

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 5, 2004

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Joseph R. Davis, Chief, Development Review Division *JRD*  
A. Malcolm Shaneman, Supervisor, Development Review Division *AMS*

**FROM:** Richard A. Weaver, Senior Planner, Development Review Division *RAW*

**REVIEW TYPE:** Pre-Preliminary Plan of Subdivision

**APPLYING FOR:** 283 one family detached lots, 278 one family attached lots and a private golf course and clubhouse

**PROJECT NAME:** Indian Spring

**CASE NO.** 7-03058

**REVIEW BASIS:** Chapter 50, Section 50-33A, Montgomery County Subdivision Regulations

**ZONE:** R-200 and R-90

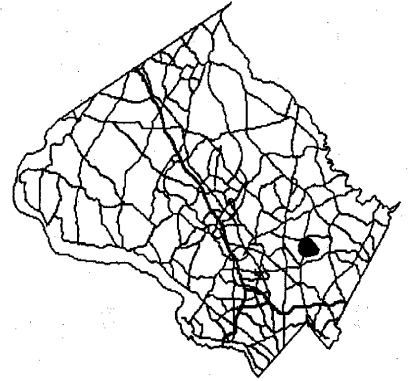
**LOCATION:** East side of Layhill Road (MD 182), approximately 1300 feet south of Middlevale Lane

**MASTER PLAN:** Kensington-Wheaton

**APPLICANT:** Winchester Homes

**SUBMITTED:** June 26, 2003

**HEARING DATE:** March 11, 2004




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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Pursuant to Section 50-33A of the Subdivision Regulations, No Objection to the Submission of a Preliminary Plan, Subject to the Following Conditions:

## **CONDITIONS:**

- 1) Limit the pre-preliminary plan to 332 single-family detached units, 262 single-family attached units, and an 18-hole golf course with clubhouse and associated facilities
- 2) At the time of preliminary plan, satisfy the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) component of the APF test by providing a transportation improvement at the intersection of Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Randolph Road. The proposed improvement must increase the intersection capacity so that the Critical Lane Volume (CLV) with the site-generated peak-hour trips through it does not exceed the intersection's CLV under background conditions. Any proposed transportation improvement should be coordinated with the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA) project planning study for an interchange at this intersection
- 3) Construct the extension of Tivoli Lake Boulevard into the site from the south, as a primary residential master planned street, P-13
- 4) Construct a third access point into the site from the north at existing Foggy Glen Drive
- 5) Provide on-site and off-site traffic calming measures to discourage non-local traffic using Tivoli Lake Boulevard/Indian Spring Road between Randolph Road and Layhill Road (MD 182). Possible off-site traffic calming could include a traffic circle at the intersection of Tivoli Lake Boulevard and Osterport Drive/Hugo Circle
- 6) Install a traffic signal at the intersection of Layhill Road and Indian Spring Road, if the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) determines it satisfies the traffic signal warrants
- 7) Per Section 59.E.2.3 of the Zoning Ordinance, provide one bicycle rack or locker per 20 automobile parking spaces not to exceed 20 bicycle racks or lockers for the subject plan to be coordinated with Transportation Planning staff regarding their location and type
- 8) At the time of preliminary plan, comply with the conditions of approval for the preliminary forest conservation plan. The applicant must satisfy all conditions, including meeting all planting requirements on site, prior to recording of plat(s) or MCDPS issuance of sediment and erosion control permits
- 9) Any golf course proposed as part of a future application for this property will show the modified environmental buffer as illustrated on the pre-preliminary plan dated February 3, 2004. No clearing, grading or other golf course features will be allowed in the modified buffer.
- 10) At the time of preliminary plan compliance with the conditions of approval of the MCDPS stormwater management approval
- 11) Applicant to establish a green corridor, as shown on current pre-preliminary plan dated February 3, 2003, as a Public Use Trail Easement through the subject property from the existing Foggy Glen Drive terminus on the north side of the subject property, to Tivoli Lake Boulevard on the south side. The green corridor should be located away from roads, outside of the floodplain, and away from

