



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
10/17/02
Item # 7

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 11, 2002
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: John Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division
FROM: Judy Daniel, AICP for the Department of Park and Planning *JAC*
REVIEW: Special Exception
APPLYING FOR: Service Organization
REVIEW BASIS: Chapter 59, Zoning Ordinance; advisory to the Board of Appeals
APPLICANT: Damascus Sports Association
CASE NUMBER: S-2517
ZONE: Rural Density Transfer Zone
LOCATION: Howard Chapel Drive, Damascus
MASTER PLAN: Damascus Master Plan
FILING DATE: April 4, 2002
PLANNING BOARD: October 17, 2002
PUBLIC HEARING: October 30, 2002

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

1. The applicant is bound by all submitted statements and plans, as revised.
2. Hours of operation limited as noted below. No games may begin before 9:00am:

Spring (March-June)

Monday-Friday 4pm-8pm
Saturday 7:30am - 8pm
Sunday 8:30am - 7pm

Summer (Late June -July)

Monday - Friday 4pm - 8pm
Saturday 7:30am - 9pm
Sunday 9am - 7pm

Fall (August-November)

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Monday - Friday | 4pm - 8pm |
| Saturday | 7am - 9pm |
| Sunday | 10am - 7pm |

Winter (December-February)

No activity other than grounds maintenance as needed.

3. Approval of Final Forest Conservation Plan by the M-NCPPC technical staff prior to record plat and the release of sediment and erosion control or building permit, as appropriate.
4. No ball fields may encroach into the stream valley buffer. No grading associated with the ball fields may occur in the forested stream valley buffer. Limited grading will be allowed within the unforested buffer but must be limited to the greatest extent possible and be graded at a maximum slope of 3:1 to accommodate reforestation. Mitigation will be required where the stream valley buffer is impacted by grading in the unforested stream valley buffer adjacent to the two southwestern ballfields as well as the deceleration lane at the entrance.

Required mitigation measures must include a reforestation area equivalent to the impacted areas of stream valley buffer (SVB) associated with the deceleration lane and the graded areas at the ball fields. The priority for mitigation planting is to augment the existing forest line within the SVB. This mitigation is above the planting requirement as calculated on the Forest Conservation Worksheet. The mitigation planting area must be identified on the final Forest Conservation Plan.

5. Use of the existing stream crossing must be restricted to foot traffic and maintenance equipment by the placement of signs and gate or similar means.
6. Compliance with the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) requirements for stormwater management and sediment and erosion control and approval of stream crossing permits from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).
7. Development limited to nine fields (seven for baseball/softball, one for football, and one for lacrosse).
8. During the Spring baseball season (approximately three months early March to mid-June) no football or lacrosse games may be scheduled concurrently with the baseball/softball games.
9. To minimize the potential traffic impact on Howard Chapel Drive of up to 7 simultaneous baseball/softball games, the games must be scheduled to stagger starting times as follows:

Weekday - Games must be staggered by 15 minutes on weekday evenings. There must be no more than two games scheduled for the first time slot, no more than two games for the second time slot 15 minutes later, and no more than three games for the final time slot.

Weekend - For weekend games, a one-hour stagger must be scheduled between sets of games. There must be no more than four games starting at the first time and one hour later, no more than three games may start.

10. The applicant must coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) regarding requirements of acceleration/deceleration and left-turn storage lanes on Howard Chapel Drive at the site entrance road.
11. The applicant must design and construct an exclusive eastbound MD 108 left-turn lane at the MD 108/Howard Chapel Drive intersection to address safety concerns noted by the MD State Highway Administration (SHA). If right-of-way is not available to construct this left-turn lane, the applicant must negotiate in good faith to acquire the necessary right-of-way and/or coordinate with SHA to acquire the right-of-way through the condemnation process.
12. No lights may be used on the ballfields.
13. Adjust the landscaping plans to provide an additional 23 evergreen trees and 11 deciduous trees to the planted buffer along the northern property lines adjacent to Lots 4, 5 and 6. Maintain an average of 15 foot on-center spacing within a 30-foot wide buffer and preserve the 70% evergreen tree to 30% deciduous tree ratio.
14. Provide a solid fence at least 6 feet in height along the rear lot lines of Lots 4, 5, and 6 to the north.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

This is an application for a sports complex for youth sports being submitted and to be managed by, the Damascus Sports Association. It has been submitted as a special exception for a "Private Club or Service Organization". The applicant states that the facility is intended to serve as a recreational center for youth sports primarily for residents in the northern part of the county. The site is on the east side of Howard Chapel Drive about 1.3-mile northeast of MD 108 in the Damascus area.

Neighborhood

The proposed sports facility is in an area that is a mix of rural and residential land uses. The subject parcel and surrounding parcels on the east side of Howard Chapel Drive are in the RDT Zone. Two larger lots with existing homes immediately adjoin the site to the north. Further to the southwest along the east side of Howard Chapel toward

Damascus, the zoning changes to Rural Cluster. The immediate vicinity on the west side of Howard Chapel across from the proposed site fronts on an older residential subdivision, Watkins Village, in the RE-2C zone.

Site

The applicant site is known as Parcel 333 and outlots "E" and "F" on Tax Map GX13. This is an approximately 68-acre property taking access from the south side of Howard Chapel Drive. The recreational athletic facilities will be managed by a non-profit organization for youth sports. Activities proposed include football, baseball, softball, basketball, wrestling, lacrosse, cheerleading, and "poms". The site contains streambeds, woodland, and open fields. It will require a fair amount of grading to create level surfaces for the fields.

Application Description

The Damascus Sports Association (DSA) currently uses fields and facilities at 12 public schools and 9 public parks to operate its programs. This represents all the available fields in the area that DSA serves. Residential growth in recent years in this part of Montgomery County has brought increased demand for fields and a search for a permanent home. Absent a new location, DSA will have to limit participation due to lack of fields. The DSA site will provide a central location and fields for most of the Association's programs.

The proposed site is bordered on two sides by existing woodland and adjacent to active farms. On the other sides there are homes on large lots, and a small frontage on Howard Chapel Drive. Proposed facilities include 9 playing fields (2 for T-ball, 5 for baseball, 1 for football, 1 for lacrosse). Lighting is proposed for a football field and two of the baseball/softball fields. No lights are proposed in bleachers, outside the concession stand, or outside the press box. The fields are approximately 250 feet from the nearest homes to the north, and 700-800 feet from the nearest homes fronting on Howard Chapel Drive.

The greatest level of activity is anticipated for Saturdays, and the applicants propose to stagger starting times of games to lessen traffic impact. Access to the site is from Howard Chapel Drive, and two parking lots are to be provided. In addition, carpooling is encouraged by DSA, and this is a common practice for youth sports. No off-site parking is to be permitted.

The DSA proposes the following seasonal hours of operation:

Spring (March-June)

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Monday-Friday | 4pm-8pm |
| Saturday | 7:30am- 9pm |
| Sunday | 8:30am - 7pm |

Summer (Late June -July)

Monday - Friday 4pm - 8pm
Saturday 7:30am - 8pm
Sunday 9am - 7pm

Fall (August-November)

Monday - Friday 4pm - 8pm
Saturday 7am - 10pm
Sunday 10am - 7pm

Winter (December-February)

No activity other than grounds maintenance as needed.

The DSA has no employees. Volunteers, usually parents of participants, will be on the property to assist with all activities. The number of volunteers will vary depending on the schedule. Maintenance (mowing, field care) will be weekly during the growing season. Limited maintenance is anticipated during the winter months.

The DSA states that having this location will enable parents to bring their children to a central location to play different sports, rather than driving to multiple fields for children in different sports. They believe this will encourage family involvement and reduce traffic to other parts of the county. Also, transferring the majority of DSA programs to a central facility will open many hours of time at school and park fields now used by DSA for other groups.

ANALYSIS

Zoning

Private clubs are permitted in the RDT Zone in accordance with the criteria in Section 59-G-2.42, which indicates the use must conform to the special exception requirements of Section G-2.24. The proposed facility easily meets zoning requirements for height, setback and lot size.

Master Plan

The property is within the boundary of the Damascus Master Plan adopted 1982. The Master Plan is silent on special exceptions. Uses such as a service organization or private clubs are permitted – with a presumption that they do not radically change the character of the surrounding area. The staff does not believe that the proposed use will radically change the character of the surrounding area - a mix of rural and residential uses within 1.5 mile from central Damascus where sport fields are appropriate.

Landscaping and Lighting

On-site landscaping is not a significant issue with this type of use, appropriate buffers from residential uses in the vicinity are very important. The entry to this facility should

include low landscaping that does not interfere with the line of sight for traffic along Howard Chapel Drive. Within the site, proper buffering from the two residential properties to the north is vital.

