



MCPB
1/20/05
Item #5

MEMORANDUM

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE: January 13, 2005
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: Rose G. Krasnow, Chief *RJK*
Michael Ma, Supervisor
Development Review Division
FROM: Mary Beth O'Quinn, Site Plan Review #1
(301) 495-1322

REVIEW TYPE: Site Plan Review concurrent with Preliminary
Plan Review
APPLYING FOR: Approval of 48 residential units on 6.32 acres,
that includes 42 townhouses and 6 MPDU (duplex) condominium units
PROJECT NAME: **Baum Property**
CASE #: 8-05012
REVIEW BASIS: Sec. 59-D-3, Zoning Ordinance: Site Plan required in the RT-8 Zone

ZONE: RT-8
LOCATION: The Intersection of Valley Park Drive and Coltrane Drive
MASTER PLAN: Damascus
APPLICANT: Elm Street Development
FILING DATE: October 10, 2004
HEARING DATE: January 20, 2005



STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of 48 residential units on 6.32 acres, of which 42 are townhouses and 6 are MPDU condominiums, subject to the following conditions:

1. Preliminary Plan Conformance
The proposed development shall comply with the conditions of approval for Preliminary Plan 1-04098, concurrently under review by the Planning Board.
2. Site Design
Prior to signature set approval of site and landscape/lighting plans the following revisions shall be included and/or information provided, subject to staff review and approval:
 - a. Provide a masonry fence (or wood fence with visible masonry foundation wall minimum two feet in height) to screen the rear yards of Lots 1, 2, and 3, and Parcel A; use materials to match keystone retaining walls proposed for site frontage;
 - b. Coordinate utility feed locations with WSSC easement alignment: show utility feed locations on signature set;
 - c. Provide trash facility for MPDU condominium units with compatible screening; include details (plan and elevation); locate facility on site plan;
 - d. Provide two additional benches for Open Play Area; locate benches to coordinate with perimeter planting;
 - e. Relocate pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Street A and Coltrane drive, per Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services recommendation, shifting handicapped ramps westward and providing striped crosswalk;

- f. Relocate shade street trees along Street A adjacent to the HOA parcel, the Tot Lot, and Lot 4 as follows: install trees in 6-foot grass panel adjoining curb; locate 5-foot sidewalk behind grass panel; realign handicapped ramps at the drive aisle serving Lot 4 – Lot 15.
- g. Provide deck detail for Units 1-10 and MPDU Condominiums; deck fences should be provided with sight-tight materials.

3. Landscaping

- a. Provide hedge screening at a minimum height of 36 inches to screen parking and private drive aisle at south end of parcel; provide additional plantings at the top of retaining wall, including ground cover;
- b. Provide additional landscaping for Open Play Area, including hedge (or knee wall) at perimeter, 5 ornamental trees, 3 additional shade trees.

4. Lighting

- a. Provide a lighting distribution and photometric plan with summary report and tabulations to conform to IESNA standards for residential/commercial development.
- b. All light fixtures shall be full cut-off fixtures.
- c. Deflectors shall be installed on all fixtures causing potential glare or excess illumination, specifically on the perimeter fixtures abutting the adjacent residential properties.
- d. Illumination levels shall not exceed 0.5 footcandles (fc) at any property line abutting county roads or adjacent residential properties.
- e. The height of the light poles shall not exceed 14 feet including the mounting base.

5. Pedestrian Circulation

- a. Provide a path of wood-chip or natural materials across the rear of Lots 1, 2, and 3, and Parcel A.

6. Recreation Facilities

- a. Provide a plan and elevation of the Tot Lot play equipment at 1:10 scale;
- b. Verify minimum Tot Lot area of 1,000 square feet and suitable surface grading;
- c. Verify that the equipment supports five activities;
- d. Label required setback from street.

7. M-NCPPC Park Facility

The applicant shall comply with the following conditions of approval from M-NCPPC-Park Planning and Research Analysis in the memorandum dated July 7, 2004:

The applicant shall dedicate to M-NCPPC the land area south of Valley Park Drive along the eastern parcel boundary, adjacent to MNCPPC Damascus Valley Park. Dedication of parkland shall not include any stormwater management ponds or facilities. Land to be conveyed by time of record plat for the project areas that include the dedicated parkland and adjacent roads and lots. Dedicated property shall be conveyed free of trash and unnatural debris and the boundaries to be adequately staked and signed to delineate between private properties and parkland.

8. Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs)

- a. The proposed development shall provide 6 MPDUs on-site; the applicant is receiving no density bonus for providing MPDUs on site.

9. Transportation

The applicant shall comply with the following conditions of approval from M-NCPPC- Transportation Planning in the memorandum dated January 13, 2005:

- a. The applicant shall construct an eight foot, shared use asphalt path, along the north side of Valley Park Drive, from the southern property line to Ridge Road (MD 27), as part of an agreement with Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation

9. Transportation

The applicant shall comply with the following conditions of approval from M-NCPPC- Transportation Planning in the memorandum dated January 13, 2005:

- a. The applicant shall construct an eight foot, shared use asphalt path, along the north side of Valley Park Drive, from the southern property line to Ridge Road (MD 27), as part of an agreement with Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) to construct the eight foot bike path through the limits of the Baum Property frontage as part of C.I.P. # 509944;
- b. The applicant shall dedicate all road rights-of-way and construct all roads shown on the approved site plan to the full width mandated by the Damascus Master Plan and to the design standards imposed by all applicable road codes. Only those roads (or portions thereof) expressly designated on the site plan, "To Be Constructed By Montgomery County C.I.P. Project No. 509944" are excluded from this condition.

10. Forest Conservation and Environmental Planning

The applicant shall comply with the following conditions of approval from M-NCPPC-Environmental Planning in the memorandum dated January 13, 2005:

The proposed development shall comply with the conditions of the final forest conservation plan. The applicant shall satisfy all conditions prior to recording of plat(s) or Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) issuance of sediment and erosion control permits.

