



**City of Stamford**  
**Zoning Board**

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**STAFF REPORT**

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**TO:** CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD  
**FROM:** VINEETA MATHUR, PRINCIPAL PLANNER  
**SUBJECT:** **ZB #223-34 900 Long Ridge Road, Final Site Plan & Architectural Plan and Requested Uses Application**  
**DATE:** October 27, 2023  
**MASTER PLAN:** Master Plan Category 8 (Mixed Use Campus)  
**ZONING:** C-D (Commercial- Design District)

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**Introduction**

The 900 Long Ridge Road Property Owner LLC (Owner and Applicant) is requesting approval of the related Special Permit, Final Site Plan Application to facilitate the redevelopment of the property with a mixed use development consisting of 508 residential units, 20,000 sf of non-residential floor area likely to include a child day care use on a 36.5-acre parcel located at 900 Long Ridge Road. The proposal will remove 230,000 sf of office space in two existing buildings on the site.

**Background**

Stamford's office parks were established in the 1970s and 80s with the migration of major corporations from New York City. These office parks provided a park like setting for several corporate headquarters. The property 900 Long Ridge Road served as the office location for large companies such as Combustion Engineering (C-E), Hyperion, Oracle and Nestle Waters. Five decades from their conception, office parks now have a high vacancy rate due to several factors including obsolescence of the office buildings, relocation and downsizing of several corporations and an overall shift away from campus like offices towards more urban offices in Downtown areas. Recognizing the underutilization of vast expanses of land and the growing need for housing, the 2015 Master Plan called for redevelopment of these office parks including residential development. The C-D district regulations which govern these campuses have since been amended

to facilitate residential use to allow for the revitalization of these properties. The former Dorr-Oliver mining company site was redeveloped as housing resulting in the successful Palmer's Hill development. In December 2021 the C-D regulations were amended by the Zoning Board creating a uniform standard for residential, non-residential and mixed use development in the C-D district and requiring Special Permit approval for all uses. The current proposal fully complies with the new C-D regulations and incorporates the latest Mobility, Usable Open Space and Publicly Accessible Amenity Space regulations creating further benefits for the City and its residents.

### **Site and Surroundings**

The site is bound by Merritt Parkway to the north, single family homes to the west, the office building located at 800 Long Ridge Road to the south and Long Ridge Road to the east. The site is currently occupied by two office buildings, a four level (3 story) parking garage and four surface parking lots. Most of the existing buildings are confined to the western portion of the site while the area in the front along Long Ridge Road is comprised of natural slopes, wetlands, trails and tree cover. The site has one access driveway winding up the site from Long Ridge Road and looping around the back to connect the two office buildings, the parking garage and four surface parking lots. The site slope necessitates a connecting staircase between the upper and lower parking levels.