The criteria for commercial recreational or entertainment establishments (G-2.45) include a requirement for a buffering fence when adjacent to residential properties. This is a non-profit, not a commercial use, but the potential for impact remains. Although the adjacent properties to the north are not in a residential zone, the staff believes that they have the potential to be significantly impacted without a proper buffer. Therefore, the staff is recommending that a solid fence at least 6 feet in height must be constructed and maintained along the rear lot lines of Lots 4, 5, and 6 to the north.

The planted buffer proposed by the applicant along the adjacent residential property lines consists of approximately 70 evergreen trees and 29 deciduous trees. The buffer is planted in an informal massing and is approximately 1,537 feet in length. Staff recommends increasing the tree density of the buffer plantings to an average of 15 feet on-center within a 30-foot wide buffer. The 70% evergreen tree to 30% deciduous tree ratio should be preserved. This recommendation will require an additional 23 evergreen trees and 11 deciduous trees to the proposed plantings. The additional trees will enhance the effectiveness of the buffer and further screen the proposed use from the residences to the north.

The special exception criteria for this use note that on-site lighting is "*all outdoor lighting shall be located, shielded, landscaped or otherwise buffered so that no direct light shall constitute an intrusion into any residential area not to reflect or cause glare into any residential zone*". Although the adjacent properties are in a rural, not residential zone - excessive lighting would be detrimental to them. Therefore, the staff told the applicant that lighting would be carefully considered for this use.

Despite this concern, the applicants did not submit a lighting plan, and did not submit a photometrics study until late last week. What was submitted was incomplete. However, the staff believes that this use can function, although to a more limited extent, without the use of lights. Therefore, in the absence of acceptable lighting plans to review, the staff is recommending that the use not be authorized to light the ballfields.

Traffic

The staff concludes that the proposed use, with the conditions recommended, will not adversely impact the surrounding roadway network. If mitigated by the conditions proposed, the roadway system as it currently exists is adequate to accommodate traffic to be generated by the proposed sport facility. To assist in a smoother traffic flow, the staff has proposed conditions to stagger game starting times, limit the number of concurrent games, and require acceleration and deceleration lanes at the entrance. Conditions for approval are noted at the beginning of this report, and the full Transportation Report is attached.

Site Access and Circulation - The applicant proposes one access point to the site from Howard Chapel Drive, a two-lane road with a posted speed limit of 25 mph. Howard Chapel is not classified as a primary road along the frontage of the proposed use. The Damascus Master Plan classified approximately 1000 feet of Howard Chapel southwest of the site as a primary residential roadway (P-2) from a point approximately 3,000 feet north of MD 108 to a point approximately 4,000 feet north of MD 108. The Damascus Master Plan recommends that P-2 be constructed on a new alignment between Howard Chapel Drive and Woodfield Road Extended. For its entire length, Howard Chapel drives functions as a collector street between MD 108 to the southwest and Long Corner Road to the northeast via a short length of Gue Road.

The staff believes that the proposed three-lane (two outbound lanes and one inbound lane) entrance road provides safe and efficient access. The location of the entrance road was developed with consideration of the environmental constraints existing in the vicinity of the site. The site access with the above comments and the internal vehicular circulation system shown on the site plan are adequate.

Pedestrian Facilities - The site is located in the rural policy area, where the County's roadway design standards do not include curbs or sidewalks due to the relatively low level of pedestrian activity, the adverse effects associated with closed-section design, and inconsistency with rural character. The proposed development is not expected to generate a high level of off-site pedestrian activity, as most participants do not live within walking distance of the site. The staff concurs that the proposed site plan provides adequate pedestrian accommodations.

Congestion Levels at Nearby Roadways and Intersections - A traffic analysis for the proposed sport facility was prepared to determine the impact of development on nearby roadways and intersection capacities. Three local intersections were identified as critical intersections to be affected by the development of the subject site and were examined in the traffic analysis to determine whether they meet the applicable congestion standard of 1,500 Critical Lane Volume (CLV) for the Damascus Policy Area. The CLV impacts of the proposed development on these intersections were analyzed and are summarized in Table I (attached at the end of this report).

As indicated in Table I, all intersections analyzed are currently operating at well below acceptable CLVs (CLV standard is 1,500) during the weekday peak hours and the weekend highest one hour. Under the background development (developments approved but not built) and the total development (background development plus the site development) conditions, acceptable traffic conditions at all intersections are not adversely affected from the intersection capacity perspective.

While the proposed development will not cause intersection congestion thresholds to be exceeded, it does create an operation concern at the intersection of MD 108 and Howard Chapel Drive. At this location, the State Highway Administration (SHA) recommends that the applicant be required to construct an exclusive left-turn lane, as indicated in their attached October 7 letter. The staff believes that SHA's recommendation is consistent with roadway design guidelines published by the

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and, therefore, supports SHA's position.

The traffic study also analyzed the site traffic impact on the link of the two-lane Howard Chapel Drive. As shown on Table II (also attached to this report), the results of the Link Capacity analysis indicate that although the proposed facility generates additional traffic on Howard Chapel Drive, there is sufficient roadway capacity available on Howard Chapel Drive to accommodate the proposed use. The staff is recommending conditions to avoid scheduling simultaneous games to avoid internal traffic congestion and spread out the peak traffic flow at the entrance and on Howard Chapel Drive.

Staging Ceiling - The subject site is located in the Rural Policy Area (just outside the Damascus Policy Area) where there are no assigned staging ceilings. For information, there is capacity available for employment development (833 jobs as of August 31, 2002) in the Damascus Policy Area based on the FY 02 AGP staging ceiling capacity.

Environmental

Natural Resources - This application is subject to the forest conservation law. The Natural Resources Inventory (#4-02250) and Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan have been submitted and approved. Forest Conservation requirements will be met with retention and recording of Category 1 Forest Conservation Easements.

Stream Quality - The site is located within the Upper Scott's Branch tributary of the Upper Patuxent River watershed. The *Countywide Stream Protection Strategy* (CSPS) assesses the Upper Scott's Branch subwatershed as having good stream conditions and excellent habitat conditions, designating it as an Agricultural Watershed Management Area. The applicant proposes one stream crossing to gain access to the proposed facility. The crossing will require permits from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).

Stormwater Management - The applicant has submitted a stormwater management concept plan to the Department of Permitting Services (DPS). The plan is currently under review. The current site development plan shows a proposed stormwater management pond for quantity control, and two infiltration trenches for water quality control. DPS may require additional stormwater management for the parking lots and fields, but there appears to be adequate space outside the stream valley buffer. Bioretention in and near the parking lots may be an option for stormwater quality and some quantity control.

If the layout of the site development plan (dated 10/07/02) is altered due to DPS stormwater management requirements (or any other reason), the applicant must resubmit revised plans to the M-NCPPC for approval. Several conditions necessary for these environmental concerns are noted at the beginning of the report.

Subdivision

The proposed use is on an unrecorded parcel and will need to go through the subdivision process if the special exception is approved. An issue at that platting will be to designate and protect an existing well access easement for the properties to the north, which is indicated on the site plan.

Historic Preservation

No concerns were raised by the Historic Preservation staff regarding this site.

Compliance with Specific and General Special Exception Provisions

As noted in the attached, the application meets the special exception criteria for the use.

Citizen Concerns

The staff was aware for some time that there would be opposition to this proposal, and the staff had met with a group in the community to discuss this an upcoming rezoning proposal, but no one had contacted the staff to specifically discuss concerns with the application. At that meeting, traffic and noise appear to be the greatest concerns. On the day the staff report was submitted, one letter of support and several letters of opposition were received and they are attached to this report. The concerns expressed are generally those that the staff has addressed - primarily traffic, lighting, and activity. The staff believes that additional letters may be received.

INHERENT/NON-INHERENT

The staff believes that the level of activity, traffic, and noise are the inherent characteristics of potentially greatest concern for a use of this nature. This certainly does not preclude this type of use because there are certainly other private clubs, schools, and other outdoor activity uses of various types located in proximity to residential areas in the county. The staff has proposed conditions to limit the impact of traffic, hours of operation, and activity. Noise is addressed through the County's Noise Ordinance.

The staff believes that the most significant non-inherent concerns related to lighting and environmental impacts. The applicant has worked closely with the environmental staff to address these concerns. They have made multiple adjustments in their site plan, and several conditions are proposed to mitigate potential impacts. Because the information submitted was insufficient, the staff has recommended that no field lighting be allowed. Thus that concern is alleviated.

