

*Minutes*  
Baltimore County Design Review Panel  
May 8, 2019  
**Approved**

*Contents*

**Call to order and announcements**

**Review of today's agenda**

**Minutes of the January 9, 2019 meeting**

**Items for initial or continued discussion**

1. 312 West Wind Road - RRLRAIA - Residential Review
2. 29 Susquehanna Avenue / 215 Washington Avenue - Towson DT district
3. 305 York Road -Towson Row Whole Foods -Towson DT district

**Adjournment of the Board meeting**

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*Appendices*

**Appendix A**

Agenda

**Appendix B**

Minutes – January 9, 2019 meeting, as approved

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Baltimore County Design Review Panel  
May 8, 2019  
**Approved**

**Call to order**

Design Review Panel (DRP) Chairman, Mr. John DiMenna, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Baltimore County DRP to order at 6:00 p.m. The following panel members were:

**Present**

Mr. John DiMenna  
Ms. Nikki Brooks  
Ms. Cecily Bedwell  
Mr. Matt D'Amico  
Ms. Kelly Ennis  
Mr. Donald Kann  
Mr. Matt Renauld  
Mr. Joseph Ucciferro

**Not Present**

Mr. Qutub Syed

Residential reviewer present: Mr. Fran Anderson.

County staff present were: C. Pete Gutwald, Jeff Mayhew, Jenifer Nugent, Marta Kulchytska, and Brett Williams.

**Minutes of the January 9, 2019 Meeting**

Mr. Matt D'Amico moved the acceptance of the January 9, 2019 draft minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Nikki Brooks and passed by acclamation at 6:01 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

## **ITEM 1**

**PROJECT NAME:** 312 West Wind Road

**DRP PROJECT #:** 615

**PROJECT TYPE:** RRLRAIA - Residential Review

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The 312 West Wind Road project was presented by Mr. Jeff Blum, Delbert Adams Construction Group.

The Delbert Adams Construction Group will be constructing a new two-story 4,807 sf home on vacant land at 312 West Wind Road. The new home will have a full basement and two levels of living space. The foundation and chimney of the home will be faced with natural stone. The exterior of the home will have a combination of painted horizontal siding and trim with board and batten siding to match some of the surrounding homes. There will be a side loaded three car garage.

The grounds of the property will be professionally landscaped to enhance some of the mature trees on the site. The home will be accessed from the West Wind Road via a new asphalt driveway.

### **SPEAKERS:**

Ms. Nicole Klimt, resident of 308 West Wind Road, asked about how drainage and storm water is to be managed on the site.

Mr. Joseph Ucciferro replied that the County has a special review process prior to issuing of a permit.

### **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:**

Mr. John DiMenna, DRP Chairman, opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

Mr. Fran Anderson asked if the applicant met with neighbors.

Mr. Jeff Blum answered that they did not meet with the neighbors. He said they sent the required notification letters.

Mr. Fran Anderson stated that a more developed landscape plan is needed and that he likes design of the house.

Ms. Cecily Bedwell noted that the architecture is nice and fits in the area. She said that the board and batten is done well. She would like to see more cleaned up requirements for the architecture, particularly the relationship between the columns and entablature on the front facade. She stated that the neck of the column should align with the entablature. Ms. Bedwell suggested to add pilasters or half square columns to the porch where it attaches to the façade of the house. She also noted that if siding is less than 6" it should be trimmed or paneled for treatment of the sides of the dormer windows.

Mr. Joseph Ucciferro mentioned that the project looks great and asked about the material for the retaining wall.

Mr. Jeff Blum replied that the material will be natural stone.

Mr. Donald Kann asked if a tree protecting fence will be used.

Mr. Jeff Blum replied that a snow fence will be used as is common practice to protect the forested area.

Ms. Kelly Ennis had no comments.

Mr. Matt D'Amico stated that the design needs to show that it protects the adjacent trees.

Ms. Nikki Brooks had no comments.

Mr. John DiMenna had no comments.

