July 5, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA:

John A. Carter, Chief

Community-Based Planning Division

Judy Daniel, Team Leader, Bethesda-Chevy Chase/North Bethesda Team

FROM:

N'kosi Yearwood, Senior Planner (301.495.1332)

Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 07204-MCPS-1: Walter Johnson High School

Modernization - 6400 Rock Spring Drive, R-90 Zone, North Bethesda

Master Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE transmittal of the following comments to the Montgomery County Public Schools

(MCPS):

Coordinate with the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services 1. (DPS), the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), and Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to provide for the following improvements to satisfy Local Area Transportation Review (LATR):

- Add a separate right-turn lane on northbound Rockledge Drivé at the a. intersection of Rockledge Drive-Boulevard and Rock Forest Drive-Rockledge Drive.
- Add a second right-turn lane from southbound I-270 East Spur off-ramp at the intersection with Rockledge Boulevard.
- Add a second right-turn lane from southbound Rockledge Boulevard to C. westbound Rockledge Drive.

The LATR improvements above were identified as necessary improvements. Montgomery County should use the Development Approval Payment (DAP) made by the developer of Site Plan Amendment No. 81974005B, Lockheed Martin Corporate Headquarters addition for their Corporate Training Center - The Center for Leadership Excellence.

- 2. Work with DPWT and the future applicant of Rock Spring Center regarding future improvements along Rock Spring Drive to safely and efficiently handle vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic movements.
- 3. Install crosswalk markings at all entrances along Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive.
- 4. Improve the delineation of the designated pedestrian paths, within the parking area along the southwestern portion of the school, so that crosswalks and sidewalks clearly lead to the building's entrances and other facilities.
- 5. Provide evergreen shrubs that screen existing surface parking along Rock Spring Drive.
- 6. The applicant must obtain a sediment control permit from the Department of Permitting Services.
- 7. The applicant must obtain a final stormwater management approval from the Department of Permitting Services.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) proposes the modernization of Walter Johnson High School in North Bethesda to provide new classrooms, portions of the existing building will be renovated, and the existing athletic fields will be upgraded. The proposed 34,000 gross square feet modernization will increase student capacity to approximately 2,200 students. The modernization will be completed in different phases, beginning this year and ending in 2009-2010.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The proposed modernization is a continuation of an addition completed in 2003, which included the addition of a three-story classroom wing on the east side of the existing building, a new cafeteria/kitchen, a music suite, and renovation of the art suite on the lower level. The auditorium was recently renovated. The current enrollment is approximately 1,982 students in grades nine to 12 with a projected capacity of 2,200 students.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Context

Walter Johnson High School is located in the Rock Spring Center area of North Bethesda. The school, approximately 31 acres in size, is located at the intersection of Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive. Democracy Boulevard serves as the southern boundary of the school. Immediately north of the Walter Johnson High School is the Davis Tract with Rock Spring Center development that includes Avalon Bay apartments

and two residential towers that are under construction. Additional residential and non-residential development will occur in the future. Georgetown Square shopping center is to the immediate east and a series of office buildings with associated surface and structure parking are located along Rockledge Drive to the west.

Project Description

The proposed high school modernization will renovate the existing building, and maintain the spatial relationship of math, science and technology on the upper levels and arts and humanities classrooms on the main and lower floors along with core facility spaces.

At the southeastern corner of the building, the classroom addition, approximately 34,000 gross square feet, will provide a corridor connecting to the existing technology education suite on the upper level. Eight additional classrooms are included in the new expansion.

The proposed modernization will be completed in different phases beginning in 2007 and ending in 2009-2010. There are six phases of building construction. These phases will begin this year with the installation of 45 portables, east of the existing building and a new fire-lane.

The portable classrooms will be used while interior areas are being renovated. As the renovations are completed during this three-year period, the number of portable classrooms will gradually be reduced. Additional elements of the modernization that will begin between June 2008 and December 2009 include:

- Modifications to the main entrance to Walter Johnson High School
- Approximately 80 classrooms and laboratories will be renovated
- Athletic facilities renovations will include:
 - o Upgraded baseball and softball field,
 - Four new tennis courts.
 - o New practice fields and expanded eight-lane track, and
 - o Improvements to the stadium with 2,600-seat capacity grandstand with a new press box, concession stand, a ticket booth, a combination soccer and football field, and upgraded irrigation.