*Existing office building (Former Oracle)*



*Existing office building (Former C-E/Hyperion)*

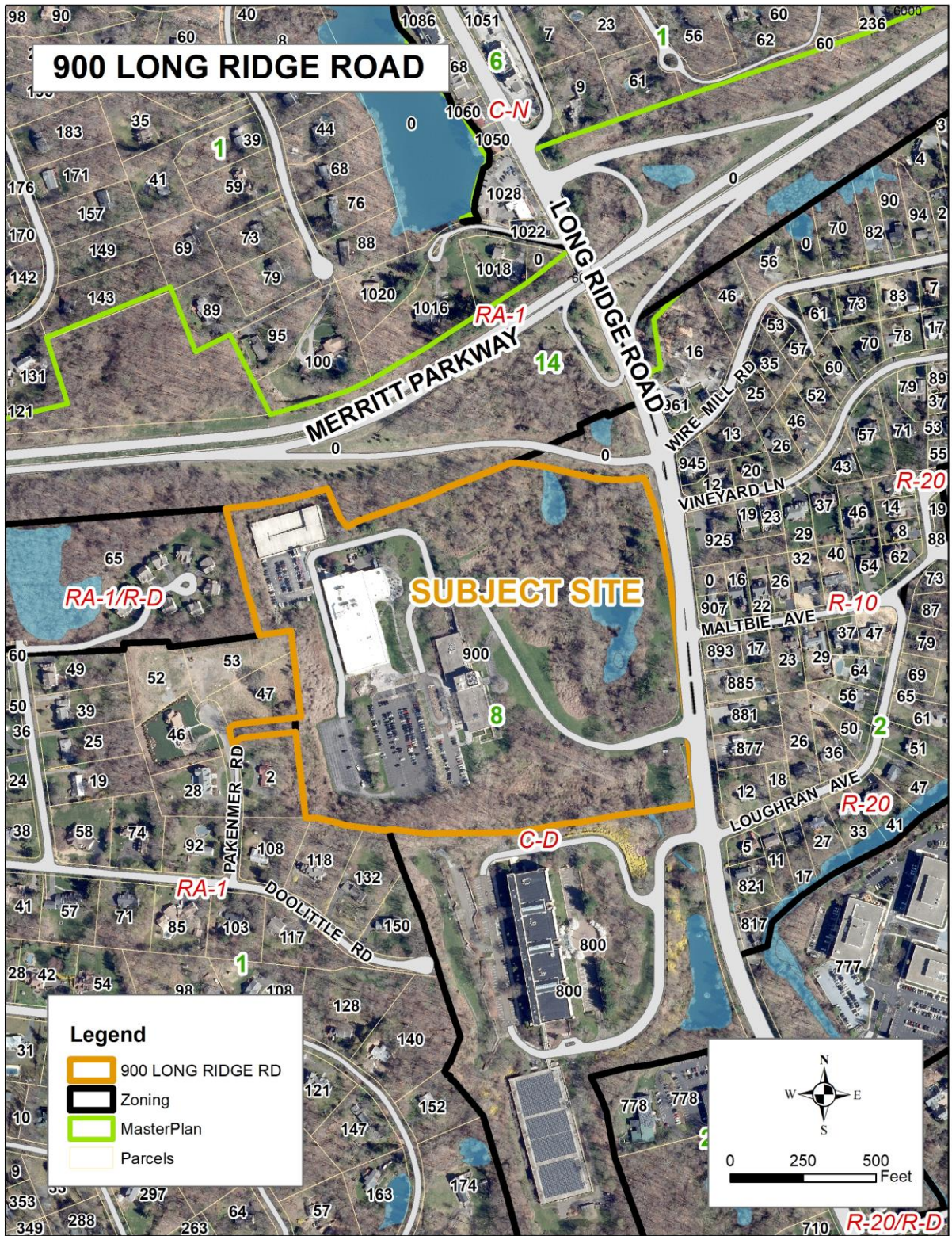


*Existing parking garage*



*Significant grade difference exists throughout the site*





**AERIAL IMAGE**





## **OVERALL SITE PLAN**

### **Final Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses**

The proposed development comprises of four (4) new buildings (Buildings A through D) with a mix of studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments in addition to a total of 20,000 sf of non-residential use distributed between Buildings A & C (See Overall Site Plan above). The existing structured garage located on the northwest side of the site will remain while the two existing office buildings comprising 230,000 sf will be demolished. The remainder of the site includes landscaped open spaces for residents, site driveways and parking areas as well as regulated areas comprising

of wetlands and watercourses. A portion of the site will be dedicated to a trail system constituting the required Publicly Accessible Amenity Space (7.8% of the lot area). The site has significant grade, sloping down from west to east. The site also sits lower than the surrounding properties on the north, west and south. The proposed building placement utilizes the grade by terracing the building from the west to the east thus minimizing the visual impact of the buildings.

