



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

May 1, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: John Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division
FROM: Glenn Kreger, Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team Leader *GK*
Margaret Rifkin, Planner Coordinator (301/495-4583) *MR*
Community-Based Planning Division

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral
PROJECT NAME: Revised Master Plan for Walter Reed Army Medical Center,
Forest Glen
APPLICANT: Department of the Army
CASE NUMBER: 03103-NCPC-1
REVIEW BASIS: Article 28, Chapter 7-112 of the Regional District Act
ZONE: R-90
MASTER PLAN: North and West Silver Spring Master Plan
FILING DATE: March 17, 2003

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval to transmit comments to the National
Capital Planning Commission (NCPC).

COMMENTS: NCPC should require the Army to address the following concerns:

Overall

1. Provide a vision for the campus in the master plan, that includes:
 - a. An illustrative plan showing basic information on one drawing, including: building footprints, landscape, paths, conservation areas, roads and other significant features.
 - b. A design concept for the new Research and Development area along Brookville Road, showing buildings and other significant features.
 - c. A new location for the vehicle wash facility in the interior of the site, rather than in the future Research and Development area.
 - d. A new location for the warehouse and salt dome within the perimeter of the new security fence.

2. Excess the warehouse and salt dome site north of Linden Lane, preferably in conjunction with the reuse of the National Park Seminary site.
3. Ensure that any new development along Linden Lane conforms to the development standards for the R-90 zone.
4. Ensure public access to Ireland Drive/trail and to the hiker/biker trail from Linden Lane to Rock Creek Park.
5. Bring new development to the staff before submission for mandatory referral review.
6. Address the full set of comments in the attached staff memoranda from the Transportation and Environmental Planning Sections (Attachments 5 and 7).

Environment

7. Provide for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Follow the Montgomery County Environmental Guidelines and Forest Conservation Law.
8. Protect the native ecosystem of Rock Creek Park by using native plants in the vicinity of the park, and not non-native invasive plants. Reflect this in Appendix III (Plant Material Matrix).
9. Submit stormwater management plans for future development.

Transportation

10. Ensure that the Brookville Road entrance is the formal entrance and major access for traffic, including trucks destined for the warehouse north of Linden Lane.
11. Include a streetscape concept for Linden Lane and Brookville Road adjacent to the site coordinated with DPWT, M-NCPPC and the Army's own streetscape concepts for within the site.
12. Update the 1992 Memorandum of Understanding concerning traffic reduction measures signed by NCPC, M-NCPPC and the Army.

National Park Seminary (NPS)

13. Coordinate any ridesharing and transit programs with the future users of the National Park Seminary site.
14. Provide for pedestrian and bicycle connections between the National Park Seminary neighborhood and the Capital Crescent Trail/future Purple Line Station south of the site. Consider closing such access only when threat levels warrant as determined by the Homeland Security Advisory System.

15. Ensure that changes to Army utility lines and service are made in a time and manner that takes into consideration the future use of the NPS property. The approach should minimize negative impacts on the NPS site and, if possible, be done in a way that makes reuse of the site simpler and more cost effective.

PREVIOUS PLANNING BOARD ACTIONS

The Planning Board has taken the following actions:

November 7, 1991	Mandatory Referral	Deferral of the Revised Master Plan Report for Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Forest Glen Section – “Until Conditions Are Met”
July 15, 1992	Memorandum of Understand (MOU)	Transportation Management Program - MOU National Capital Planning Commission, Montgomery County Planning Board and Walter Reed Army Medical
February 28, 2002	Mandatory Referral	Approval of the Relocation of the WRAMC Fire Station from the Historic District
June 17, 2002	Mandatory Referral	Approval (administrative) Physical Security Improvements, Gate Improvements, Fencing

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject of this review is a master plan for the entire Walter Reed Army Medical Center site in Forest Glen. It is not a detailed review of individual projects within the campus, that are already funded for design and construction.

The site is approximately 140 acres and is bounded on the south by industrial uses along Brookville Road, on the east by a railroad track carrying freight and commuter trains, on the west by Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, and on the north by the National Park Seminary Site. The land use is primarily medical research with supporting services as well as community facilities for military personnel. The community facilities include a commissary, ballfields and other recreational uses. These facilities also support the main campus for Walter Reed in the District of Columbia. The site includes a helicopter pad. The largest building on the site is the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), which includes approximately 500,000 square feet of laboratories and supporting facilities.

This master plan maintains the same general mix of land uses and shows the addition of 25,000 square feet of additional structures including a new veterinary clinic, vehicle wash facility, and warehouse/repository for pathology. It also includes security, circulation and urban design improvements. The master plan designates “development

zones” which are areas for future development. These development zones include an area for additional Research and Development along Brookville Road as well as areas for relocated or new Service and Maintenance Facilities.

PLANNING BOARD ISSUES

Major issues:

- Current and future measures to address traffic impacts
- Protection of Rock Creek Stream Valley Park and access
- Coordination in support of the National Park Seminary reuse

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The Army has recently formed a community council composed of Army staff and representatives from nearby civic organizations and the M-NCPPC. This council meets regularly.

The Army conducted a public meeting on April 30, 2003, about this revised master plan. Community concerns will be reflected in the staff presentation to the Planning Board.

Recent concerns have focused on traffic impacts particularly on Linden Lane and Brookville Road. There has been some community interest in seeing Brookville Road widened (attached e-mail from Vittone North Woodside Montgomery Hills Civic Association) and in requesting that fire trucks not use Second Avenue when traveling between the Walter Reed main campus and the Forest Glen Annex. In the past, community concerns have also been expressed about noise generated by the mechanical equipment on the roof of the WRAIR building.