- private residences and fences wherever possible, and give the impression and feel to the user of a park like setting.
- 12) Applicant to construct within the Public Use Trail Easement, a 10' wide hard surface trail from the existing Foggy Glen Drive terminus on the north side of the proposed development, to the existing Tivoli Lake Boulevard terminus on the south side of the development. Trail to be constructed where possible outside of environmental buffers, to park standards and specifications and include necessary bridges for stream crossings and be adequately signed
  - 13) Applicant to work with M-NCPPC staff to provide natural surface trail connections from the community and the hard surface trail to be located therein, to the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and the master planned natural surface trail system on the east side of Northwest Branch
  - 14) No portion of the golf course improvements to encroach into existing parkland
  - 15) Applicant to work with M-NCPPC staff to determine adequate land for dedication by Applicant to M-NCPPC along the southern portion of the subject property that would sufficiently widen existing parkland such as would accommodate construction of a natural surface trail along the Bel Pre Creek Tributary to Northwest Branch for access to local neighborhoods
  - 16) Applicant to continue working with MNCPPC and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to complete a site search for needed elementary school site as defined by MCPS. Suitable site to be deemed acceptable to MCPS prior to preliminary plan approval
  - 17) Abide by all applicable regulations under Chapter 59 and Chapter 50 of the Montgomery County Code

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the public hearing on the Indian Spring Country Club Property is to discuss the issues regarding its re-development. The applicant has requested that this project be reviewed pursuant to Section 50-33A of the Montgomery County Subdivision Regulations. This section requires the Planning Board act to: 1) Approve, 2) Disapprove, with written opinion or 3), Approve with conditions or modifications as the Board deems necessary. The conditions will expire ninety (90) days from the date of mailing of the opinion for this hearing item action, unless a complete preliminary plan is submitted within that timeframe.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Vicinity and Property Description**

The subject property is the current site of the Indian Spring Country Club. The Country Club and its 36 hole golf course have been in existence since 1954 and is currently zoned R-200 with a small portion zoned R-90. The application not only proposes residential development but modifications and renovations to the existing clubhouse and golf course. Since this Country Club predates the requirement for special exception as is stated in the County Code, the present operation is a legal non-conforming

use. The Zoning Ordinance under section 59-G-4.1 establishes that a non conforming use may continue so long as the use of a building, structure or lot is not extended in any way, or the use is not abandoned for six (6) months, and the building in which the use is located is not destroyed or severely damaged. Staff is concerned that the extreme modifications proposed by this application to the existing facility will jeopardize the existing, legal non-conformity. If it is no longer valid, it will be necessary to obtain Board of Appeals approval for a special exception prior to Planning Board review of the Preliminary Plan.

The subject property is located within the Kensington-Wheaton Planning Area. It is on the east side of Layhill Road, approximately 1300 feet south of Middlevale Road. The property is surrounded with established single family neighborhoods that were developed under the R-200, R150 and R-90 zones. Single family detached units about the majority of the existing club property however, a pocket of single family attached (townhomes) abut the property to the south near the Tivoli Lakes Boulevard terminus.

The Indian Spring Club currently occupies the entire 308-acre tract. The property lies within the Northwest Branch watershed. The streams of Northwest Branch are designated Use IV, recreational trout waters. The stream valleys of the Northwest Branch mainstem and Bel Pre Creek form the eastern and western boundaries, respectively, of the subject property. Five tributaries of Northwest Branch and Bel Pre Creek traverse through the property. A 36-hole golf course and country club currently operate on the property. Most of the land cover is grass. There are about 31.7 acres of forest, most of which are associated with stream valleys. There are also some tree stands. The topography on most of the site is rolling, with some areas of steep slopes along parts of wooded stream valleys and adjacent to the floodplain of Northwest Branch. The 100-year floodplains of Northwest Branch and Bel Pre Creek lie along the eastern and southern portions of the property. The floodplain areas cover 45.8 acres and are currently in golf course.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal**

Consistent with the recommendations of the Approved and Adopted Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan the current plan anticipates a total of 561 single family units using the R-200 MPDU option. The current breakdown is for 283 detached units and 278 attached units with 71 MPDU's. The applicant is requesting a waiver from the maximum percentage of attached units (40%) to allow additional townhouse units.

