

- a) Successional/Transitional: Dominated by Tulip poplar, Red maple, Ailanthus, Black walnut, and Red cedar. The majority of trees measure 2-4" diameter at breast height (DBH).
- b) Mature Hardwoods: Dominated by Tulip poplar, Red maple, and mixed oaks. This category is located along stream channels with many of the trees measuring 24" DBH (specimen) or greater.
- c) Transitional/Immature: Dominated by Tulip Poplar with some Black Cherry and Red Maple. The trees usually measure 2-6" DBH.
- d) Sawtimber, Poletimber, and Mature Mixed Hardwoods: Dominated by Tulip Poplar and Red Maple. Trees in this category measure from 6" to greater than 24" DBH.

The stands are as follows:

Stand 1: Category (A) This 0.8-acre stand is sited near a small stream and was probably earlier farmed field allowed to go fallow that has begun to revert to forest. Large number of invasive species including multi-flora rose are found in this stand. This stand has a high retention value.

Stand 2: Category (B) This 0.42-acre stand is located alongside and around the southern stream channel. Non-tidal wetlands are found throughout this stand. This stand has an abundance of groundcover, shrubs, and specimen trees, many of which are wetland species. This stand has a high retention value.

Stand 3: Category (E) This 0.36-acre stand is located on a hillside with some steep slopes. This stand, with the dominant Tulip Poplars and associate mixed hardwoods species (Oaks), maintains a number of specimen trees. This stand has a high retention value.

Stand 4: Category (E) This 0.34-acre stand is very similar to Stand 3, but with less associated Oak species. It is located on a steep sloped hillside that ends at the stream and wetlands found in Stand 2. This stand has a high retention value.

Stand 5: Category (B) This 0.87-acre stand is aligned with the stream channel and associated wetlands. This stand could be prone to flooding. Composed of mostly Tulip Poplars, there are a number of mixed Oak species and specimen trees present. The understory vegetation found is associated with hydric soils and wetlands. This stand has a high retention value.

Stand 6: Category (E) This 1.84-acre stand, with a number of specimen trees, is located on the north side of Stand 5. The environmental setting is the same as Stand 5 with the stream channel and wetlands. Tulip poplars

dominate with associated mixed hardwoods. This stand has a high retention value.

Stand 7: Category (E) This 2.3-acre stand is located on the south side of Stand 5. It has the same structure and setting as Stand 6 with Tulip Poplars and Red Maples co-dominant. Numerous specimen trees exist. This stand has a high retention value.

Stand 8: Category (C) This 0.7-acre stand is found on the far southeastern portion of the property bordering Omega Drive. The composition is almost all Tulip Poplars in the 1-6" DBH range. The stand does contain three (3) specimen trees on the property line. This land was probably an abandoned field or pasture that has begun to revert to forest with a number of invasive groundcover species. The retention value should be further studied due to the proximity of a non-tidal wetland.

A noise impact study was performed by Phoenix Noise and Vibration. This study took into account current conditions only. The study used the 65 dBA day/night average (Ldn) as the acceptable level for residential development. The study found that property within 150-225' of the Sam Eig Highway centerline are impacted by levels at or higher than the 65 dBA Ldn. Property within 80-166' of the Omega Drive/Fields Road centerline are impacted by levels at or higher than the 65 dBA Ldn. As project plans and traffic studies are further developed, an updated noise study should be performed modeling the increased traffic.

HISTORIC RESOURCES:

A portion of the proposed annexation area is historically known as the England/Crown Farm. Several of the farm structures were placed on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation on October 2, 1984, and are listed on that plan as Site #20/17. The *Montgomery County 1990 Approved and Adopted Shady Grove Area Master Plan* identifies an environmental setting consisting of a 47.5-acre parcel. This setting would be further evaluated at the time of development.

The designated buildings include a two-story frame Victorian house and an earlier log structure built circa mid-1880s. The England family had purchased this land from the Hunter family and built the house by 1894. The house has a full width front porch, intricate bracket work and cornice along its main facade. It represents a typical Maryland farmstead and appears on the Hopkins Map of 1894 under the name of Hattie England. Later, the farm was the home of George Garrett, until being purchased by the Crown family in the early 20th century. The log building, which pre-dates the main house contains a boxed staircase leading to a loft and may have been a tenant house during the Hunter family's ownership of the farm. The Site should be further evaluated for historic and architectural significance, including adaptive re-use possibilities.

As noted, an appropriate “environmental setting” should be determined and incorporated into the proposed development of the farm property. The development plan for the proposed annexation should indicate preservation and future use(s) for the house as well as the possible restoration of the log house. The City’s Historic District Commission will be responsible for final determination of setting and use(s) for these historic resources.