11. Noise Attenuation

The applicant shall comply with the following conditions of approval from M-NCPPC-Environmental Planning to attenuate noise from Valley Park Drive:

- a. Certification from an engineering firm that specializes in acoustical analysis, that the building shell for residential dwelling units to be constructed within the unmitigated 65 dBA Ldn noise contour, is designed to attenuate projected exterior noise levels to an interior level not to exceed 45 dBA Ldn. The certification from the acoustical engineer shall be reviewed and approved by M-NCPPC Environmental Planning staff prior to issuance of building permits. Any changes that may affect acoustical performance shall be approved by the acoustical engineer in advance of installation and M-NCPPC Environmental Planning staff prior to their implementation.
- b. Applicant shall conduct an outdoor-to-indoor noise analysis of constructed units to ensure the 45 dBA Ldn interior noise level is achieved within the unmitigated 65 dBA Ldn contour after construction and shall present verification of noise levels to M-NCPPC Environmental Planning staff prior to occupancy of the residential units.
- c. For all residential dwelling units to be constructed within the 65 dBA Ldn unmitigated noise contour, the applicant/developer/builder shall disclose in writing to all prospective purchasers that those homes are impacted by existing and future highway noise. Such notification will be accomplished by inclusion of this information in all sales contracts, brochures and promotional documents, including the Illustrative Site Plan(s) on display within any sales related office(s), as well as in Homeowner Association Documents, and by inclusion on all subdivision and site plans, and with all Deeds of Conveyance. Notification shall be provided to M-NCPPC staff prior to issuance of any building permit.

12. Stormwater Management

Comply with conditions of MCDPS stormwater management concept approval dated September 29, 2004. Final design of the stormwater management pond shall be submitted to Environmental Planning and Parks Planning staff for review and comment prior to MCDPS approval.

13. Occupancy Provisions

Occupancy of MPDU units shall be limited to households that satisfy the income restrictions set forth in Article 25A of the Montgomery County Code for Moderately Priced Dwelling Units and any regulations duly adopted thereunder, as such Article or regulations may be amended from time to time.

15. Development Program

Applicant shall construct the proposed development in accordance with the Development Program. A Development Program shall be reviewed and approved by M-NCPPC staff prior to approval of signature set of site plan. Development Program shall include a phasing schedule as follows:

- a. Street tree planting shall progress as street construction is completed, but no later than six months after completion of the units adjacent to those streets.
- b. Community-wide pedestrian pathways and recreation facilities including Tot Lot, internal sidewalks, natural paths, sitting areas, Open Play Area, and the 8-foot bike path on the west side of Valley Park Drive along Magruder's Overlook road frontage, shall be completed prior to issuance of the 30th building permit;
- c. Landscaping associated with each parking lot and building shall be completed as construction of each facility is completed;
- d. Clearing and grading shall correspond to the construction phasing, to minimize soil erosion;
- e. Coordination of roads with each section of the development;
- f. Phasing of dedications, stormwater management, sediment/erosion control, recreation, forestation, community paths, trip mitigation or other features.

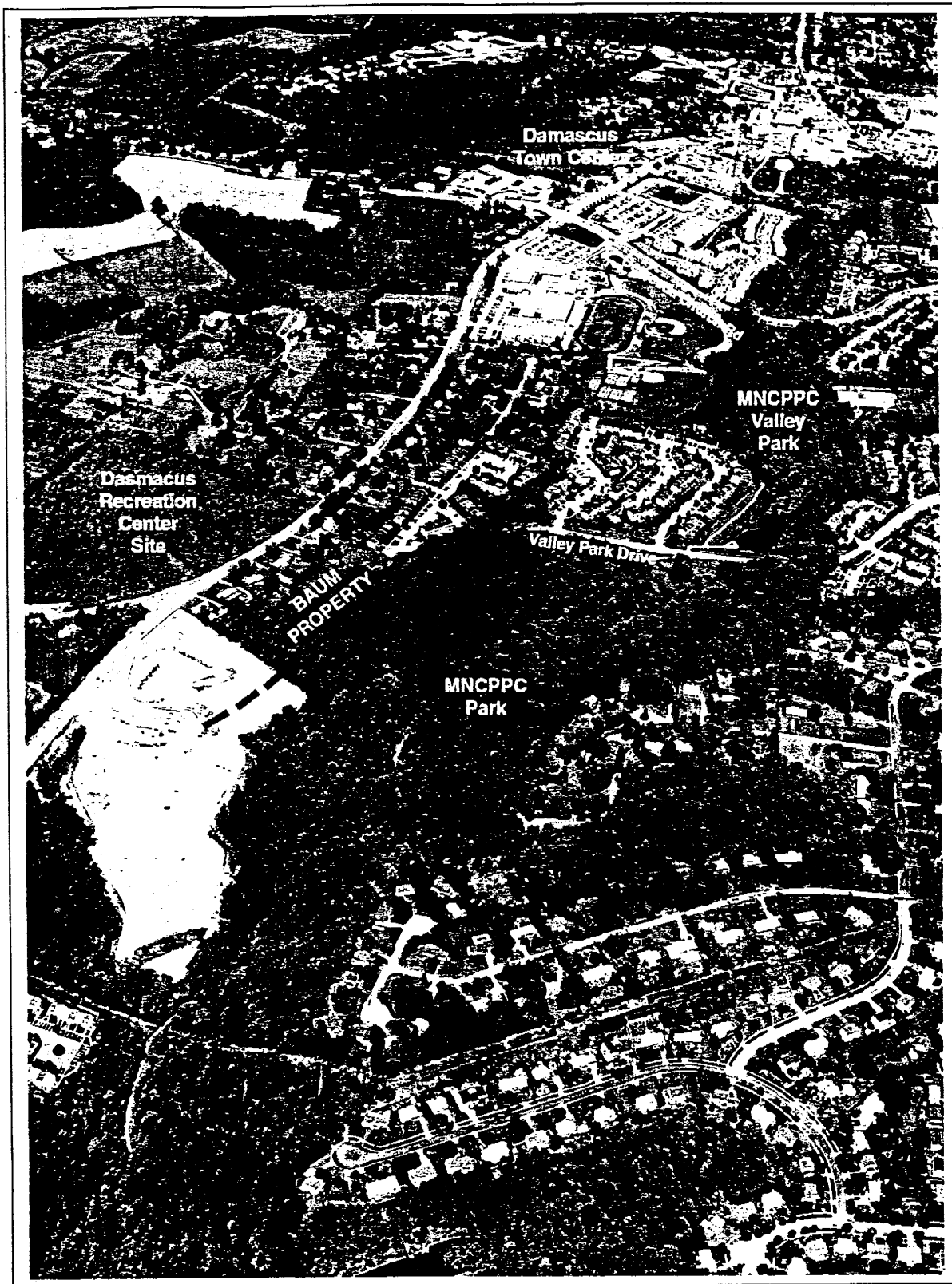
16. Clearing and Grading

No clearing or grading prior to M-NCPPC approval of signature set of plans.