CONCLUSION

The staff would be more comfortable with the application if the zoning ordinance provided more guidance and objective standards for facilities of this nature. Because they are proposed so infrequently, they are lumped in with facilities with fewer traffic, noise and activity concerns. The staff worked closely with the applicants to address the environmental, lighting, and traffic issues. Noise is governed separately by the County's Noise Ordinance - and the applicant must comply with those standards.

In the absence of concrete standards, a strong effort was made to limit the potential impact of game related traffic along Howard Chapel Drive, the aspect that we believed to be of greatest concern. The intensive evaluation of this aspect resulted in a number of conditions that would mitigate the impact of the traffic generated by the use. Similarly, the intensive environmental review resulted in a number of modifications to address the stream valley protection issues. The applicants were very cooperative in working with staff on these traffic and environmental issues. And the landscaping review resulted in a recommendation for additional protection of the immediately adjoining property owners.

The use will create a change in the pace of activity in this area. It will produce far more traffic than area residents are used to seeing. But, the staff is persuaded that this use is an important one for the community at large, and the location - while a mix for rural and residential uses, is within 1.5 mile from central Damascus. There is a strong countywide need for youth sport facilities. Although Howard Chapel Drive is somewhat narrow at the entrance to the proposed site, the transportation staff is comfortable, with the limitations and conditions proposed, that the use will not excessively burden this road and that the entrance will provide safe ingress and egress.

The only outstanding issue at the time this report was written was the proposed field lighting. The applicant agreed to adjustments to their proposed lighting of three fields to reduce potential impact - glare and ambient light. Regretfully, they did not submit acceptable plans until late last week. The staff believes that due to the nature of their planned activities, the use can function without field lighting. Therefore, the staff has added a condition that will preclude the installation of field lighting instead of recommending denial based on an incomplete submission. This condition also has the effect of limiting hours of operation.

The remaining area of concern to the staff is the hours of operation. The staff believes that the requested 7:00 AM and 7:30 AM opening times on Saturdays (varying with the season) have the potential to create avoidable noise and traffic concerns at a very early time when many people in the adjoining neighborhood may still prefer to be sleeping. Therefore, the staff recommends that the opening time remain as requested, to allow the preparation of fields by a DSA volunteers, but that no games be scheduled to begin any earlier than 9:00 AM. Similarly, although an 11 pm closing time is requested for Fall (August-November) Saturdays, this is not logical if there are no field lights. So a closing time of 9 pm is recommended to allow time for clean up crews.

Given the potential good this use offers the broader community the staff recommends approval of the use with the conditions noted at the beginning of this report. With these conditions to address safety, traffic, environmental, and compatibility issues, the staff believes this use will be appropriate at the requested location.

Attachments

Special Exception Requirements

Sec. 59-G-1.2. Conditions for granting.

59-G-1.21. General conditions.

(a) A special exception may be granted when the board, the hearing examiner, or the district council, as the case may be, finds from a preponderance of the evidence of record that the proposed use:

- (1) Is a permissible special exception in the zone.

The property is zoned RDT, which permits a private club/service organization as a special exception.

- (2) Complies with the standards and requirements set forth for the use in division 59-G-2.

The proposed use complies with the criteria of section 59-G-2.24.

- (3) Will be consistent with the general plan for the physical development of the district, including any master plan or portion thereof adopted by the Commission.

The Damascus Master Plan is silent on special exceptions, deferring to the Zoning Ordinance.

- (4) Will be in harmony with the general character of the neighborhood considering population density, design, scale and bulk of any proposed new structures, intensity and character of activity, traffic and parking conditions and number of similar uses.

With the proposed conditions, the staff believes that this use will be in harmony with the general character of the surrounding area in relation to these issues.

- (5) Will not be detrimental to the use, peaceful enjoyment, economic value or development of surrounding properties or the general neighborhood; and will cause no objectionable noise, vibrations, fumes, odors, dust, glare or physical activity.

With the proposed conditions, the staff believes the use will not be detrimental in regard to the issues noted for the reasons expressed in the accompanying staff report.

- (6) Will not, when evaluated in conjunction with existing and approved special exceptions in the neighboring residential area, increase the number or intensity of special exception uses sufficiently to affect the area adversely or alter its predominantly residential nature.

The surrounding area is zoned for agricultural and low-density residential uses, with a mix of agricultural and residential uses present. With traffic carefully controlled, via the proposed conditions, the proposed use would not significantly alter the residential/rural character of the area, which is located approximately 1.5 mile from central Damascus.

- (7) Will not adversely affect the health, safety, security, morals or general welfare of residents, visitors or workers in the area.

With the conditions proposed, the staff evaluation finds no admissible adverse impact on safety, security or morals.

- (8) Will be served by adequate public services and facilities including schools, police and fire protection, water, sanitary sewer, public roads, storm drainage and other public facilities. If the special exception use requires approval of a preliminary plan of subdivision in accordance with chapter 50 of this Code, title "Subdivision of Land," the adequacy of public facilities will be determined by the Planning Board at the time of subdivision approval. In that case, the Board of Appeals must include such Planning Board approval as a condition of the grant of the special exception.

If this special exception request is approved, subdivision of the property will be required and adequacy of public facilities will be determined during that process.

Specific Conditions

Sec. 59-G-2.42. Private clubs and service organizations. See section 59-G-2.24

Sec. 59-G-2.24. Golf courses and country clubs.

The Board may authorize a golf course, country club, private club or service organization including community buildings, upon a finding that the proposed use will not adversely affect surrounding residential and agricultural uses because of noise, traffic, number of people or type of physical activity; provided, that the following standards and requirements can be met:

- (a) The provision of food, refreshments, and entertainment for club or organization members and their guests may be allowed in connection with such use, provided the availability of such services is not reasonably expected to draw an excessive amount of traffic through local residential streets.

The proposed use is not on a street that would be described as having a local residential street character. It is along a road that functions as a rural primary or collector road. During normal day-to-day operations, the proposed club would generate a minimal amount of traffic – however the club is proposing a significant level of weekend (Friday-Sunday) daytime activity. Provision of food and refreshments will be very limited, primarily for the benefit of participants of ball games.

- (b) All buildings shall conform to the height, coverage, and setback regulations of the zone in which they are located; and all facilities shall be so located as to conform to other special exception standards.

The proposed club building will meet the development standards of the applicable RDT Zone for lot size, lot width, setbacks, lot coverage, and building height. Only one small building is proposed (a concession stand near two of the ballfields) and a small set of bleachers.

- (c) All outdoor lighting shall be located, shielded, landscaped or otherwise buffered so that no direct light shall constitute an intrusion into any residential area.

The staff is recommending that no outdoor field lighting be allowed for this use.

Transportation Review Tables

Table I

| Intersection Capacity Analysis with CLV Under Various Development Schemes During the Peak Hour | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| | Existing | | | Background | | | Total | | |
| | Weekday | | Weekend | Weekday | | Weekend | Weekday | | Weekend |
| | AM | PM | | AM | PM | | AM | PM | |
| MD 108/MD 124 | 531 | 914 | 693 | 600 | 1034 | 693 | 600 | 1110 | 772 |
| MD 108/Howard Chapel Road | 382 | 486 | 406 | 425 | 560 | 406 | 425 | 740 | 586 |
| Long Corner Road/Gue Road | 259 | 196 | 62 | 259 | 196 | 62 | 259 | 228 | 109 |