Access to the property is accommodated at three points: 1) Tivoli Lakes Boulevard to the south, 2) the existing access road from Layhill Road to the west and 3) to Foggy Glen Road to the north. As per the master plan Tivoli Lakes Boulevard would be extended across Bel Pre Creek and onto the subject property. Through the internal road network a link will be created for an interconnection of Tivoli Lakes Boulevard with Layhill Road to the west and Foggy Glen Road to the north. Both on-site and off-site traffic calming measures will be required to minimize non-local traffic from using the

new road network. The point at which Tivoli Lakes will cross the stream is fixed at that location. The environmental sensitivity of the actual crossing, i.e. bridge culvert etc. will be more appropriately examined as part of the preliminary plan and site plan review.

The proposal also anticipates an 18 hole private golf course and clubhouse entwined within this community. The rebuilt golf course would use the same general areas that are currently used by the existing golf holes. The applicant anticipates relocating and re-grading some of the existing holes for the new golf course. Additionally, the applicant anticipates rebuilding the clubhouse in its current location. Staff provides more discussion on the golf course layout in the following pages.

The Countywide Park Trail Master Plan approved in 1998 by the Planning Board recommends a regional trail connection from Alderton Drive to the north of the subject property south to Wheaton Regional Park. As such, the Indian Spring property is a critical link in the regional system. The proposed plan depicts a green corridor through the property that meets the needs of staff trail planners to accomplish this goal. Other trail connections to get the residents of the new community to the regional trails will also be required.

The applicant is also requested to continue working with staff as the plan progresses to determine a suitable area of Park dedication along the Bel Pre Creek so that a natural surface trail can be accommodated along that tributary. The applicant has expressed a willingness to continue these negotiations.

As part of the Development Review Committee review, the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) have indicated a need for an elementary school site within this cluster. The Indian Spring property represents one of the largest remaining privately held developable parcels in this area. MCPS has expressed a desire to acquire a portion of the property for a school site. Alternative options are also under consideration between MCPS and M-NCPPC for a school site. The applicant is providing the necessary engineering expertise to look at other potential sites that may meet MCPS standards for elementary school sites. A suitable site will be located prior to Planning Board review of a Preliminary Plan for this project.

## **MASTER PLAN**

The 1989 Approved and Adopted Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan confirmed the existing R-200 and R-90 zones. The master plan is silent on the type of development that could or should occur on the Indian Spring site. The Plan does recommend for the extension of Tivoli Lakes Boulevard into the site from the south and connecting it with the existing Indian Spring access road to provided a link form Randolph Road to Layhill Road. The master plan specifically recommends that this road network be designed to prevent "cut-through" traffic movement between Layhill Road and Randolph Road. (See master plan excerpts attached)

## ISSUES TO DATE

As stated previously, the Approved and Adopted Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan is silent on the type of development that is to occur on this tract other than an R-200/R-90 type development. The applicant wishes to pursue a residential community with a golf course component. Certain conflicts have arisen where the proposed golf course layout encroaches into the environmental buffers as calculated by the formula within the Planning Board adopted *Environmental Guidelines*. Discussions to date have centered on the fact that a number of the existing golf course holes, which were originally established in the 1950's before modern environmental standards, are located within the floodplain of the Northwest Branch and Bel Pre Creek.

The applicant feels that the golf course is an existing condition and that any new holes that will be placed in the established corridors of the existing holes (and therefore within the environmental buffer) should be allowed. Numerous meetings have occurred with staff and the applicant discussing the merits of allowing some flexibility with respect to environmental buffer guidance. Staff believes that the development in its entirety represents new development and that the environmental buffers as proposed by staff should be respected. The issue is discussed in detail below.

