

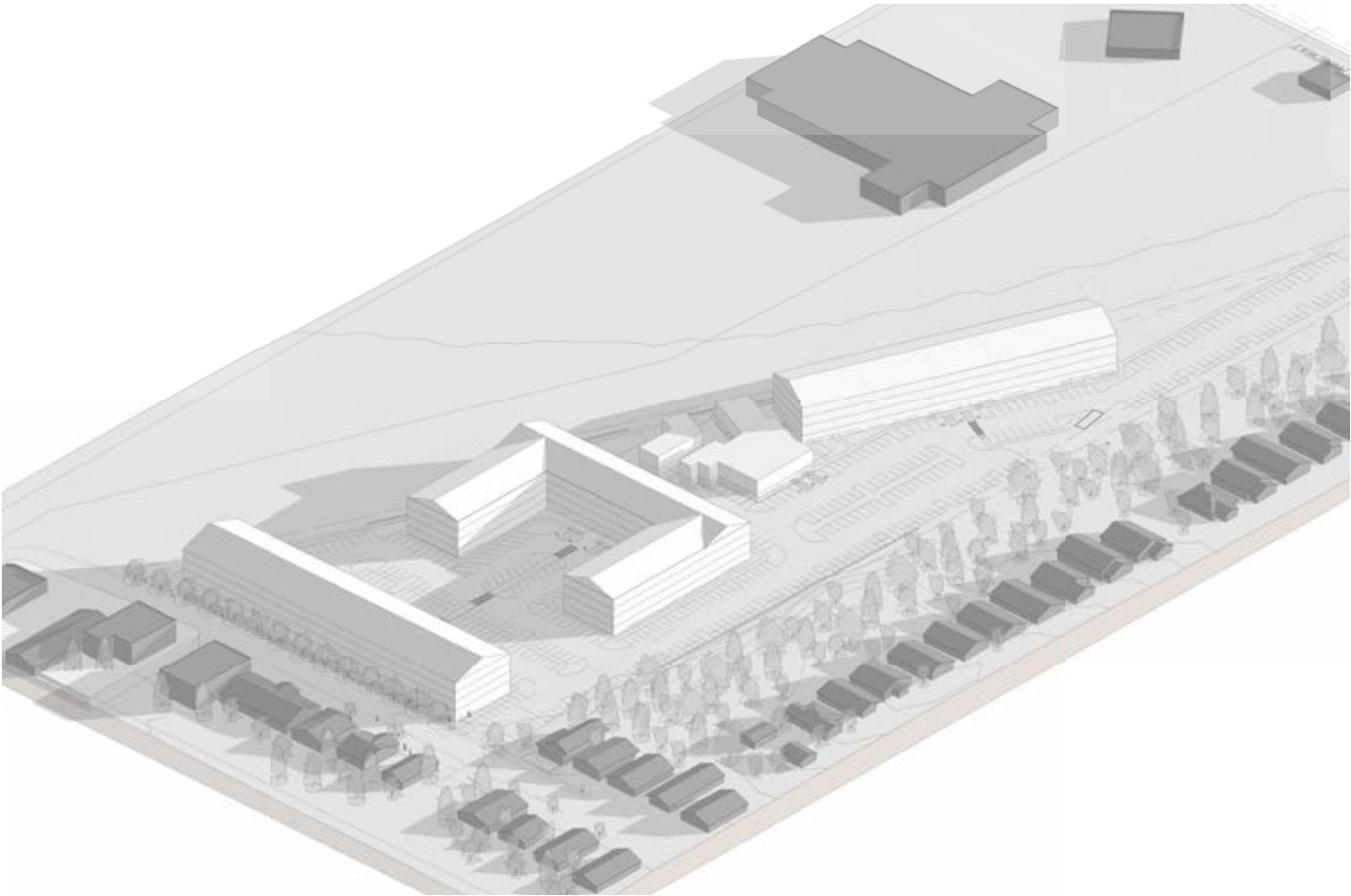
Exide Battery Plant Development

Community Feedback and Recommendations

Developed by
Capitol View Neighborhood Association
Development Committee



CAPITOL VIEW
ESTABLISHED 1912



THE PROPOSED EXIDE BATTERY PLANT DEVELOPMENT

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A note from the Capitol View Neighborhood Association

Dear Atlanta Department of City Planning:

We provide the attached report of recommendations for the proposed Rangewater development, situated on the former Exide Battery factory site, located at 1246 Allene Avenue. We have discussed the development directly with Rangewater representatives and have reviewed available documents pertaining to the site plans. After much research and deliberation, we cannot support the proposed development as it is currently envisioned. To be clear: we are not opposed to the development of the site, nor do we have any issue with the increased residential density that the plan proposes. Rather, we find that the design of the site plan does not encompass the quality and value of a development that the surrounding neighborhoods and residents deserve. We welcome change, but we insist that a development of this size and impact be more carefully crafted to provide value to existing residents and greater opportunity for versatility well into the future. Our detailed recommendations--which address building scale, BeltLine access, land use, housing affordability, among other topics--follow this letter.