MASTER PLAN:

Montgomery County

Montgomery County July 1990 Approved and Adopted Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan recommends that the land use pattern for development of the Crown Farm would incorporate a mix of uses: 2,000 dwelling units and 50,000 square feet of retail/commercial uses. The plan recommends a residential land use pattern that would locate most of the housing at the two proposed transit stops. The western portion of the property would have lower density housing with a housing mix of multi-family (40-50

percent), attached dwellings (40-50 percent), and detached dwellings (10-20 percent), the last to be determined at the time of subdivision and site plan review. The Master Plan suggests that retail uses of 50,000 square feet would be appropriate near the transit stops and developed in conjunction with the residential units.

A park is proposed in the high-density area adjacent to the transit stops to provide recreation for residents and employees from nearby employment. An elementary school site, proposed for west of Decoverly, would also provide recreational facilities for the residents as well as fill a need for this level of educational facility. Adaptive reuse of the historic England/Crown Farm is encouraged.

Development guidelines, in fulfillment of the Master Plan's objectives, must incorporate a mix of uses, an interconnected system of streets, street oriented buildings, diversity of housing types, and a mix of active and passive open space areas.

City of Gaithersburg

While the entire Crown Property is identified in the *2003 City of Gaithersburg Master Plan* as Special Study Area 4, that study has not yet been completed or incorporated into the adopted plan. Further, that Master Plan makes no specific land use or zoning recommendations for the property. The Crown Property, under consideration for annexation, is addressed in the Transportation Element of the 1997 Master Plan. The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) is shown going through the property from the southeast corner of the property.

The *1999 City of Gaithersburg Housing Policy and Smart Growth Policy*, as well as the Themes of *2003 Master Plan Process and Overview*, discuss the importance of maximizing single family housing throughout Gaithersburg. They also stress staging development based on adequate public facilities including existing and future transportation infrastructure and adequate school capacity. They encourage using Traditional Neighborhood Development techniques to enhance community identity along with other programs such as pocket parks, tot lots and Art in Public Places. They encourage environmentally sensitive "best practices methods" to be utilized for stormwater management and that the City participate in reducing different types of pollution including noise, visual and lighting pollution to ensure a high quality of life sustainable for future generations.

ZONING:

Current Montgomery County Zoning

The site is approximately 182.8 acres. The Montgomery County Zoning Map indicates three zoning designations. The western portion of the site, approximately 94.2 acres, is zoned R-60/TDR. The eastern portion of the site, approximately 83.7 acres, is zoned R-200. The portion of Sam Eig Highway right of way that is included in the Annexation is zoned R-200/TDR.

The R-200 Zone generally allows two housing units per acre and is similar to the City's R-A (Low Density Residential) Zone.

The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program was implemented by Montgomery County in 1980 to preserve farmland and farming in the upper portion of Montgomery County identified as the county's Agricultural Reserve.

Recommended Montgomery County Zoning

The County's Master Plan recommends mixed-use residential and commercial/retail uses be developed on the farm property. As noted earlier, approximately 50,000 square feet of commercial/retail use is recommended. However, the County's Master Plan recommends that the R-60/TDR portion of the property be developed in conjunction with development of the balance of the Property (currently zoned R-200) under the Planned Development Zone with a density of 22 to 25 units per acre. The master plan provides that, through this combination, a total of 2,000 dwelling units plus MPDUs may be permitted. At 12.5 percent MPDUs, a total of 2,250 units would be the permitted residential density. Additionally, the PD Zone would permit commercial square footage of approximately 50,000 square feet.

Substantial Change

It should be noted that per Article 23A, Subsection 9(c) of the Maryland Annotated Code:

"no municipality annexing land, may for a period of five years following annexation, place that land in a zoning classification which permits a land use substantially different from the use for the land specified in the current and duly adopted Master Plan or plans . . . without the express approval of the ... County council in which the municipality is located."

The subject petition has been referred to the Montgomery County Planning Board for their review. Because the amount of commercial/retail density proposed as part of the petition is a significant increase to the County's 1990 Master Plan, the annexation would presumably require the consent of the Montgomery County Council.

Proposed City Zoning

The applicants are requesting the designation of the Mixed Use Development (MXD) Zone (Division 19, Section 24-160D.1-13 of the Gaithersburg City Code). This zone is intended to provide a more flexible approach for comprehensively planned, multi-use projects than is allowable in various conventional zoning categories.

A specific purpose of the zone is to ensure that the development will implement the adopted master plan and other relevant planning and development policies and guidelines for the area. Additionally, the MXD zone provides procedures for various plan approvals, including phased development to ensure the adequacy of the provision

of public facilities and the concurrent implementation of community amenities. It is designed to provide a superior natural environment and to encourage an efficient use of land by locating employment and retail uses convenient to residential, thereby reducing dependency on the automobile and encouraging pedestrian circulation systems. Creative correlation of architecture and signage is stressed. And, importantly, the MXD Zone aims to assure compatibility of the proposed land uses with internal and surrounding uses through the highest standards of land planning.