From an environmental standpoint, staff believes that there are two issues of the project that the Planning Board should provide guidance on in order to determine the extent of staff application of the "Environmental Guidelines" and the forest conservation law to the proposed project:

- 1) Given the environmental constraints on the property, is a residential development and golf course use appropriate at this site?**

**Staff Position** -- Given the nature and magnitude of proposed changes to this large property, and the land use options being considered for its use, staff is reviewing the proposed land development project as a new development, consisting of new residential uses, retention of a clubhouse/conference facility, and modification of the existing golf course. If the development consisted only of new residential uses, staff believes there would be sufficient land outside environmental buffers for development on the property with preservation and restoration of the environmental buffers with only small, unavoidable buffer encroachments. However, retention of an 18-hole golf course along with new residential development significantly increases the developer's preferred development envelope for the project and results in modifications to large environmental buffer areas. Therefore, a development project on this property which incorporates both uses cannot achieve full or almost full restoration and protection of environmental buffers, as defined in the "Environmental Guidelines". Accordingly, from an environmental review perspective, staff would not support a golf course community on this property.

Staff notes that the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan is silent on whether or not a golf course community is appropriate on this property.

**Applicant Position** -As stated above, the argument is made that the existing golf course encroachment represents an existing condition. The current golf course was developed at a time when there were no environmental protection measures such as the preservation of floodplains, wetlands, water quantity and/or quality controls. The applicant anticipates moving some of the holes to new locations but would re-grade a number of holes in their current location and would attempt to use existing cleared corridors to the extent possible consistent with good golf course design principles. The applicant would be required to provide water quality and quantity control for both the golf course and residential development that do not exist currently. The applicant also proposes additional forest planting both in and out of the environmental buffer areas.

**2) If a golf course community is preferred on the property, how much should environmental buffers as defined in the "Environmental Guidelines" be modified for this proposed development?**

**Staff Position** - If a golf course community is preferred, staff has identified those highest priority environmental buffer areas which it believes are the minimum areas that should be preserved and restored as natural areas to assure that the stream valley protection goals set forth in the "Environmental Guidelines" are upheld. Staff believes the modifications to environmental buffer areas to allow for a golf course community are extensive in size, scope, and impact.

The applicant's current proposal preserves some, but not all, of staff's recommended modified environmental buffer areas. Therefore, staff does not support the applicant's current layout proposal and recommends that the layout be further revised to conform to its recommended modified environmental buffers. Staff believes that any further reductions in the environmental buffers would compromise the intent and spirit of the "Environmental Guidelines" and the county forest conservation law's priorities for stream valley protection and reforestation.

**Applicant Position** - The modified buffer as delineated by staff remains an obstacle to their golf course layout. The latest revision to the plan, dated February 3, 2004, still shows encroachment of the golf course into the modified buffer. The applicant maintains that additional "pushing" of the golf course holes upslope and out of the environmental buffer limits the useable area for residential development to unacceptable levels. The applicant has expressed that the issue of the buffer should be resolved before the Planning Board as part of the discussion of the Pre-Preliminary Plan.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DISCUSSION**

### **Background**

One of the tools that staff and the Planning Board use to reduce impacts of land development projects to environmental resources is the application of the “Environmental Guidelines”. The guidelines define buffers from environmentally-sensitive features and resources that should be preserved as natural areas as part of a land development project. Where existing uses within environmental buffer areas (e.g., pasture or crop field on a farm) on land that is proposed for development have been managed or maintained as something other than a natural area, the guidelines recommend that the buffers be protected and restored as part of the new land development project. For example, when a land development proposal is reviewed for land that currently has a pasture or hayfield within an environmental buffer area, staff recommends this non-wooded buffer area be planted or regenerated in forest; staff does not typically recommend that the buffer remain in grass cover.

In general, environmental buffers are protected in their entirety as part of land development projects. Where permanent encroachments into environmental buffers are proposed, the guidelines provide for review criteria to determine whether the encroachments are necessary and unavoidable. Most often such encroachments are tied to required infrastructure for the project, such as a road to access the site, sewer lines, or stormwater management outfalls. Where staff and the Planning Board have determined that buffer encroachments are necessary, all reasonable measures are applied to the development project to minimize these encroachments.