Subject Site

Walter Johnson High School is located in the southeastern portion of Rock Spring Park, the area between I-270, Old Georgetown Road and Democracy Boulevard. The irregular shaped property has frontage on Rock Spring Drive, Rockledge Drive, Democracy Boulevard and Bells Mill Road. Athletic fields, including outdoor track, football, tennis and baseball facilities are on the southern portion of the property, while surface parking for students, teachers and drop-off areas are north and west of the school. The existing high school building is a three-story structure that is approximately 324,930 gross square feet in size. There are no environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands and streams, on the property.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan Conformance

The proposed modernization is consistent with recommendations of the Approved and Adopted (1992) North Bethesda Master Plan. The Master Plan recommends the R-90 (single-family residential) Zone for Walter Johnson High School. The Plan notes that students "not only drive to and from school, they also use their cars at noon for lunch at Montgomery Mall or the neighborhood shopping centers" (p.101).

The Plan notes that pedestrian connections from buildings to bus stops and also between buildings are generally poor in Rock Spring. Sidewalks are located next to the road; there are no street trees and few bus shelters (p.100).

The Plan also recommends the redesign of the Rock Spring Drive axis as the main visual organizing element, with improved sidewalks, street trees, a transitway, station stops, and a bikeway (p.136). Although the sidewalk is adjacent to the curb, the sidewalk along Rock Spring Drive is approximately eight feet in width while the sidewalk along Rockledge Drive is narrower.

Since the Plan was adopted, Rock Spring Drive has been improved in the area of the school, and a new bus shelter was recently added. Further improvements are still warranted, including:

- Work with DPWT and the current applicant of Rock Spring Center regarding future improvements along Rock Spring Drive to safely and efficiently handle vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic movements.
- MCPS should install crosswalk markings at all entrances along Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive to improve student safety.

Development Standards

Walter Johnson High School property is zoned R-90 (single-family residential). High schools, as a publicly owned or publicly operated uses, are permitted uses in the zone, Section 59-C-1.31 (c). The proposed expansion is consistent with the standards of zone.

Transportation and Access

Site Access – Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive are the primary entrances to Walter Johnson High School. Bus drop-offs and pick-ups occur from both Rock Spring and Rockledge Drives. These access points will be retained with the proposed modernization.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation Plan – All vehicular improvements are internal to the property. Existing sidewalks along Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive will not change with the proposed expansion. There are Ride-On stops on Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive.

Parking – Walter Johnson High School has 450 automobile parking spaces and a staging area for 24 school buses. The existing temporary 92 parking spaces, adjacent to the existing tennis courts will be replaced with new tennis courts.

Roadway Improvements – The submitted traffic study indicated that the high school expansion to 2,200 students would impact the Rockledge Boulevard at Rockledge Drive/Rock Forest Drive and I-270 eastbound spur at Rockledge Boulevard intersections (see Transportation Planning Memo for additional information).

Landscape and Lighting

The submitted lighting plan illustrates that wall mounted lights on the school will not impact adjacent rights-of-way. Existing lights for the athletic fields will be retained. New landscaping is proposed for the eastern portion of the school. Staff recommends that the applicant provide additional landscaping along Rock Spring Drive to screen existing surface parking.

Environmental Guidelines

Stormwater Management – Quantity control was provided in the previous addition, but quality control is also provided as part of the modernization and may include sand filter and bio-retention devices. The Department of Permitting Services must approve a final stormwater management plan.

Forest Conservation – The proposed addition is exempt from forest conservation since no forest will be cleared.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – Walter Johnson modernization will not seek Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. All new County facilities must be LEED certified – silver beginning FY 08. Some LEED principles are included in the modernization:

- Construction Waste Management There is a plan to control waste and recycle construction debris and waste.
- Indoor Air Quality There is a plan to control the air quality during construction.
- Low VOCs The specs require products to be free of volatile organic compounds (VOC).
- Light Fixtures Lights will be energy efficient and switched according to LEED principles.
- Recycled Materials Many materials are required to be made from recycled materials or to be able to be recycled.
- Energy Efficiency The modernization will be designed to meet American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) 90.1-2001 energy requirements, BOCA Basic Energy Conservation codes, and the Montgomery County energy conservation codes.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Walter Johnson High School modernization was developed with input from the Facility Advisory Committee that includes representatives from the Parent Teachers Association (PTA). The proposed plans were reviewed and modified with suggestions from the committee. Staff spoke with Tom Murphy, a Walter Johnson Parent Teachers Association representative, who noted that the group is supportive of the modernization and desires to keep the project moving forward. Several existing civic and homeowners associations received notification on the proposed mandatory referral. No letters, emails or phone calls were received prior to this report.