Table II
Link Capacity Analysis on Howard Chapel Drive North of MD 108

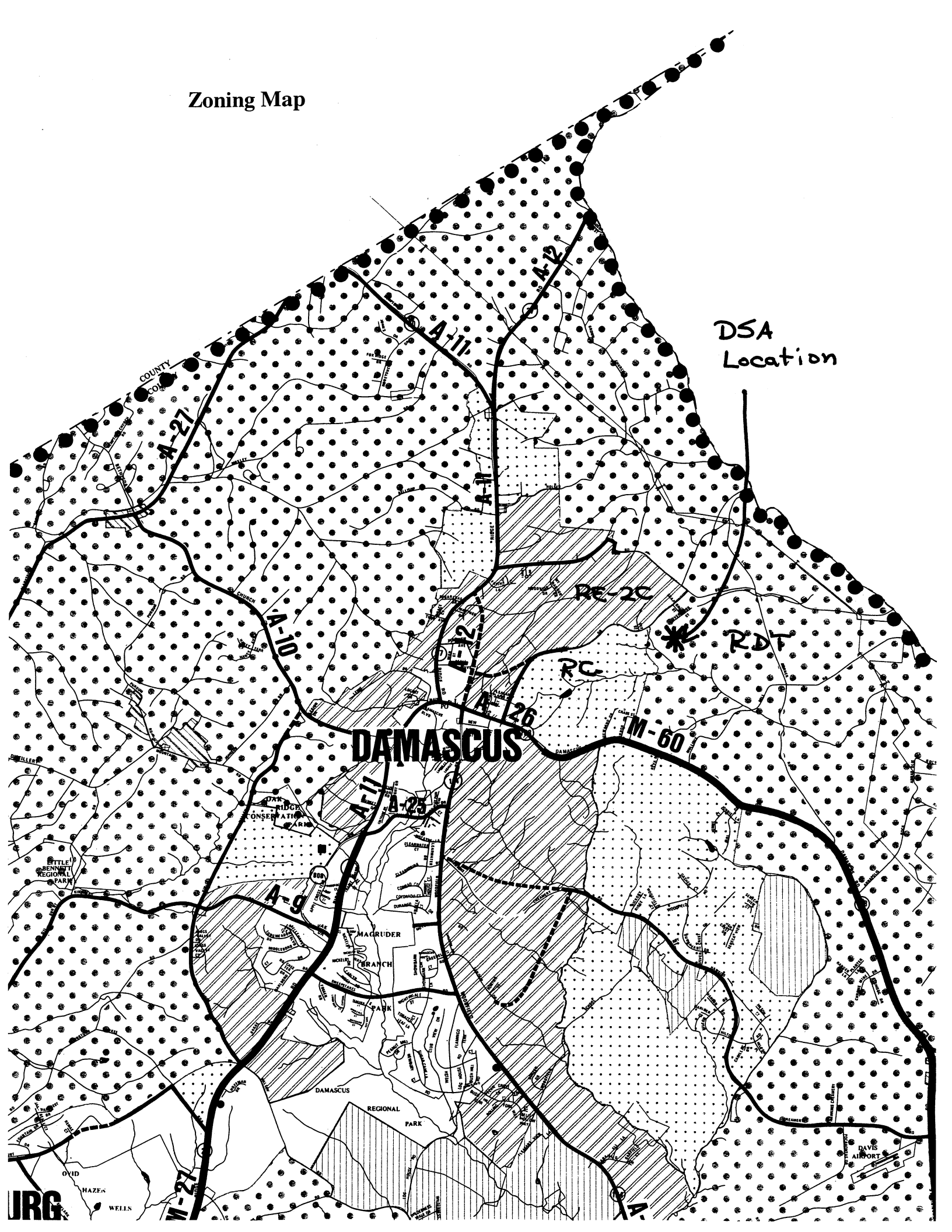
| | Existing | | Background | | Total | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | V/C* | LOS** | V/C | LOS | V/C | LOS |
| Weekday A.M. Peak Hour | 0.05 | B | 0.05 | B | 0.05 | B |
| Weekday P.M. Peak Hour | 0.08 | B | 0.08 | B | 0.21 | C |
| Saturday Mid-day Peak Hour | 0.06 | B | 0.06 | B | 0.19 | C |

*V/C is volume to capacity ratio

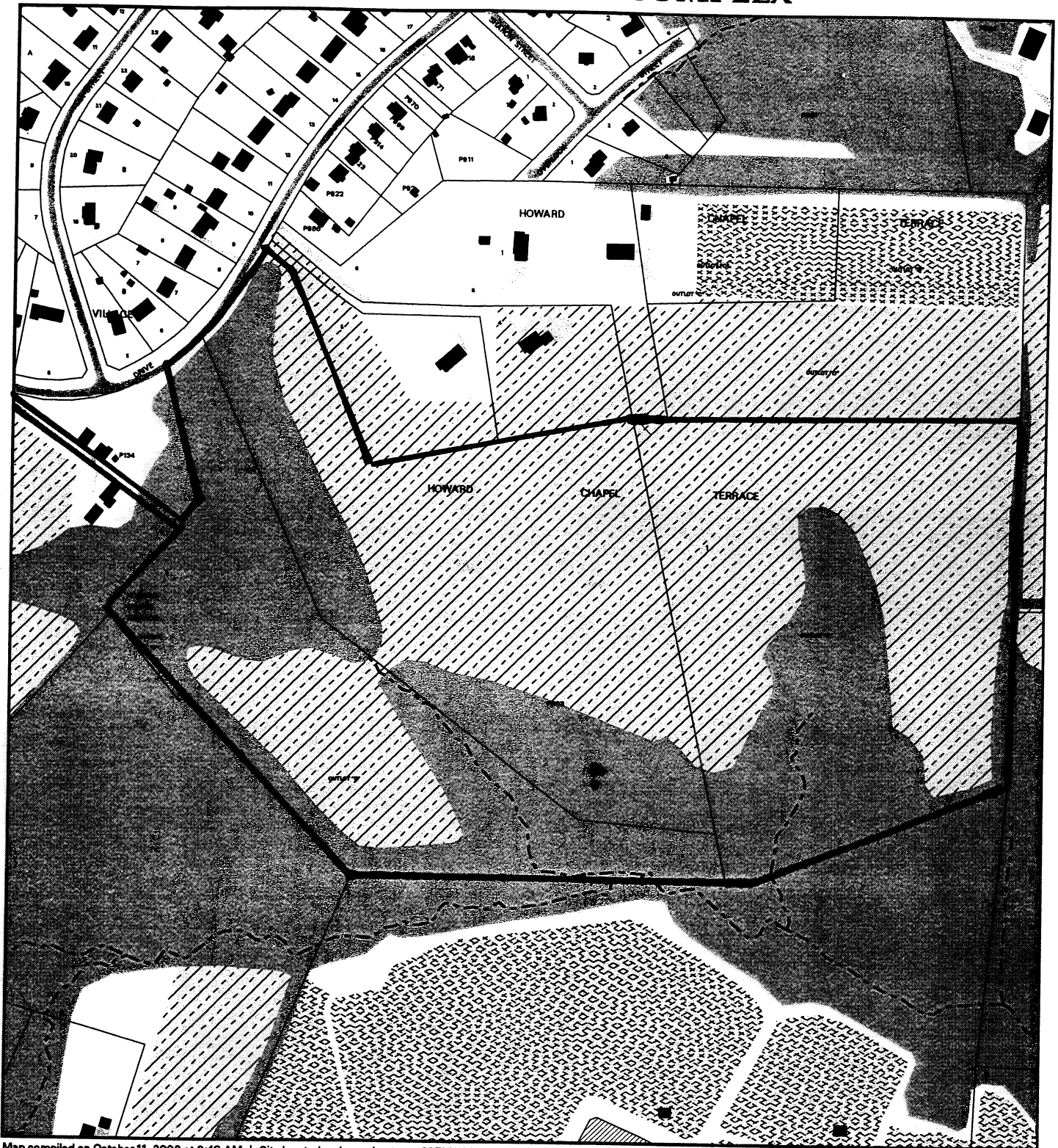
**LOS is the level of service

Zoning Map

DSA
Location



DAMASCUS SPORTS ASSOCIATION COMPLEX



Map compiled on October 11, 2002 at 9:43 AM | Site located on base sheet no - 237NW08

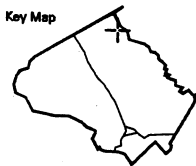
NOTICE

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Property lines are compiled by adjusting the property lines to topography created from aerial photography and should not be interpreted as actual field surveys. Planimetric features were compiled from 1:14400 scale aerial photography using stereo photogrammetric methods.