In the case of the Indian Springs Country Club property, most of the land is in country club and golf course use. Many of the small streams within the interior of the property have been greatly modified from their natural state through piping, creation of in-stream ponds, channelizing, and maintaining grass cover along the channel banks. Golf course fairways, greens, tees, and cart paths lie within the wide floodplains of Bel Pre Creek and Northwest Branch.

Ideally, with a new land development project, environmental buffer areas would be identified around both natural and modified streams, floodplains, and wetlands on the property. Environmental buffers that have been modified by the golf course would be priority areas for restoration for purposes of improving stream resources and for reforestation. Reforestation of environmental buffers is consistent with the county forest conservation law, which specifically identifies environmental buffers as high priority for reforestation and afforestation.

Restoring environmental buffers as natural areas would also be consistent with Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection’s Countywide Stream Protection Strategy (CSPS). The property lies within the Bel Pre Creek and Middle Mainstem Glenmont subwatersheds. Both of these subwatersheds are designated by CSPS as “watershed restoration areas”. This means that past and present land uses have



significantly affected the stream system in these subwatersheds in a negative way and that opportunities, such as establishing and increasing forested stream buffers, to restore and improve these stream systems are recommended.

With the applicant's proposed golf course community, many of the environmental buffers on the property would not be restored to forested areas. Many, but not all, environmental buffer areas that are currently mowed, channelized, piped, or have in-stream ponds would continue to be maintained as such to accommodate the golf course component of the development. In staff's opinion, the proposed development would preclude significant opportunities to reforest environmentally-sensitive and high priority areas as defined in the "Environmental Guidelines" and the county's forest conservation law.

After careful review of the environmental and physical constraints of the property and the applicant's desired elements of a golf course community, staff believes that there are two issues that the Planning Board should provide guidance in order to determine the extent of staff application of the "Environmental Guidelines" and the forest conservation law to the proposed project:

- (1) Is a golf course community appropriate at this site, given the environmental constraints?
- (2) If a golf course community is preferred on the property, how much should environmental buffers as defined in the "Environmental Guidelines" be modified for this proposed development?

### **Environmental Buffer Protection and Land Uses**

*From a strictly environmental protection perspective, staff believes that a development project on this property that includes both residential uses and a golf course is not appropriate.* Staff believes there would be sufficient land outside environmental buffers for development on the property with preservation and restoration of the environmental buffers with only small unavoidable buffer encroachments. However, retention of an 18-hole golf course along with new residential development significantly increases the developer's preferred development envelope for the project and results in modifications to large environmental buffer areas.

The Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan, adopted in May 1989, indicates that the streams in this part of Northwest Branch have water quality problems, including stream channel erosion. The master plan recognizes that these problems are due to past and existing land uses that were constructed without stormwater management controls. The master plan also recognizes opportunities for restoration and correction of problems are limited because of the developed nature of this part of the Northwest Branch watershed and the limited space. It states that "erosion mitigation measures, for the most part, will have to be limited to channel improvements, selective rip-rapping, revegetation along stream banks, and aggressive use of best management practices on developing sites." Staff believes the proposed golf course community will for the most part not be in

keeping with this master plan recommendation. By continuing the currently developed state (as part of the golf course) of many of the environmental buffer areas on the property, the golf course community precludes full reforestation and restoration of stream valleys.

*Staff notes that the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan is silent on whether a golf course community is appropriate for the subject property: The master plan states:*

“The recommendation is to confirm the existing R-200 and R-90 zoning. This tract should be the subject of a special study should this facility ever become available for redevelopment. Any redevelopment of this tract should provide Class I bicycle and pedestrian access to the nearby park trails. A primary road will be needed to provide traffic access to the arterial roads.”

### **Environmental Buffer Modifications for a Golf Course Community Use on Indian Springs Country Club Property**

If the Planning Board decides that a golf course community is appropriate on this property, and environmental protection must be factored in with other competing land use objectives, staff has identified those environmental buffer areas which it believes are the minimum areas that should be preserved and restored as natural areas to ensure that the stream valley protection goals set forth in the “Environmental Guidelines” are upheld.