We would like to preface our recommendations with a reflection on Rangewater's approach to the surrounding neighborhood and the NPU. Our principal impression is that Rangewater has rushed through the process of presenting its plans to the neighborhood, requesting support for their SAP application without providing the courtesy of adequate time to process the plans or give proper feedback. To be frank, they have sown widespread distrust among the residents of the neighborhood. Had Rangewater presented its plans well in advance of applying for the SAP, it could have acted to incorporate some community recommendations into the application itself. Instead, Rangewater's representatives chose to file the SAP first, beginning the clock on the 21-day feedback window before they even so much as introduced themselves. Beyond communicating that it did not really value the opinions of the neighborhood, Rangewater also offered a false impression that the neighborhood's input should take the form of an up or down vote of support--that our recommendations would not matter and that there was really not time to change things. As it stands, Rangewater will present to NPU-X for the first time at their general body meeting on October 12th, which is actually after the initial deadline for SAP feedback (October 10th at 12pm), a situation which would have given the NPU no input on the SAP application. Thankfully the city planner reviewing the application agreed to extend the deadline until after NPU-X meets. Realizing the narrow window provided to the NPU, the Capitol View Neighborhood Association quickly formed a committee to review the development, survey neighborhood feedback, and draft a response to present to the NPU for adoption.

We urge the reviewers of Rangewater's Capitol View development application to pump the breaks on what appears to be a rushed effort to develop an important parcel of real estate: one that comprises the entire stretch of the Capitol View neighborhood's direct beltline access and sits squarely between the Pittsburgh Yards site and Murphy Crossing. The impact that this development will have on the BeltLine corridor cannot be overstated.

Sincerely,
Capitol View Neighborhood Association

Section I

Neighborhood Concerns

Resident Perspectives

Community Requests

Resident Perspectives

Community Survey

Platforms used: In-person conversations, Nextdoor and Email

After five (5) days of engaging with our neighborhood-at-large, we received feedback published on Nextdoor and email about the proposed Exide Battery Development. There is some consensus for the project but with conditions.

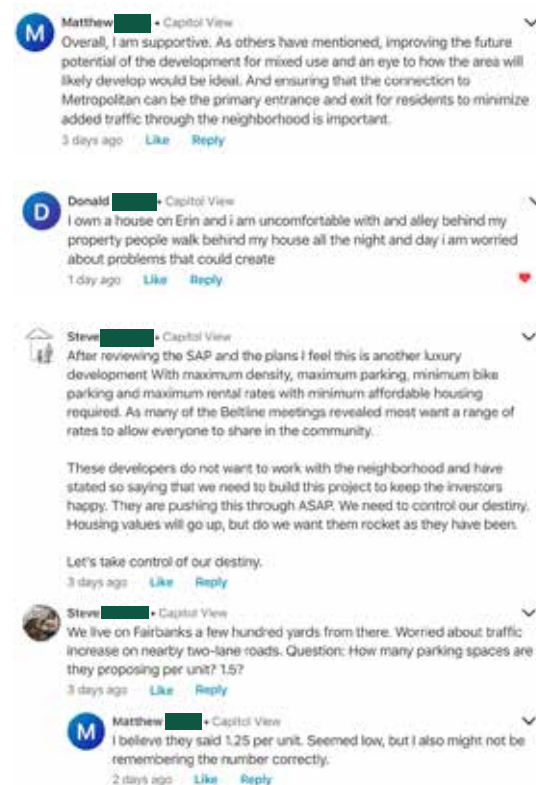
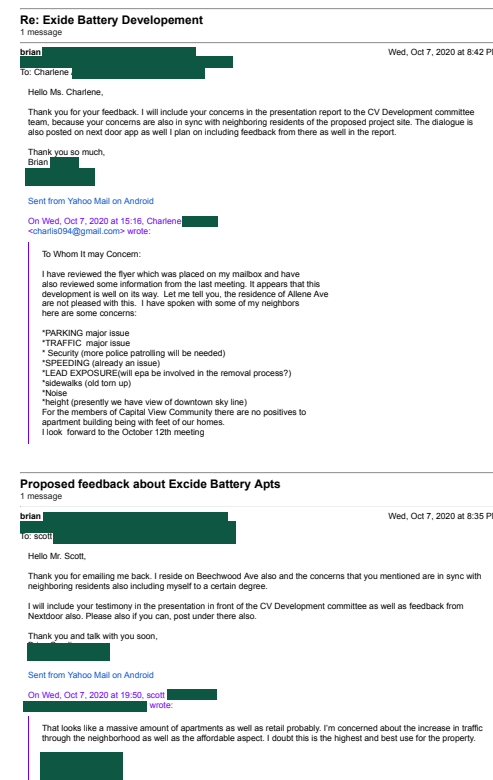
Overall, the majority of the residents agree that the scope of project would be too large for the neighborhood in terms of density. The height of the structure on Allene is too tall and needs to be scaled down to a level that would compliment rather than compete with the existing street and neighborhood vernacular.

Other mentioned concerns include that having multi-family, affordable housing apartments could bring neighborhood property values down and crime increase. Some residents feel that a mixed-use development could increase property values and is more palatable. Residents would prefer a mixed-use development to include condos and affordable housing apartments, and a few small retail/commercial facilities, such as shops and offices. They request that parking be planned a few blocks away near the Aluma Farm and the Sprint Warehouse.

