



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item # 5
5/8/08

April 24, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief *GK*
Community-Based Planning Division

Sue Edwards, Team Leader, I-270 Corridor *SE*
Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Pamela Johnson, AICP, Planner Coordinator (301.495.4590) *PJ*
Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 08301-MCPS-1: Watkins Mill High School
Telecommunications Facility – 10301 Apple Ridge Road, R-200 Zone, 1985
Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL with the following conditions relating to the Tree Save Plan:

1. The applicant shall adjust the conduit alignment and associated proposed Limits of Disturbance (LOD) to avoid impacting the six pine trees at the northeast corner of Apple Ridge Road and the parking lot entrance (or provide an alternative alignment also avoiding impacting these trees); and
2. No pre-construction meeting, clearing or grading shall occur prior to approval of the Tree Save Plan.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has submitted a joint application with T-Mobile to replace an existing 74-foot stadium pole holding light and sound equipment with a 120-foot telecommunications monopole at Watkins Mill High School in Montgomery Village. The sound and lighting equipment would be removed from the existing pole and reattached to the monopole at the same height as currently. The school is located at 10301 Apple Ridge Road at the southwest corner of Apple Ridge Road and Watkins Mill Road. The monopole is just south of the stadium bleachers in the northeast section of the school property. A small equipment compound for the facility would be placed about 45 feet northwest of the telecommunications monopole (Attachment 1).

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Neighborhood Context - Located in the Flower Hill district of Montgomery Village, Watkins Mill High School is north of the City of Gaithersburg on land zoned R-200 for single-family residential use. The school is bordered by single-family homes in Montgomery Village to the northeast, east and southeast. The Williams Range section of Montgomery Village, consisting of detached homes on Town-Sector-zoned land is immediately east of the school, and the Fairridge and Walkers Mill townhouse sections are to the south and southwest on R-90-zoned land. The forests and stream valley of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Great Seneca Park, Unit 1, is just west and north of the school (Attachment 2).

Project Site - Watkins Mill High School contains 50.1 acres on an elongated site, which slopes from its southern, front side towards the rear. The stadium is situated in the northeast corner of the site in a natural depression. Two vehicular access drives lead from Apple Ridge Road to the school and to its 380-space parking lot and its area for bus-loading and student drop-off. Nearly 1,720 students, in grades nine through twelve, attend the school, which was built in 1989.

Project Description - Watkins Mill High School stadium currently has four, 74-foot-tall sound-and-light poles. T-Mobile plans to replace the southwest pole beside the stadium access drive (Attachment 3) with a stronger, reinforced 120-foot light pole. The T-Mobile wireless communications antennas will be placed at the 118-foot level and the lights reattached at their original 74-foot level, while the sound equipment will be reattached at the 56-foot and 40-foot levels (Attachment 4). The monopole is designed so that two additional telecommunications carriers may receive coverage later from the facility. The telecommunications facility will provide enhanced coverage to the residents in the school vicinity and in the areas of Watkins Mill, Shadow Oak, Williams Ridge, Fairridge, Great Seneca Park, Watkins Meadow, Neelsville Estates, Frenchtown, Clusters, Heights, and McKendree.

The planned 350-square-foot equipment compound northwest of the monopole will be enclosed by an eight-foot high chain link fence. A 200-square-foot inner compound grounded on a concrete pad will be contained by a similar chain link fence, and will hold three large metal equipment cabinets and provide space for a future fourth cabinet. An underground cable will connect the compound with the monopole.

Green slatting will be woven into the outer fence which encloses the equipment compound, and shrubbery planted on three sides of the exterior fence will also enhance views of the compound area. The applicant agreed to substitute the originally proposed golden-toned Japonicus Golden Maiden Euonymus with Manhattan Euonymus, an evergreen shrub with a true green color blending well with the football field and adjoining forest (or else another evergreen shrub of similar size and color). (Attachment 5.)

ANALYSIS

Conformance with Master Plan – The proposal conforms with the 1985 Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan. The Land Use Plan designates the site for this school and shows the land for single-family residential use. The Zoning Plan designates R-200 zoning for the site. Additionally, the Plan specifically states on page 26:

The Seneca High School site (now referred to as Watkins Mill) is no longer considered unneeded. The County Council has approved the necessary construction funds for the new high school to serve the area east of I-270.

The Plan lists the site as Analysis Area Number 36 in the Flower Hill District (page 47). This Analysis Area, containing 20 acres, was vacant at the time of the Plan's development. The Area was proposed for R-200/TDR-4 zoning, with 64 to 128 units proposed with a net 64 units proposed over base density.

Conformance with Development Standards – The proposal conforms with the Zoning Ordinance Standards relating to “private telecommunications facilities” attached to a publicly-owned structure located on publicly-owned land (Section 59-A-6.12). To comply with these standards, which require that if adjoining property is residentially zoned, the building or cabinet must be “faced with brick or other suitable material on all sides and landscaped to a height of at least 3 feet,” the applicant has agreed to plant shrubbery on three sides of the outer fence (Attachment 5), and slatting within the exterior fencing as screening.