This map is created from a variety of data sources, and may not reflect the most current conditions in any one location and may not be completely accurate or up to date. All map features are approximately within five feet of their true location. This map may not be the same as a map of the same area plotted at an earlier time as the data is continuously updated. Use of this map, other than for general planning purposes is not recommended. - Copyright 1998

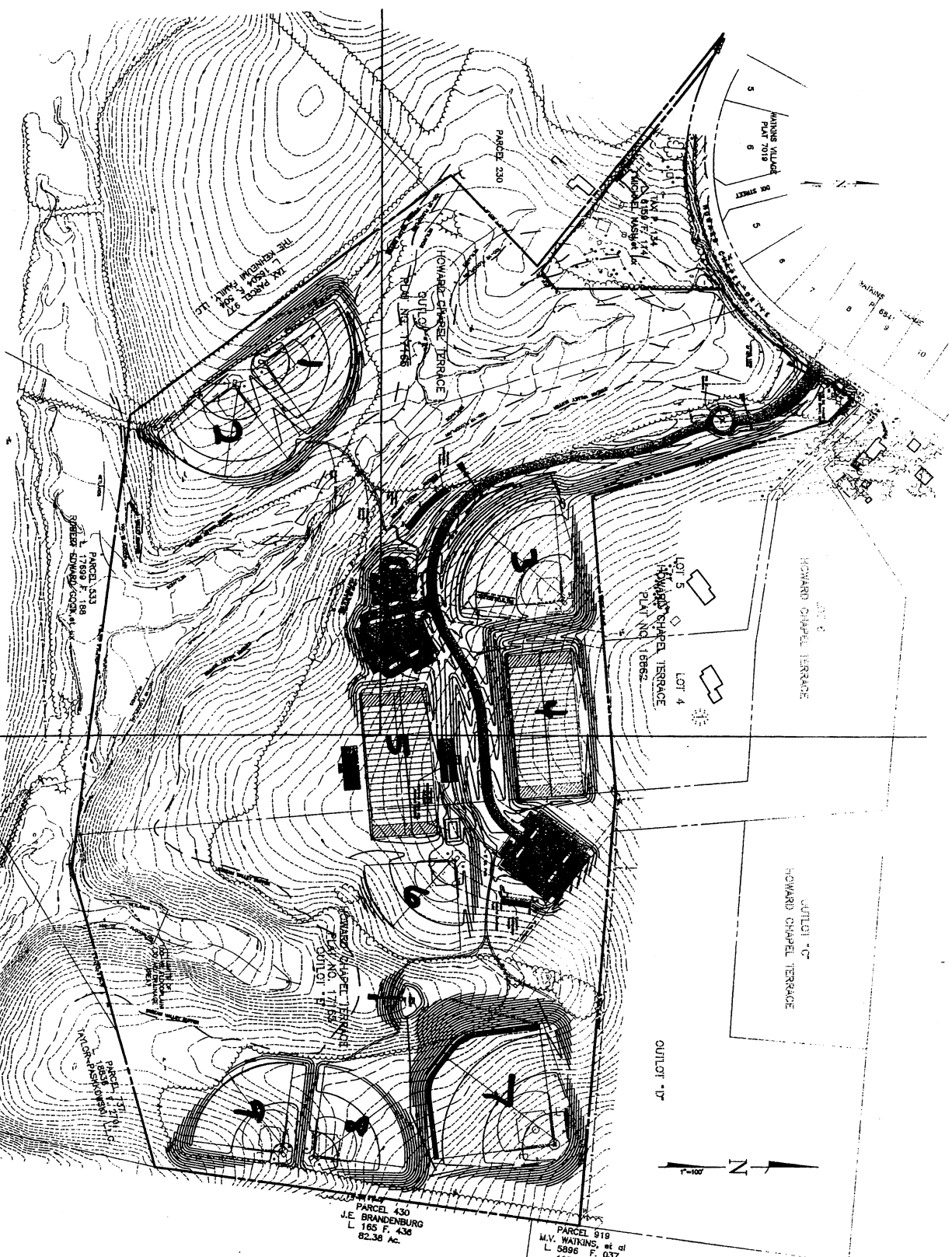
Key Map



N



1:4800



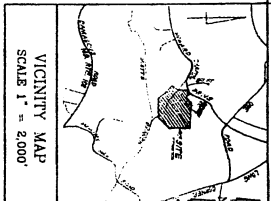
Call "Miss Utility" at 1-800-257-7777,
 48 hours prior to the start of work.
 In the event of an emergency, call the
 Department of Public Works, at 301-253-7777.
 For more information, contact the
 Department of Public Works, at 301-253-7777.
 The Department of Public Works, at 301-253-7777.



APPLICANT
 DAMASCUS SPORTS ASSOCIATION
 DAMASCUS, MD 20822
 PHONE: 301-253-2055

| NO. | DATE | DESCRIPTION | BY |
|-----|----------|-------------------|-----|
| 1 | 10-28-02 | Revised site plan | 301 |
| 2 | 11-28-02 | Revised site plan | 301 |
| 3 | 12-28-02 | Revised site plan | 301 |

Site Plan Map



PARCEL 430
 J.E. BRANDBURG
 L 165 F. A36
 82.36 Ac.

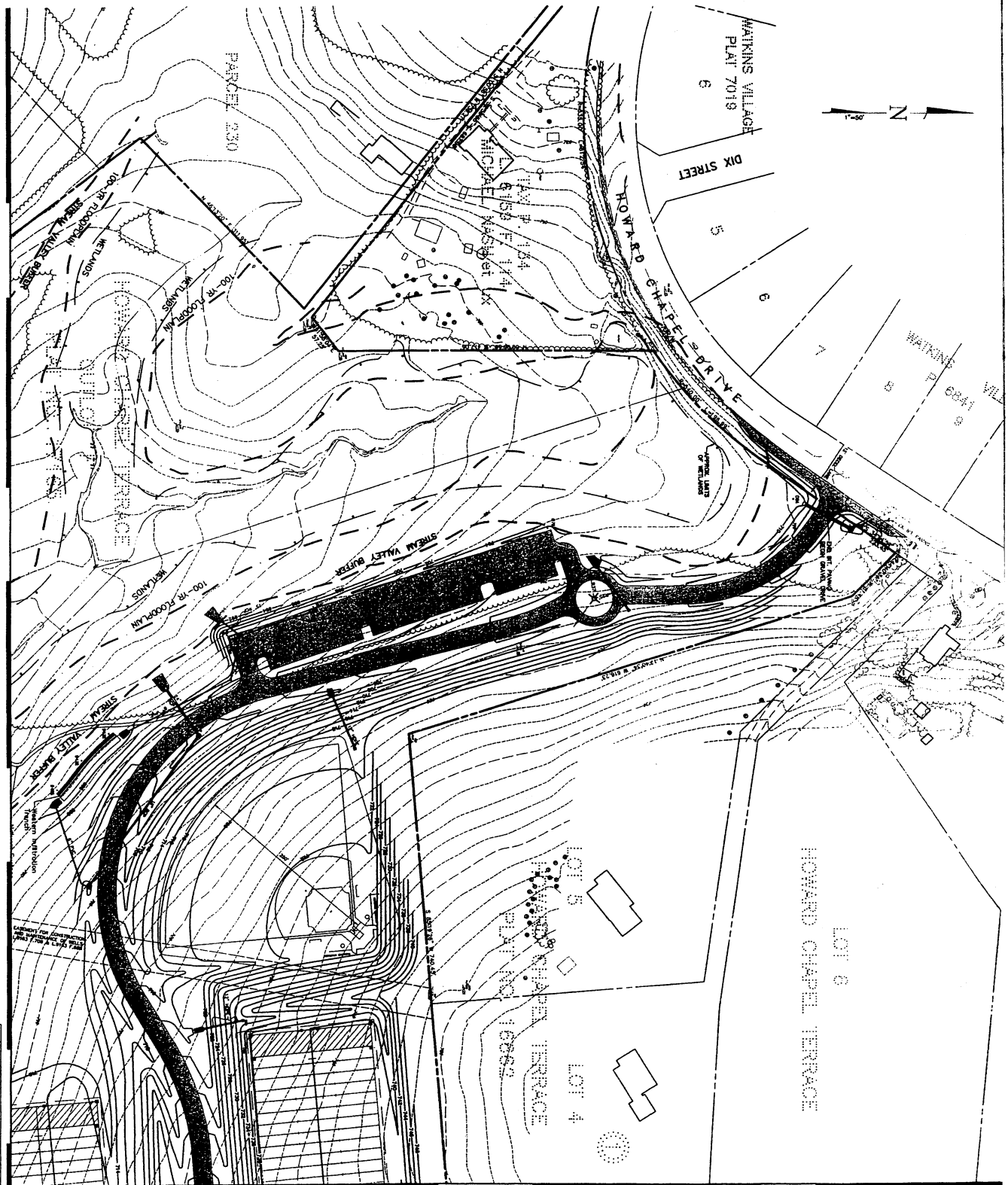
GENERAL NOTES

- Site Area - 64.46 Acre. Property is located on Howard Chapel Drive.
- Topography - Based from Ass'd. Elevation (ASD) by Thomas A. Kelly Survey, Inc.
- Boundary - Based on Record Plat No. 17415.
- Soils - The soils are primarily H-1 (medium heavy) and H-2 (medium heavy) with H-3 (medium heavy) in the upper portion. The soils are primarily H-1 (medium heavy) and H-2 (medium heavy) with H-3 (medium heavy) in the upper portion. The soils are primarily H-1 (medium heavy) and H-2 (medium heavy) with H-3 (medium heavy) in the upper portion.
- The project is sited on a 20-foot wide easement.