**DISPOSITION:**

Mr. Fran Anderson made the motion to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. To provide a more developed landscape plan, including screening the adjacent properties and protecting trees.
2. To add pilasters or half square columns to the porch, correlating with the freestanding outside columns.
3. To align the porch entablature above the columns with the neck of the columns.
4. The siding less than 6" on the dormers should be replaced with panel or trim.
5. To update illustrations to show stone and blues stone cap on the retaining wall.
6. To clarify that the retaining wall would be stone.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Matt D'Amico and approved by acclamation at 6:27 pm.

**ITEM 2**

**PROJECT NAME:** 29 Susquehanna Avenue / 215 Washington Avenue

**DRP PROJECT #:** 616

**PROJECT TYPE:** Towson DT district

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The 29 Susquehanna Avenue / 215 Washington Avenue project was presented by Ms. Patricia Malone, Venable LLP, and Mr. Bryce Turner, BCT Architects.

The project consists of façade and streetscape improvements as well as new signage on an existing building located at 215 Washington Avenue. The improvements include adding new materials and painting to the brick building and installing a steel trellis frame to help integrate signage to the building and its streetscape. The sign package includes a new address sign mounted to the trellis, a new tenant sign at the entry ramp, a new corner identity sign and a canopy mounted sign per the tenant's design which will replace the tenant panel signage along Washington Avenue.

DRP Chair, Mr. John DiMenna asked Ms. Jenifer Nugent to read the staff report. The following represents the Department's staff report submitted to the DRP and was summarized at the meeting:

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING COMMENTS:**

**THE DOWNTOWN TOWSON OVERLAY DISTRICT**

Passed by the Baltimore County Council on July 5, 2016, the Downtown Towson Overlay District was enacted to create a comprehensive set of regulations and guidelines to ensure that the redevelopment of Towson results in high quality walkable and urban design.

The goals of this new district are to:

- Encourage walkable, mixed use development by providing more flexible development opportunities
- Foster improved site and architectural design by requiring the use of high quality building materials, enabling signature buildings in strategic locations in the district and integrating urban design components into the public realm
- Encourage economic vitality through mixed-use development

As a result, less emphasis is placed on Euclidian zoning rules and regulations and more on the characteristics of design that make an urban area function successfully. Each new building in the DTD should contribute significantly to the comprehensive vision and cohesive feel of the district.

This staff report will follow the BCZR code references for the project's conformance with the relevant regulations as set forth in Bill No. 49-16, Downtown Towson Overlay District.

#### **BCZR 259.16.G.6.A – ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- Tree canopies should be preserved, maintained or re-established and native plant materials and those withstanding urban conditions should be used. Outdoor spaces should be designed to reduce heat island effect and include green space to provide relief from the built environment.

**Recommendation:** The proposed plan indicates that existing trees and green landscaping will be maintained. New planting will be provided within the existing landscape beds. Staff agrees that no modifications are proposed that would negatively impact environmental sustainability.

#### **BCZR 259.16.G.6.E – BUILDING PRINCIPLES/ARCHITECTURE**

- An appropriate variety of architectural styles, materials and details are encouraged throughout the district.
- New buildings should be contextual in scale and style to the surrounding structures and variation in building scale and detail should relate to the scale and function of pedestrian uses along the streetscape and reinforce pedestrian activity.
- All visible facades should be given design consideration, including rooftops, and should be designed purposefully. Rooftop equipment should be screened fully from horizontal view and the screening should be expressed and integrated as part of the buildings composition. Rooftops and parapets should enhance the character of the skyline and strengthen the identity of the individual buildings.
- Variations in building fenestration patterns should be used to emphasize building features such as entries, shifts in building form and/or differences in function and use. The use of structural bays, expressed columns, window mullions, horizontal fenestration, etc. should be utilized to promote a pedestrian scale. Ground levels should be developed to provide visual interest to pedestrians.