CONCLUSION

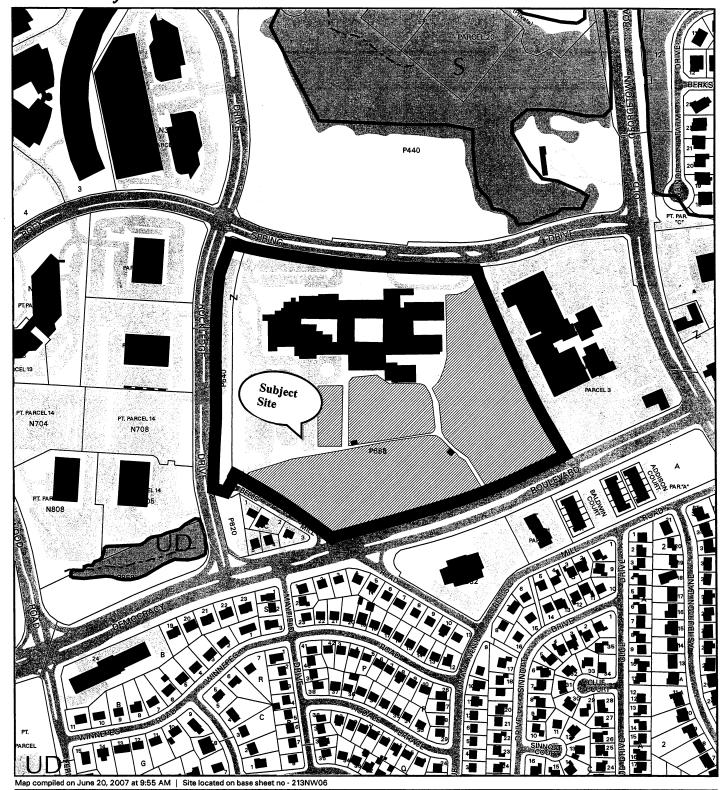
The staff recommends transmittal of the proposed mandatory referral with the comments noted at the beginning of this report.

NY:ha: g:\yearwood\Walter Johnson Expansion to MCPB

Attachments

- 1. Vicinity Map
- 2. Proposed Site Plan
- 3. Architectural Elevations
- 4. Phasing Exhibit
- 5. Transportation Planning Memo

WALTER JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL



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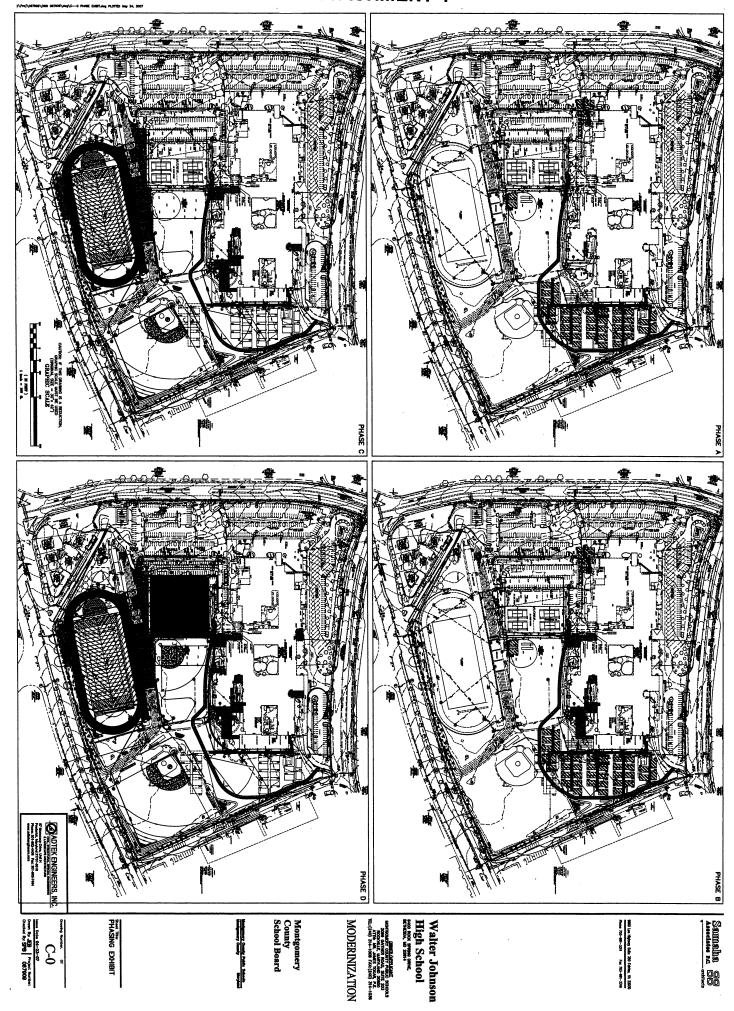
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NORTH ELEVATION SCALE: 1/16"=1'-0"