In addition, residents are concerned that the proposed entrances to the property would increase traffic and reduce the quietness of the neighborhood. We suggest that the points of entrances and exits need to be rerouted to Metropolitan Pkwy instead. There is a deaf school and pre-school/day care in the vicinity of the proposed project, and this project could interfere with residential neighborhood activity due to increased traffic.

In respect to the Atlanta Beltline, neighboring residents think that it would be unfair for the proposed project to have their own direct access to the Beltline, while tenured existing residents will not.

If and once a project is approved the community demands that the design team and developer respect the character of the neighborhood. Working and quiet hours should be applied during construction times as well as once the complex is inhabited.



Affordable Housing

Residents have expressed concerns about affordable housing, expressing a desire that Rangewater provide affordability, and also expressing the desire that any affordability provided be of a high quality that fits into the character of the neighborhood. The current plan to provide units within the structure that are of equal quality with non-affordable units meets our concerns, however the volume and depth of affordability planned does not. Our recommendations for Rangewater's affordable housing offerings follow, in Section II.

Traffic

Residents have expressed concerns about traffic, expressing concern that the added density will create traffic blocks on Allene Avenue, Erin Avenue, Metropolitan Parkway, Dill Avenue, and other neighboring residential streets. The lack of a cut through from Metropolitan Parkway to Allene Avenue could potentially increase traffic on both of these streets immensely. Our recommendation is that Rangewater perform a traffic and environmental impact study to prove that the proposed traffic plan will not dramatically alter the current traffic situation, or, if it will, that Rangewater presents a traffic improvement plan.

Architectural Design

Residents have expressed concerns about the lack of respect and sensitivity to the existing architecture of the neighborhood. It appears that, the character of the neighborhood was not considered at the time of design. The sheer height, materiality, and geometric language of the facades do not seem to be cohesive with the existing site. Residents feel that the presented design, in its current state and scale, is an eyesore to the historic and humble character of the neighborhood.

Community Requests

Review Beltline/Murphy Crossings Meetings

Residents ask that Rangewater and the design team review the Beltline/Murphy Crossings meetings which show several surveys of opinions of neighborhood residents. These meetings and their results can begin to answer questions about the neighborhood attitude and how this particular project can fit into the fabric of the Capitol View neighborhood.

Review Existing Precedent

Residents ask that Rangewater and the design team review existing precedents that exist in surrounding neighborhoods that have succeeded. An example is the Sylvan Hills Senior Housing Mixed income development starting with seniors and finishing off with market rate townhouses.

Section II

Neighborhood Recommendation

Affordability

Land Use

Site & Building Design

Neighborhood Recommendation: Affordability

We are concerned about the impact that the proposed Rangewater development will have on the affordability of our neighborhood for current residents, and do not find the existing affordability plan adequate to curb that impact. Rangewater has stated that they will target “creative professionals” to rent their apartments at rates beginning at \$1300/month for a studio apartment. In contrast, the average gross rent for units in the surrounding census tract (comprising the neighborhoods of Capitol View and Capitol View Manor) is \$1179/month. The vast majority of housing units in the surrounding census tract are single-family homes with upwards of 1200 square feet per unit. This means that a creative professional renting a studio apartment in Rangewater’s development will be paying 110% of the rent that a neighbor down the street in a single family home pays. It is a certainty that the presence of this building will apply upward pressure on rents in the surrounding neighborhood, squeezing out existing renters, over half of whom are already estimated to be cost burdened (399 of 613 renter households are cost burdened according to 2013-2017 5-year ACS data).

We encourage Rangewater to revisit its plan to provide minimum affordability standards under the BeltLine inclusionary zoning requirements. At present, Rangewater states it will offer 15% of its units at rates affordable to households earning 80% Area Median Income (AMI). Under this framework, Rangewater’s rent for an “affordable” studio unit--the least expensive unit available--would be \$1158/month: nearly equal to existing average rents in the surrounding neighborhood of detached, single-family homes. When rents rise as a result of Rangewater’s development, families currently renting two-and-three bedroom neighborhood homes would not even be able to afford the “affordable” units set aside in the very complex that led to their displacement.

We urge Rangewater to provide units at deeper levels of affordability to offset the impact its development will invariably have on the surrounding area. If Rangewater is concerned that it cannot afford to set aside units with truly affordable rents, we suggest that they explore engaging with Atlanta Housing’s Housing Choice Voucher program, which would provide full fair market rent for units accepting vouchers. Participation in this program would not impact Rangewater’s bottom line and would provide more space in their development for households who deserve to live in and enjoy the development Rangewater brings to the BeltLine.

Neighborhood Recommendation: Land Use

What best fits into the site and supports the neighborhood?