**Recommendation:** The project proposes a new paint finish for EIFS, new trellis feature with address signage and new handrails at the front entrance. The Department of Planning recommends that all proposed upgrades to the building structure will function as a positive impact on foot traffic and will bring a refreshing and aesthetically pleasing look to the building. These upgrades will not adversely impact the surrounding area and is in line with the vision of the Towson DT guidelines.

## **BCZR 259.16.G.6.F – BUILDING MATERIALS**

- The innovative use of high quality materials will be encouraged. Replacement materials that imitate or falsely replicate natural material applications should be avoided.
- Character and image should be reinforced by using high quality materials, textures, patterns, and colors in well designed and innovative ways including the use of natural materials that age well.
- Finishes and materials should reinforce those used in the proposed architectural style, where practical (i.e., real stone in lieu of faux stone)
- Building material selection for the ground floor of buildings should be given careful consideration to create pleasing pedestrian environments while also be tolerant to wear from weather.
- All visible facades of a building from the public realm shall be treated equally in terms of materials, color and design detail, where practical, and shall have a finished appearance to all sides.

**Recommendation:** The project proposes an upgraded darker painting to the EFIS. There will also be a structural steel trellis proposed on the front façade. Additionally, there will be upgrades to the existing sidewalk and curb and gutter along the front of the building. Planning staff recommends that the structural upgrades will be durable with finishes and materials that complement the architectural style. The pedestrian realm will also be addressed with the new upgraded walking surface to the sidewalk. The proposal is consistent with the Towson DT guidelines and will not adversely impact the neighborhood.

## **BCZR 259.16.G.6.G – LIGHTING**

- Lighting fixtures should be designed and installed within the context of the architecture of a building, complement lighting within the public realm and shall minimize sky glow, glare and light trespass thus conforming to best practices as identified by national lighting standards.
- Lighting should be used to provide illumination that complements the aesthetic appeal and safety promoting safe pedestrian activity at night. Lighting as a night time amenity should be considered. Highlighting of significant architectural features, trees and artwork should be considered.

**Recommendation:** The applicants propose no new lighting at this time. Staff would encourage the applicant to ensure that the use of building lighting as well as streetscape lighting is consistent with the Towson standard street light design.

## **BCZR 259.16.G.6.H – SIGNS**

- Signs shall be oriented to and scaled for the pedestrian realm, be integrated within the architectural features of a building's façade, enhance their graphic impact to the pedestrian realm, add visual interest, facilitate wayfinding and enhance the character of the area.
- Signs should be located and designed to avoid conflicts with street trees and street lights.

**Recommendation:** A new address sign will be mounted to the trellis. It will be an aluminum reverse channel letter sign that will utilize halo illumination. At the entry ramp, a new tenant sign is proposed to replace the current pylon signage at the corner of Washington and Susquehanna. There will be new corner identity signage which will use internal wash lighting and is intended to mitigate light pollution. The channel lettering will have LEDs mounted along the return of the letter that will illuminate the back face of the cabinet. The tenant panel signage along Washington Avenue will be removed and replaced with an allowance for a canopy mounted sign. The planning staff recommends that the signage does not adversely impact the surrounding environment and is designed to satisfy the pedestrian realm which achieves the goal of the Towson DT guidelines.

**FINAL RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the project be approved, subject to any conditions of the Design Review Panel.

Mr. John DiMenna, DRP Chairman, opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

**DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:**

Ms. Nikki Brooks asked to provide the engineered trellis details.

Mr. Matt D'Amico suggested to add verticals to the hand rails.

Ms. Kelly Ennis had no comments.

Mr. Matt Ranauld suggested to consider lighting in the trellis. He also asked if the existing planting will be irrigated.

Mr. Bryce Turner answered that it is not irrigated and will be consistently maintained.

Mr. Donald Kann stated that the railing on the balcony gives scale to the building. He suggested to consider installing exterior lighting.

Mr. Joe Ucciferro had no comments.

Ms. Cecily Bedwell asked if there are existing street lights.

Mr. Bryce Turner answered that there is one on the corner.