17. Signature Set

Prior to signature set approval of site and landscape/lighting plans the following revisions shall be included and/or information provided, subject to staff review and approval:

- a. Development program, inspection schedule, and Site Plan Opinion;
- b. Undisturbed stream buffers at least 100 feet wide;
- c. Limits of disturbance;
- d. Methods and locations of tree protection;
- e. Forest Conservation easement areas;
- f. MPDU and recreation facility calculations;
- g. Note stating the M-NCPPC staff must inspect tree-save areas and protection devices prior to clearing and grading;
- h. Centralized, screened trash areas for all multi-family units;
- i. Location of outfalls away from tree preservation areas;
- j. Incorporate streetscape and bike path design for Valley Park Drive frontage (Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation CIP) into signature set drawings; show location of bike path, street trees, street lighting, retaining walls.



Oblique aerial photograph (2003) showing the Baum Property and the Damascus Town Center. The dashed red line depicts the proposed completion of Valley Park Drive, forming the eastern boundary of Baum Property residential development. Ridge Road (MD 27) is located between the Baum Property and the future Damascus Recreation Center (left side of image). The Damascus Town Center is shown at top.

ISSUES OF SITE PLAN REVIEW

In the course of site plan review, staff and applicant reviewed building locations, open space, recreation, pedestrian access, and public amenities. Applicant and staff also addressed compatibility issues: building and retaining wall design with respect to massing, scale, and facing materials, with particular attention to the views from public streets and nearby M-NCPPC park land. The provision of the bike path along Valley Park Drive comprised the most significant issue of site plan review, as discussed below:

I. Valley Park Drive Capital Improvements and the Off-Road Bicycle Path

DPWT Capitol Improvements Program

The planned extension of Valley Park Drive, currently a "paper street," is funded for construction under Montgomery County Capital Improvements Program #509944. The project is intended to provide a through-traffic connection between Ridge Road (MD 27) and Woodfield Road (MD 124), consisting of 1,100 feet of new construction and 450 feet of road reconstruction. Design plans proposed the roadway as a reduced-width, closed section arterial road: 26-foot pavement width curb-to-curb, curb and gutter, and a five-foot sidewalk on the north side of the roadway which forms the Baum Property frontage. A connection from Coltrane Drive to the new section of Valley Park Drive (using a portion of the Baum Property) is proposed to serve the existing Damascus Manor neighborhood.

Planning Board Consideration of the Capitol Improvements Program

On September 9, 2004, the Planning Board reviewed Valley Park Drive Project by means of the proposed CIP Forest Conservation Plan and Mandatory Referral 04810-DPWT-1. Previously, the Planning Board had considered the Valley Park Drive roadway design on June 18, 1998 at its public hearing addressing roadway design. [See Attachment, *Letter from Bruce E. Johnston, Chief, DPWT to Derick Berlage, Planning Board Chairman*, dated August 4, 2004] The plan was approved including a 5-foot sidewalk adjoining the curb despite the Planning Board's request for a wider, off-set sidewalk to increase pedestrian safety. The plan did not include a bike path.

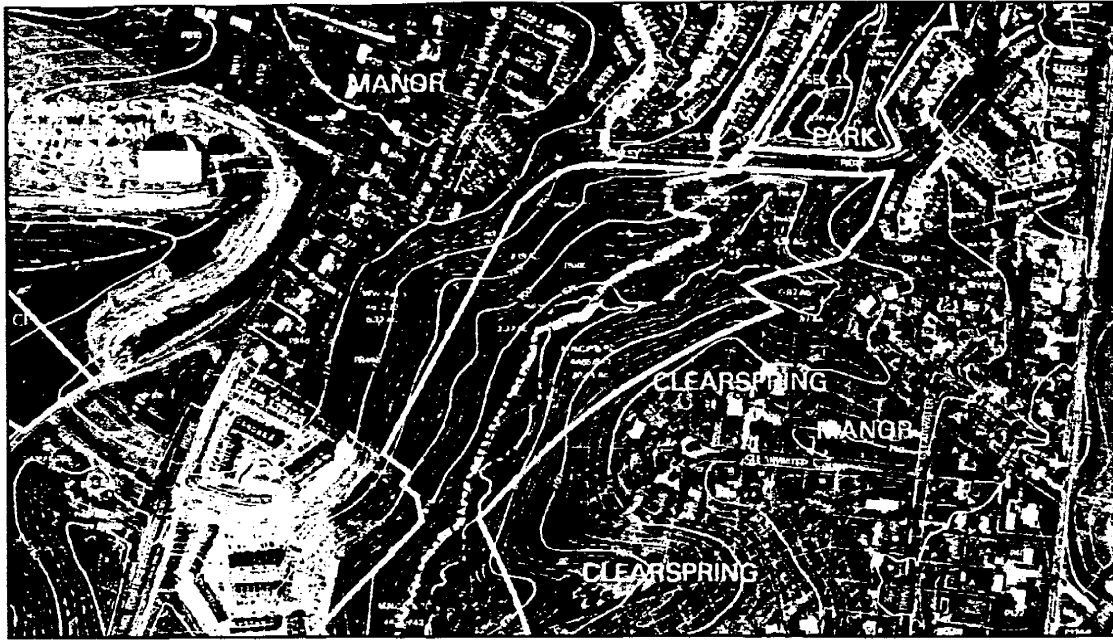
At its most recent hearing on September 9, 2004, the Planning Board reviewed both the Forest Conservation Plan and the Mandatory Referral favorably, recommending approval. Specific comments for the Mandatory Referral, pertaining to the Baum Property in concert with the pending Damascus Master Plan Amendment, included a recommendation to increase pedestrian safety through wider sidewalks and to provide a Class I, off-road bike path (8-10 feet in width) along one side of Valley Park Drive. [See Attachment, *Letter from Derick Berlage, Planning Board Chairman to Michael C. Hoyt, Deputy Director, DPWT*, dated September 9, 2004.]

Damascus Master Plan, Staff Draft, September 2004

The pending comprehensive amendment to the Damascus Master Plan was presented in draft form to the Planning Board on September 30, 2004; a subsequent public hearing was held on November 4, 2004. The plan emphasizes the need for east-west connectivity and identifies the importance of providing a bike path along Valley Park Drive to provide access between Little Bennett Regional Park and Seneca Greenway. As noted in the attached Memorandum, dated September 2, 2004, addressing the above referenced Mandatory Referral, staff recommended inclusion of the Class I, off-road bike path while acknowledging the practical difficulties in executing roadway design changes at this late point in the Valley Park Drive project:

Staff believes that the inclusion of a bike path along Valley Park Drive at this late stage . . . might require some substantial redesign because of the steep slopes involved and delay the project's schedule. However, widening the proposed five-foot sidewalk to an eight-to-ten-foot bike path should be considered as part of this project, especially since the steep slopes would make the possibility of a follow-up project to widen the sidewalks later very unlikely. Whether or not the sidewalk is widened to bikeway width, staff believes that the proposed sidewalks use as a connection to the park trails increases the need to provide a greater separation between sidewalk users and vehicular traffic.