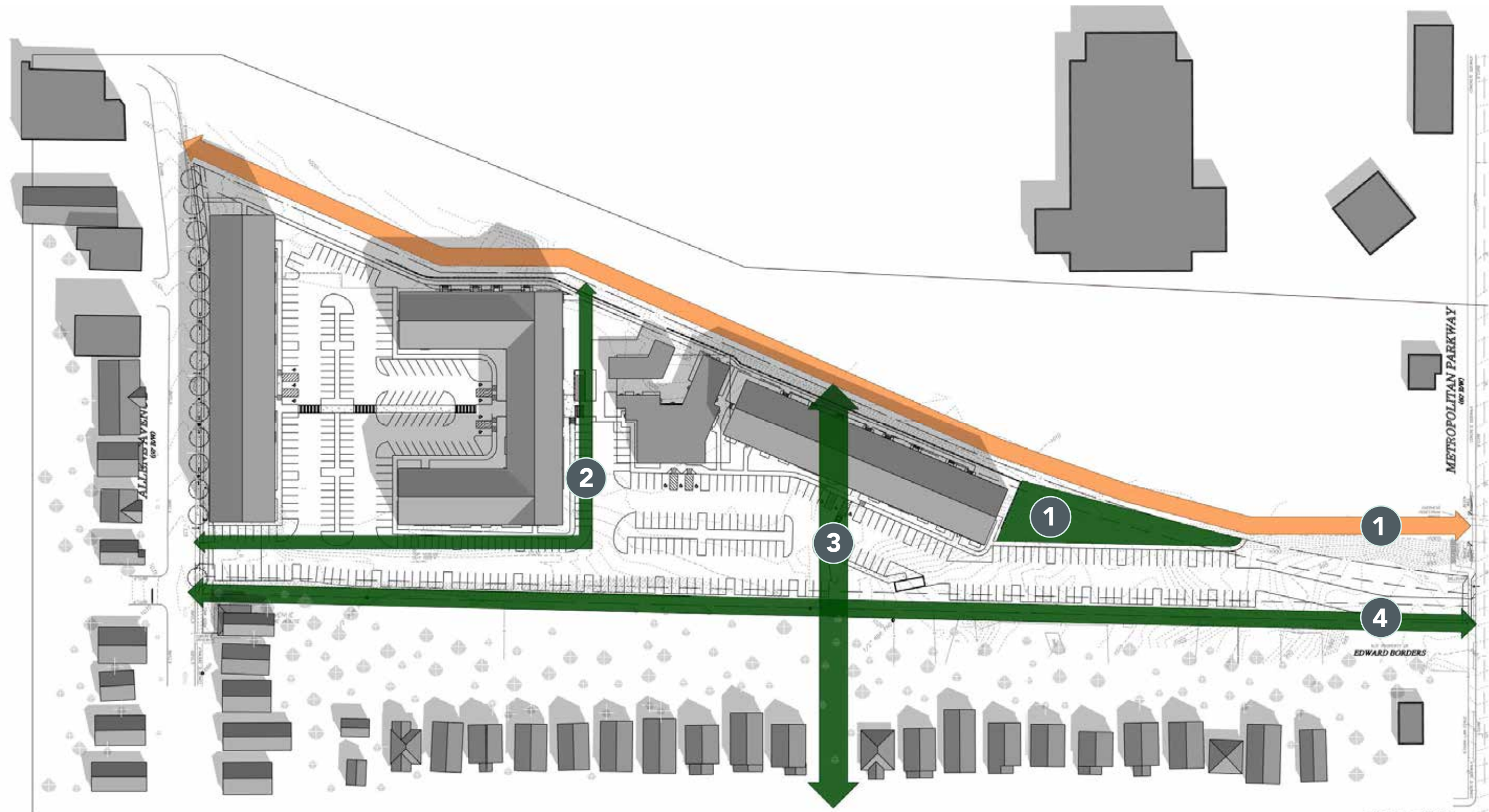
What types of buildings can be adapted as economics and neighborhood changes?

Rangewater has expressed an awareness that as Atlanta grows in the coming years, there will be a need for greater density, particularly around the Beltline, which was formed for the explicit purpose of connecting the city through walkability, bicycle infrastructure, and eventually, transit. This greater density, paired with these alternate modes of transportation will create an opportunity to reinvision this development in coming years as Atlanta grows.

To that end, we recommend that the development should prioritize adaptability through an emphasis on mixed use. While the current zoning has a focus on residential, there is no reason that the first floor of the buildings cannot be built to allow for a change to commercial or retail use in the future, as demand for those uses increases. They could be built as flexible live-work spaces, for instance. This emphasis on adaptability would ultimately make the development more desirable and resilient, as it would expand the possibilities for future use. We ultimately want the development to be as successful as possible, and we believe that to limit the development’s use to strictly residential would severely limit that success.

We believe the development should also prioritize the adaptability of its surface parking. In a community meeting, Rangewater acknowledged that there may be a demand to repurpose the surface parking of this site in coming years as the demand for density increases. Unfortunately, the plans as presented offer little opportunity to repurpose the extensive surface parking. One parking lot is almost completely surrounded by buildings, which would make future redevelopment of that spot nearly impossible. The rest of the parking is spread out over a narrow slice along the south of the property, such that development of that area would necessarily cut off traffic routes across the site. As presented, it’s hard to imagine repurposing much of the parking without significantly hindering the use of the existing buildings. We recommend that the entire layout of the buildings and parking lots should be changed to allow the maximum amount of flexibility for future development. There should be a plan envisioned for parts of the parking lot to be redeveloped, without impeding the parking that is left.