SAMAHA ASSOCIATES, P.C. 12/06/06

WALTER JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL 6400 SOCK SPRING DRIVE BETHEDA. MD 20814
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS





July 5, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Nkosi Yearwood, Planner

Community-Based Planning Division

VIA:

Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor

Transportation Planning

FROM:

Ed Axler, Planner/Coordinator

Transportation Planning

SUBJECT:

Mandatory Referral No. 07204-MCPS-1

Walter Johnson High School Modernization

North Bethesda Policy Area

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review of the subject mandatory referral case to modernized the existing high school. The athletic fields, auditorium, and gymnasium are to be renovated. The internal circulation is to be improved with better connections. Classrooms, tennis courts, and a wrestling room are to be added. This modernization would increase the school's capacity to 2,200 students.

FINDINGS

Transportation Planning staff has the following findings as part of the APF test for transportation requirements related to the subject mandatory referral case:

- Submit a Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) study if future capital 1. improvements are proposed to accommodate student enrollment higher than the maximum 2,200-student capacity that was analyzed in the submitted traffic study.
- 2. Work with the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS), the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and Public Works (DPWT), and the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to provide for the following improvements to satisfy Local Area Transportation Review (LATR):
 - Add a separate right turn lane on northbound Rockledge Drive at the intersection a) of Rockledge Drive-Boulevard and Rock Forest Drive-Rockledge Drive.

- b) Add a second right-turn lane from the southbound I-270 East Spur off-ramp at the intersection with Rockledge Boulevard.
- c) Add a second right turn lane from southbound Rockledge Boulevard to westbound Rockledge Drive.

DPWT's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Project No. 509036, Transportation Improvements for Schools, is one available mechanism to fund these improvements.

- 3. Provide for pedestrian crosswalks at the handicapped ramps across the driveways along Rock Spring drive and Rockledge Drive.
- 4. Remove the partial lead-in sidewalk on the western side of the driveway to the bus drop-off and pick-up area.
- 5. Improve the delineation of the designated pedestrian paths within the parking area along the west side of the school site so that crosswalks and sidewalks clearly lead to building and school facility entrances.
- 6. Continue to work with DPWT and the current applicant of Rock Spring Center regarding future improvements along Rock Spring Drive to safely and efficiently handle vehicular, bicycles, and pedestrians traffic movements.

The Transportation Planning staff finds that the proposed modernization to the existing high school satisfies the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) test and will have no adverse effect on nearby roadway conditions or pedestrian facilities.

DISCUSSION

Site Location

This existing high school is located on the east side of Rockledge Drive between Rock Spring Drive and Democracy Boulevard.

School Bus and Vehicular Access Circulation and Parking

The existing vehicular access points are from Rockledge Drive, Rock Spring Drive, and Bells Mill Road (which provides access to Democracy Boulevard). These access points will be retained under this subject Mandatory Referral. The existing vehicular access points are as follows:

- 1. The school bus drop-off and pick-up area is accessed from one access point along Rock Spring Drive where the center median restricts left-turns into the school.
- 2. The student drop-off and pick-up area is accessed from a one-way pair of access points along Rock Spring Drive where the center median restricts left-turns out of the school.

- 3. The student and school staff parking area is accessed from a full-movement access point and a right-turn out only access point along Rockledge Drive. The loading dock for service vehicles is accessed from the same point.
- 4. The parking area has an alternative access point from Bells Mill Road that provides access to Democracy Boulevard.

The existing site has 542 parking spaces and 24 bus bays on-site. The proposed tennis court would displace 92 temporary parking spaces that are not being replaced. Off-site parking is available at meters along Rockledge Drive.