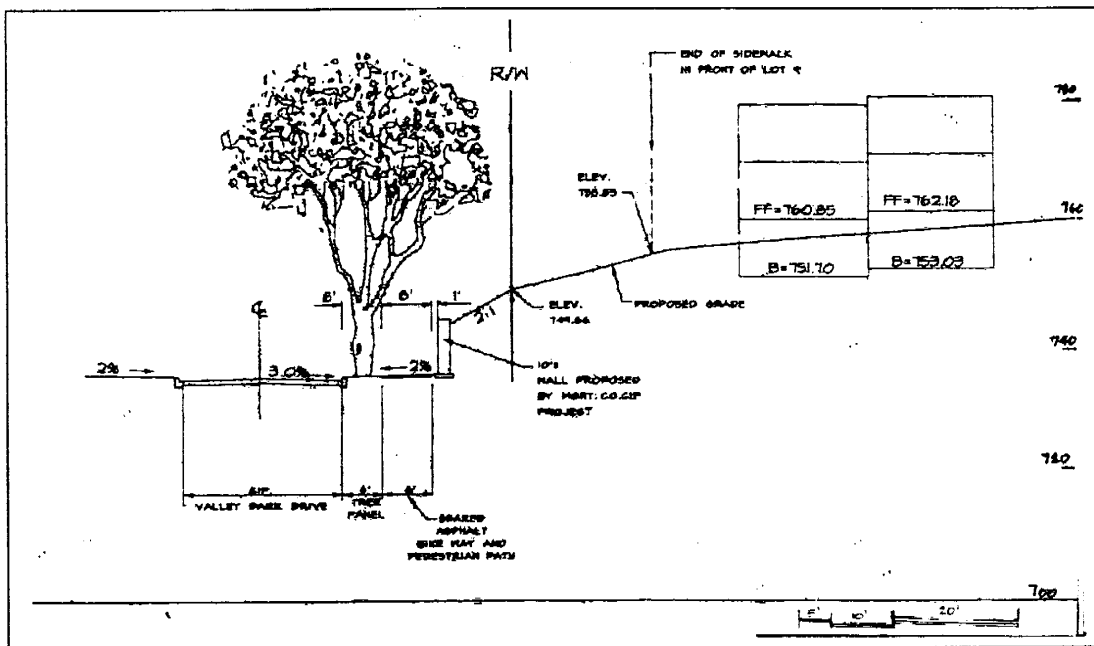
BAUM PROPERTY AND MAGRUDER BRANCH TRAIL



Aerial view of the Baum Property and Valley Park Drive. The white dotted line bisecting the photograph shows the Magruder Branch Trail. The trail runs roughly parallel to the streambed.

Preliminary and Site Plan Review for the Baum Property

Staff considered the provision of the Class I bike path and improvements to enhance pedestrian safety of primary importance to the concurrent Preliminary and Site Plan Reviews. Collaboration between the applicant, and the staffs of Parks, Transportation Planning, Subdivision, DPS, and DPWT produced specific solutions for the provision of the off-road bike path along the Baum Property frontage and for the adjacent Elm Street Development subdivision. Per the schematic, revised design, the road section will feature a 6-foot grass planting strip adjoining the curb to accommodate full-size shade trees, and an 8-foot asphalt hiker-biker trail, with variable dimension for the area supporting the continuous retaining wall that is closest to the property line. [See graphic below.]



Applicant Position:

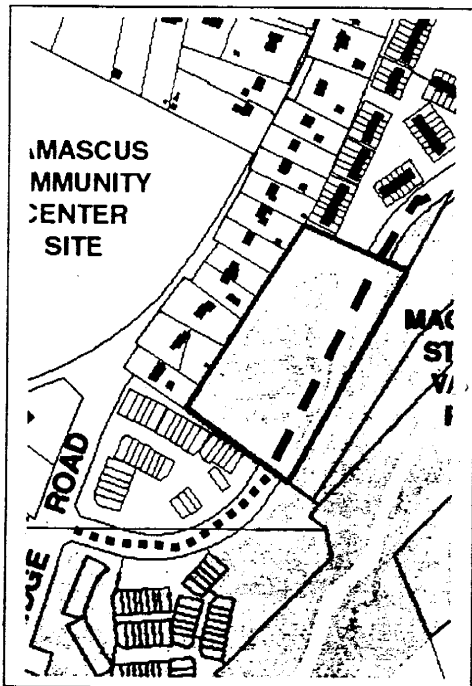
The applicant agrees with the recommendations of MNCPPC staff, DPS, and DPWT for the provision of the off-road bike path. As described by DPWT planners, the applicant has agreed to provide the bike path or widened sidewalk along the Valley Park Drive frontage for the subdivision adjoining the Baum Property to the south. The applicant has further agreed to provide the street trees at the typical spacing of 40-50 feet on center within the curbside planting strip in the event DPWT is unable to do so at the completion of the road construction.

DPWT and DPS Position:

At MNCPPC staff request, planners from DPS and DPWT, including the CIP project design manager, reconsidered the long-standing approved design for Valley Park Drive. After extensive coordination, that included evaluation of steep slopes, street profile, feasible bike path dimensions, and street tree placement, DPWT confirmed on January 5, 2005, that the 8-foot bike path across the Baum Property frontage would be designed and constructed as part of the CIP project, and verified that the project would include street trees planted within the 6-foot curbside planting strip. DPWT and the applicant reached an agreement that the applicant would provide design, construction, and installation of the bike path and street trees for Magruder's Overlook, the adjacent property to the south, a subdivision developed by Elm Street Development. The arrangement will be handled through Permitting Services and DPWT.

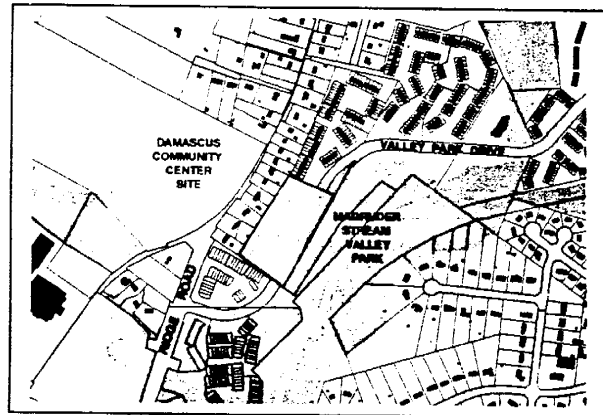
Staff Position:

Valley Park Drive is the sole connection between park trail systems located to the east (Seneca Greenway) and to the west (Little Bennett Regional Park). During the on-going Damascus Master Plan process, residents have emphasized the community's need for safe east-west connections between these two park/trail systems.