<b>Unit Type</b>	<b>Number of units</b>
Studio	56
1 bedroom	235
2 Bedroom	194
3 Bedroom	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>508</b>

The proposed buildings have varying footprints and designs allowing for an interesting overall residential campus. A majority of the units (approx. 70%) have either a balcony or a patio and are integrated by a network of concrete pedestrian paths and landscaped areas.

The proposed plan fully complies with the C-D district regulations including height, setback, density, lot coverage and building coverage. The C-D district is the most restrictive district in terms of building and lot coverage. While the zoning district allows a maximum building coverage of 10%, the proposed plan only uses 9.1% building coverage. Similarly, while the district permits 35% lot coverage, the plan only proposes 27% lot coverage maximizing pervious area and maintaining natural vegetation on the site. The site far exceeds the setback requirements. The required setback from the street is 50' whereas the plan provides a 600' setback. The zoning district requires a 100' setback from properties in single family zoning districts. The proposal provides a 100' setback from the RA-1 zoning district to the west. While the required setback for property lines to all other zoning districts is 50' the proposed building setback varies from 76' to 150'. The buildings meet the height limitation of 4 story/60' with all buildings being less than 54' above average grade.

A sliver of the property extending from the western boundary of the site is situated in the RA-1 zoning district. This portion is not included in the zoning calculations for the proposed development and is proposed to remain unchanged except for sprucing/weeding of the vegetation as necessary.

The proposed residential and complimentary non-residential use represent a reduction in peak hour traffic volume compared to the office use previously existing on the site. Data and analysis is provided in the traffic study revised on September 25, 2023. The site currently does not fully utilize

the available office floor area and thus would permit additional office development which would be higher in traffic intensity compared to the proposed mix of uses.

The proposed development will be constructed in two partially concurrent phases with Building C & D being part of the first phase followed by Buildings A and B.

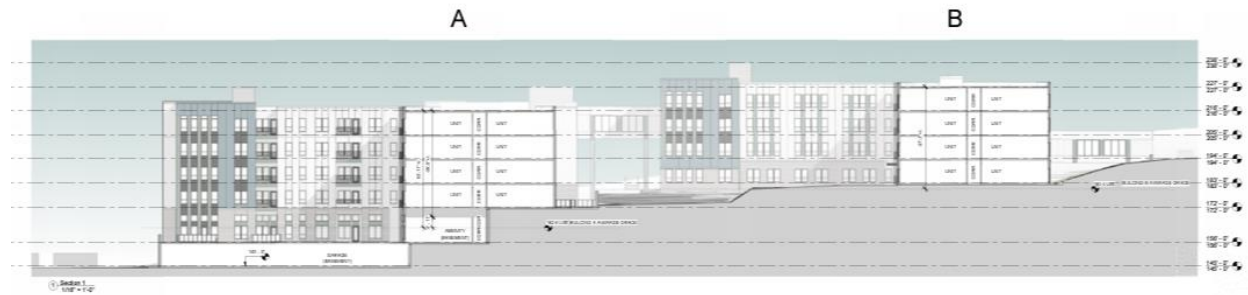
**900 Long Ridge Road**  
**Mixed-Use Residential Community**  
**Zoning Data Chart - C-D Zone**

	Required/Allowed	Proposed	Notes
<b>Lot Area</b>	15 acres	36.3 acres (1,582,365 sf)	<b>Complies.</b> Excludes 11,255 sf in the RA-1 Zone
<b>Building Coverage</b>	10%	9.1% (144,250 sf)	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>Lot Coverage</b>	35%	28% (439,550 sf)	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>Floor Area Ratio</b>	0.35	0.34 (541,415 sf)	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>Density</b>	508 DU (14 DU/Acre)	508	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>BMR</b>	10% (50.8 DU)	51	<b>Complies.</b> All BMRs to be onsite.
<b>Building Stories</b>	4	4	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>Building Height</b>	60'	54'	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>Street Line Setback</b>	50'	600'+	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>Single-Fam Setback</b>	100'	100'	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>All other Setbacks</b>	50'	76'/150'+	<b>Complies.</b>
<b>Usable Open Space</b>	38,100 (75 sf/du)	39,035	<b>Complies.</b> Does not include private balconies or acres of walking trails.
<b>PAAS</b>	5%	7.8%	<b>Complies.</b>