North Bethesda Transportation Management District

This site is within the boundary of the North Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD). In accordance with the North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan and County Code Section 42A-25, subdivision applicants are required to participate in the North Bethesda Transportation Management Organization (TMO) in cases where the non-residential development has 25 or more employees. Staff recommends participation in the TMO to assist in achieving and maintaining the 39-percent non-auto driver mode share goal for TMD area employees. The participation should include the following:

- 1. Appoint a transportation coordinator as the point of contact between the TMO, employees, and students.
- 2. Participate in the County's annual commuter survey of residents and employees to monitor the performance of the trip reduction measures.
- 3. Promote alternative transportation modes to employees and students

Pedestrian Facilities

The pedestrian facilities were improved recently with the widening of the sidewalk along Rock Spring Drive to be 8 feet wide. Sidewalks also exist along Rockledge Drive and Democracy Boulevard.

Pedestrian crosswalks are needed at the handicapped ramps across the driveways along Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive as recommended in Finding No. 3. The main pedestrian lead-in walkway from Rock Spring Drive is on the eastern side of the driveway into the school bus drop-off and pick-up area. The short segment of the lead-in sidewalk on the western side of this driveway between the handicap ramp and the sidewalk end should be removed to discourage pedestrians from crossing the school bus driveway at a second point as recommended is Finding No. 4. The southernmost portion of the student and staff parking lot has a combination of sidewalks and crosswalks that do not provide a continuous connection to either the school building or other destinations such as the sports facilities. The designated pedestrian paths in this parking area should be revised to more clearly communicate a continuous connection between the parking area and pedestrian destinations on the school property as recommended in Finding No. 5.

Available Transit Service

Bus service is available along nearby roadways:

- 1. Ride-On bus routes 6, 26, and 96 operate along Rock Spring Drive.
- 2. Metrobus routes J-1 and J-3 operate along Rockledge Drive.
- 3. Ride-On bus route 6 and Metrobus routes J-1, J-2, and J-3 operate along Old Georgetown Road.
- 4. Ride-On bus route 47 and Metrobus routes J-2 and J-3 operate along Democracy Boulevard.

Master-Planned Roadways and Bikeways

According to the *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan*, the nearby roadways and bikeways are designated as follows:

- 1. Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) is a six-lane divided major highway, M-4, with a recommended 120-foot minimum right-of-way.
- 2. Rock Spring Drive is a four-lane arterial, A-81, with a recommended 80-foot minimum right-of-way and a Class I bikeway.
- 3. Fernwood Road is a four-lane arterial, A-85, with a recommended 80-foot minimum right-of-way and a Class II or III bikeway.
- 4. Democracy Boulevard is a six-lane divided major highway, M-5, with a recommended 120-foot minimum right-of-way along the property frontage and a Class I bikeway.
- 5. I-270 East Spur is a twelve-lane divided freeway, F-1, with a recommended 300-foot minimum right-of-way.
- 6. I-270 West Spur is a six-lane divided freeway, F-1a, with a recommended 300-foot minimum right-of-way.

Rockledge Drive is not designated in the *North Bethesda/ Garrett Park Master Plan*, but it was built as a business district street with an 80-foot-wide right-of-way.

In accordance with the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan*, the recommended master-planned bikeways are as follows:

- 1. A shared use path, SP-1, is designated along Old Georgetown Road between Democracy Boulevard and Cheshire Drive.
- 2. A signed shared roadway, SR-59, is designated along Rock Spring Drive between Westlake Terrace and Old Georgetown Road.

3. A shared signed roadway, SR-60, is designated along Fernwood Road between Rock Spring Drive and Democracy Boulevard and along Rockledge Drive between Westlake Terrace and Rockledge Boulevard.

Local Area Transportation Review

The increased enrollment up to the maximum capacity would generate the following peak-hour vehicular trips within the weekday morning peak period (6:30 to 9:30 a.m.) and the weekday evening peak period (4:00 to 7:00 p.m.):

	Number of Students	Weekday Peak Hour Vehicle Trips		
		Morning	Evening	
Maximum Capacity	2,200	1,164	251	
Existing Enrollment	1,982	1,049	226	
Net Increase in Enrollment	215	115	25	

The number of peak hour vehicular trips generated by the increased enrollment up to the maximum capacity was determined based on driveway counts reflecting the existing enrollment. The number of evening peak-hour trips are relatively small compared with the morning peak-hour trips because the school day ends before the start of the evening peak period at 4:00 pm.