Ms. Cecily Bedwell asked to investigate lighting for pedestrian realm.

Mr. John DiMenna asked what kind of coating is proposed for the trellis.

Mr. Bryce Turner answered that it will be powder coating.

Mr. John DiMenna asked what type of coating will be used for the EIFS.

Mr. Bryce Turner answered that it will be vinyl base paint.

**DISPOSITION:**

Mr. Matt D'Amico made the motion to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. To make the trellis members more substantial.
2. To provide vertical posts for the hand rails.
3. To consider landscape up-lighting for the trellis.
4. To address the railing on the balcony at the south façade of the building.

The motion was seconded by Donald Kann and approved by acclamation at 6:49 pm.

### **ITEM 3**

**PROJECT NAME:** 305 York Road -Towson Row Whole Foods

**DRP PROJECT:** #564c

**PROJECT TYPE:** Towson DT District

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The Towson Row Whole Foods (305 York Road) project was presented by Mr. Christopher Mudd, Venable LLP; Mr. Brian Gibbons and Mr. Eric Walter of Greenberg Gibbons; Mr. Jim Voelzke and Mr. Neville Fernandes of MV&A architects; and Mr. Hank Alinger, Bohler Engineering.

The originally approved Towson Row mixed-use development project covering 5.93 +/- acres inclusive of residential apartments, student housing units, and over 300,000 square feet of office space, hotel, and retail space and associated parking went to the DRP in June 2015 wherein which the Development Plan and Design Guidelines were approved. The project precedes the DTD overlay and guidelines.

The project proposes a seven-story building at the Northwest corner of the intersection of York Road and Towsontown Boulevard to be part of the Towson Row development. The construction will be comprised of a two-story 88,000 sf retail podium which includes a 65,000 sf Whole Foods Market. Atop of the retail space, 233 units of residential and student housing are proposed. Loading areas are proposed to be accessed off of Chesapeake Avenue and a pedestrian plaza is designed along Towsontown Boulevard.

There will be 51 subterranean garage parking spaces located behind the lower level retail and accessed from York Road. The main pedestrian access to the residential and student housing units will be via a lobby located along York Road. A pedestrian passage is proposed to connect Chesapeake Avenue to the upper level mezzanine of the Whole Foods building.

Outdoor amenities are proposed for the retail users and the residents. Plazas and upper level terraces are incorporated within the building facades along Towsontown Boulevard and York Road. Parking for the Whole Foods Market is provided within the two lower levels of the Student Housing building that was previously reviewed and approved by the DRP and currently is under construction.

The plan being presented today will go before the Development Review Committee (DRC) for a plan refinement to reflect the changes from the originally approved development plan.

#### **SPEAKERS:**

Ms. Lorrie Geiss, a representative from the Towson Communities Alliance, expressed concerns about the narrow pathway from Chesapeake Avenue to the Whole Foods. She also stated that for safety purposes the parking access from York Road should be right-in and right-out only.

Ms. Marsha McLaughlin, a representative from the Green Towson Alliance, expressed support of the Whole Foods as part of the development and supported Towson Row project moving forward. However, she had concerns about pedestrian movement and connections from Chesapeake Avenue and York Road and the location of the loading area along Chesapeake Avenue. Additionally, she noted that there is no connecting road from Chesapeake Avenue to Towsontown Boulevard.

Ms. Beth Miller, a representative from the Green Towson Alliance, suggested the tree pits along Towsontown Boulevard should be changed to a continuous bio-retention planting strip with shrubs and perennial flowers between the trees. She also recommended that additional canopy trees should be provided in the planting bed at the Ma & Pa Bridge abutment and in the terraced planters along Towson



Row. She stated the design of the dead-end public realm between the Student Housing and the Whole Foods Building along Towson Row should be re-examined to maximize plantings and usable gathering or café seating space to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and the garage entrance. Ms. Miller also asked about any proposals for protected bike lanes according to the Complete Streets guidelines. She was concerned about the safety of the narrow path. She proposed to activate the pedestrian realm by using murals, a trellis, light sculptures and/or mosaics on blank walls. Ms. Miller also inquired about screening the Whole Food roof top equipment.

