapter 22A and Chapter 19.

F. Water Quality Plan Compliance (if applicable)

The Property is not located within a Special Protection Area and no Preliminary or Final Water Quality Plan is required.

G. Necessity for Park Use (for disposition requests)

This provision is inapplicable because the Mandatory Referral Project does not involve the disposition of a County surplus school. Furthermore, there is no impact from the Mandatory Referral Project on public parkland.

H. Evaluation of Alternatives (if applicable)

As discussed above, the Mandatory Referral Project is consistent with the General Plan, the Minor Master Plan, and other plans and policies for the area, and is otherwise compatible with surrounding properties and the neighborhood, the transportation network, the environment or other resources. As such, the Mandatory Referral Project does not give rise to a need for evaluation of alternatives or mitigation measures.

## **IX. Conclusion**

The Mandatory Referral Project will benefit both the County and the surrounding community by improving connectivity on-site, providing improved stormwater management, ensuring adequate commuter parking continues to remain available on-site, and importantly, facilitating the future development of the Property with a transit-oriented, predominantly residential redevelopment with numerous public benefits and amenities in accordance with the Minor Master Plan. The development of the Property is also expected to increase WMATA ridership, which is an important goal for the area-wide Metrorail system. For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Planning Board promptly review this Mandatory Referral Application and provide its concurrence.