A traffic study was required to satisfy the LATR, because the <u>total</u> number of vehicular trips generated by school is 30 or more peak-hour trips during the weekday morning and evening peak hours. Total trips include existing and new trips. The following table shows the Critical Lane Volume (CLV) values at the analyzed intersections:

Line Intersect		Weekday	Traffic Condition			
	Intersection	Peak Hour	Existing	Background	Total	Total Improved
Old Georgetown Road & I-270 East Spur (North Side)	Morning	983	1,013	1,015		
	Evening	834	1,048	1,049		
Old Georgetown Road & I-270 East Spur (North Side)	Morning	1,167	1,204	1,207		
	Evening	1,087	1,350	1,352		
Old Georgetown Road & Rock Spring Drive- Wildwood Manor Driveway	Morning	1,034	1,224	1,235		
	Evening	1,227	1,517	1,524		
Old Georgetown Road & Democracy Boulevard – Wildwood Shopping Center Driveway	Morning	1,304	1,417	1,428		
	Evening	1,257	1,489	1,491		
Old Georgetown Road & Cheshire Drive	Old Georgetown Road &	Morning	1,220	1,313	1,324	
	Evening	978	1,108	1,112		

CLV Table Continued:

Line No.	Intersection	Weekday Peak Hour	Traffic Condition			
			Existing	Background	Total	Total Improved
	Democracy Boulevard & Rockledge Drive	Morning	686	927	935	
		Evening	620	902	904	
7 Democracy Boulevard & Fernwood Road	Morning	817	979	981		
	Fernwood Road	Evening	1,137	1,218	1,218	
8	Democracy Boulevard & I-270 West Spur (West Side) ¹	Morning	756	877	877	
		Evening	875	1,164	1,164	
	Fernwood Road-Westlake Terrace & Rockledge Drive-Marriott Driveway	Morning	702	925	925	
		Evening	772	960	960	
10	Rock Spring Drive &	Morning	634	834	834	
10	Fernwood Road-Marriott Driveway	Evening	706	1,039	1,039	
11	Rock Spring Drive & Rockledge Drive	Morning	772	1,123	1,137	
11		Evening	819	1,334	1,348	
12 R	Rockledge Drive-Rock Forest Drive & Rockledge Boulevard-Drive	Morning	1,223	1,870 ²	1,870²	1,157
12		Evening	800	2,036 ²	2,038 ²	1,975 ^{2,3}
	Rockledge Boulevard & I-270 East Spur (South Side)	Morning	1,387	1,783*	1,796 ²	1,654 ^{2,3}
		Evening	651	1,137	1,138	1,200
14	Rockledge Boulevard & Walter Johnson's Driveway (South)	Morning	403	528	566	
14		Evening	229	353	354	
15	Rockledge Boulevard & Walter Johnson's Driveway (North)	Morning	685	810	820	
-13		Evening	213	378	381	
	Rock Spring Drive & Walter Johnson's Driveway (West)	Morning	363	469	482	
	water Johnson's Driveway (west)	Evening	397	630	633	
17	Rock Spring Drive & Walter Johnson's Driveway (East)	Morning	543	649	683	
		Evening	418	650	656	
18	Democracy Boulevard & I-270 West Spur (East Side)	Morning	663	719	719	
		Evening	662	904	904	

The footnotes are as follows:

¹ At Democracy Boulevard/I-270 West Spur (west side), the CLV congestion standard is 1,475 for this intersection located within the Potomac Policy Area.

³ The intersection improvements described in Finding No. 2 are proposed at intersections No. 12 and 13. Even though the CLV values in the total improved traffic condition still exceed the 1,550 congestion standard, the site-generated traffic is mitigated because the CLV values in the total improved traffic condition are lower than the CLV values in the background traffic condition.

These LATR improvements were identified as necessary improvements towards which the County should use the Development Approval Payment (DAP) paid by the developer of Site Plan Amendment No. 81974005B, Lockheed Martin Corporate Headquarters (i.e., addition for their Corporate Training Center - The Center for Leadership Excellence) to DPS.

Policy Area Transportation Review/Staging Ceiling Condition

Walter Johnson High School is an existing land use with 150 jobs already accounted for in the staging ceiling numbers. Under the current *Annual Growth Policy*, Policy Area Transportation Review is not considered in the APF review.

EA:tc

cc:

Craig Hedberg Barbara Kearney Fiona Thomas

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