**Building A**

This building is located closest to Long Ridge Road and will be 644' from the property line along Long Ridge Road. Due to this large setback, none of the buildings are expected to be visible from Long Ridge Road. Building A is designed around an amenity terrace and will contain 169 apartments, 11,000 sf of non-residential space and 98 garage parking spaces (including EV and Class A bike parking spaces). Class B bike parking spaces are provided close to the entrance of the building on both the west and east side. The building will have ground access from two separate floors due to the grade differential on the site. The east side of the building will provide access to the parking garage as well as access to the non-residential space and residential amenities. The residential lobby can be accessed from the west side of the building. The Applicant proposes to attract a day care facility to use the largest non-residential space in this building. The space will have access to the drop-off area as well as the exterior playground making it conducive for such a use. Based on comments received from the Planning Board the Applicant adjusted the unit

distribution of Building A to change 8 of the two-bedroom units to three-bedroom units. The top story of Building A is connected to Building B by a covered passageway as shown in the Section drawing below. This will allow the residents of Building B to utilize the amenities in Building A. The amenity terrace includes a pool, grills, dining area, landscaping, lounge seating and fire pit. Additional indoor amenities areas are also proposed.



**Section showing Buildings A and B looking south**

**Building B**

Building B is an L shaped structure and will contain 91 apartments. The residential lobby is located on the east side of the building with a defined drop-off carved out of the adjacent Parking Area A containing 128 parking spaces. The building will have a secondary pedestrian access located on the south side of the building which leads to a landscaped area and connects to the concrete path connecting to Building A. Parking Area A is further connected to a 110-space parking lot (Parking Area B) and a 28-space parking lot (Parking Area C) by a two-way driveway. A small detention pond is proposed on the north side of Building B.

**Building C**

Building C will contain 139 apartments, 9,000 sf of non-residential space and 132 garage parking spaces. The amenities on the terrace level of Building C include a sports court, swimming pool, sitting areas, grills, and landscaping. Additional indoor amenities are also proposed within this building.



**Section showing Buildings C and D looking south**



## **Building D**

Building D will consist of 109 apartments and will be connected with Building C through a covered passage similar to the connection between Buildings A and B. The building will have a drop-off area along with some surface parking spaces close to the entrance.

## **Building Design**

The buildings use a mix of high-quality material including full size brick for the base and cementitious siding for the upper levels. The building façade includes breaks such as recesses, change in material color and use of balconies to make them more attractive. Building corners and key sections are accented by using a metal panel frame. Design features such as skywalks connecting buildings and ground level landscaped promenade provide variety in pedestrian experience throughout the site.



### **Use of a mix of materials, color and building fenestration**

## **Landscaping**

The site is planned to be extensively landscaped. Approximately 72% of the site will remain pervious. The proposal aims to preserve mature trees throughout the site and remove invasive species to restore the natural balance.

Approximately 300 new trees (including deciduous, evergreen) are proposed to be planted on the site as well as several thousand other bushes/flowers. Additional trees will be incorporated per recommendation by EPB staff. The Applicant has been working with neighbors to determine additional landscape screening on some of the single family neighbor's property. All parking lots will include landscaped islands and trees meeting the parking lot design standards.

The proposal includes the creation of two water feature. A 'pocket-pond' is proposed north of the existing trail and the proposed PAAS area. A small detention pond is proposed on the west side of Building A. The project also includes the addition of trails connecting to the existing network to further enhance recreational opportunities. Some of the unique landscape features include a landscaped promenade between Building C and Building D and the community plaza between Building D and the existing parking garage.