HOWARD CHAPEL TERRACE
 SPECIAL EXCEPTION SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
 12TH ELECTION DISTRICT - MONTGOMERY COUNTY - MARYLAND

MAEHRIS, HENDRICKS & GLASCOCK, P.A.
 Engineers & Planners & Surveyors
 4215 N. JAY ROAD
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 PHONE: 301-953-3333
 FAX: 301-953-3333

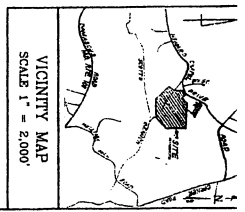
| NO. | DATE | DESCRIPTION | BY |
|-----|----------|-------------------|-----|
| 1 | 10-28-02 | Revised site plan | 301 |
| 2 | 11-28-02 | Revised site plan | 301 |
| 3 | 12-28-02 | Revised site plan | 301 |



MATCHLINE SEE SHEET 4 OF 4

| NO. | DATE | DESCRIPTION | BY |
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MATCHLINE SEE SHEET 3 OF 4



Detailed Site Plan Map



SPECIAL EXCEPTION SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
HOWARD CHAPEL TERRACE
 PARCEL 535 and OUTLOTS E and F - BLOCK 1
 12TH ELECTION DISTRICT - MONTGOMERY COUNTY - MARYLAND

Macoris, Hendricks & Glanville, P.A.
 Engineers & Planners • SURVEYORS
 P.A. (001) 948-0088
 1420 Westmont Road
 Suite 120
 Rockville, MD 20851-1719

| Designed | Drawn |
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APR 13 2002
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THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

October 10, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Judy Daniel, Team Leader
Rural Team
Community-Based Planning Division

VIA: Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor *DKH*
Transportation Planning

FROM: Ki H. Kim, Planner *KHK*
Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Special Exception Application No. S-2517
Damascus Sport Association
Damascus

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's adequate public facilities (APF) review and recommendations on the subject special exception application. The application is for development of a "private club" on 68+ acres of land located on the east side of Howard Chapel Drive about 1.3 mile north of MD 108 in the Damascus area. The development includes nine playing fields for baseball/softball, football, and lacrosse games.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our review of the submitted traffic analysis, Transportation Planning staff recommends the following conditions as part of the APF test for transportation requirements related to approval of this special exception application.

1. The development under this special exception application is limited to nine fields (seven for baseball/softball, one for football, and one for lacrosse).
2. During the Spring Baseball season of approximately three months between early March and mid-June, no football or lacrosse games are scheduled concurrently with the baseball/softball games.
3. In order to minimize the traffic impact of having seven baseball/softball games simultaneously on Howard Chapel Drive, the baseball/softball games should be

scheduled with staggering starting times by 15 minutes for the games on weekday evenings so that there would be two games scheduled for the first time slot, two games for the second time slot 15 minutes later, and three games for the final time slot. For weekend games, a one-hour stagger should be scheduled between sets of games so that there would be four games starting at one time and then, one hour later, three games starting.

4. The applicant should design and construct an exclusive eastbound MD 108 left-turn lane at the MD 108/Howard Chapel Drive intersection to address the safety concern per the State Highway Administration's (SHA) comments described in their letter dated October 7, 2002 to Ronald C. Welke (copy attached). If the right-of-way is not available to construct this left-turn lane, the applicant should negotiate in good faith to acquire necessary right-of-way and/or coordinate with SHA to acquire the right-of-way through condemnation process.
5. The applicant should coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) regarding requirements of acceleration/deceleration and left-turn storage lanes on Howard Chapel Drive at the site entrance road.

DISCUSSION

Site Access and Circulation

One access point to the site is provided from Howard Chapel Drive. Howard Chapel Drive, a two-lane roadway with a posted speed limit of 25 mph, is not classified as a primary road along the site frontage. The Damascus Master Plan classifies approximately 1,000' of Howard Chapel Drive southwest of the site as a primary residential roadway, P-2, from a point of approximately 3,000' north of MD 108 to a point of approximately 4,000' north of MD 108. The Damascus Master Plan recommends P-2 be constructed on new alignment between Howard Chapel Drive and Woodfield Road Extended. For its entire length, Howard Chapel Drive functions as a collector street between MD 108 to the southwest and Long Corner Road to the northeast via the east leg of Gue Road.

The three-lane (two outbound lanes and one inbound lane) site entrance road provides safe and efficient access. The location of the entrance road was developed with consideration of the environmental constraints existing in the vicinity of the site. The site access with the above comments and the internal vehicular circulation system shown on the site plan are adequate.

Pedestrian Facilities

The site is located in the rural policy area, where the County's roadway design standards do not include curbs or sidewalks due to the relatively low level of pedestrian activity, the adverse effects associated with closed-section design, and inconsistency with rural character. The proposed development is not expected to generate a high level of off-

site pedestrian activity, as most participants do not live within walking distance of the site. Staff concurs that the proposed site plan provides adequate pedestrian accommodations.

Congestion Levels at Nearby Roadways and Intersections

A traffic analysis for the proposed sport facility was prepared to determine the impact of development on nearby roadways and intersection capacities. The following is a summary of the traffic analysis.

Three local intersections were identified as critical intersections to be affected by the development of the subject site and were examined in the traffic analysis to determine whether they meet the applicable congestion standard of 1,500 Critical Lane Volume (CLV) for the Damascus Policy Area. The CLV impacts of the proposed development on these intersections were analyzed and are summarized in Table I.

Table I

| Intersection Capacity Analysis with CLV Under Various Development Schemes During the Peak Hour | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|---------|------------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|
| | Existing | | | Background | | | Total | | |
| | Weekday | | Weekend | Weekday | | Weekend | Weekday | | Weekend |
| | AM | PM | | AM | PM | | AM | PM | |
| MD 108/MD 124 | 531 | 914 | 693 | 600 | 1034 | 693 | 600 | 1110 | 772 |
| MD 108/Howard Chapel Road | 382 | 486 | 406 | 425 | 560 | 406 | 425 | 740 | 586 |
| Long Corner Road/Gue Road | 259 | 196 | 62 | 259 | 196 | 62 | 259 | 228 | 109 |

As shown in the above table, all intersections analyzed are currently operating at well below acceptable CLVs (CLV standard is 1,500) during the weekday peak hours and the weekend highest one hour. Under the background development (developments approved but not built) and the total development (background development plus the site development) conditions, acceptable traffic conditions at all intersections are not adversely affected from the intersection capacity perspective.

While the proposed development will not cause intersection congestion thresholds to be exceeded, it does create an operational concern at the intersection of MD 108 and Howard Chapel Drive. At this location, the State Highway Administration recommends that the applicant be conditioned to construct an exclusive left-turn lane, as indicated in the attached October 7, 2002 letter from Ken McDonald to Ron Welke. Staff finds that SHA's recommendation is consistent with roadway design guidelines published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and, therefore, supports SHA's position as defined in Condition 4.

The traffic study also analyzed the site traffic impact on the link of the two-lane Howard Chapel Drive. As shown on the following Table II, the results of the Link Capacity analysis indicate that although the proposed facility generates additional traffic on Howard Chapel Drive, there is sufficient roadway capacity available on Howard Chapel Drive to accommodate the proposed development.

**Table II
Link Capacity Analysis on Howard Chapel Drive North of MD 108**

| | Existing | | Background | | Total | |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|------------|-----|-------|-----|
| | V/C* | LOS** | V/C | LOS | V/C | LOS |
| Weekday A.M. Peak Hour | 0.05 | B | 0.05 | B | 0.05 | B |
| Weekday P.M. Peak Hour | 0.08 | B | 0.08 | B | 0.21 | C |
| Saturday Mid-day Peak Hour | 0.06 | B | 0.06 | B | 0.19 | C |

*V/C is volume to capacity ratio

**LOS is the level of service

Staff's recommendations for avoiding scheduling baseball/softball and lacrosse/football games and staggering starting times of baseball/softball games as described in Conditions 2 and 3 are developed to avoid internal traffic congestion and spread out the peaking traffic flow at the entrance and on Howard Chapel Drive.

Staging Ceiling

The subject site is located in the Rural Policy Area (just outside the Damascus Policy Area) where there is no assigned staging ceilings. For information, there is capacity available for employment development (833 jobs as of August 31, 2002) in the Damascus Policy Area based on the FY 02 AGP staging ceiling capacity.

CONCLUSION

Staff concludes that the proposed development of a private club for youth-based athletics with conditions as described in this memorandum will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding roadway network. The roadway system as it currently exists is adequate to accommodate traffic to be generated by the proposed sport facility.