The dotted line indicates bike path section provided by the applicant; the dashed line shows DPWT portion

Provision of the Valley Park Drive Class I bike path fulfills a significant goal of the pending Damascus Master Plan Amendment. The applicant will provide the bike path along the Magruder Overlook subdivision frontage. Clearly, the intensive effort put forth by DPS and DPWT propelled this development application, at the eleventh hour, to achieve a major goal of the master plan process and provides a convincing example of successful and timely inter-agency coordination.

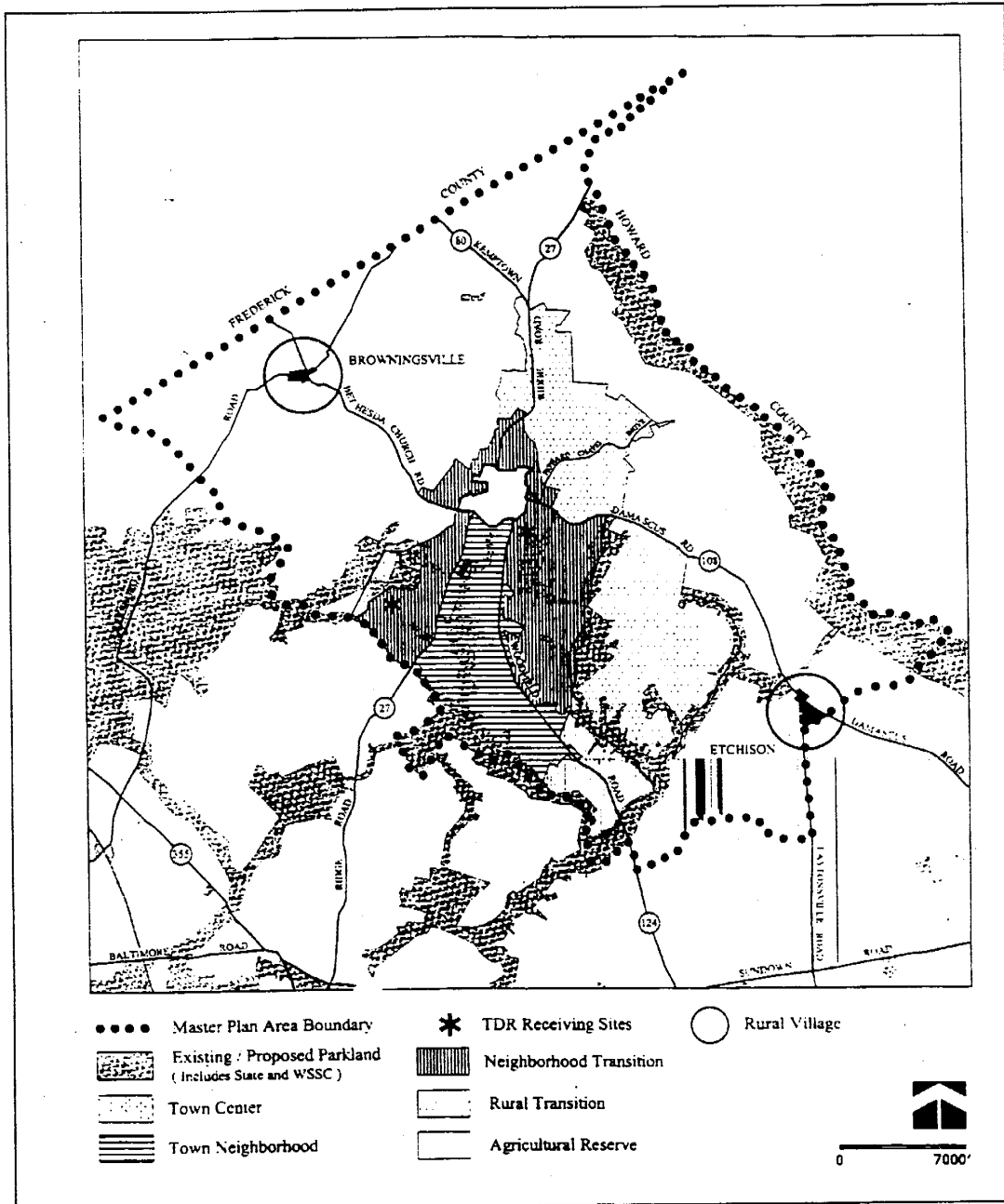


Planimetric map showing Valley Park Drive connection through the Baum Property

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Surrounding Vicinity

The site is located about one mile south of the Damascus Town Center, formally identified as the intersection of Ridge Road and Main Street (MD 108); the Town Center functions as the commercial center for northern Montgomery and Western Howard County. The Town Neighborhood Area, located within the Magruder Branch Valley between Ridge Road and Woodfield Road, is recognized as the largest area of residential growth in Damascus in recent years. The neighborhood, essentially linear in form, is organized along a north-south axis that parallels the interior streambed and the two flanking arterial roads that delineate the development at 5-subdivision widths.

Ridge Road (Route 27), an arterial road, accommodates significant north-south travel from Howard, Carroll, and Frederick Counties to employment centers along the I-270 Corridor. Ridge Road offers limited Ride-On Bus Service.



Development Area Map from the Damascus Draft Master Plan, September 2004. The Town Center is shown in yellow at the intersection of Ridge Road and Main Street. The Baum Property is shown in red, within the Town Neighborhood Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Site Description

The Baum Property, a parcel of approximately 6.30 acres is located approximately one mile south of the Damascus Town Center within the Magruder Branch watershed. The rectangular parcel, about 760 feet by 360 feet, is oriented along the north-south axis established by the nearby arterial roads that parallel the Magruder Branch streambed. The lot is one of the few remaining developable land parcels within the Town Neighborhood Area, which may be identified by its boundaries of Ridge Road (MD 27) to the east and Woodfield Road (MD 124) to the west. The Magruder Overlook townhouse subdivision lies to the south, while the Manor Park subdivision of detached one-family homes is adjacent to the north.