The proposal exceeds the Usable Open Space requirement providing more than 39,000 sf of Usable Open Space where 38,100 sf of Usable Open Space is required. The calculation only includes the spaces which meet the dimensional, ADA and other requirements under the Usable Open Space definition of Section 3.

### **Street trees**

Given site frontage of 1,139 feet, and the requirement of 1 street tree per 25' a total of 46 street trees will be required. Staff recommends that the Applicant coordinate with TTP and Land Use staff prior to the Building Permit regarding the placement of the street trees in relation to the proposed sidewalk.

### **Below Market Rate Housing**

The Applicant proposes to meet the required 10% BMR requirement on site with 51 BMR units proposed at 50% of Area Median Income. This will provide a good boost to the Below Market Rate unit inventory in the City and expand the geographical options for affordable housing in the City. The expansive nature of the site and the amenities will be further assets to the affordable housing stock.

### **Publicly Accessible Amenity Space**

The project provides 7.8% of the land as Publicly Accessible Amenity Space whereas 5% is required for the C-D district. The PAAS will be in the form of trails and will be required to meet the standards in Section 6. Additional details of the PAAS showing compliance with section 6 will be required prior to issuance of a Building Permit.

### **Parking and Access**

The proposal includes 819 parking spaces where 780 spaces are required based on Parking Category 3 requirements per unit type. The plan also includes 5 public parking spaces close to the entrance of the Publicly Accessible Amenity Space (PAAS). The parking summary is given below:

### Parking

Use Type	Amount	Rate	Required	Provided	Notes
Studio (market)	50	1.00	50	819	<b>Complies.</b> Non-residential parking demand to be accommodated by use of shared parking pursuant to §12.I. See accompanying shared parking analysis from Kimley-Horn. Additional 5 public parking spaces not included.
1BR (market)	211	1.50	317		
2BR (market)	175	1.75	306		
3BR (market)	21	2.00	42		
Studio (BMR)	6	0.75	5		
1BR (BMR)	24	1.25	30		
2BR (BMR)	19	1.50	29		
3BR (BMR)	2	1.50	3		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>781</b>		

### Bicycle Parking

	Required	Provided	Notes
Class A (residential)	57.2	63	<b>Complies.</b> Class A and B spaces to be shared among residential and non-residential uses.
Class A (non-res)	4		
Class B (residential)	51.2	63	
Class B (non-res)	10		
<b>Total</b>	<b>122.4</b>	<b>126</b>	

	Required	Provided	Notes
<b>EV Spaces</b>	<b>32.2</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>Complies.</b> Non-residential uses to share EV spaces as part of shared parking approval per §12.L.1 and §12.I

## Required Actions

Applicant has requested approval of the following Special Permits:

## Special Permits

### 1. Section 9.G.3: Permitted Uses

The C-D district regulations were amended by the Zoning Board pursuant to application 221-10 to require a Special Permit for all permitted uses. The Applicant is requesting the approval of the residential uses along with some of the permitted non-residential uses to allow the flexibility in occupying the 20,000 sf of non-residential use. Staff supports this request which facilitates the creation of housing to meet the high need and to provide complimentary non-residential uses such as Child Day Care, shared office space to improve quality of life of residents and to reduce vehicle trips.

### 2. Section §9.G.4.g: Exemption of Parking Structures from Zoning Calculations

The Applicant requests approval to allow the existing freestanding parking structure to remain exempt from the Building Coverage and Density calculations.