Staff’s modified environmental buffers are as follows:

- Five small (first and second order streams) tributaries to Northwest Branch and Bel Pre Creek traverse through the existing golf course. Much of these streams have been significantly altered through the construction and operation of the country club and golf course. Some sections have remained as forested stream valleys. As noted earlier in this memo, Environmental Planning staff would typically recommend that the altered sections of streams and their buffers be restored as much as possible (e.g., afforestation in stream buffers on open sections of streams, re-creating natural stream channels as much as possible where streams are currently piped). However, with the modified buffers, staff would recommend preservation of the full or almost full environmental buffers only in those sections of the five streams that are currently forested. Staff would allow use of the altered small, interior streams and their environmental buffers as part of the development envelope. With the modified buffers, most of the existing 31.7 acres of forest would be retained, and there would still be water flows from these streams that ultimately feed the major streams of Bel Pre Creek and Northwest Branch. However, the stream valleys of these five small streams could not be restored to allow for

continuous, forested riparian corridors that connect to the larger stream valleys of Bel Pre Creek and Northwest Branch.

- *Of all the environmental buffers affected by the proposed development, staff considers the stream valleys of Bel Pre Creek and Northwest Branch to be the highest priority riparian corridors for protection and restoration.* These two stream valleys are the largest of the affected riparian corridors. They include extensive floodplains both on and off the subject property. Extensive wetlands and forest also occur within these stream valleys, mostly lying within M-NCPPC parkland. Bel Pre Creek is a major tributary of Northwest Branch that drains approximately 4.5 square miles. The part of Northwest Branch that is adjacent to the subject property drains roughly 21 square miles of land. Much of the stream valley of Northwest Branch mainstem lie within M-NCPPC parkland, including the part of the stream valley adjacent to the subject property. Currently, the golf course extends well into the wide floodplains of both of these streams. (Floodplains are part of an environmental buffer area, as defined in the "Environmental Guidelines".) Along Northwest Branch stream valley, areas of the floodplain that lie within M-NCPPC parkland have also been cleared and maintained as part of the golf course operation.

Staff's modified environmental buffer along Bel Pre Creek would allow minimal forest planting along the stream except for the proposed extension of Tivoli Lakes Boulevard and an existing golf hole that staff would allow to remain as a stream crossing. On the north side of the stream, staff's buffer would be 50 feet wide. This width is significantly narrower than the 100-year floodplain, which is about 200 feet or more from this section of Bel Pre Creek. Staff's modified buffer would also be much less than the minimum 125-foot wide environmental buffer that is defined in the "Environmental Guidelines" for Use IV streams.

Along Northwest Branch, the modified buffer generally follows the 100-year floodplain boundary. This boundary is consistent with the existing Northwest Branch stream valley park boundaries upstream and downstream of this property. In addition, staff's proposed buffer generally follows the park-take boundary that is recommended in the "Countywide Park Trails Plan" (July 1998). The trails plan recommends additional park acquisition along this portion of the Northwest Branch stream valley "to emphasize its protection" and to ensure that a hard surface park trail through this part of Northwest Branch could be located outside the stream valley. The plan "places the highest environmental protection priority on the Northwest Branch Stream Valley system..."

Staff has worked closely with the applicant over many months determine if a golf course community as envisioned by the applicant could, at a minimum, adhere to staff's modified environmental buffers. To the applicant's credit, some changes in the project have been made that reduce encroachments into the modified buffers. The entrance road from Layhill Rd. is relocated at the eastern end so that an existing stream crossing is eliminated and the crossing area can be restored and reforested. The part of the Northwest Branch floodplain along the northeastern portion of the property is shown to be afforested as a natural area. And a narrow strip of forest is proposed to be planted along part of Bel Pre Creek.

Existing forest stands, for the most part, are proposed to be retained. One exception is the stream valley forest at the north end of the property: Park staff's recommended trail is shown to be located within existing forested environmental buffer. The proposed trail location needs to be moved so that it lies outside this section of the environmental buffer.