The site itself features natural grades typical of a stream valley with a consistent slope dropping from west to east at approximately 18% grade. A small area within the northwest corner of the site features 25% slopes. The parcel is positioned as the "second layer" of subdivision development in relation to Ridge Road. This interior parcel directly adjoins the west side of the MNCPPC Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park that forms the central "spine" of the Town Neighborhood Area. Approximately 0.14 acres lies within the stream valley buffer at the northeast corner of the site.

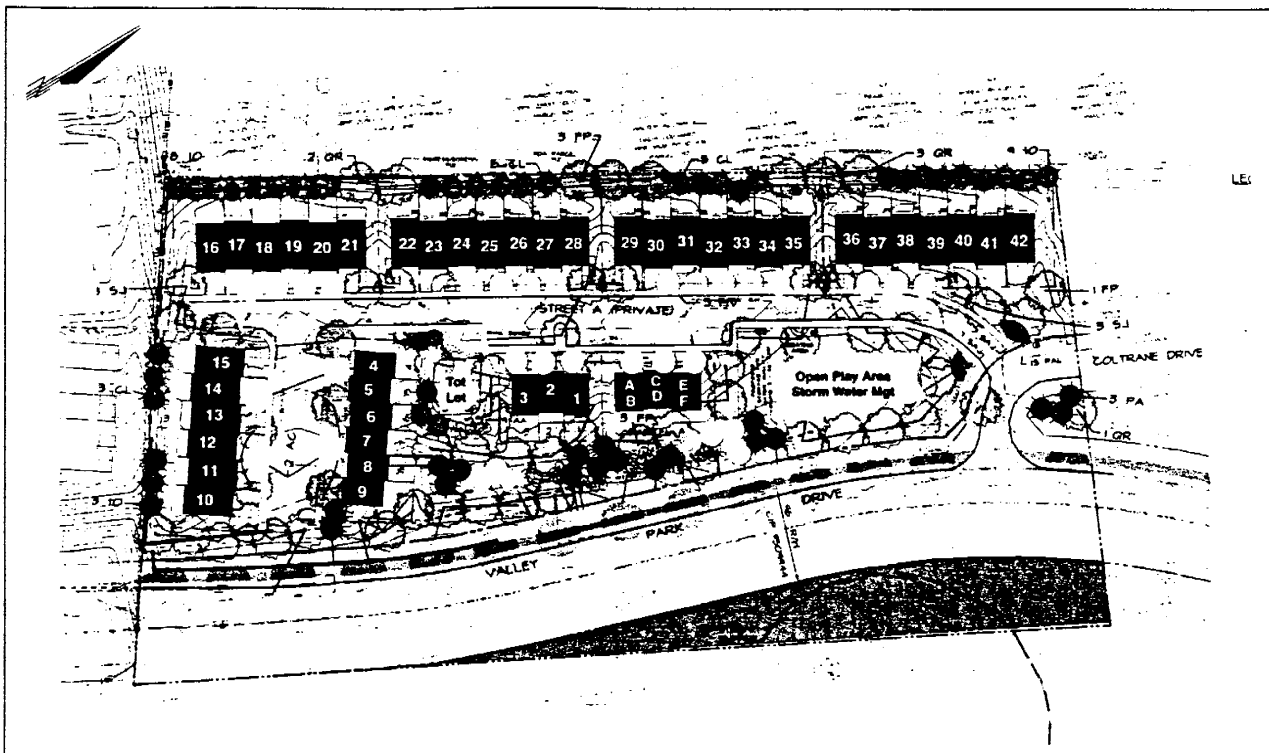


The Baum Property as viewed in orthographic photo. Note the Damascus Community Center (Rec Center) on the east side of Ridge Road under construction (upper left). The asterisks denote the connection points for Valley Park Drive. The off-road bike path proposed for Valley Park Drive will provide a useful east-west trail connection and enhance access to the Community Center.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal

The proposed site plan is organized essentially along a linear axis that bisects the property lengthwise, articulated by the private Street A that terminates in the short L-extension at the southern end of the site. Twenty-seven units are arranged in four segments of townhouses that define a straight line along the internal street, oriented rear-to-rear in relation to the detached housing on Ridge road; the houses face two opposing short sticks of houses and the residual open space that slopes toward the future Valley Park Drive with views of the Magruder Stream Valley. The short L-base is formed by a double-loaded drive aisle flanked by head-in parking on the north. The "open space" or void of the "L" is enhanced by a Tot Lot at the south end and an Open Play Area at the north, hugging the two small housing clusters that comprise three standard townhomes and the six "piggy-back" MPDUs. The Open Play Area serves a dual function by accommodating underground the site's Stormwater Mangement facility.

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is provided at the north end of the site by the extension of Valley Park Drive that upon its construction will offer a highly desired through-traffic connection between Ridge Road and Woodfield Road. The proposal also features an 8-foot Class I bike trail along the Valley Park Drive frontage.



The Site Plan proposed for the Baum Property. Note the Class One Bike Path (orange), internal sidewalks (yellow), and recreation (turquoise). The dark green area at bottom represents a forestation area that will be dedicated to MNCPPC. The stream buffer is shown by the red dashed line at bottom. The reduced-width arterial road calls for the use of retaining walls (shown along the bike path), designed to preserve environmental features of the area. Units shown as A through F represent the duplex MPDUs.

ANALYSIS: Conformance to Zoning Regulation

PROJECT DATA TABLE			
The Baum Property	Site Plan 8-05012	RT-8	RT-8
Development Standard	Total Areas	Permitted/Reqd	Proposed
Gross Site Area			
Total Gross Tract Area	6.32 acres		
Area of Public Dedication	Valley Park Drive		2.27 acres
Total Net Tract			4.05 acres
Proposed Use	Townhouses/Duplex		
<u>Development Standards RT-8</u>			
Tract Area (minimum)		20,000 sf minimum	275,299 sf
Density (standard method)		8 du/acre (50 units)	7.6 du/acre (48 units)
Density (MPDU optional method)		9.76 units/acre (61 units)	Not used
<u>Building Setbacks</u>			
From 1-family detached dwelling zone		30 feet minimum	30 feet
From public street		25 feet minimum	25 feet
From adjoining lot - side	Equal to Front Setback	10 feet minimum	10 feet
From adjoining lot - rear		20 feet minimum	20 feet
<u>Building Height</u>			
		35 feet maximum	35 feet maximum
<u>Building Coverage</u>			
Footprint Coverage	Standard method	35% maximum	30%
Green Area	Standard method	50% minimum	65%
<u>Parking</u>			
Standard	2 spaces/unit	96 spaces	101 spaces