Neighborhood Recommendation: Site Design



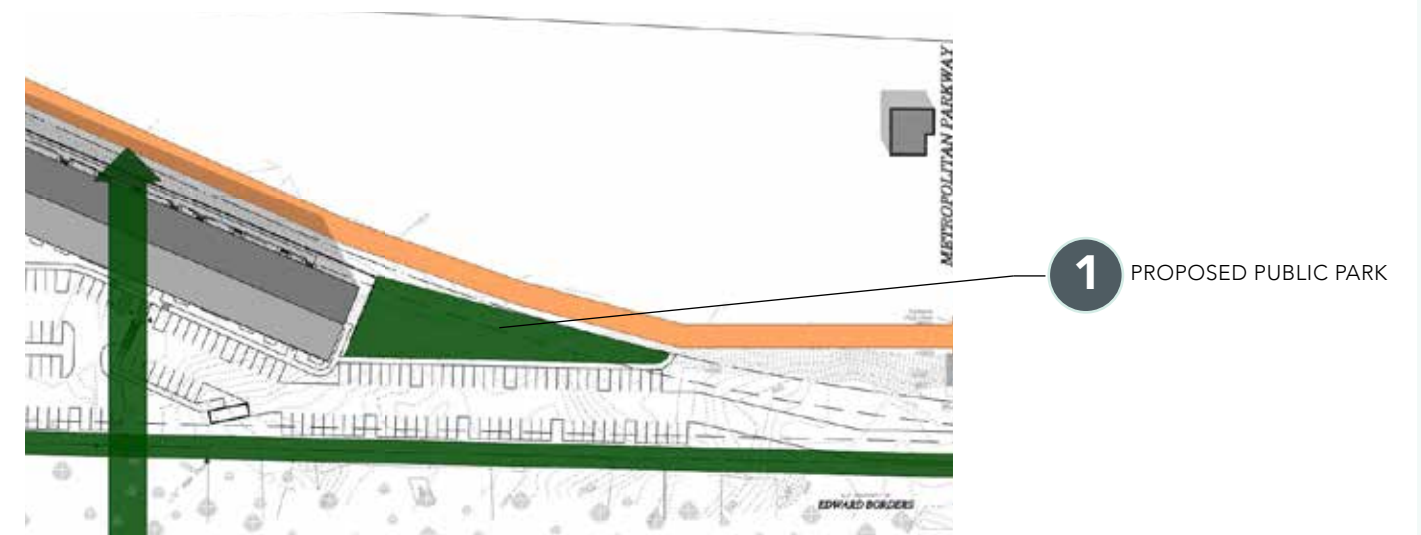
Please see further details on the recommended site design on the subsequent pages. Numbers correspond to the points made in several sections as noted.

Beltline Access

- 1 The project site parcel stretches across the entirety of Capitol View neighborhood's direct beltline access. The plans presented by Rangewater displayed conflicting design elements regarding public beltline access through their project, making it difficult to understand what their plan is. We understand that Rangewater plans to build a ramp from the sidewalk on Metropolitan Ave south of the existing rail bridge, sloping up to the Beltline. It is our understanding that this ramp would be available to the public. We appreciate this feature of the design, and want to emphasize that **such an access path should be wide enough for comfortable mixing of pedestrians and bikes in both directions, and that it will also be graded to ADA standards for manual wheelchair access.** On at least one site plan provided Rangewater proposed a private dog park on a triangular sliver of land abutting the BeltLine. **We recommend that Rangewater work with the Beltline to instead transform this sliver of land, which runs alongside the public use access ramp from Metropolitan, into a pocket park available for public use.** In addition to signaling a gesture of goodwill to neighbors whose entire beltline frontage is otherwise occupied with this development, doing so would better transition the public access into the BeltLine trail itself.
- 2 The proposed site plans also represented various versions of pedestrian access through and across parking lots. At least one version of the plan did not even include crosswalks where pedestrians would need to cross a parking lot thoroughfare in order to access the BeltLine. We recommend that the development **include protected pedestrian and bike access from the southern face of the Allene Avenue building through the site to the commercial space identified as a potential coffee shop and to the BeltLine, directly.** We also recommend that Rangewater include proper pedestrian-oriented way-finding signage through their property to clearly demonstrate that the access pathways are intended for public use.
- 3 A Capitol View resident whose property abuts the development has expressed interest in working with Rangewater and the BeltLine to create interior neighborhood access to the BeltLine. We hope that Rangewater will take this unique opportunity to explore the possibility of creating access from Erin Avenue across the site plan to the Beltline. Please contact the Capitol View Neighborhood Association [info@capitolview.org] to get in touch with the neighbor who has expressed interest in exploring this possibility.

Landscaping

Green screening created using trees, bushes and other plantings is an effective and environmentally friendly solution to allow privacy and create noise barriers, among many other benefits. We feel that the southern property line in particular, which backs into the backyards of Erin Avenue residents, deserves a more dense landscape solution than what is currently proposed. Below are some examples of green screening solutions using evergreens and tall hedges that should be considered.



The inclusion of the proposed public park/green space at the site is an idea that we are excited about. The park can become a wonderful addition to our neighborhood, and a great way for future residents to meet with existing residents. The park can also act as a destination point to the adjacent Atlanta BeltLine.

An added advantage to the park is that the area could be developed as part of stormwater, since it is located at the low point of the site. This will be much less costly than the below grade systems that will be required to employ.