Mr. Kevin Tehan, business owner from Towson, is very excited about the Whole Foods Market and prospects for the community.

Mr. John DiMenna asked Ms. Jenifer Nugent to read the staff report. The following represents the Department's staff report submitted to the DRP and was summarized at the meeting:

### **DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING COMMENTS:**

The Department of Planning has reviewed the proposal for conformance with the following.

1. *Comprehensive Manual of Development Polices* (Division III, Section A, Commercial Corridors, Main Street, and Division VI, Section F, Amenity Open Space).
2. *Baltimore County Landscape Manual*
3. *Baltimore County Master Plan 2020*
4. *The Towson Row Development Guidelines as approved May 21, 2015*

### **SITE DESIGN**

The site design intent consists of:

- Main vehicular access into the building off of Towson Row and York Road.
- Pedestrian access to the building is through multiple points: residential lobby off York Road, lower level retail access from Towsontown Boulevard, a pedestrian pathway from Chesapeake Avenue to a mezzanine level of Whole Foods Market, direct access off of Towson Row and an internal access from the lower parking area behind the lower level retail component to the grocery level of the development.
- Plaza, landscaping and streetscape amenities proposed around the perimeter of and within the site.
- Stabilization of the historic rail road bridge abutment

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of site design intent, subject to recommendations from the Design Review Panel and the following:

1. The pedestrian "Towson Passage" needs to be fully designed to ensure efforts are made for safety while providing for an aesthetic experience. The use of lighting, and other design elements like murals, artwork and/or decorative screening for the garage should be incorporated into this location.
2. More canopy trees should be designed into the public realm for shade and protection at the plaza area.
3. The retail parking at York Road should be right in/right out to alleviate traffic congestion.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, FORM AND IMAGE

Pages 49-63 of the Towson Row Design Guidelines

- The applicant proposes to construct a multi-story building consisting of two levels of retail with garage parking on the ground level and five levels of residential and student housing units.
- The proposed materials include a mix of brick masonry, cedar panels, fiber cement paneling, metal paneling and cladding, and clear and spandrel glass.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends the following be incorporated relative to the architectural design, form and image comments that may be generated by the Design Review Panel:

1. Further design elements and materials should be incorporated into the north façade of the building.
2. The rooftop equipment areas should incorporate green roof elements. The roof top equipment area for the Whole Foods should be reconsidered for an alternate location.

## OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The Towson Row Design Guidelines outline specific tenements of design specific to Open Space and Streetscape Elements (Pages 29-46)

The applicant is proposing the following:

- Sidewalks throughout the site.
- Street level pedestrian amenities proposed around the retail exteriors and pedestrian seating is proposed throughout the main plaza area along Towsontown Boulevard.
- Landscaping is proposed along the base of the structure as well as streetscape plantings in the form of tree pits at regular intervals.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the open space elements subject to the recommendations of the Design Review Panel and the following:

1. Provide further details for the tree pits and planters that include elements outlined from page 40 of the Towson Row Design Guidelines. These include types of plantings in the tree pits as well as incorporating storm water management design.
2. Provide more detail for the plaza area. Specifically, more detail relative to the paving, street furniture, trash receptacles, bike racks, planters, fencing and site walls.

## STREETS, PARKING, AND CIRCULATION

Pages 14-26 and 29-37 of Towson Row Design Guidelines

### A. Pedestrian Circulation

1. The pedestrian realm is key to a successful walkable environment. The width and design of the streetscape and the activation of the street edge where the building and pedestrian interface is most important in an urban area. Building entries off the street as well as storefront designs will be critical to creating this environment.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the pedestrian elements subject to recommendations of the Design Review Panel and the following:

1. The pedestrian pathway should be wider to enhance safety and connectivity.

2. Provide more detail of the portion of the whole foods building and how it transitions to the parking entrance of the student housing building as it is not clear in the presented package. Potential pedestrian amenities should be considered in this location.