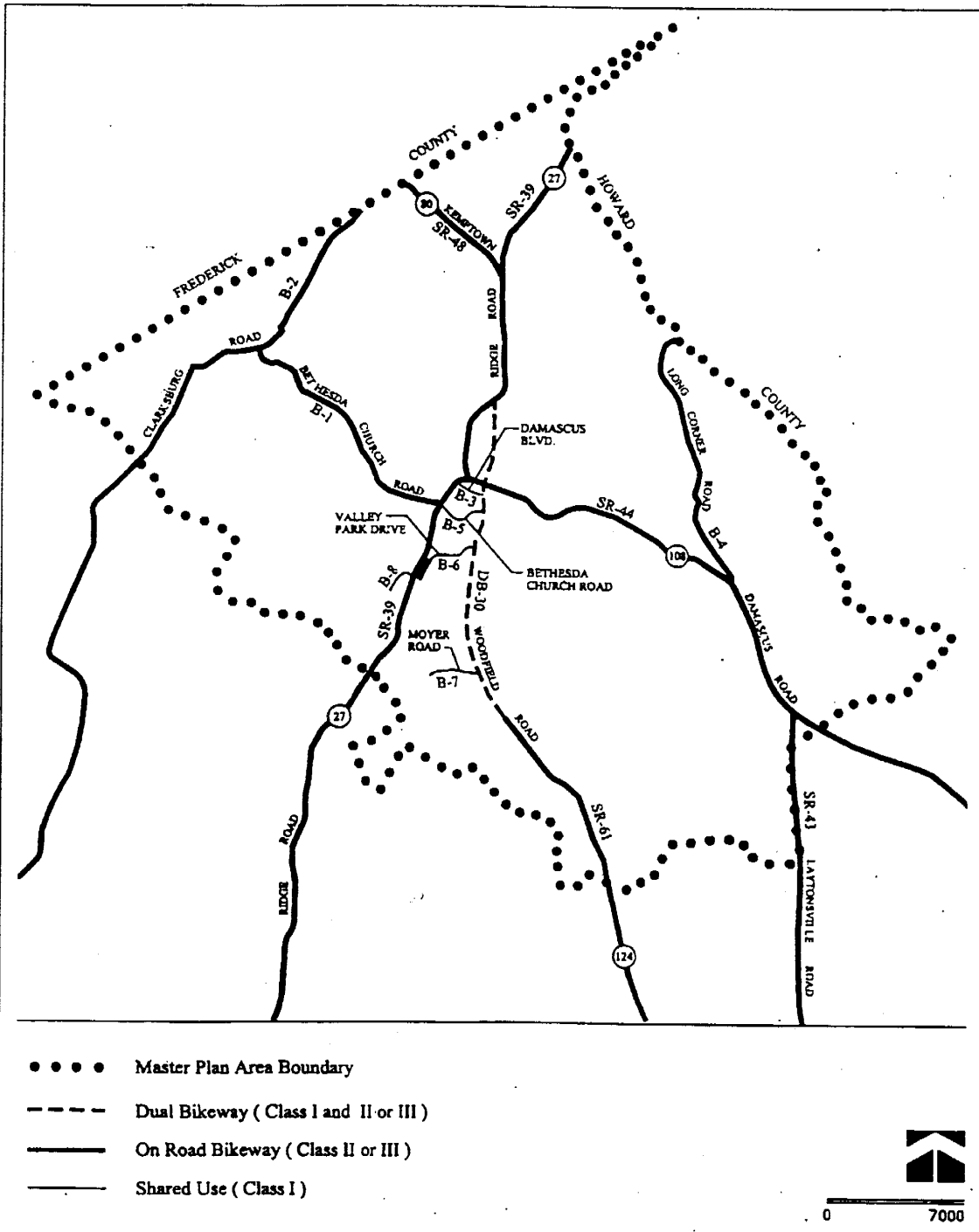
ANALYSIS: Recreation

DEMAND POINTS <i>per 100 units</i>	Tots D1	Children D2	Teens D3	Adults D4	Seniors D5	TOTALS
Townhouses	17.00	22.00	18.00	129.00	7.00	193.00
MPDU Multi-family	11.00	14.00	12.00	118.00	16.00	171.00
TH # units = 96 0.42	7.14	9.24	7.56	54.18	2.94	81.06
MF # units 0.06	0.66	0.84	0.72	7.08	0.96	10.26
PROJECT DEMAND	7.8	10.08	8.28	61.26	3.9	91.32
SUPPLY POINTS						
On Site						
Picnic/Sitting (1)	1.00	1.00	15.00	5.00	2.00	1.00
Open Play Area II	3.00	4.00	4.00	10.00	1.00	22.00
Tot Lot	9.00	2.00	0.00	4.00	1.00	16.00
Natural Areas	0.00	0.50	0.07	6.13	3.06	9.77
Pedestrian System	0.78	2.02	1.66	27.57	1.76	33.77
Bike System *	0.39	1.01	1.24	9.19	0.39	12.22
On Site Total	13.78	9.52	20.73	52.69	8.82	105.54
Off Site						
Nature Trails	0.39	1.01	1.24	9.19	0.59	12.41
Off Site Total	0.39	1.01	1.24	9.19	0.59	12.41
SUPPLY/DEMAND RATIOS						
On Site Ratio	1.77	0.94	2.50	0.86	2.26	
Off Site Ratio **	0.05	0.10	0.15	0.15	0.15	
* Applicant will provide bike path on adjoining property per agreement with DPWT						
** Substantial off site recreation facilities will be accessible at the Damascus Community Center within one mile of the Baum Property site.						

ANALYSIS:

Conformance to Master Plan

The Baum Property is located in the Suburban Residential or Magruder Branch Valley Area of the 1982 Damascus Master Plan on Valley Park Drive. Currently, the 1982 Master Plan is being amended and this area is referred to in the Public Hearing Draft as the Town Neighborhood area, where the residential character is mostly developed and consists of low to medium density single-family homes. The land use recommendations for the Town Neighborhood area does not recommend any changes to the land use policy in this area. The current amendment to the Damascus Master Plan recommends a Shared Use Class I path on Valley Park Drive.



The Bikeway Plan included in the Draft Damascus Master Plan Amendment, September 2004. Note the Valley Park Drive bikeway connection (B-4) between Ridge Road and Woodfield Road.

Local Area Transportation Review

The applicant submitted a traffic statement indicating that the proposed development will generate 24 trips in the morning and 42 trips in the afternoon weekday peak hour. Since the projected peak hour trips are fewer than fifty (50), a Local Area Transportation Review is not required.

Forest Conservation

The Baum Property employs the standard method of development. The subject property, with a gross tract area of 6.32 acres, includes 4.63 acres of forest. There are no streams or wetlands on the property although the stream buffer of an offsite stream carries onto the property. The stream buffer is located along the eastern portion of the property.

