

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK & PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

November 4, 2004

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cathy Conlon, Development Review
Robert Kronenburg, Development Review

FROM: Piera Weiss, Eastern County Team, Community-Based Planning

SUBJECT: Preliminary Plan 1-05020 and Site Plan 8-05006

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval. Preliminary Plan 1-05020 and Site Plan 8-05006 are consistent with the 1997 *Approved and Adopted Fairland Master Plan*.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:*History*

This project has been proceeding through the development process since 2000 when the applicant filed a pre-preliminary plan. The idea of a golf course community on the subject site dates to 1994 and the planning process that lead to the drafting of the 1997 Fairland Master Plan. In 1994, the property owner contacted staff to discuss options for developing their 180-acre tract of land located on the county line and adjacent to the Gunpowder Golf Course.

After discussion and public meetings with the owners and the surrounding communities, staff incorporated recommendations for a golf course community into the master plan because the site had the potential to achieve the goals of the master plan such as creating a new community at the county line, enhancing public facilities and providing connections between the Fairland Recreational/Regional Park located in both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The master plan recommended the use of the Planned Development Zone (PD) for the development because the project involved exchanging parkland (the existing golf course) as well as issues of compatibility with existing neighborhoods and connections between the two counties.

In 2003, after urging by the Planning Board to pursue the PD zone, the applicant filed a local map amendment. Staff reviewed the zoning case for the Planning Board and testified before the Hearing Examiner as to the merits of the development plan and consistency with the master plan. The Planning Board recommended approval of the

zoning case and the Montgomery County District Council granted the PD-2 Zone. The applicant subsequently filed the preliminary and site plans in July 2004.

1997 Approved and Adopted Master Plan

The primary goal of the *1997 Approved and Adopted Fairland Master Plan* was community building and recognizing and reinforcing each community's unique character and identity. The master plan organized the Fairland master plan area into communities. Descriptions of each community included housing types, local facilities, known problems or issues, what types of new development were appropriate and what public facilities were needed.

A secondary goal was providing more housing options, in particular, increasing the number of new single-family detached housing where the existing housing mix favored attached or apartment units. The plan recommended rezoning or optional methods of development for specific properties in order to balance the overall mix of units within a community.

The *1997 Master Plan* designated the subject property as Area 2 within the Oakfair-Saddlecreek Community and described the community as follows:

Much of this area was built in the 1980s and encompasses about 1200 homes ... there are 800 townhouses and over 400 detached homes. The average density is six units to the acre ... Problems in the area include the lack of pedestrian connections from this neighborhood to the Fairland Recreational Park... Three public streets stub at the 200-acre tract of vacant land (Area 2) and there are concerns regarding the extension of these roads and the ability of the road system to accommodate additional units.

Area 2 is located between the residential development and the County line. Prior to the 1980s much of this acreage was used for sand and gravel excavation. There are forested areas, steep slopes and wetlands associated with the upper reaches of the Little Paint Branch...Area 2 has the potential of adding detached units to the housing mix, expanding or reconfiguring the Gunpowder Golf Course, ... improving the road network including a possible extension of roads to Old Gunpowder in Prince George's County; and hiker/biker access to the Fairland Recreational Park. The Planning Staff for the Montgomery County Public Schools has recommended that a school site be included in Area 2 for two reasons: the number of households that could be served (approximately 1,500) and the potential for children to walk to school. A school would provide a centrally located community focal point.

The plan recommended that the site, if combined with the adjoining public Gunpowder Golf Course, would be suitable for redevelopment as a public golf course and a private community. The plan recommended the use of the PD Zone to achieve this recommendation because the zone addresses appropriate mix and size of units, issues related to public uses, and protection of environmental features. The zoning process

would involve assemblage of privately owned parcels, cooperation with M-NCPPC (owner of the golf course) as co-applicant, and would afford the highest level of scrutiny of compatibility and environmental issues as well as ample opportunity for public input prior to the subdivision process.