The following findings must be met for this Special Permit:

(a) Parking Structures shall not cover more than five percent (5%) of the Lot Area; *Footprint of garage is 1.9% of site area. Complies.*

(b) Lot Coverage shall not exceed thirty-five percent (35%); *Proposed lot coverage 27% . Complies.*

(c) Floor Area Ratio of all Buildings, exclusive of Parking Structures, shall not exceed 0.35; *Proposed FAR 0.34. Complies*

(d) The height of the Parking Structure shall not exceed thirty feet (30') above average grade; *No change proposed. Complies.*

(e) All Parking Structures shall be appropriately screened from view by Principal Buildings, topography, and/or landscaping to the satisfaction of the Zoning Board. *The existing structure will be screened by Building C and Building D on the south side and existing tree cover on the north side.*

*Staff supports this request given the consequent gain in pervious surface and limitation of the building footprint.*

### **Section 12.D.1.g: Width of Parking spaces**

The Applicant requests to permit the residential parking spaces to be 8.5' in width, as permitted in Parking Categories 1 and 2, instead of the 9' otherwise required.

*Staff believes that the request is appropriate given that the multi-family parking lots and structures are similar in nature to those in Parking Category 1 & 2 and given that the project exceeds the parking requirement.*

### **Referral Comments**

#### **Planning Board**

In a letter dated September 20, 2023 the Planning Board voted to recommend approval of the related Site and Architectural Plan and Requested Uses application as well as the Special Permit application. The Planning Board found the request compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category 8. The proposal also aligns with the following policies:

- Policy 3B.4: Encourage the reconfiguration of existing office and retail space to accommodate market trends and potential new users
- Policy 4E.4: Consider opportunities for mixed-use transit supportive redevelopment of underutilized office parks on High Ridge and Long Ridge Roads and
- Policy 6A.1: Balance new development with preservation of existing residential communities

Planning Board also recommended adding a pedestrian/bike access along the main access driveway. In response, the Applicant has revised the plans to include a concrete path along the



main access driveway. Planning Board recommended a security plan for the residential complex given that the project includes a PAAS area.

### **Environmental Protection Board**

Robert Clausi, Executive Director, Environmental Protection Board provided comments in a memo dated September 7, 2023 noted that the plan does not propose any activity within the 25' wide upland review area around the on-site wetlands and watercourses and therefore no separate EPB permit is required. Mr. Clausi made comments related to site controls during construction, and site drainage. He noted that the proposed landscape plan provides an acceptable restoration of the site's planting. The response memo from the Applicant dated October 19, 2023 states that the recommendations from EPB will be duly incorporated into the Building Permit plans.

### **Fire Marshall**

In an email dated October 25, 2023, Assistant fire Marshall Chad Armstrong stated the agreement with the Applicant regarding the Fire protection infrastructure and equipment that needs to be incorporated into the site.

### **Engineering Bureau**

Willetta Capelle in a memo dated August 23, 2023 provided technical comments on the application which are to be addressed prior to Building Permit. The Applicant addressed these comments in their October 18, 2023 letter to the Engineering Bureau.

### **Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau**

Frank Petise, Transportation Bureau Chief and Jianhong Wang, Traffic Engineer in a letter dated August 18, 2023 provided comments on the traffic assessment, civil site plan, landscaping plan and recommended contribution by the Applicant towards traffic signal and pedestrian improvements at the intersection of the driveway with Long Ridge Road. The letter also required the Applicant to contribute towards a sidewalk along Long Ridge Road connecting the existing bus stops. In the October 19, 2023 memo the Applicant stated that they are agreeable to all recommendations made by TTP including \$500,000 towards off-site improvements as stated above.

### **Summary**

Staff believes that the proposed project will fulfil the goals of Stamford Master plan which call for the revitalization of existing office parks and increase in the supply of housing. The proposal also implements the recommendation of Stamford's Housing Affordability Plan which similarly suggests redevelopment of vacant commercial buildings for the purpose of housing and facilitate the production of Below Market Rate housing. The creation of 51 Below Market Rate units will directly address the need for affordable housing. The proposed plan utilizes existing site

infrastructure, minimizes site disturbance while providing a well-designed and landscaped residential campus. The public amenities created through the project include a new public sidewalk, street trees, contribution towards pedestrian and traffic improvements as well significantly increasing the tax revenue generated from the site.