The application has been reviewed by the Telecommunications Transmission Facility Coordinating Group, as required by Section 59-G-2.58 of the County Code, which approved the facility on July 5, 2007, conditioned on the Board of Appeals' approval of the Special Exception. (Approval of a Special Exception, however, will not be required for the subject facility, since the monopole will replace an existing structure.) Also, the Committee approved the 120-foot height for the monopole, stating that some of the proposed areas, including Watkins Meadow, Neelsville Estates, Frenchton, the Clusters, the Heights, and McKendree, will be better served with a 120-foot rather than an 80-foot antenna (an alternative monopole design considered by the Committee).

Staff has also reviewed the visibility and compatibility of the views of the proposed facility, and believes that views of the facility will be compatible with its surrounding neighborhood.

Community Outreach – T-Mobile and MCPS staff presented the proposal to the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) of Watkins Mill High School on March 18, 2008. PTA attendants endorsed the proposal and were pleased about potential income from the facility. Several members suggested that the compound be moved to the other side of the stadium, but the group decided that the location beside the service drive was preferable. The applicant also held a widely advertised Community Open House at the school on March 19, 2008, which was lightly attended. One attendee asked whether the compound would be safe from possible intruders, and about the future reception of the facility. The applicant indicated the facility would provide good reception to the intended community as previously noted. Also, since the cabinets would be locked, and T-Mobile had not previously experienced intruders, the applicant believed the compound would be secure. Staff mailed letters to civic and homeowners associations and to adjoining and confronting homeowners, and has received no adverse comments on the facility.

Transportation – Transportation Planning staff finds that adding an unmanned wireless communications facility at the High School would have no adverse impact on the transportation network within the immediate local area of the high school (Attachment 6).

Environment – A Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation was approved on May 24, 2007 subject to future approval of the Tree Save Plan. Environmental Planning staff has reviewed the subject proposal and recommends that the applicant adjust the conduit alignment and associated proposed limits of disturbance (LOD) to avoid impacting the six pine trees at the northeast corner of Apple Ridge Road and the parking lot entrance (or provide an alternative alignment also avoiding impacting these trees). Additionally, Environmental Planning staff recommends that no pre-construction meeting, clearing or grading occur prior to approval of the Tree Save Plan.

The site is exempt from stormwater management requirements because less than 5,000 square feet of disturbance are proposed in the scope of work (see Attachment 7 for complete memorandum from Environmental Planning).

Parks – Parks staff has reviewed the proposal and finds that the proposal will have no impact on park property (Attachment 8).

CONCLUSION

Staff finds that the proposal conforms with the Master Plan and will not adversely affect its surrounding neighborhood, and thus recommends approval of the Mandatory Referral.