However, even with these changes, the applicant's proposal still includes significant encroachments into staff's modified environmental buffers. The southeastern portion of the Northwest Branch floodplain would continue to be in golf course use. It appears that this use would preclude the reforestation of a portion of existing parkland in floodplain that would be adjacent to the golf course. A new golf hole is proposed to cross Bel Pre Creek, which would add to the length of Bel Pre Creek that could not be reforested (i.e., in addition to the stream section that would be crossed by Tivoli Lakes Boulevard extended and the section that would be left unforested because of the existing golf hole crossing).

Staff does not support the applicant's current layout proposal and recommends that the layout be further revised to conform to its recommended modified environmental buffers. Staff does not believe additional reductions to the environmental buffers can be made without significantly compromising the intent and spirit of the stream valley protection objectives of the "Environmental Guidelines" and of the priorities for reforestation specified in the county forest conservation law. Staff believes its recommended modifications to the buffers are already significant in size and scope. Staff's modified buffers eliminate opportunities for restoring the smaller stream valleys within the site's interior as forested corridors to connect to the major stream valleys of Bel Pre Creek and Northwest Branch. It is possible that water quality of these smaller streams may not improve because golf course uses will continue to be near or on most of these small streams, along with added impervious surfaces covering adjacent uplands due to new residential development.

Staff's modified buffers also provide only a narrow corridor for reforestation along Bel Pre Creek. In addition, further reducing the buffer along Northwest Branch to less than its 100-year floodplain, in staff's opinion, would prevent full reforestation of the floodplain and restoration of its natural function and value for retaining and filtering stormwater runoff and providing forested riparian habitat in this major stream valley.

## **TRANSPORTATION DISCUSSION**

### **Site Location and Vehicular Access**

The site is located on the east side of Layhill Road between Bonifant Road and Randolph Road. The Northwest Branch Park is located along the eastern property line. The site will have three points of access:

- 1) An access point from Layhill Road at the existing intersection with Indian Spring Road.
- 2) A second vehicular access point from the south by extending Tivoli Lake Boulevard.
- 3) A third access point from the north at the existing terminus of Foggy Glen Drive.

### **Pedestrian Facilities**

The proposed pre-preliminary plan will not adversely affect the existing pedestrian access, and would add missing segments to the existing pathway system.

### **Master Plan Roadways and Trails**

In accordance with the approved and adopted *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton*, the master plan designations are as follows:

- Layhill Road (MD 182) is designated as a four-to-six-lane divided, major highway, M-16, with a 120-foot right-of-way with an existing Class II bikeway on both sides.
- Tivoli Lake Boulevard is designated as the southern end of a 36-foot-wide primary residential street, P-13, with a 70-foot right-of-way.
- Indian Spring Access Road is designated as the western end of the same 36-foot-wide primary residential street, P-13, with a 70-foot right-of-way.
- Glenallan Avenue is designated as a 48-foot-wide arterial, A-56, with an 80-foot right-of-way.
- Georgia Avenue (MD 97) is designated as a six-lane divided, major highway, M-8, with a 120-foot right-of-way.
- Randolph Road is designated as a six-lane divided, major highway, M-17, with a 120-foot right-of-way and an existing Class I bikeway.

In accordance with the approved and adopted *Aspen Hill Master Plan*:

- Bonifant Road is designated as a two-lane arterial, A-40, with an 80-foot right-of-way and an existing Class II bikeway.

#### On-Going Transportation Project

The relevant on-going transportation project is SHA's Intersection Capacity Improvement Project No. MO854B11. The project is to develop design plans to reconstruct Randolph Road under Georgia Avenue. Currently, the project team is addressing the comments and developing a report for the primary investigation. The 35% design plans were completed on January 16, 2004. The project is funded for design and minimal right-of-way acquisition, with future construction funding uncertain at this time. The Planning Board had reviewed the location and design plans and made their recommendation to support Alternative "C" at their public hearing on March 7, 2002. Prior to SHA's Project, this improvement was a mid-term grade-separated candidate in the Congestion Relief Study Program in 1998. The current project manager is Keith Kurchurek who can be contacted at 410-545-8792.