KHK:cmd

Attachment

S-2517 Damascus Sport Asso.doc



**Maryland Department of Transportation
State Highway Administration**

Parris N. Glendening
Governor

John D. Porcari
Secretary

Parker F. Williams
Administrator

October 7, 2002

Mr. Ronald Welke
Transportation Coordinator
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: **Montgomery County
MD 108 General
Damascus Sports Association**

Dear Mr. Welke:

Enclosed are State Highway Administration's (SHA) comments on the review of the Traffic Impact Study Report by Street Traffic Studies, Ltd. dated August 13, 2002 that was prepared for the proposed Damascus Sports Association Complex in Montgomery County, Maryland. The comments and conclusions are as follows:

- Access to the 68.4-Acre Athletic Fields Complex is proposed from one (1) full movement driveway on Howard Chapel Drive (a County roadway).
- The traffic consultant determined that the proposed development would not cause any study intersection to exceed the congestion standard within the Damascus Policy Area as defined by the M-NCPPC.

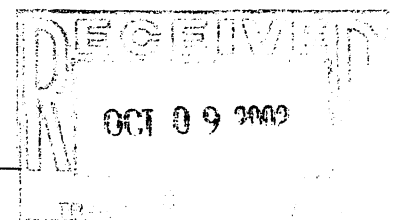
Although the MD 108 at Howard Chapel Drive intersection was projected to be within the adopted congestion standard for the Damascus Policy Area, SHA is concerned with the significant projected increase in left turning traffic from eastbound MD 108 to northbound Howard Chapel Drive. The approach sight distance along eastbound MD 108 is limited due to the presence of a crest vertical curve just west of Howard Chapel Drive. The tripling of the eastbound MD 108 left turn volume without an exclusive left turn lane is a serious operational concern and will likely increase rear end collisions along eastbound MD 108.

Therefore, in conclusion, SHA recommends that the M-NCPPC condition the applicant to design and construct an exclusive eastbound MD 108 left turn lane at the MD 108/Howard Chapel Drive intersection to address this significant safety concern. Roadway improvement plans should be submitted to SHA for our review and comment.

My telephone number is _____

Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech
1-800-735-2258 Statewide Toll Free

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 717 • Baltimore, MD 21203-0717



Mr. Ronald Welke
October 7, 2002
Page 2 of 2

If you have any questions or comments regarding the enclosed, please contact Larry Green at (410) 995-0090 x20.

Very truly yours,



Kenneth A. McDonald, Jr., Chief
Engineering Access Permits Division

cc: Greg Cooke – SHA Engineering Access Permits Division
Ed Axler – M-NCPPC Montgomery County
Larry Green – Daniel Consultants, Inc.
Lee Starkloff – SHA District 3 Traffic Engineering
Joseph Finkle – SHA Travel Forecasting Section
William Richardson – SHA Traffic Development & Support Division
Stephen Petersen – STS, Ltd.

Damascus Community Alliance
"A Voice of Common Unity for a Community that Cares"

Board of Directors

Douglas Boline
(H) 301-414-0389

Bret Duncan
(H) 301-253-0007

Janet Reister
(H) 301-670-2539

Gary Richard
(H) 301-253-2287

John M. Richards
(H) 301-482-2085

Randy Scritchfield
(W) 301-253-5030

Don Spence
(H) 301-253-2977

Peggy Stone
(W) 301-216-0004

Bill Thimmesch
(H) 301-368-9028

October 10, 2002

Derick Berlage
The Maryland-National Capital Park
and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

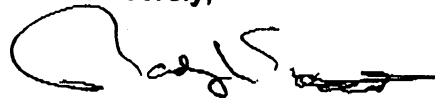
VIA FACSIMILE
(301) 495-1304

Dear Mr. Berlage,

On behalf of the Damascus Community Alliance, I wish to express our support for the proposed sports complex for the Damascus Sports Association. For reasons that have been enumerated many times before, you are keenly aware of the need for recreation in the Upcounty. We support the private endeavor of the Damascus Sports Association in what they wish to accomplish and hope that the Commission can support them as well.

Please call with any remaining questions at (301) 253 - 5030.

Sincerely,



Randy L. Scritchfield
Chairman

RLS/mjk

Honorable County Council Member,

10/10/02

I would like to express my strong opposition to the sports complex proposed by the Damascus Sports Association (DSA). My opposition stems from two meetings I attended back in January and February 2002 hosted by the Damascus Community Alliance and DSA respectively. Also, several factors I have learned about since these meetings.

First, it is very disturbing to hear the DSA directors "pitch" the sports complex as being "for the community" in one part of their presentation and then later make it quite clear it is not open for public use. All along, the true definition is that this complex is a private club, but they are very hesitant to come right out and state it in those terms. This is a clear and blatant attempt at deception. The public notice sign on display at the land site has the project titled as a "Service Organization". I fail to see how this nomenclature can be tagged to this project.

Secondly, the impact of this sports complex on the surrounding community will be very negative. The choice of land for the proposed sports complex is not driven by good land use planning, but rather financial factors. DSA can afford this parcel with County and State grants. The parcel of land intended is on a winding secondary street with poor access from two of three possible directions. One access is via Gue road, which has a .5-mile section that has a hairpin turn, one lane bridge, and a very steep grade. A second access is via Long Corner, which again has a one-lane bridge and steep and winding access. This leaves only one truly viable access point, which comes off Route 108. This is an uncontrolled, "T" intersection with very poor line of sight in two directions for cars entering onto it from Howard Chapel. The crush of traffic on Howard Chapel during practices and game times will be extremely dangerous. Howard Chapel is a two lane road with absolutely no shoulder, no sidewalks, and very unfriendly to pedestrian.

Thirdly, the DSA states it will alter practice and games times to lessen traffic concerns and thus have approval on the transportation study. They also claim they will limit the times for use of the facility. Their business plan did not adequately address how they would generate revenue to fund the maintenance and upkeep of the facility. It seems extremely obvious to me that they will rent the facility to all and any sports associations that want to use the facility. They will do this in the name of needing the funds to maintain the facility and with the extreme needs for fields in the metropolitan area; they will have a waiting list of users. This will increase the use of the facility after the fact and there are no apparent controlling mechanisms in place to prohibit the DSA from making modifications to their plans. Also, the lighting and noise from evening games will be a distraction in this neighborhood, which is currently a low-density housing area with large expanses of undeveloped farmland. Precedence as to the impact of lighting and noise is documented in the Damascus Gazette article, "Plans are Approved for New Rocky Hill", August 7, 02. In this article the Planning Board made several conditions to the approval based on negative impact to neighbors from noise, access, and lighting glare and reflection.

Finally, this area of Montgomery County is not serviced by water or sewer. All residents are on well and septic systems. The wells have not been adequate by any means. Residents have to be careful and restrict their water even in normal rainfall years. The recent drought has severely compounded this problems and several residences have has to drill new wells. Bringing in this complex and allowing them to install several thousand gallon water tanks and water football and baseball fields for recreational use will have an obvious and intense negative impact on the areas already fragile ground water level situation. I have a very serious concern that this complex could render 100's of residential wells inoperable. Though I did not see that the planning board requires any type of environmental study specifically addressing ground water issues, I would certainly request you consider this as it could have a serious negative impact on many of the area residents.

In conclusion, the deceptive nature of the DSA and their presentations leave me with little confidence they will abide by the conditions they set forth in order to obtain various approvals during this process. As is often the case, proposals and plans are structured to meet the minimum requirements to get approval, usually with full knowledge they are not feasible. Then upon approval, modifications are made and little can be done to prohibit the changes. An excellent case in point of the issue of changing plans after the fact and the negative impact a facility like this has on the surrounding community is documented in the Damascus Gazette article, "Soccerplex's Success May Require New Uses", August 7, 02. The planning board heard from many neighbors about safety issues caused by the sports complex and that due to financial needs, the Complex is now looking for an exemption to their original lease restrictions. This goes to my point that the original business plan was not adequate and now they need changes to remain financially viable.

Current zoning restrictions does not allow for the sports complex and requires a special exception. A suitable parcel would have better transportation and public utility infrastructure in place and be less disturbing to local residents. Given the additional exemption that may be needed, i.e. lighting, road reclassification, etc. and the negative impact to the surrounding community, this project is simply not suitable for this area.

The County Council has already shown support for youth in the upper county by funding the Damascus Community Center. Additional land in closer proximity to Community Center would certainly be a more practical and truly "Planned" approach to the issue of recreational fields then just imposing upon areas that are financially feasible but community unfriendly.