PROJECT ANALYSIS – FINDINGS

FINDING #1: The project will be consistent with the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan (August 2000) when the following comments are addressed:

- The applicant should update the 1992 Memorandum of Understanding particularly with regard to traffic reduction measures and implement it with community participation.
- Brookville Road should be used as the formal entrance and major access for traffic, including trucks destined for the warehouse on the north side of Linden Lane.
- The native ecosystem of Rock Creek Park should be protected. Primarily native plants should be used in the vicinity of the park, not non-native invasive plants. The Army should modify the master plan recommendations accordingly with attention to Appendix III (Plant Material Matrix).

FINDING #2: The project will be consistent with the Environmental Guidelines when the following issues are addressed:

The Army should provide for protection of environmentally sensitive areas by conforming to the Montgomery County Environmental Guidelines and the Forest Conservation Law. These guidelines should be used in this master plan and in projects implementing the plan. The Army should also submit stormwater management plans for any future development for local review by the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services rather than for State review. In addition, the Army should address the full set of comments concerning environmental protection issues that are included in the Memorandum from the Environmental Planning Section.

FINDING #3: The campus addressed by this master plan will be consistent with the Development Standards for its zone (R-90) when the following are addressed:

This facility is a publicly owned and operated use. Any new development along the residential edge that is Linden Lane should comply with the development standards in the R-90 Zone.

FINDING #4: Compatibility with existing and proposed adjacent uses and structures will be achieved when the following are addressed:

The primary compatibility concern is with adjoining residentially zoned property along Linden Lane, including the National Park Seminary site. There are several areas for future development identified in the master plan as "development zones" which are visible from Linden Lane. Any new development in these areas should be designed to achieve compatibility with the nearby neighborhoods and ensure that Linden Lane is an attractive street. Such new development should also be brought to the Planning Board staff and to the community for consultation early in the design process and in advance of submission for mandatory referral review. This will allow ample opportunity for any compatibility concerns to be addressed collaboratively.

One recent addition to the site, a new perimeter security fence, has been designed to achieve compatibility and ensure an attractive edge. With the same level of attention to design, future new development will be compatible.

The Army's proposed master plan recommends that the warehouse visible from Linden Lane be screened with plant materials to achieve compatibility.

FINDING #5: The location of the structures, open space and circulation will be adequate, safe and efficient when the following comments are addressed:

The master plan should include a vision for the campus. This should be illustrated in a way that will communicate the ideas clearly. The Army should create an illustrative plan showing on one drawing: building footprints, landscape, paths, conservation areas, roads and other significant features. This will more successfully communicate the intent and vision for the campus and contribute to its implementation over time.

Within the WRAMC campus the WRAIR building is a landmark. The building and associated features are well designed. Design themes are carried through from the building façade, to the sidewalks, parking structure, pedestrian bridge and bus stop. The ancillary buildings that are located between the WRAIR building and Brookville Road are not well-located and designed in relation to the WRAIR building. Access and circulation is not clear. Buildings are primarily older one-story structures housing the motor pool, laboratories, storage and other supporting uses.

This area is highly visible from Brookville Road, and is recommended in the Army's master plan for redevelopment with Research and Development uses. There is no design concept in the master plan for how new buildings might be sited. The master plan should include a design concept. In addition, in order for the Army to achieve its goals of creating this new Research and Development area, consideration should be given to locating the new vehicle wash facility in a different location.

Finding #6 – Transportation. To address transportation issues the Army should:

- Require all trucks, including those destined for WRAMC facilities north of Linden Lane, to use the main gate on Stephen Sitter Avenue at Brookville Road for inspection and access.
- Provide for pedestrian and bicycle access between the National Park Seminary and the Capital Crescent Trail/future Purple Line Station south of the site. Consider closing such access only when threat levels warrant as determined by the Homeland Security Advisory System.
- Provide a streetscape concept for Linden Lane and Brookville Road, which are adjacent to the site, coordinated with DPWT, M-NCPPC and the Army's own streetscape concepts for within the site. This will encourage walking and the use of transit, and enhance the character of the area.
- Update the 1992 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by NCPC, M-NCPPC and the Army with regard to traffic reduction measures. Staff has reviewed the 1992 MOU and identified minor changes and clarifications that would be appropriate and fulfill the intent of the original Transportation Management Plan.

The Army should address the full set of comments concerning transportation issues that are included in the Memorandum from the Transportation Planning Section.

PROJECT ANALYSIS – COMMENT

(The following comment is in addition to the above findings required by Planning Board policy)

COMMENT #7: National Park Seminary

Every effort should be made to coordinate with the National Park Seminary (NPS) site for the benefit of both the Army and the future user of the NPS.

The Army should coordinate with the General Services Administration, the separation of the utility lines from the NPS site to minimize negative impacts. If possible, such changes should be done in a way that makes the transition to a new use for the NPS site simpler and more cost effective.

The warehouse and salt dome on the north side of Linden Lane should be relocated to free the site for reuse in conjunction with the National Park Seminary site. For this reason, the master plan should identify a new site for these uses within the area enclosed by the new security fence.

The Army should coordinate any ridesharing and transit programs with the future users of the National Park Seminary site as part of the effort to reduce cumulative traffic impacts. This is an efficient way to maximize the effectiveness of traffic reduction measures for both the Army and the future users of the NPS site.

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Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Existing Zoning
3. Concept Plan
4. Landscape Development Plan
5. Memo from Environmental Planning
6. Sensitive Natural Resource Areas & Army's "Development Zones"
7. Memo from Transportation Planning
8. Memorandum of Understanding – July 1992
9. Letters