

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning

June 8, 2005

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Daniel Janousek  
Development Review Division

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

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

SUBJECT: Johnson Nursery  
Special Exception Case No. S-2070-A

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This memorandum represents Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review and recommendations on the subject special exception application for the proposed 24,700 square feet of nursery on a site next to the Quince Orchard Marketplace located on the north side of Darnestown Road (MD 28), west of Quince Orchard Road (MD 124) in the Darnestown area.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Based on our review of the site plan and the traffic analysis submitted by the applicant, staff recommends the following conditions as part of the APF test related to approval of the subject special exception application.

1. Total development under this special exception is limited to 24,700 square feet of retail nursery building.
2. The applicant shall provide a separate southbound right-turn lane from Riffle Ford Road onto Darnestown Road (MD 28).

## DISCUSSION

### Local Area Transportation Review

Seven intersections were identified as critical intersections to be affected by the proposed construction of a nursery next to the existing shopping center and were examined in the petitioner's traffic study for the Quince Orchard Marketplace to determine whether they met the applicable congestion standard. The congestion standards in the Gaithersburg City and North Potomac areas are 1,450 and 1,475 Critical Lane Volumes (CLV), respectively. The critical lane volume (CLV) impacts of the proposed nursery on critical intersections in the vicinity of the site were analyzed and are summarized in Table 1. Due to the nature of the nursery business operation, the Saturday mid-day and weekday AM and PM peak hour traffic conditions are analyzed.

**Table 1**

<b>Intersection Capacity Analysis with CLV</b>						
<b>During the Weekday Peak Hour and Saturday Mid-day</b>						
<b>Intersection</b>	<b>Existing Weekday</b>			<b>Total Future</b>		
	<b>AM</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>AM</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
MD 28/Shopping Center Driveway	744	1,070	642	779	1,303	870
MD 28/ Quince Orchard Road	1,086	1,203	865	1,093	1,273	914
MD 28/Potomac Valley Shopping Center	673	857	672	677	888	691
MD 28/ Tschiffely Square Road	1,014	911	568	1,021	942	568
Quince Orchard Road/Hillstone Road	582	706	709	590	737	734
Quince Orchard Road/ Longdraft Road	729	1,043	982	736	1,073	1,007
MD 28/Riffle Ford Road	1,043	1,745	990	1,044	1,766	1,008
MD 28/Riffle Ford Road with Improvement	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,019	1,724	1,006

As shown in the above table, all intersections analyzed, except during the weekday PM peak hour at MD 28 and Riffle Ford Road, are currently operating at acceptable CLVs (below 1,450 – 1,475) and this acceptable level will continue for the total future development condition (the existing traffic plus traffic from the Quince Orchard Marketplace, including the new nursery site) during the weekday AM and PM peak hours and the Saturday mid-day. In order to mitigate unacceptable

congestion level at the MD 28/Riffle Ford Road intersection during the weekday PM peak hour, the applicant proposes to construct a separate southbound right-turn lane on Riffle Ford Road. The total future traffic condition with the proposed improvement at this intersection is improved compared to the existing traffic condition as shown in the above table. Therefore, this special exception application meets the Local Area Transportation Review requirements of the APF review.

#### Site Access and Vehicular/Pedestrian Circulation

Access to the site exists on Darnestown Road (MD 28) as “right-in and right-out” only. Additional driveway access is proposed from inside the existing shopping center and this driveway is connected to the existing full-movement signalized shopping center entrance on MD 28. The applicant submitted the delivery truck turning radius information for the proposed truck route to/from MD 28. Staff reviewed this information and finds existing/proposed access to the site and the internal traffic (including trucks) circulation system shown on the site plan are safe and adequate. Staff also finds that the internal pedestrian circulation system and the existing sidewalk and bikeway along MD 28 are safe and adequate. Based on staff’s field reviews, staff finds that the proposed nursery operation will not adversely affect pedestrian safety . The pedestrian traffic to the site is minimal and the signalized MD 28 intersections at Quince Orchard Road and the shopping center entrance include the pedestrian signal phasing with appropriate pedestrian crosswalk pavement markings.

#### Master Plan Roadway and Bikeway

Darnestown Road (MD 28) exists as a four-lane divided major roadway with sidewalks on both sides per the Gaithersburg Master Plan’s recommendation. A bikeway is not recommended along Darnestown Road in the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan. The Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan recommends a Shared Use Path along Darnestown Road and designated bike lanes exist on both eastbound and westbound MD 28.