PJ:ha: G:\johnson\Watkins Mill Mandatory Referral

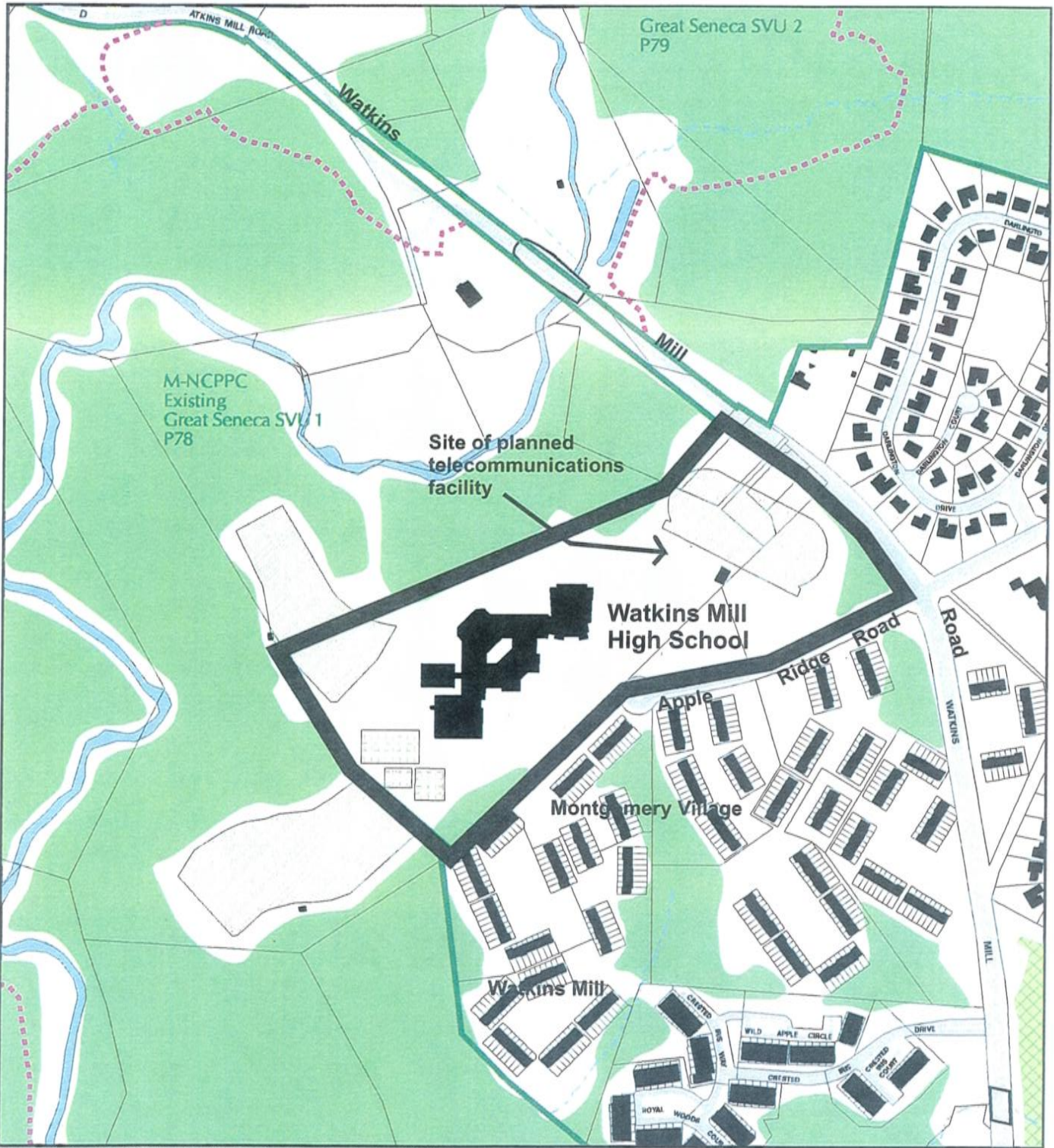
Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Approved and Adopted Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan Zoning and Highway Plan
3. Planned Location of Telecommunications Facility at Watkins Mill High School
4. Elevation of Planned Telecommunications Monopole
5. Landscape Plan for the Equipment Compound
6. Transportation Planning Memorandum
7. Environmental Planning Memorandum
8. Park Planning and Stewardship Memorandum

ATTACHMENT 1

VICINITY MAP

Watkins Mill High School Telecommunications Facility Mandatory Referral



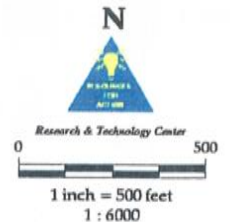
Map compiled on April 15, 2008 at 9:11 AM | Sites located on base sheet no - 227NW10