Since the plan does not propose the use of any optional method development standards such as increased building coverage or reduced open space, off site forestation is permitted. The applicant proposes to meet the planting requirements through a combination of onsite landscape credit and offsite planting. A portion of the site (0.14 acres) will be dedicated to MNCPPC Parks.

Housing Impact Statement

The number of MPDUs proposed meets the required minimum of 12.5 percent, that is: $[48 \text{ units} \times .125 = 6 \text{ units}]$. This means that of the 48 total units 42 will be market rate and 6 units will be MPDUs, for a net gain of 6 affordable housing units. Because the developer is proposing to construct only the minimum percentage of MPDUs, the developer will not be entitled to any density bonus. Upon review of the proposed plan, the Department's housing staff recommends that the MPDUs be mixed with market units, rather than be built in separate sticks, because the integration of MPDUs among the market units is successful from both sales and social perspectives.

FINDINGS: For Site Plan Review

1. *The Site Plan is consistent with an approved development plan or a project plan for the optional method of development if required.*

Not applicable.

2. *The Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the zone in which it is located.*

See data table above.

3. *The location of the building and structures, the open spaces, the landscaping, recreation facilities, and the pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems are adequate, safe and efficient.*

a. Location of Buildings

The overall site development of the Baum Property is determined to a large extent by prevailing land patterns of the Damascus Town Neighborhood, that is, the established boundaries of the Magruder Stream Valley Park, the locations of Ridge Road and Woodfield Road, and the programmed, infill infrastructure for Valley Park Drive. These linear forms establish a corridor—the primary north-south axis of this neighborhood’s orientation. The ensuing strata of development inward from the arterial roads increases in density toward the stream valley that forms the “green” spine of this residential environment.

The resulting land patterns suggest the resulting site layout for the Baum Property – in accordance with the existing houses sited in linear fashion along the arterials roads. The building locations, proposed to achieve maximum feasible density, define the internal street for this parcel by the placement and spacing of the four groups of attached homes. The four groups are broken by the regular 20-foot openings that accommodate drainage. The short leg of the L-form features facing rows of six townhouses, with a side-end exposure to Valley Park Drive, elevated approximately 30 feet above the roadway surface.

In general, while the site design pertaining to individual units resorts to predictable siting and spacing, the layout as a whole responds well to the adjoining properties by placing the side-end units back-to-back with those of the Magruder Overlook and by continuing the housing pattern vis-à-vis the internal road connection with the Manor Park development. [See also *Findings, (5), Compatibility*, below.]

b. Open Spaces

The site’s open spaces are, by nature of the site’s L-shaped development, assigned to the residual spaces that remain along the north-south axis: the Tot Lot at the south and the Open Play Area II at the north. The open spaces for recreation are well sited for the use and enjoyment of the residents. The Open Play Area accommodates the underground stormwater management facility, illustrating the efficient use of available open space. Staff recommends additional landscaping and seating for the open play area to better define the space and to create a visible boundary that will enhance the safety of residents.

c. Landscaping and Lighting

The landscaping and lighting is adequate, safe, and efficient. The disposition of the site boundaries within the stream buffer, the surrounding sensitive environment, and optimal design for the reduced-width arterial create significant challenges in topography and grading, particularly along the Valley Park Drive frontage. The compulsory use of retaining walls, paradoxically, allows the narrower road section to protect the stream buffer (with increased residential density) while imposing manmade engineering on the public road—view sheds that project to fifteen feet

in height. In a sense, the forcing of the development envelope toward the roadway vis-à-vis the retaining walls, and the orientation of the majority of units facing open space and Magruder Park establishes a democratic “sharing of views” that allows a greater number of residents to partake, daily, of the benefits MNCPPC Park system visually, if not physically.

The plan proposes shade tree planting between the County retaining wall (off site) and the housing’s retaining wall (on site) to soften the visual effects of the walls. Staff recommends additional plantings on site, including ground cover at the top of the wall(s) to further mitigate the appearance of the wall height. The parking areas and fronts of houses are planted with attractive clusters of oak, ash, spruce and cypress, with a selection of ornamental trees. Staff recommends additional attention to the planting details and root zones in the retaining wall areas prior to signature set.

d. Recreation

The proposed development offers adequate, safe and efficient recreational amenities. On site recreation includes a tot lot, open play area of 5,000 square feet, and the pedestrian system. The Valley Park Drive off-road bicycle path will be provided by the County’s Capital Improvements Program along the site frontage; however, the applicant, as part of an agreement with the County, will provide the extension of the bike path along the frontage of the adjacent development, Magruder’s Overlook. The site’s proximity to the Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park and to the trails through the stream valley offers access to the Moyer Road Park with additional recreational amenities. Furthermore, the Damascus Community Center, currently under construction (see photograph, page 10), will provide additional off-site recreational opportunities within one mile of the new development.

e. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation is adequate, safe, and efficient. The vehicular circulation system consists of a single entry point from Valley Park Drive to the internal Street A that provides a continuous connection from the Manor Park Development to the north. Street A terminates in a perpendicular extension that serves twelve additional townhouses. The on-street parking areas that serve nine of the townhouses and the six MPDUs are well placed and attractively landscaped.

Pedestrian circulation is provided by curbside sidewalks along Street A, with connection to the combined bike path/sidewalk on Valley Park Drive. Staff recommends a slight shift in the placement of a portion of the sidewalk on the east side of Street A to provide greater separation between vehicles and pedestrians and to accommodate curbside shade trees.

4. *Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other Site Plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development.*

The proposed housing is compatible with the established patterns of the Damascus Town Neighborhood Area and with the adjacent developments. The continuity of the private street connection with the Manor Park Development and the building line defined by the east-facing townhomes continues the existing development pattern. The arrangement of the short L-leg, featuring back-to-back townhomes at the southern boundary, responds well in massing and grading to the Magruder Overlook subdivision.

The most challenging aspect to achieving compatibility for this site rests with the ability to attain a unified streetscape along Valley Park Drive—through the provision of street trees and the bike path, in relation to the proposed retaining walls. The achievement of satisfactory residential density along with the preservation of significant areas of parkland requires, in return, an attractive public street that realizes an agreeable human scale.

5. *The Site Plan meets all applicable requirements of Chapter 22A regarding forest conservation and Chapter 17 regarding Water Resource Protection.*

The plan conforms to the requirements of Chapter 22A for forest conservation by the applicant's provision of off site planting of 1.98 acres and on site landscaping credit.