Sincerely,



Bernard, Melanie Lauer and Family
26718 Howard Chapel Dr.
Damascus, MD 20872
301.253.4831
lauerb@nima.mil

26626 Howard Chapel Drive
Damascus, MD 20872
Home: (301) 414-2317
Daytime: (301) 402-2037

Planning Board
MNCPPC
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

October 10, 2002

Honorable Planning Commissioners,

I am strongly opposed to the sports complex proposed by the Damascus Sports Association (DSA). While I am not necessarily opposed to building new baseball and football fields for up-county youths, I believe the choice of land for the proposed complex is being driven by economics and not good land-use planning.

I reside upon Howard Chapel Drive and my driveway is just after a long, blind curve, which has resulted in a number of near accidents as drivers speed around the curve while I'm entering or exiting my driveway. I strongly believe that increased traffic due to the sports complex will greatly impact my family and the community, increasing the number of trips generated, and making it harder for me to safely exit and enter my driveway. I spoke with Mr. Kim on your planning staff and have the impression that his traffic numbers are based on naïve and misleading information concerning the likely use of the ballfields. I also believe that a traffic signal might be needed at the intersection of Howard Chapel and Route 108 to facilitate traffic leaving the ballfields, in contrast to Mr. Kim's report. The other access points for the complex would be Gue road, which as a dangerous hairpin turn, and Long Corner Road, which has a one lane bridge, neither of which are suitable for the type of traffic the complex would generate. Finally, the availability of parking at the complex may need a closer examination than other fields have received in the past, such as Damascus Regional Park, which has a full parking lot with cars parked on the grass and road shoulders during sporting events.

Other aspects of the proposed complex will have negative impacts on the surrounding community. DSA intends to install stadium lighting and sound systems for their baseball and football games. Our community is very quiet and secluded such that the noise and sound pollution will be an unwelcome intrusion. In fact, residents all along

Howard Chapel Drive complain that they can hear the public address system, the crowds cheering and the marching bands playing at Damascus High School sporting events, well over a mile away. Similar noises will be generated from the proposed complex right in our community, only a few hundred yards away!

Finally, DSA has informed the community that they would like to hold games and events from 9 to 11 months out of the year (football, baseball, lacrosse and other seasons) from 6 to 7 nights per week (depending upon rain outs) until 10 PM at night. I cannot overstate how strongly I am opposed to the lights shining, the public address system blaring and the traffic zipping past my house in the late evening.

The current zone does not allow for a sports complex and thus DSA is seeking the special exception. A more suitable parcel would have easy motor vehicle access, have a smaller effect (percentage-wise) on trip generations, and be less intrusive and disturbing to the local residents.

Again, I strongly oppose the proposal and the granting of a special exception and hope that you consider this prior to casting your vote. The county and the County Council has already shown support for youth in the upper county by funding the Damascus Community Center. I'll end with this thought: both my wife and I work during the day and enjoy our home in the evenings and the weekends - which is exactly the hours the sports complex will be used.

Respectfully yours,



David J. Bernard

Judy Daniel
M-NCPPC Community Based Planning
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301-495-4555 Fax: 301-495-1304
judy.daniel@mncppc-mc.org

Subject: Damascus Sports Association development on Howard Chapel Road in
Damascus

Dear Ms. Daniel,

I would like to voice my concern to the Planning Board about the DSA's plan for development of a ball field complex on Howard Chapel Drive. I hope that the county plans to widen the shoulders of the road and put in sidewalks to accommodate walkers and cyclist. This road is not safe for walkers in its current configuration, and is often used by cyclists. Additional traffic will create hazards.

I hope every consideration has been made of the impact this development will have on the Patuxent watershed, and that the stream valley will be adequately protected from erosion due to increased run-off created by any impervious areas planned.

I strongly object to any plans for lighting and public address system, as they are in complete contradiction to the agricultural zoning.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Susan Causey
26821 Overlook Street
Damascus, MD 20872

Oct. 10, 2002

Judy Daniel
M-NCPPC Community Based Planning
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Daniel,

I am writing in regard to the Damascus Sports Complex. I do not think the Complex should be approved for the proposed location on Howard Chapel Dr. in Damascus. A facility like that (which is a great asset to the community) should be located closer to major roads. The main access point for the facility would be Howard Chapel Dr. and Route 108, but the complex will be located too far down Howard Chapel Dr. and beyond the major curves to be a good choice. It is ridiculous to expect Howard Chapel Dr. to handle that type of traffic; it is not designed appropriately for that type of use. Also, accessing the complex from the north via Gue Rd. or Long Corner is even less accessible, and those roads are not designed appropriately for that type of use either.

In addition, I have heard that the classification of the road may have to be changed to accommodate the sports complex. If that is the case, then it should be addressed in the upcoming Damascus Master Plan review before any decision is made. Otherwise the decision should be based on the existing classification of the road only, and if the existing classification is not appropriate for the traffic the complex will generate (and by my experience with the road, it will not handle that type of traffic safely), then the project should not be approved.

Sincerely,

Cindy Snow
27210 Ridge Rd.
Damascus, MD 20872
301-391-6872

Preller, Barbara

From: Cindy Moses [cindy@moseshometeam.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 10, 2002 2:37 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Damascus Sports Complex Special Exception

RECEIVED
 OCT 10 2002

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
 THE MARYLAND NATURAL AND
 PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr.. Berlage,

As a Damascus resident, I urge you to deny the request for a special exception that would permit the construction of a multi-field sports facility in our rural, agricultural community. The issues are many and, ultimately, the proposed sports facility is incompatible with the character of the community. Please consider these issues in arriving at your recommendations:

1. **Traffic:** We exist on 2 lane country roads throughout the Damascus area. These roads wind and twist with blind curves and hills. The intersection at Rt 108 and Howard Chapel Road is a blind intersection. Improving this intersection would involve the loss of two existing homes. Ours is a community of slow-moving farm vehicles and horse trailers. On the weekends, our roads are used heavily by cyclists. The rural areas of Montgomery County are quickly being overrun with heavy automobile traffic. Growth in nearby Frederick, Carroll and Howard Counties resulting from increasing housing prices in Montgomery County places more and more cars on our roads everyday. In the past few years, we experienced several deaths of cyclists on our rural roads. Providing recreational opportunities for a select few "club members" at the expense of losing irreplaceable opportunities for cyclists to use our roads is unacceptable. The proliferation of "big box" houses of worship in the Laytonsville/Damascus area has greatly increased traffic congestion on weekends and weekday evenings. Enough is enough.
2. **Water:** The proposed fields undoubtedly will need copious amounts of water to establish and maintain playing fields. Over the past several years, drought conditions resulted in numerous dry wells in the surrounding community. Do we really think it is a matter of good public policy to divert drinking water from area residents to lawn watering of the fields owned by a private club? In the event the fields are not watered, how are the critical watershed areas protected from the erosion and run-off that is inevitable from paved parking lots, roads, and closely mown playing fields? My neighbors and I voluntarily ceased watering our vegetable gardens and fruit trees during the water crisis. People who are accustomed to having a public water supply never worry whether water will flow when they turn on the tap. Sadly, this is not the case in our rural community that depends on well water.
3. **Compatibility:** The property in question is immediately adjacent to a large commercial equestrian facility and an extensive network of bridle trails. I fear for the safety of those on horseback whose horses will be spooked by the high level of noise and commotion that will emanate from the proposed sports complex. Personally, I moved to Damascus nearly 6 years ago from North Bethesda where I had lived since 1959. A major part of my decision to sacrifice my 2 mile commute for a 24 mile commute lay in the increasing traffic congestion in the lower County and light pollution. It seemed very sad to me that one can no longer gaze at the night sky in the lower County and see stars or the Milky Way. One would believe we live on the "Red Planet" given the color of the night sky in Bethesda. I sought the peace, serenity, and quiet enjoyment of a rural lifestyle. My husband and I investigated the area zoning prior to making an offer on our home. We saw that the home was located in an agricultural reserve that we believed would be free from just the kind of noise and light pollution encroachment that now threatens us in the form of a privately owned sports complex. The vast majority of my neighbors are senior citizens who will suffer from the noise and traffic generated by the proposed sports complex. These proposed fields will be used by a few local residents, however, the vast majority of users will not be from the Damascus area.
4. **Need:** There already exist an extensive number of sports fields throughout the County. The new HUGE soccerplex in Germantown, the new Boys and Girl's Club in Olney, the fields that are attached to the public and private schools as well as other public parkland and privately-owned playing fields.

Thank you for considering these issues in arriving at your recommendation regarding the proposed Sports Complex. I may be reached at the numbers below should you wish to speak with me further.

Sincerely,

10/10/2002

Cynthia Moses

Cynthia G. Moses
26301 Mullinix Mill Rd, Mt Airy, MD 21771 (really Damascus)
301-590-5525 office
301-482-1592 home
301-922-9237 cellular