The master plan also recommended protection of environmental resources. On page 119, in the Environmental section, the plan states that the stream valley between McKnew Local Park and the Fairland Recreational Park, although disturbed, contained a diverse and unusual plant community, and was worthy of protection as parkland. On page 140, the master plan discusses the forest cover and recommends protection where possible and practicable in order to protect stream buffer areas and high quality forest stand between the stream and the Colonial Gas Pipeline right-of-way.

On page 92 in the Transportation section, the plan recommends that the traffic signal at McKnew Road be evaluated and possibly moved the Cedar Tree Drive because Cedar Tree Drive can accommodate more traffic since it has fewer driveway access points. On Page 94 the plan recommends that an interconnected road system be evaluated creating a connection between Cedar Tree Drive and Gunpowder Road to access the golf course and proposed golf course community. The master plan recommends bikeways and sidewalks to connect the new community to the existing communities along McKnew Road, Cedar Tree Road, Saddle Creek Road and Gunpowder Road.

Review of Preliminary Plan and Site Plan

The following comments compare the proposed Preliminary and Site Plans to the eight master plan recommendations for the subject site.

- 1) Density cap of 396 units in Montgomery County with an appropriate mix of housing.

The plans show a maximum of 396 units. The unit mix is 346 detached units and 50 attached units (MPDUs). The unit types include detached units in three different lot sizes and duplexes and townhouses. As stated earlier, the emphasis in the master plan for residential development was to obtain as many detached units as possible given zoning and subdivision requirements

- 2) MDPU's distributed throughout the development

The plans propose 34 MPDU townhouses units to be located adjacent to the main recreational facilities that will serve the private development. These units are also part of the development pod that includes the detached patio homes. The remaining MDPU's (16) are duplexes and are located in groups of four in three other locations.

- 3) Extension of the road network

The plans show an extension of the existing road network and access to the proposed school site in conformance with the master plan recommendations.

- 4) Areas of no disturbance and environmental impact

The plans indicate areas of no-disturbance, mitigation, and restoration in conformance with the Environmental Guidelines. Environmental Planning Unit Staff will have to determine whether the preliminary and site plans are in compliance with the environmental regulations and guidelines.

- 5) Non-vehicular access to Fairland Recreational Park

The plans propose connections to the existing trail system and sidewalks along all public streets. The plans indicate that a hard and soft surface trail network will be provided on the site as well as on park property to reconnect any trails displaced by the development. A Class I bicycle and sidewalk system connect the development to the surrounding communities and public facilities.

- 6) Connect roads to Prince George's County, if desirable

Cedar Tree Road has been connected to Old Gunpowder in Prince George County. The Prince George's County Planning Board has approved the connection to Old Gunpowder Road as part of subdivision approval for the portion of the development in Prince George's County.

- 7) Common open space for residents

Community open space and recreational facilities solely for the residents include tennis courts, a swimming pool, tot lots and a trail system.

- 8) 12-15 Acre School site

The plan includes an 11+ acre school site centrally located with access to both Saddle Creek Drive and Cedar Tree Drive. Although this acreage is smaller than that recommended in the master plan, MCPS staff has accepted the acreage in dedication as well as the location, extension and design of public road access to the school.

Staff concludes that the Preliminary Plan and Site Plan carry forward the recommendations of the 1997 Approved And Adopted Master Plan. Staff, therefore, recommends approval.

OAKFAIR/SADDLECREEK (Figure 21)

Much of this area was built in the 1980s and encompasses about 1,200 homes. The boundaries are MD 198, the Fairland Recreational Park, and a tributary of the Little Paint Branch. There are 800 townhouses and over 400 detached houses. The average density is six units to the acre. Older development is located along Birmingham Drive, Wooten Lane, and Valley Stream Road. The Seventh Day Adventist Church on McKnew Road is used as a meeting place. Although there are a few private recreational facilities associated with individual developments, including tot lots and ball courts, they are not open to the general public. McKnew Local Park is the only public facility in the area, but it is currently undeveloped. The park is planned to be improved by FY 99.