#### Traffic Signal Warrants Study at the Intersection of Layhill Road and Indian Spring Road

The applicant's transportation engineer submitted a traffic signal warrant study to SHA to determine if installation of a traffic signal is warranted at the intersection of Layhill Road and Indian Spring Road. Based on a one-lane westbound approach on Indian Spring Road at the intersection with Layhill Road, three of the eleven warrants in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* may be satisfied:

1. Interruption of continuous traffic (for eight hours)
2. Four-hour volumes
3. Peak-hour volume.

However, a separate right-turn lane is being considered for the westbound Indian Spring Road approach that would reduce the "side street" volumes and may no longer warrant installation of a traffic signal at this intersection.

#### Site-Generated Traffic

The proposed redevelopment of the existing 36-hole golf course would generate the following vehicular peak-hour trips during the weekday morning peak period (6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.) and the weekday evening peak period (4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.):

Type of Development	Number of Units or Holes	Peak-Hour Trips	
		Morning	Evening
Single-Family Detached	332 Units	231	293
Single-Family Attached	262 Units	134	161
Golf Course	18 Holes	40	49
<b>Total Peak-Hour Trips</b>		<b>405</b>	<b>503</b>

A traffic study is required because the proposed land uses generates 50 or more peak-hour trips during the weekday morning and evening peak periods.

Congestion Levels at Nearby Intersections

Based on the results of the traffic study prepared for the pre-preliminary plan, the CLV values at eight nearby intersections were calculated for the existing, background, total, and total improve traffic conditions. Only the calculated CLV values at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road exceed the congestion standard of 1,650 CLV for the Kensington/Wheaton or Aspen Hill Policy Areas. At this intersection, the applicant's transportation consultant proposed right-turn lanes on the northbound Georgia Avenue, southbound Georgia Avenue, and westbound Randolph Road approaches. With these improvements, if feasible, the CLV values as shown in the total improved traffic condition would be reduced below the congestion standard of 1,650 during both the weekday morning and evening peak hours. With SHA's planned interchange at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road, an alternative improvement might be to contribute to the future construction funding on a pro-rata basis.

Policy Area Transportation Review/Staging Ceiling Condition

Based on the *FY 04 AGP* staging ceiling capacity, the remaining capacity is 2,530 housing units as of February 29, 2004 in the Kensington/Wheaton Policy Area.

**PARKS and TRAIL DISCUSSION**

The Countywide Park Trails Master Plan that was approved by the Planning Board in 1998 provides for a hard surface trail from Alderton Drive south to Wheaton Regional Park. This trail has major regional significance by linking the Matthew Henson Trail to the Northwest Branch trail system thereby ultimately enabling users to travel on bicycle or foot along the entire Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park hard surface trail system to the Master Planned Matthew Henson Trail and then west to connect with the Rock Creek Trail system. This trail connection is recommended in the Plan to be located outside the stream valley to best protect the natural resources. The Trails Plan envisioned the widening of Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park when Indian Spring Golf Course developed in order to allow environmentally sensitive construction of the trail, however, given the Applicants desire to preserve the golf course, it is recommended that the trail be routed through a greenway within the community as proposed by the Applicant.

In addition, this subdivision offers an ideal opportunity to link the proposed community, as well as existing nearby residents, to Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and the master planned natural surface trail that lies on the east side of Northwest Branch. Opportunities for these connections include 1) Dedication to M-NCPPC of land adjacent to Bel Pre Creek that would sufficiently widen existing parkland along the creek and allow community access from the southern portion of the development and adjacent neighborhoods to Northwest Branch parkland and 2) Establish a natural surface trail from the northern portion of the development to the master planned natural surface trail along the east side of Northwest Branch.

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**Attachments:**

- 1) Neighborhood development map
- 2) Property base map
- 3) Pre-Preliminary plan
- 4) Master Plan excerpt
- 5) Citizen Correspondence

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