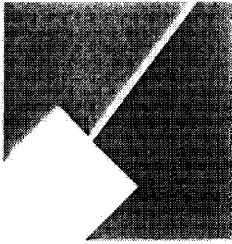
#### Summary

Transportation Planning staff concludes that the granting of the requested Special Exception to allow the proposed nursery on the site next to the existing Quince Orchard Marketplace shopping center with the roadway improvement condition, as recommended in this memorandum, would not have an adverse effect on the nearby road system.

KHK:gw

mimo to Janousek re S-2070-A Johnson Nursery

M-NCPPC



## MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760  
301-495-4500, [www.mncppc.org](http://www.mncppc.org)

June 8, 2005

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Dan Janousek, Zoning Analyst, Development Review Division

FROM: Nancy Sturgeon<sup>NS</sup>, Community Planner, Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Johnson's Nursery - Special Exception Case No. S-2070-A

Johnson Family Properties LLC operates three Florist and Garden Centers in Montgomery County, including a store located on the northwest corner of Darnestown Road and Quince Orchard Road at 12201 Darnestown Road. Johnson's has operated on this three-acre corner site since 1961. Adjacent to this existing garden center is a Safeway store and a gas station. The existing garden center, Safeway, and gas station are zoned C-1 and are owned by the Johnson family. Immediately adjacent to and west of the Safeway along Darnestown Road is a 14-acre parcel in the R-200 zone, which is also owned by the Johnson family. This 14-acre parcel, at 12311 Darnestown Road, is the subject property. It is bordered by Darnestown Road on the south, single-family residences to the west and north, and the Safeway to the east. The residential neighborhoods surrounding the property, Willow Ridge and Orchard Hills, are zoned R-200. Quince Orchard High School is on the south side of Darnestown Road across from the subject parcel.

Johnson Family Properties LLC has submitted an application that involves relocating their existing garden center from the three-acre commercially zoned corner site to the 14-acre residentially zoned site. The property is within the boundaries of the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*. Special exception review and approval is required in order to operate a nursery or garden center in the R-200 zone. In 1994, a special exception was approved for the subject property for the construction of a building and greenhouse and the operation of a nursery and garden center. A storage building was constructed on the subject property, but the greenhouse was never built and the retail operation remained at the corner location. The submitted application is intended to modify the existing special exception to allow the entire garden center to be relocated from its existing site to the subject property.

## **Master Plan Guidance**

In the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*, the subject property was considered part of the Smokey Glen study area. Named after Smokey Glen Farm, a private recreation facility on Riffle Ford Road, the Plan identified environmentally sensitive areas near Seneca Creek Park and recommended lower density residential zones for these areas. The subject property was not considered environmentally sensitive and the Plan reconfirmed the zoning. On page 4, the Master Plan listed several recommendations for Smokey Glen, including: "The remaining areas (not considered environmentally sensitive) be confirmed as half-acre residential zoning." On page 50, the Plan states: "This Plan confirms the R-200 and C-1 Zones on two parcels fronting MD 28." The Plan's zoning and land use maps show R-200 and low density residential for the subject property. The proposed special exception for the subject property is not inconsistent with the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*.

## **Neighborhood Compatibility**

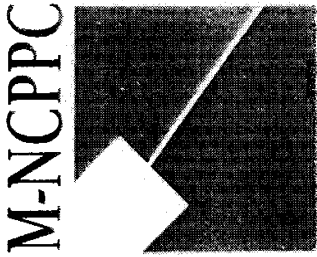
The original submittal for Special Exception S-2070-A involved the use of the entire 14-acre property for the relocated and expanded Johnson's garden center. The scale and intensity of the proposed operation raised concerns for staff as well as residents who live adjacent to the property. The applicant and their representatives held several meetings with residents to discuss their concerns. In response to the many issues that were raised, the project was completely redesigned and condensed in scale and size. Whereas the original layout covered the entire 14-acre site, the redesigned project covers about 6 acres (5.77 acres).

On the west and north sides of the site, there will be a 50-foot buffer between the property line and an eight-foot high board-on-board fence. This buffer area will be landscaped with evergreen, ornamental, and shade trees. On the east side, which is adjacent to the C-1 land, the setback is 15-feet between the property line and the fence. Along the south side, where the property fronts on Darnestown Road, the applicant proposes a decorative (six-foot high) ornamental fence, a monument sign, a landscape wall, and plantings to include shrubs, groundcover, flowers, and trees.