Problems in the area include the lack of pedestrian connections from this neighborhood to the Fairland Recreational Park and the Burtonsville commercial area. Sidewalks within the developments are discontinuous and critical links are missing. Three public streets stub at a 200-acre tract of vacant land (Area 2) and there are concerns regarding the extension of these roads and the ability of the road system to accommodate additional units. McKnew Road from MD 198 to Saddle Creek Drive is not a full-width primary road and does not have continuous curb, gutter, or sidewalks.

Area 2, is located between the residential development and the County line. Prior to the 1980s much of this acreage was used for sand and gravel excavation. There are forested areas, steep slopes, and wetlands associated with the upper reaches of the Little Paint Branch. A series of ponds remain from earlier uses. Area 2 has the potential for adding detached units to the housing mix; expanding or reconfiguring the Gunpowder Golf Course, as proposed by one of the land owners; improving the road network including a possible extension of roads to Old Gunpowder Road in Prince George's County; and hiker/biker access to the Fairland Recreational Park. The Planning Staff for the Montgomery Public Schools has recommended that a school site be included in Area 2 for two reasons: the number of households that could be served (approximately 1,500) and the potential for children to walk to school. A school would provide a centrally located community focal point. Area 9 contains steep slopes, is almost entirely wooded, and includes part of the stream valley for the Silverwood tributary of the Little Paint Branch.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Area 2: 198 Acres: 173, R-200/TDR; 25, RE-2; 9 Parcels

- Remove TDR designation, retain R-200 zoning since the density bonus provided by TDRs cannot be achieved in the golf course community design due to environmental constraints associated with the Little Paint Branch that flows through much of Area 2. Rezone RE-2 portion to R-200 to remove split zoning on properties. Encourage use of the Planned Development (PD) zone to achieve the appropriate mix and size of units, an improved golf course design located outside the stream valley, and protection of other environment features such as steep slopes and wooded area. The PD will permit a greater level of scrutiny throughout the development process and will promote compatibility between the golf course community and the existing community that will share a street network and elementary school.
- Encourage a public/private partnership between Montgomery and Prince George's County M-NCPPC Parks Departments and the property owners to develop a golf course community. This would entail upgrading and expanding the existing public golf course and developing a residential community around the links.

- The golf course community could be best accomplished under the provisions of the Planned Development Zone (PD 2). The following should be evaluated at the time of the zoning request for PD:

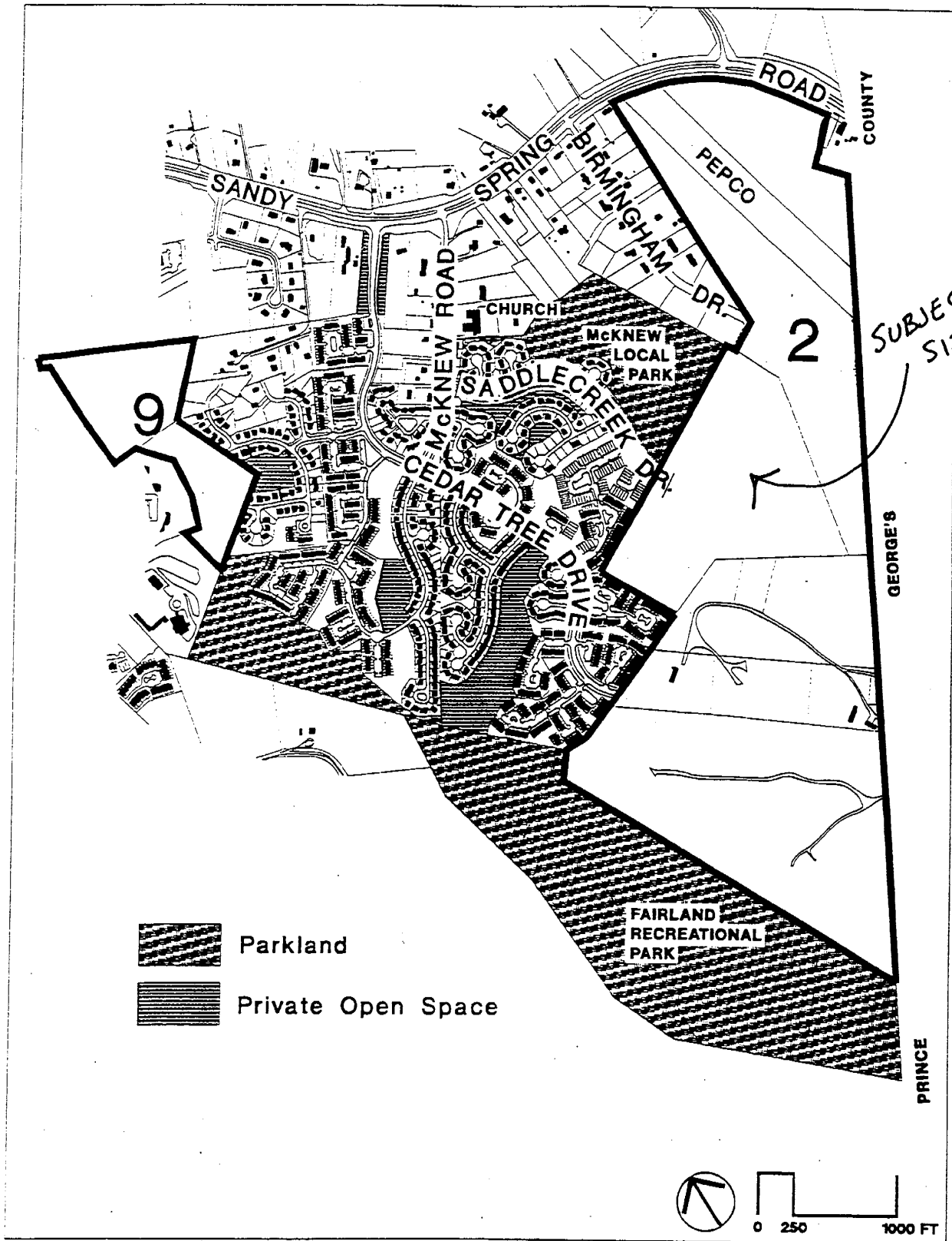
- A density cap of 510 units overall, with 396 units in Montgomery County and an appropriate mix of housing types including single-family detached homes and attached units;
- MPDUs to be distributed throughout the development;
- Extension of the existing road network (see Transportation section, page 93);
- Areas of no disturbance or environmental impact (see page 119);
- Non-vehicular access to Fairland Recreational Park;
- Connect road(s) to Old Gunpowder Road in Prince George's County, if desirable;
- Common open space for residents of the new community; and
- A 12-15-acre site for a public elementary school.

Area 9: 22 acres: 4 acres, R-200; 18 acres, R-200/TDR; 2 parcels

This site is severely constrained with steep slopes and forest cover and has limited potential for achieving existing density recommendations and utilizing TDRs.

- Remove TDRs.
- Provide pedestrian access via Red Cedar Lane and Swiss Stone Drive to Silverwood Tributary and Fairland Recreational Park.
- Expand stream buffers and open space connection to Fairland Recreational Park.
- Acquire much of steep slope area along the Silverwood tributary (Bryan and Fehr Properties) for parkland. (See page 119.)

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sides. This cross-section can be accommodated in a right-of-way less than the currently recommended 120 feet. Access to the shops along MD 198 should be controlled and consolidated to improve safety and circulation for both pedestrians and vehicles.