Traffic Study

A development that is increasing the number of households in our community by over 35% will undoubtedly have an impact on traffic in our neighborhood. A traffic study was not provided by RangeWater and Dwell because, apparently, it was not required. Therefore, CVNA sought a third-party resource to provide a traffic study analysis, found in Attachment A.

The study revealed an expected total of 1757 daily trips in and out of the development, with 50% entering and 50% exiting. The study further showed that 87% of these trips, the vast majority, would be directed toward Metropolitan Ave and only 13% directed toward Allene Ave. Importantly, this assumes that the entrance at Metropolitan is a full service entrance allowing both right and left turns, in and out.

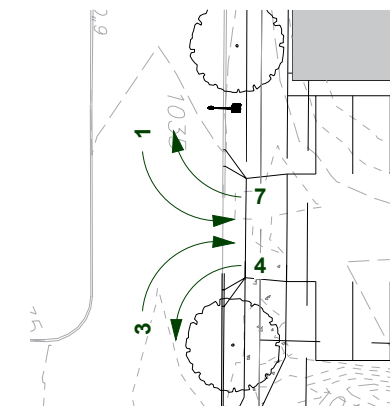
Unfortunately, the bridge abutments directly adjacent to the proposed entrance prevent the possibility of making a safe left turn onto Metropolitan, and it is doubtful that a right turn will be much safer. Therefore it is expected that traffic signaling will be required at this entrance to allow for these expected trips without redirecting them through the neighborhood.

The chart below illustrates the number of trips expected over one peak hour, am and pm, in all directions for Allene and Metropolitan. Looking just at the am rush, there are expected to be 75 outgoing trips to Metropolitan, and only 11 out to Allene. Imagine if none of those 75 could exit at Metropolitan and all of them had to travel on Allene to find their way.

As a matter of public safety, a full service entrance at Metropolitan Avenue is strongly recommended.

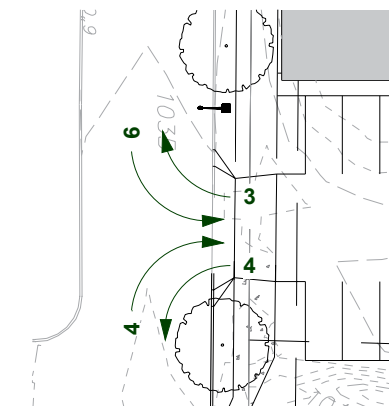
ASSUMPTIONS:

- An estimated 2,500 total daily trips (13% of the total trip distribution) occur on Allene Ave., and an estimated 17,000 total daily trips (87% of the total trip distribution) occur on Metropolitan Pkwy, currently (before considering the proposed development).
- The proposed development will add an estimated 1757 daily trips total split between Metropolitan Pkwy. and Allene Ave., respectively.
- AM peak is 8% of total, and PM peak is 9% of total.
- Entrance on Metropolitan Pkwy. is will be a full service entrance meaning both left and right turns can occur both when entering and exiting the property.



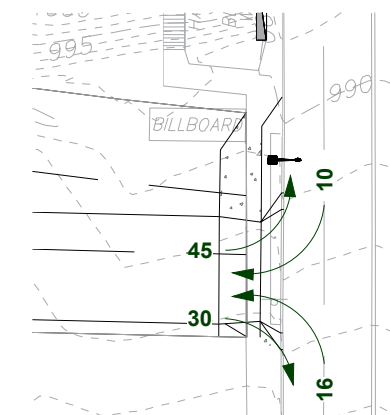
AM TRIPS
• IN = 4
• OUT = 11
• TOTAL = 15 TRIPS

ALLENE AVE. TRIPS - AM



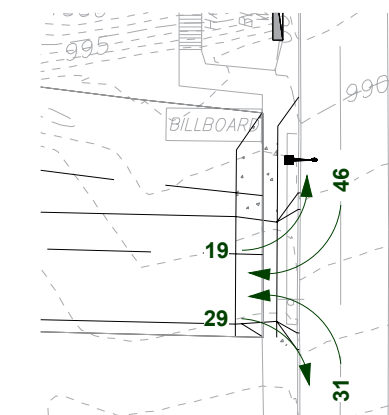
PM TRIPS
• IN = 10
• OUT = 7
• TOTAL = 17 TRIPS

