

**Montgomery Center
Project Narrative
May 2022**

The Carr Companies (the “Applicant”) proposes a Development Special Use Permit (“DSUP”) for the property known as the Montgomery Center (the “Property”). The Property is an entire block, surrounded by Montgomery Street to the north, Madison Street to the south, N. Fairfax Street to the east, and N. Royal St. to the west. Montgomery Park lies across Montgomery Street to the north. A low-scale retail, commercial and arts use building currently occupies the Property. The Property contains approximately 87,187 SF or approx. 2 acres. The future development of the Property is guided by the Old Town North Small Area Plan (“OTN SAP”) and is specifically within the “Mixed Use Core” area in the OTN SAP.

The Applicant proposes a mixed-use development that includes a total of 348,748 SF of Floor Area. A total of 331 residential units, retail and arts/cultural uses are proposed. The proposed building height includes several heights with architectural tapering and transitional stepbacks, ranging between 50’ to approx. 108’. The project open space exceeds the required 25% with both at-grade and above grade private open spaces. Two or three levels of underground parking will be provided, which will serve the proposed uses and meet the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

There are several special features of the project including the large arts anchor; the two large public plazas, “Montgomery Plaza” and “Machanic Courtyard;” and the Arts Paseo. Montgomery Plaza is over 6,000 SF and is directly across the street from Montgomery Park. Montgomery Street and the plaza will be activated by sculptures, outdoor seating, retail and arts uses. Retail uses will continue to front N. Fairfax Street as it does today, and Machanic Courtyard will allow for the main access to the arts anchor and the Arts Paseo from N. Fairfax. Retail will wrap around from N. Fairfax Street to the south on Madison Street, where there is a residential lobby and walk-up residential units, facing the Alexandria House Park. N. Royal Street will include semi-active façade areas, a residential lobby and retail use. The active arts, plaza and retail will provide synergy with the current activity at Montgomery Park, like the farmer’s market, along with vibrant retail and arts uses planned at other nearby projects. The Arts Paseo will provide a mid-block connection north-south through the project, further connecting the project with other destinations in Old Town North.

The proposed development is in general conformance with the existing, applicable CRMU-X zoning district regulations. Additionally, the development meets all of the goals of the redevelopment called for on pages 45 and 46 of the OTN SAP, including affordable housing, ground floor arts/cultural uses, retail uses, streetscape improvements, improved urban design and connectivity. The Applicant seeks bonus height and density for both the provision of the arts use and for affordable housing, both of which are recommended for the Property in the OTN SAP. The project provides a variety of heights within the full-block development ranging from 50’ along Montgomery Street, up to 108’ at the southwest part of the block.

The proposed development addresses the primary guidance for the Mixed-Use Core:

- *SubArea 4, Mixed Use Core: Provide improved street access with welcoming entries through implementation of OTN SAP prescribed streetscape and landscape standards:*

The proposed development dramatically increases the openness and access to the property through the large plazas described above and below, as well as through the Arts Paseo. The project also incorporates the streetscape section dimensions prescribed in the OTN SAP. The ground floor retail, residential lobbies, plazas and arts uses will provide activation and interest along all facades of the development.

- *Integrate buildings with their surroundings terms of massing and scale:*

The proposed building includes a variety of setbacks, height transitions and open spaces, creating interest and allowing for the building to fit into the developed surroundings.

- *Utilize appropriate building height and scale transitions, particularly when adjacent to lower scale developments in neighboring residential Subareas:*

The project includes a tiered step-down to 50' north across Montgomery Street to Montgomery Park. This northern area of the development also includes Montgomery Plaza, a significant open space of 6,000 SF that also provides visual taper to Montgomery Park. The building also includes other setbacks and design relief features at upper levels along N. Royal, N. Fairfax and N. Madison Streets, also providing a height transition.

- *Implement the Retail/Arts and Cultural Areas and Corridors:*

The proposed retail and arts use is consistent with Figure 2.04 in the OTN SAP which requires arts and retail along Montgomery Street, and is optional and therefore not required on other surrounding streets: retail is proposed along Montgomery Street, with art features within the Montgomery Plaza; retail use is planned on N. Royal; retail and Machanic Courtyard with access to the arts use is planned for N. Fairfax; and retail and walk-up residential units are planned for N. Madison St.

The proposed retail and Machanic Courtyard along N. Fairfax Street is consistent with and complementary to the Arts Corridor planned per Figure 2.05. Machanic Courtyard will serve as the main access point for the featured arts anchor and Arts Paseo.