NOTICE

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ATTACHMENT 2

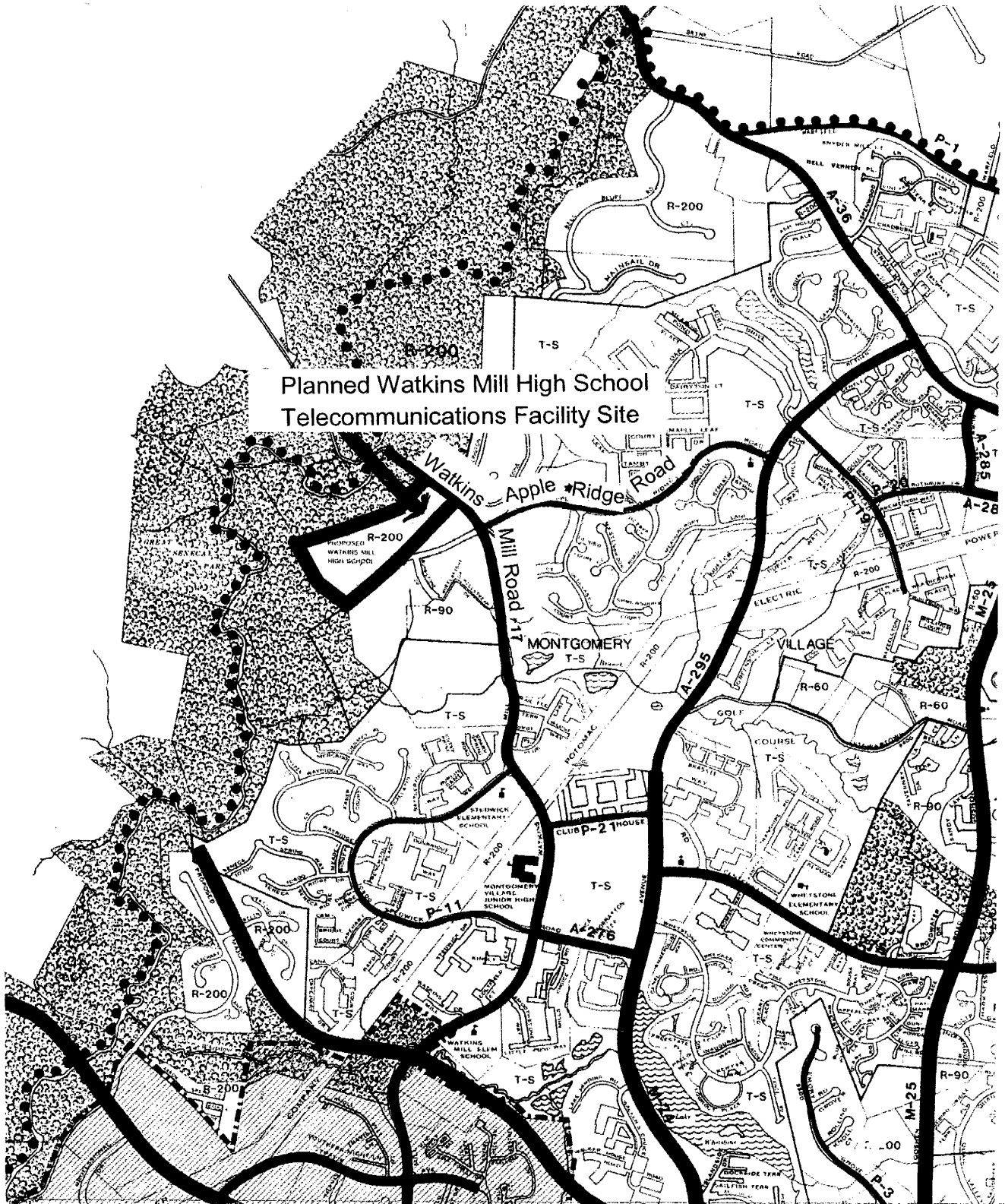
APPROVED AND ADOPTED

Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

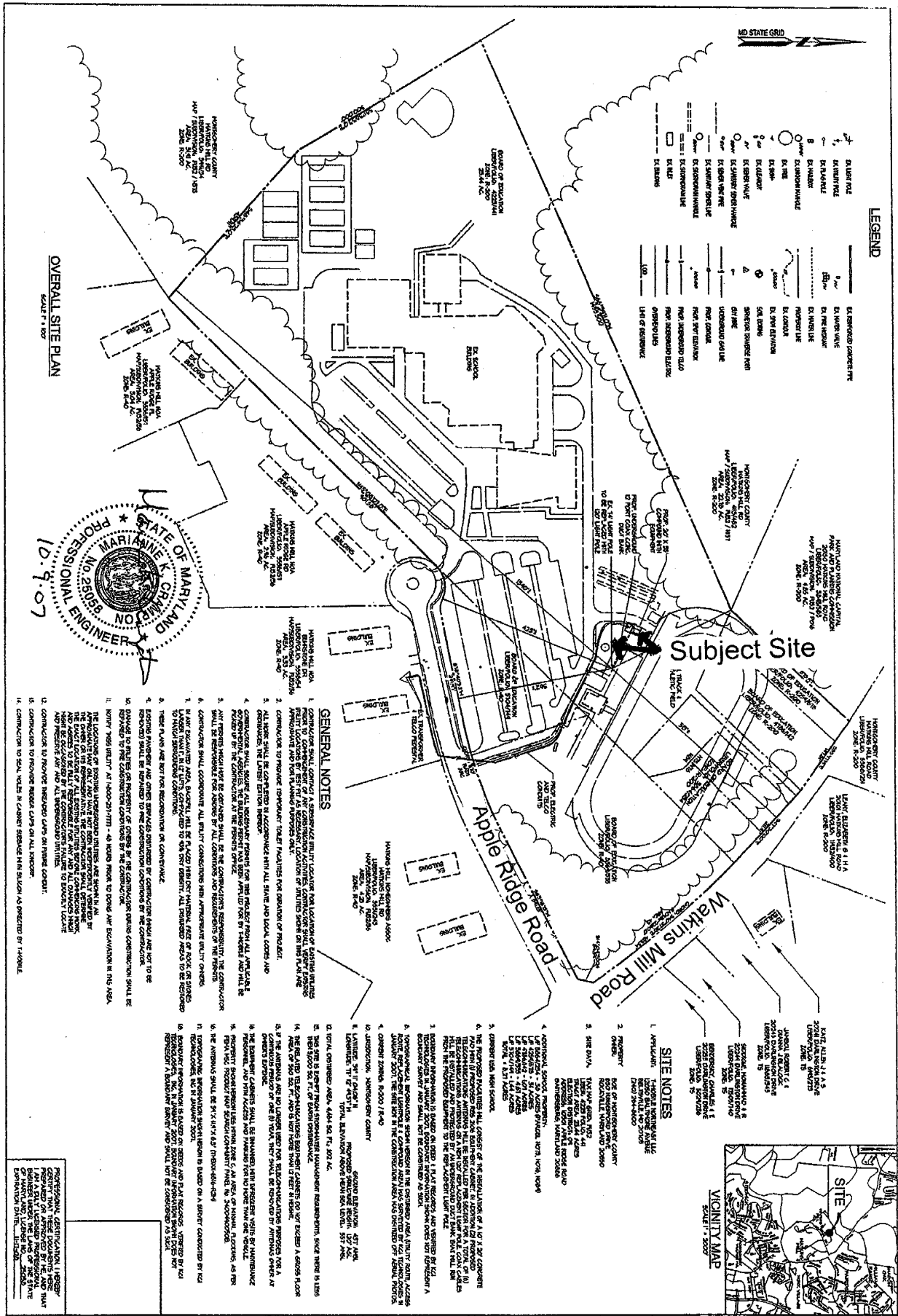
JANUARY 1985

Zoning & Highway Plan



ATTACHMENT 3

PLANNED LOCATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AT WATKINS MILL HIGH SCHOOL



MD STATE GRID

LEGEND

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OVERALL SITE PLAN



Subject Site

GENERAL NOTES

1. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE APPLICABLE AGENCIES AND AUTHORITIES.
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PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION: I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I AM A LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND AND THAT I AM THE DESIGNER OF THIS PROJECT.

| | |
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| CD Rev. A | 03-07-07, 09-10-07 |
| CD Rev. B | 10-03-07 |

| NO. | DESCRIPTION OF REVISIONS |
|-----|--------------------------|
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| | |

KCI TECHNOLOGIES
 ENGINEERS
 PLANNERS
 SCIENTISTS
 CONSTRUCTION MANAGERS
 14000 Greenway Drive, Suite 100
 Laurel, Maryland 20786
 (301) 495-6500
 (301) 495-6500
 (301) 495-6500

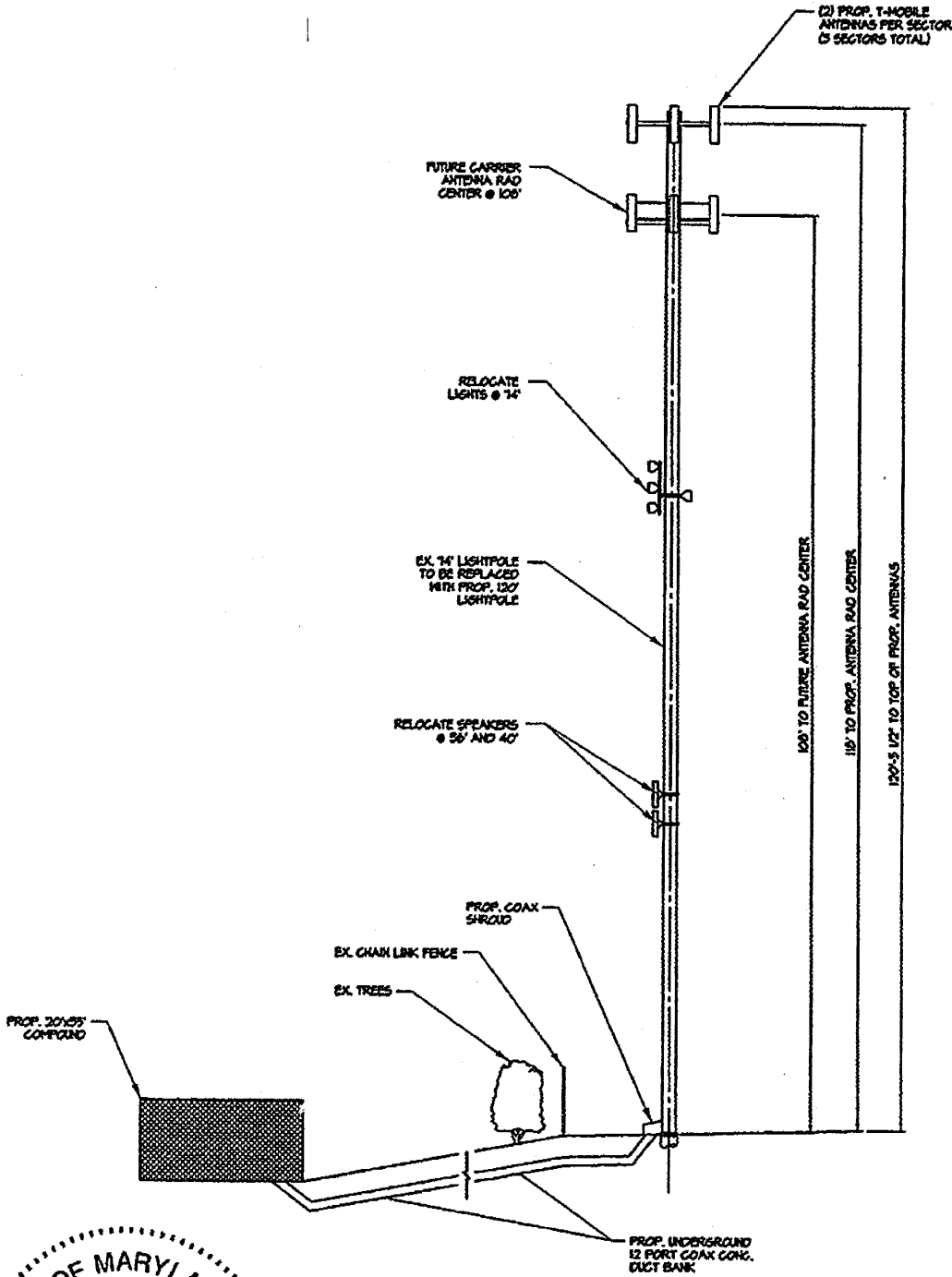
T-Mobile Northeast LLC
 12200 BALTIMORE AVENUE
 BELTSVILLE, MD 20854
 (240) 284-9900 FAX: (240) 284-9900