ALLENE AVE. TRIPS - PM



AM TRIPS
• IN = 26
• OUT = 75
• TOTAL = 101 TRIPS

METROPOLITAN PKWY. TRIPS - AM



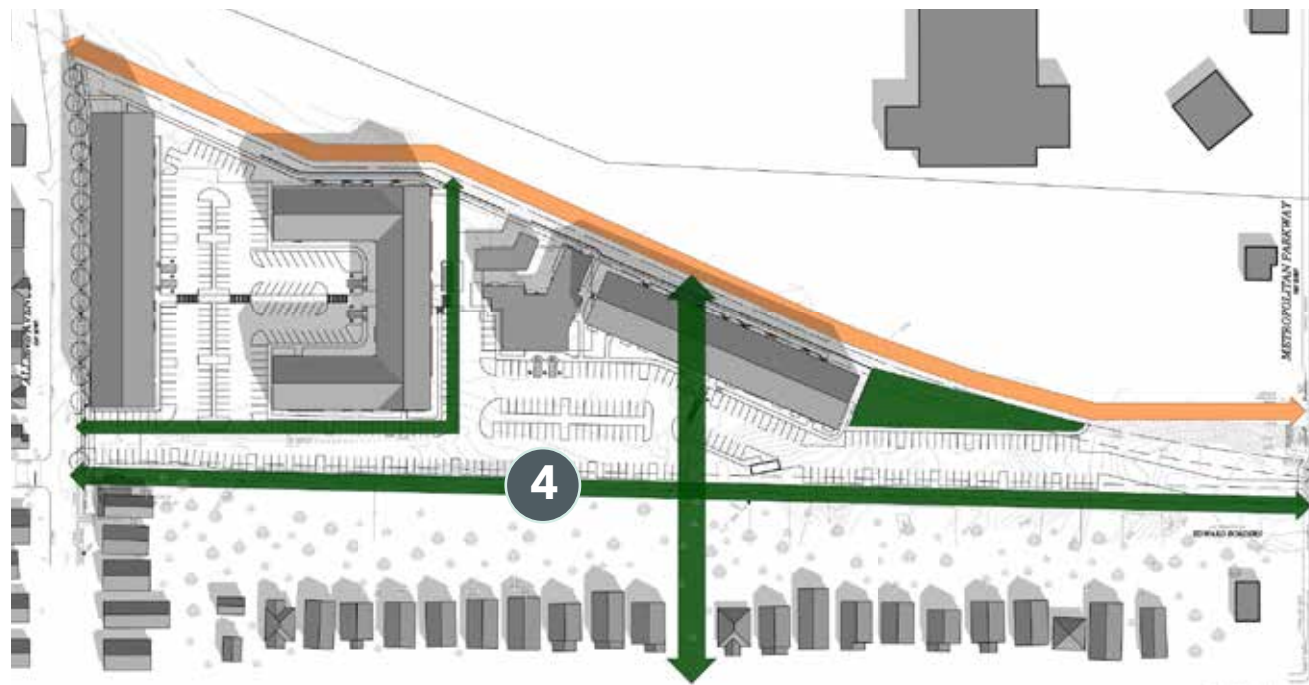
PM TRIPS
• IN = 77
• OUT = 48
• TOTAL = 125 TRIPS

METROPOLITAN PKWY. TRIPS - PM

Through Street Connection

- 4 We highly and strongly recommend that a new two-way street/pass through be created to connect Allene Avenue with Metropolitan Parkway. Effectively an extension of Beechwood Avenue, this would maintain and extend the existing grid of the Capitol View neighborhood. The entrance into the apartment complex could be moved from Allene onto this street allowing new options on site configurations.

In addition, the proposed roadway could be conceived to incorporate public angled or head in parking on its Northern side to supplant on-site parking given over to this purpose, which will mitigate parking overflow into the already densely-parked Allene Avenue and Erin Avenue.



Parking

1. The Beltline was envisioned as a way to transform Atlanta by connecting the city with alternate modes of transportation, allowing residents more options to move around the city. The aspiration of the Beltline is to envision a future with less reliance on cars. The Beltline overlay has reduced parking requirements and encourages shared parking, including counting on street parking spaces toward parking minimums.
2. The plans that Rangewater presented contain a large number of new off-street parking spaces that are at the maximum allowed for the Beltline overlay. Further, they appear to have made no effort to take advantage of the possibility of shared parking. It is our recommendation that Rangewater revisit their plans and severely reduce the amount of off-street parking spaces in their plan, both by simply reducing parking to the minimum required and developing shared parking. There is a particular opportunity for shared on-street parking along the west side of Allene Ave. Placing parallel parking spaces here will give residents of the new development proximity to their buildings, as well as slow down the speed of car traffic along this corridor, which is of particular concern to pedestrians and bicyclists.
3. Reducing parking generally will have a number of positive spillover effects: it will reduce the overall cost of this development and will allow for more affordable housing on this site; it will allow for greater flexibility for the site to be redeveloped as need change in the future; and it will reduce traffic and create less disruption to the surrounding neighborhood.
4. The bike parking is at the minimum required by the Beltline (50) and is for residents only. They do not mention if they are sheltered. Considering the development is on the Beltline and the residents may have visitors, this seems to be too little.

Lighting Plan

Considering the proximity of the parking area to the properties of our Erin Avenue neighbors, we ask that parking lot lighting is considered with sensitivity to the neighbors and the environment. Moreover, we request that the design team consider other alternative paving materials for the surface parking area that is more environmentally friendly compared to asphalt.

Neighborhood Recommendation: Building Design

Building Height

The Exide Battery Factory site is presently surrounded by two-story single family homes and condo/loft buildings. Most of the single-family homes on this street were built in the 1910s to the late 1920s. More recent developments, such as the condo buildings and the Coeur d'Allene lofts, have adhered and respected the existing architecture of these historic homes by limiting heights to two-story at maximum. Below are several photos showing the aforementioned buildings, as well as photos of single-family craftsman bungalows built in the 1920s-1930s and the Westside School, an early childhood education center that serves many of our youngest residents.