As a result of the redesign, the proposed garden center would be adjacent to the rear yard property line of three single-family homes west of the site that front on Copen Meadow Court and a very small portion of a fourth home that fronts on Copen Meadow Drive. The back of the closest single-family home on Copen Meadow Court is over 100-feet from the fence. In the original submission, the proposed garden center would have been adjacent to an additional 9 homes (seven existing and two approved single-family homes).

## **Conclusion**

Staff finds that the proposed special exception modification is not inconsistent with the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan* and, with the significant changes made to the site plan, it will not negatively impact adjacent residences. The applicant has shown a willingness to work with and respond to the concerns raised by both staff and residents. The redesigned project minimizes impacts to adjacent homes and should maintain the existing character and peaceful enjoyment of the adjacent residential neighborhood.



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8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Dan Janousek, Development Review

**VIA:** Mary Dolan, Environmental Planning *MD*

**FROM:** Michael Zamore, Environmental Planning *mz*

**DATE:** June 7, 2005

**SUBJECT:** Special Exception S-2070-A  
Retail/Wholesale Nursery and Garden Center, 12311 Darnestown Road

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Environmental Planning staff has reviewed the Special Exception request referenced above. Staff recommends **approval** of this request with the following conditions:

1. Compliance with the conditions of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) letter of May 20, 2005 approving the project's Stormwater Management Concept Request.
2. Compliance with the Montgomery County Noise Control Ordinance (Chapter 31B of the Montgomery County Code).

**Forest Conservation**

The existing approved Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD)(No.4-01130) and the approved Final Forest Conservation Plan (FCP)(No.1-01058) for Willow Ridge Phase II (Johnson Nursery Property) cover the site. Separate FCP and NRI/FSD are therefore, not required for this special exception application. Three significant and two specimen White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) trees that were marked for removal (i.e. saved but not counted) on the original FCP will be removed as part of this project. Their removal is unavoidable and no mitigation is required.

**Environmental Guidelines**

This site is not located within a Special Protection Area and there are no sensitive environmental features onsite. Proposed work will not impact an existing approved Tree Save Plan or the original FCP conditions for the Johnson Nursery Property.

## **Watershed Protection**

The property is mainly in the Lower Long Draught of the Great Seneca Creek Watershed (except for a small southwestern portion that is in the Potomac Grove Tributary to the Muddy Branch Watershed). A small tributary to Great Seneca Creek originates near the northwestern boundary of the site. The Montgomery County *Countywide Stream Protection Strategy* (CSPS, 1998) lists Lower Long Draught subwatershed stream and habitat conditions as 'good'. A wastewater discharge treatment plant (WWTP) is located in this area. The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been monitoring the stream in the vicinity of the WWTP from 1997 as part of the County's NPDES permit requirements.

CSPS has designated the Potomac Grove Tributary as a remedial Watershed Protection Area. Although CSPS lists subwatershed, stream and habitat conditions as 'good', stream banks are actively eroding, and sediment deposition and embededness are high, because of conditions upstream that have impacted the area. Much of the stream substrate is bedrock so channel downcutting is less of a problem than in upstream areas. CSPS recommends the use of onsite stormwater management efforts that help correct these existing conditions.

## **Stormwater Management**

The applicant has an approved stormwater management concept that shows on-site channel protection measures via a dry pond; on-site water quality control via a surface sandfilter; and on-site recharge via grass channels. DPS listed specific issues that the applicant must address at detailed sediment control/stormwater management plan stage, in its letter of May 20, 2005 approving the project's Stormwater Management Concept Request.

## **Water and Sewer Availability**

Public water (Category W-1) and sewer (Category S-1) in Montgomery County's Ten-Year Water and Sewage System Plan, currently serve the property.

## **Noise**

The operation must comply with all provisions of the Montgomery County Noise Control Ordinance (Chapter 31B of the Montgomery County Code). Under the Ordinance the receiving property line limits are 65 dBA (daytime) and 55 dBA (nighttime).

## **Air Quality**

Fumes from truck exhausts could potentially be problematic. The applicant must make an effort to ensure that trucks using the facility are in compliance (at least certification) with MVEP and other air quality standards.