SITE #WANS/28
 MCBCE -
 WATKINS MILL
 UNMANNED WIRELESS
 COMMUNICATIONS SITE
 14000 APPLE RIDGE ROAD
 WATKINS MILL, MD 20786

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| OVERALL SITE PLAN | |
| DATE: 10/03/07 | SCALE: AS SHOWN |
| DESIGNED BY: MCBCE | CHECKED BY: MCBCE |
| DRAWN BY: MCBCE | DATE: 10/03/07 |

ATTACHMENT 4

ELEVATION OF PLANNED TELECOMMUNICATIONS MONOPOLE



WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 10'



10.9.07

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| CD REV. A 03-07-07, 09-10-07 CD REV. 0 10-9-07 | | DATE 03/07/07 09/10/07 10/09/07 | |
| SCHEDULE OF REVISIONS | | NO. 1 DATE | |
| 16042450.91 T-Mobile Northeast LLC SITE # WANS138 MCOBOE - WATKINS MILL 1200 APPLE BRIDGE ROAD BATHERSBURG, MD 20848 | | | |
| ENGINEERS PLANNERS SCIENTISTS CONSTRUCTION MANAGERS 14902 Greenleaf Drive, Suite 100 Laurel, Maryland 20708 (301) 659-1521 (410) 742-8086 Fax: (410) 742-7447 www.kci.com | | T-Mobile Northeast LLC 12000 BALTIMORE AVENUE BELTSVILLE, MD 20705 (240) 244-8600 FAX: (240) 244-8610 | |
| KCI TECHNOLOGIES | | SITE # WANS138 MCOBOE - WATKINS MILL UNMANNED WIRELESS COMMUNICATION SITE 1200 APPLE BRIDGE ROAD BATHERSBURG, MD 20848 | |
| COMPOUND DETAIL & ELEVATION DRAWING NO. C3 PROJECT NO. 16042450.91 DATE: 10/09/07 CAD FILE: 16042450.91 | | | |

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION, I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THESE DOCUMENTS WERE PREPARED OR APPROVED BY ME AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, LICENSE NO. 25058, EXPIRATION DATE: 11-17-02

ATTACHMENT 6



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

March 11, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pam Johnson, Planner
Georgia Avenue Team
Community-Based Planning Division

VIA: Shahriar Etemadi, Supervisor
Transportation Planning

FROM: Ed Axler, Planner/Coordinator EA
Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. MR 08301-MCPS-1
Watkins Mill High School
T-Mobile Northwest, LLC
Unmanned Wireless Communication Site
Montgomery Village/Airpark Policy Area

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review of the subject mandatory referral to add a proposed unmanned wireless communication facility located at the Watkins Mill High School's athletic field.

RECOMMENDATION

Transportation Planning staff recommends no condition for supporting the approval of the subject mandatory referral.

Transportation Planning staff finds that adding an unmanned wireless communication facility has no adverse impact on the transportation network within the immediate local area of the high school. As a development located in the Montgomery Village/Airpark Policy Area, any new peak-hour vehicle trips generated by this communication facility are not required to be mitigated within this policy area. Thus, the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) and the Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR) tests are satisfied.

DISCUSSION

Site Location and Access

The high school is located in the northwest quadrant of Watkins Mill Road and Apple Ridge Road. The subject wireless communication facility is located on the southwest side of the school's oval track that encircles its athletic field. The monopole, itself, is proposed to be installed on top of

an existing pole that currently holds luminaries used to light the athletic field. The associated equipment cabinets would be enclosed by a security fence and located near the monopole between a paved service path and the northwest side of the bleachers.

Vehicular access to the high school is from the cul-de-sac at the western terminus of Apple Ridge Road. Within the high school campus, the vehicular and pedestrian access to the proposed wireless communication facility is from a nearby, existing paved path off the parking lot that now provides access to the athletic field and track.

Master Plan Roadway and Bikeway

According to the *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*, Watkins Mill Road is designated as a four-lane arterial, A-17, with a recommended right-of-way of 80 feet. The dual bikeway (i.e., a shared use path and a signed shared roadway), DB-27, is designated along Watkins Mill Road in the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan*.