COEUR D'ALLENE LOFTS LOCATED ACROSS FROM 1246 ALLENE AVENUE



CONDOS ACROSS FROM 1246 ALLENE AVENUE



THE WESTSIDE SCHOOL, AN EARLY EDUCATION CENTER ACROSS FROM 1246 ALLENE AVENUE



SINGLE FAMILY CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOWS BUILT IN 1920s-1930s, NEXT TO 1246 ALLENE AVENUE

We strongly suggest that the design team and developer revisit the scale and massing of the proposed buildings. Specifically, we ask that the design team and developers lend the same, respectful consideration for the proposed building 3000, facing Allene Avenue. We are aware that the proposed four-story height is allowed by city ordinances, but we have determined that this proposed height creates problems for existing residents. As an example, this building will cast a shadow for current residents - figuratively and literally.

Building Height, continued



MASSING PERSPECTIVE OF PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT (FOUR-STORY) ALLOCATION AT ALLENE AVENUE

The above is a comparison of the proposed building height to the existing building height, taken at the intersection of Allene Avenue and Beechwood Avenue. It is clear to see the sheer scale of the proposed building height, particularly the illustrated Building 3000, literally towering over the existing buildings. We strongly recommend that the developers and design team lower this height to two-story at maximum. The massing perspective below shows a comparison of the proposed building at a two-story height, which residents find more palatable. The following pages offer further visual studies comparing the proposed four-story building and the recommended two-story building.



MASSING PERSPECTIVE OF RECOMMENDED BUILDING HEIGHT (TWO-STORY) ALLOCATION AT ALLENE AVENUE

Building Height, continued



MASSING PERSPECTIVE OF PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT (FOUR-STORY) ALLOCATION AT ALLENE AVENUE



MASSING PERSPECTIVE OF RECOMMENDED BUILDING HEIGHT (TWO-STORY) ALLOCATION AT ALLENE AVENUE

Building Height, continued



STREET EXPERIENCE OF PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT (FOUR-STORY) ALLOCATION AT ALLENE AVENUE



STREET EXPERIENCE OF RECOMMENDED BUILDING HEIGHT (TWO-STORY) ALLOCATION AT ALLENE AVENUE

Building Height, continued

As our visual studies show, a height reduction for Building 3000 resolves several issues. First, it creates a more cohesive street level experience on Allene Avenue. For lack of better terms, Building 3000 will no longer stick out like a sore thumb. Second, the height reduction also no longer blocks the morning sun shining onto buildings across the street, such as the Westside School.

Third, we believe that additional opportunities exists for the development when Building 3000 is lowered. As a suggested example, the proposed amenity building and swimming pool can be moved to the Building 3000. The building can then house a community fitness center, restrooms for swimming pool usage, mail room, leasing office, business center, and other programs that are typically offered by an apartment complex. The rooftops that are created by lowering the building height can also be used as gathering space for the community (rooftop decks), and/or a community garden for the complex residents.

Relocating the amenity building to the lowered height also creates an opportunity for retail. Potential modular units that can later be converted into retail spaces can be added to the ground level of Building 3000.

With the relocation of the proposed ammenity building and swimming pool, Building 1000 gains additional space for an elongation alongside the BeltLine Trail. This extension adds to the number of BeltLine-facing units that certainly are preferred by future residents.

Should there be a need to compensate for the number of units that Building 3000 can no longer support, we are open to increasing the heights of Buildings 1000 and 2000 to five to six stories. By increasing these heights, a concrete structure shall be created to enclose the ground floor (with wood construction on top for levels 2+), which allows for future conversion into retail units facing the BeltLine.

Facade Details



ELEVATION OF PROPOSED BUILDING AT ALLENE AVENUE

The current proposed design also offers a composition facade that does not compliment the existing architecture. Most of the single-family homes on Allene Avenue are Craftsman bungalows, built in the 1910s - late 1920s. Brick homes, wood siding, and metal cladding can be found on the facade of homes on Allene Avenue. We suggest that the design team revisit the facade design to compliment the architecture of this historic community.

To the right and below are some examples of multi-family buildings that can be found throughout Atlanta that compliment the architecture of our community. Although these are older buildings, we feel that a similar style can be reproduced and applied to the proposed development.



Summary

The intent of this report is simple: to ask the developer and design team of this project (Rangewater and Dwell, or otherwise), to conduct a thorough engagement with the community and design such a project that will compliment our neighborhood. While we are proud of our identity as a neighborhood as it is, we could accept the proposed development of the site and the increased density it proposes if our concerns about its impact on our community are addressed. We find that the totality of the design for this development does not encompass the quality and value the surrounding neighborhoods and residents deserve. We welcome change, but we insist that a development of this size and impact be more carefully crafted to provide value to existing residents and greater opportunity for versatility well into the future.

It is safe to surmise that preserving the identity and character of a historic neighborhood like Capitol View is critical in our ever-changing city. After reviewing the proposed plans and learning more about the project, the Capitol View Neighborhood Association does not feel that the identity and character of our historic neighborhood has been considered in the development of this project. By its sheer scale, architectural language, affordability, site design, and the manner in which the development team engaged with our community - we conclude that we cannot support this project as-is. We are open to further discussion and dialogue with the developer and design team who, simply put, wish to develop and design responsibly.

The Capitol View Neighborhood, in its entirety, thank you for reviewing our requests and recommendations.

Contact Information

For further information and clarification of this document, please contact us via email:

Capitol View Neighborhood Association
Attn.: CVNA Development Committee
info@capitolview.org