- Eliminate the realignment of MD 198 east of Kruhm Road recommended in the 1981 Plan, although safety improvements should be made where necessary.
- Relocate the traffic signal in front of the Burtonsville Fire Department to Old Columbia Pike when access to the school is provided opposite Old Columbia Pike.
- Evaluate relocating the traffic signal from McKnew Road/MD 198 to Cedar Tree Drive/MD 198. The signalized intersection at MD 198 and McKnew Road currently provides the primary access point to the Saddle Creek subdivision. Cedar Tree Drive is built to primary residential standards with sidewalks on both sides and has few driveway connections. Of the two roads, Cedar Tree Drive may be more suitable to serve as the primary access point, especially when vacant land at its southern end is developed. If the traffic signal is relocated, there should be a new median break at Cedar Tree Drive and the elimination of the existing median break at McKnew Road to restrict access to right-in/right-out should be evaluated.

ARTERIAL ROADS: An arterial road connects major highways and provides for more access points while moving traffic at lower speeds. Typically, more than half of the traffic on an arterial is "through" traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A-287

- Construct A-287 as a four-lane arterial from Cherry Hill Road to Prince George's County line (see page 38).

Briggs Chaney Road

- Add two travel lanes to Briggs Chaney Road from Aston Manor Way to the County line.
- Improve the safety of access to Briggs Chaney Plaza when the US 29/Briggs Chaney Road intersection is grade-separated (see discussion on proposed interchange at US 29 and Briggs Chaney on page 91).
- Reclassify the section between US 29 and Dogwood Drive as a 120-foot right-of-way arterial.
- Reclassify the section between Old Columbia Pike and the Paint Branch as a two-lane arterial.
- Consider accommodating a Class I bikeway within the right-of-way.

East Randolph Road/Cherry Hill Road

- Reconstruct East Randolph Road between Old Columbia Pike and Fairland Road as a five-lane undivided roadway.

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PRIMARY ROADS: The purpose of a primary road is to provide access for 200 or more households, but a primary may carry some "through" traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Blackburn Road

- Reclassify Blackburn Road west of US 29 from a primary residential road to a secondary residential road. Retain primary residential road classification for Blackburn Road east of US 29.

Cedar Tree Drive/Saddle Creek Drive

Cedar Tree Drive is one of two primary roads serving the Oakfair/Saddle Creek community (see pages 47-48).

- Extend Cedar Tree Drive to Old Gunpowder Road in Prince George's County to access the golf course and proposed golf course community. This would provide an alternative access road for neighborhoods currently served by MD 198 only.
- Consider a cul-de-sac on Saddle Creek Drive or connect to Cedar Tree Drive to channel traffic to Cedar Tree Drive.
- Consider a ban on truck traffic once Cedar Tree Drive is extended to Old Gunpowder Road.

Fairdale Road

- Extend Fairdale Road as a primary residential road (70-foot right-of-way) north to Friendlywood Road. Road cross-section should include sidewalks and a bikeway.

Guilford Run Lane

- The proposed ICC will intersect with Briggs Chaney Road at Dogwood Lane and may prevent access to Briggs Chaney Road for a number of undeveloped properties to Briggs Chaney Road. If the proposed ICC is constructed along the master-planned alignment, access to these properties should be provided from Guilford Run Lane to Briggs Chaney Road.

Old Columbia Pike

Old Columbia Pike provides access to a number of public facilities, including the Paint Branch High School, Banneker Middle School, and the Fairland Library and constitutes the most important north-south pedestrian/bicyclist link in Fairland because it extends the entire length of the Fairland Planning Area from Burtonsville south connecting with the White Oak Shopping Center. The road is one of the older roads in the planning area and has a residential character for much of its length. The following recommendations are intended to improve pedestrian access to the various public facilities and two shopping areas and to reinforce the residential character of the road. Neighborhood traffic control/traffic-calming measures are appropriate to discourage excessive auto speeds. This Plan supports the use of such measures to ensure pedestrian/bicyclist safety and to support the use of Old Columbia Pike as a primary residential road.

- Reclassify Old Columbia Pike between the bridge over the Paint Branch and Industrial Parkway from a business district street to a primary residential road with an 80-foot right-of-way.

(SY)