Applications for the MXD zone require the concurrent submission of a sketch plan. The sketch plan includes boundaries, general location of existing and future roadways, general descriptions of future use and intensities related to density, size and height, generalized timing of road improvements, dedications of public lands, a staging or phasing plan, an outline of public facilities, general location of sensitive areas as well as a demonstration of general compliance with any City Master Plan recommendations.

The MXD zone stipulates minimum location, and development requirements (Section 24-160D.2). The development, if it does not specifically comply with an adopted master plan for that area, must satisfy the purposes and objectives of the MXD Zone. The land should include at least ten (10) acres, be located adjacent to readily accessible existing or planned highways, have public water and sewer, and have thematic and coordinated signage among the various uses. An interesting facet to this zone is that lots shall not be required to have direct access to a public street provided that this condition creates affordable housing or otherwise fosters the purposes and objectives of this zone.

The approximate total number and locations of dwelling units are to be established at the time of sketch plan approval. The commercial density, likewise, should not exceed that shown on the sketch plan, and shall not exceed a floor area ratio of 0.75.

The City Council shall approve MXD zoning and the accompanying sketch plan only upon finding that:

1. The application meets or accomplishes the purposes, objectives, and minimum standards and requirements of the zone; and,
2. The application is in accord with recommendations in the applicable master plan for the area and is consistent with any special conditions or requirements contained in said master plan; and,
3. The application and sketch plan will be internally and externally compatible and harmonious with existing and planned land uses in the MXD zoned areas and adjacent areas.

The City Council may also adopt, as part of the sketch plan for the MXD Zone, design guidelines regulating such elements as building setbacks, lot coverage, location and type of accessory structures, and appearance of buildings and their materials.

PUBLIC FACILITIES:

Water and Sewer Service

The water and sewer categories for the site are W-1 and S-6. There are two WSSC water transmission lines (60" and 36") that bisect the property in a generally east-west direction. Existing water and sewer lines surround the site. The sewer for the proposed development will connect to the existing sewer lines within the stream valley to the west. Water connections should be determined in coordination with WSSC as necessary.

Other Utilities

Electric, gas, cable and telephone run adjacent to the site within the public right-of-ways. The developer would have to contract with these services to extend them into the development. These services along Crown Farm Drive and within the development should be installed below ground.

Schools

The *FY 2007 Educational Facilities Master Plan and FY 2007-2012 Capital Improvements Program* for Montgomery County Public Schools (published June 2004) outlines the following:

- The Crown Farm property is currently in the Gaithersburg cluster with students attending Rosemont Elementary, Gaithersburg Middle School and Gaithersburg High School.
- While the Gaithersburg cluster is found to have capacity under the Montgomery County Annual Growth Schools Test, staff is concerned that Gaithersburg High School is projected to be deficient by between 12 to 59 classroom seats between the 2008-2011 school years. A 16-room classroom addition to the Gaithersburg High School is scheduled to open in August 2006 and the proposed modernization of Gaithersburg High School is scheduled to be completed in September 2012. Gaithersburg Middle School and Rosemont Elementary School have a fair amount of capacity open with up to 292 spaces available at Gaithersburg Middle School and up to 147 available at Rosemont Elementary School between the 2008-2011 school years.

TRANSPORTATION:

Transit

A key issue is the alignment for the **Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT)**. The currently approved alignment runs diagonally through the property and has two transit stops. During the charrette process and subsequent discussions, there seems to have been general consensus that an alignment change would be appropriate to better serve the proposed community as well as the existing Washingtonian Center. Staff has held a series of meetings with the CCT project team, and conceptually they appear supportive of an alignment shift.

In addition to modifying the alignment, staff is recommending that the location of the transit station be modified to serve the Washingtonian Center as well as the proposed development on the Crown Farm.

Given that the CCT is not funded at this point and to mitigate site generated trips, staff is recommending that the applicant be required to fund and operate a shuttle bus service, similar to the one in operation at the King Farm community, for a period of 12 years.

Roads

Staff is recommending that the City analyze transportation capacity issues utilizing Montgomery County's Local Area Process (LAP); however, additional City approved pipeline development approvals including the Washingtonian North and Washingtonian South Office need to be considered. As stated below, a significant number of intersection improvements will be necessary to accommodate traffic generated by the proposed development. Staff recommends that all improvements be specifically identified in and included in the annexation agreement.

The Traffic Group, Inc. has submitted a traffic analysis that evaluated 26 intersections. Staff has requested additional traffic data. Staff is continuing to review the traffic analysis in consultation with Montgomery County Park and Planning staff.

Based on staff review, it appears that intersection improvements will be required for the following locations:

- Sam Eig Highway and Diamondback Drive
- Sam Eig Highway and MD 119
- Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road
- Fields Road and Washingtonian Boulevard
- Fields Road and Rio Boulevard