The segment of Apple Ridge Road fronting Watkins Mill High School is a secondary residential street with a right-of-way of 70 feet (over the minimum of 60 feet) and existing sidewalks on both sides. This segment west of Watkins Mill Road is not listed in the *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan* because it is outside the limits of the master-planned primary residential street, P-10.

Available Transit Service

Ride-On route 64 operates on Watkins Mill Road between Stedwick Road and Apple Ridge Road and on Apple Ridge Road between Watkins Mill Road and Montgomery Village Avenue.

Local Area Transportation Review

Currently, Watkins Mill High School generates 30 or more existing peak-hour trips during the weekday morning (6:30 to 9:30 a.m.) peak period. However, the proposed wireless communication facility will be unmanned and only require routine inspections or service by one technician every 4 to 6 weeks. As a result, this communication facility would not generate any additional new weekday peak-hour vehicular trips during the weekday morning and evening (4:00 to 7:00 p.m.) peak periods. Thus, a traffic study would not be required to satisfy Local Area Transportation Review for the subject mandatory referral.

Policy Area Mobility Review

Under the *FY 2007-2009 Growth Policy*, Policy Area Mobility Review is not required for developments located in the Montgomery Village/Airpark Policy Area.

EA:tc

mmo to Johnson re Watkins Mill HS monopole MR 08301-MCPS-1

ATTACHMENT 7



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pamela Johnson, Planner Coordinator, Community Based Planning

VIA: Stephen D. Federline, Supervisor, Environmental Planning *SD*

FROM: Lori Shirley, Planner Coordinator, Environmental Planning *LS*

DATE: April 7, 2008

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 08301-MCPS-1
Watkins Mill High School – monopole

RECOMMENDATION

Environmental Planning staff recommends **approval** of the Tree Save Plan subject to the following conditions:

1. Applicant shall submit a revised Tree Save Plan to Environmental Planning for staff review and approval. The revised Tree Save Plan shall adjust the conduit alignment and associated proposed limits of disturbance (LOD) to avoid impacts to the six pine trees at the northeast corner of Apple Ridge Road and the parking lot entrance. An alternative to re-alignment would be directional boring under these trees and their critical root zones. If avoidance is not possible, include an evaluation of these 12 to 16-inch pine trees by a certified arborist to determine if additional tree measures necessary to increase the likelihood of the survivability of these trees.
2. No pre-construction meeting, clearing or grading shall occur prior to approval of the Tree Save Plan.

Changes to these recommendations may occur as a result of testimony received during the public hearing.

BACKGROUND

Watkins Mill High School is an existing school facility located on 23.44 acres in the Gaithersburg Vicinity Planning Area at 10301 Apple Ridge Road. The facility was constructed before enactment of the Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law. There is no forest, streams, wetlands, or floodplains on-site. The property is within the Great Seneca Creek watershed (Use I-P). The property is exempt from the forest conservation law per # 42007260E, and was conditionally approved subject to a Tree Save Plan (TSP) for the proposed scope of work area.

The proposal is to replace an existing 74-foot stadium light pole with a 120-foot telecommunications monopole/light pole. No such monopole exists in this area. The monopole will have nine panel antennas attached to it. Three equipment cabinets will be installed nearby at ground-level in a 10' x 20' fenced compound. The proposed total disturbed area is 2,500 square feet.

DISCUSSION

Environmental Guidelines

The Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD), 4-2007260E, was approved for this site on May 24, 2007, subject to a TSP to be approved in the future subsequent plan review. The property does not contain stream buffer, 100-year floodplain or areas of regulated forest. The property is not within the Patuxent River Primary Management Area or any of the four Special Protection Areas.

Tree Save

A Tree Save Plan for a mandatory referral is approved by Environmental Planning staff and not as a regulatory item by the Planning Board. Minor revisions are necessary before the Tree Save Plan can be signed. A comparison of the proposed limits of disturbance (LOD) on the NRI/FSD 4-2007260E's proposed TSP and the TSP stamped received by the Environmental Planning Section on March 25, 2008, shows the two LOD locations are not the same. The latter plan's LOD is located on the north side of Apple Ridge Road and on the east side of the parking lot edge where six existing pine trees (that range in diameter at breast height [DBH] of 12 to 16-inches) are located (see Attachment). By locating the LOD on the north side of Apple Ridge Road, eight existing street trees will not be impacted. However, four of the six pine trees at the northeast corner of the parking lot are shown inside the proposed LOD. The proposed LOD should be readjusted on a revised TSP similar to how it was shown on the exemption plan to avoid impacts to landscape trees at this location.

One existing nine-inch Norway spruce is located inside the LOD nearby the proposed concrete equipment pad. This tree will be removed and a new tree will not be planted as a replacement.

Stormwater Management

The site is exempt from stormwater management requirements because less than 5,000 square feet of disturbance are proposed in the scope of work.