#### B. Vehicular Circulation

- Vehicular entry is shown to be located primarily off of Towson Row with a vehicular access to a parking area at the lower level of retail off of York Road.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the streets, parking and circulation subject to the recommendations of the Design Review Panel and the following:

1. Vehicle access to the York Road parking should be limited to alleviate congestion off York Road.
2. Special paving should be incorporated at the entrance to the parking garage off of Towson Row.

#### **SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING**

Page 45 and pages 70-79 of the Towson Row Design Guidelines.

- Signs are being proposed on all four sides of the building.
- Building signage is conceptually presented in the design package along the retail portions of the proposed building.
- Lighting for the site is not fully presented within the submittal package to demonstrate where specifically it is proposed.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends the following:

1. Perspectives and elevations should show how lighting throughout the development will enhance the pedestrian experience. The different types of lighting shown within the package shall be incorporated.
2. Signage is only being shown on all four facades of the building in various sizes, styles, and locations. Applicant must demonstrate a clear design for the signs that have been confirmed. For example, the Whole Foods Market and the Towson Row Residences signage should be fully detailed (Sizes, materials and how they will be lit and affixed to the buildings) for review and approval by the panel
3. All individual tenant signage and proposed lighting shall be reviewed, as per the Design Guidelines and by the DRP administratively as lessees are signed.
4. Any signs being proposed as murals shall be defined as such and shall be reviewed by the DRP administratively once final design is complete.

#### **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:**

Mr. John DiMenna, DRP Chairman, opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

#### **SITE DESIGN COMMENTS:**

Mr. Donald Kann asked for the width of the walking path to be wider. He also suggested a right-in and right-out access along York Road.

Mr. John DiMenna asked what is the width of the passage.

Mr. Jim Voelzke answered that the width is 6'.

Mr. Matt Renauld questioned the depth of the plaza and suggested to add more seating and amenities to activate the plaza. He also commented on the right-in right-out access along York Road. Mr. Renauld also asked whether the monument sign was needed.

Ms. Kelly Ennis referred to page 31 of the proposed package and asked if there is an opportunity on the Chesapeake Avenue side to activate the pedestrian experience. She also asked for a signage package to show consistency in graphics, font sizes, and lettering.

Ms. Nikki Brooks asked about the possibility to move the residential building and the trash service area in order to widen the narrow path. She would like to see a more consistent sign package, more details on the plaza walls, and site furniture.

Mr. John DiMenna asked about the proposed material for the plaza walls.

Mr. Jim Voelzke answered that the proposed material will be precast concrete or cultured stone.

### **BUILDING DESSIGN COMMENTS:**

Ms. Nikki Brooks had no comments.

Ms. Kelly Ennis had no comments.

Mr. Matt Renauld suggested to add rooftop plantings.

Mr. Donald Kann proposed to investigate color and form of the façade to make the exterior less neutral.

Mr. John DiMenna suggested to add more landscaping at the corners to complement a pedestrian experience. He also stated that mechanical equipment should be screened.

### **DISPOSITION:**

Mr. John DiMenna made the motion to approve the project with the following conditions:

Site design:

1. To increase the width of the pathway and to consider how to celebrate the entrances from the north and the south.
2. To study ways to make the plaza at Towsontown Boulevard feel less narrow.
3. To enhance design to celebrate the area around the bridge abutment.
4. To consider whether a monument sign is really needed.
5. Entrance from York Road should be right-in and right-out only.

Building design:

1. To study further the screening of the mechanical equipment and the visual effects it will have overall.
2. To further develop the masonry of the façades facing Towsontown Boulevard and York Road.
3. To develop a comprehensive sign package to show consistency in graphics, font sizes, types and lettering.
4. To further design the screening for the transformer along York Road.

Revisions made by the developer addressing the DRP comments will be reviewed administratively.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Kelly Ennis and approved by acclamation at 8:55 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.