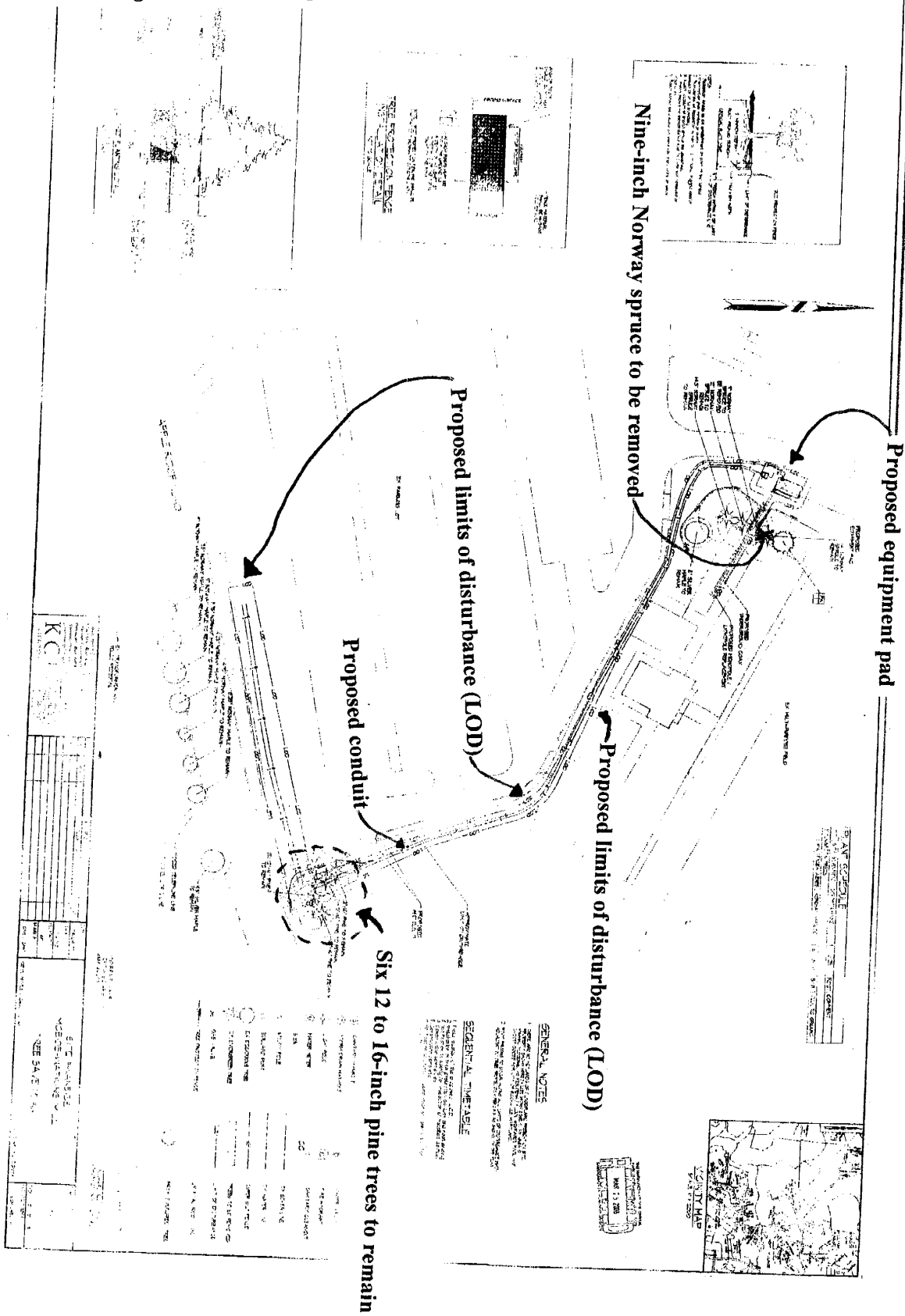
If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 301-495-4551 or electronically at lori.shirley@mncppc-mc.org.

Attachment

SDF:LS

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**Attachment – Mandatory Referral No. 08301 – MCPS-1
Watkins Mill High School – monopole – Tree Save Plan**



ATTACHMENT 8



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND - NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

March 5, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pamela Johnson, Planning Coordinator, Community Based Planning Division
FROM: Brian Murphy, Senior Natural Resource Specialist, PPS Division
SUBJECT: **WATKINS MILL HIGH SCHOOL MANDATORY REFERRAL SUBMISSION**

Park Planning and Stewardship, and the Northern Region have reviewed the Mandatory Referral submission for the light pole replacement at Watkins Mill High School adjacent to Great Seneca Park. The existing 74ft light pole is being replaced with a 120ft pole with cell phone communication antennas at the 118ft level.

This project does not have any impact to park property and therefore we have no comments on the project.

cc: Wendy Hanley, Park Manager Little Bennett