



Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan, Worksession

 Elza Hisel-McCoy, Assoc. AIA, LEED-AP, Planner Coordinator, Area 1, elza.hisel-mccoy@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.2115

 Valdis Lazdins, Planning Chief, Area 1, valdis.lazdins@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4506

Completed: 8.30.12

Description

- The Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan area is approximately 380 acres. It is bound by Jones Bridge Road on the north, East-West Highway on the south, Rock Creek Park to the east, and the Columbia Country Club to the west.
- The Sector Plan amends the 1990 *Approved and Adopted Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan*

Summary

- Provide additional information requested by the Planning Board at the July 16, 2012, presentation of the Staff Draft Sector Plan
- **Staff recommends approval of a Public Hearing Draft and that the Public Hearing be set for October 18, 2012**

Introduction: Transparency, Engagement, and Compatibility

When staff presented the Scope of Work for the Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan to the Planning Board in July 2010, some community members challenged the openness and transparency of the process. They asserted that developers had an unfair advantage and access to staff, and that the community would not be legitimately involved in the decision-making process. To address this perception, with the support of the Planning Director and the Chair, staff enlisted professional facilitators from the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County to help.

Staff worked with the facilitators to develop a community outreach process that emphasized transparency, and resulted in a number of well-attended and successful public meetings. These engaged the larger Chevy Chase Lake community, including major land owners and developers, in a two-year dialogue about what kind of change the Sector Plan could bring to the neighborhood.

Staff heard and considered many ideas and viewpoints to determine the right “fit” for Chevy Chase Lake. Did 4.5 million square feet of development, with numerous 20-story buildings and elevated parks, fit in Chevy Chase Lake? The community, and ultimately the property owner, decided it did not. Did an underpass at Connecticut Avenue and East-West Highway, to accommodate more traffic, fit? The community and planners past and present decided it did not.

Chevy Chase Lake has a definite character: established residential neighborhoods surrounding a small retail center. Ultimately, the sector plan must balance developers’ interest with the community’s desire to preserve character, so that Chevy Chase Lake does not lose the sense of place it has developed over the last century.

Preserving the area’s character while allowing compatible new development is the underpinning philosophy of the Staff Draft, and is manifested in its recommendations:

- Building heights should reinforce and enhance the Town Center, but not overwhelm the surrounding residential neighborhoods;
- Limit density to minimize traffic impacts on Connecticut Avenue without disruptive and incompatible road improvements (e.g., enlarging intersections out of proportion to the adjoining neighborhoods);
- Phase development with the Purple Line to allow only already-approved projects to move forward before transit is in place to support additional density;
- Implement rezoning by phasing two sectional map amendments to give the community greater certainty that the plan will work as envisioned;
- Allow compatible development at the shopping center that would provide additional housing and other benefits, even should the Purple Line be significantly delayed.

What the Board Asked For

On July 16, 2012, after presentation of the Staff Draft recommendations, the Planning Board requested additional information and analyses prior to setting a Public Hearing. That information is now provided and may well be supplemented during Board work sessions following the Public Hearing. The following addresses the questions raised by the Board.

What would additional building height look like in Chevy Chase Lake?

The following studies examine the character of the Town Center in Chevy Chase Lake as it exists today, as envisioned under the Staff Draft recommendation, and with the maximum building heights requested by property owners.



© 2012 Google. Result is problem. Image Date: July 2009

The Town Center, viewed along the east side of Connecticut Avenue below Manor Road, existing conditions



© 2012 Google. Report a problem. Image Date: July 2009.

The Town Center, viewed along the east side of Connecticut Avenue below Manor Road, Staff Draft recommended building heights



© 2012 Google - Report a problem - Image Date: July 2009

The Town Center, viewed along the east side of Connecticut Avenue below Manor Road, with building heights requested by property owners



The Town Center, viewed along the east side of Connecticut Avenue above Chevy Chase Lake Drive, existing conditions



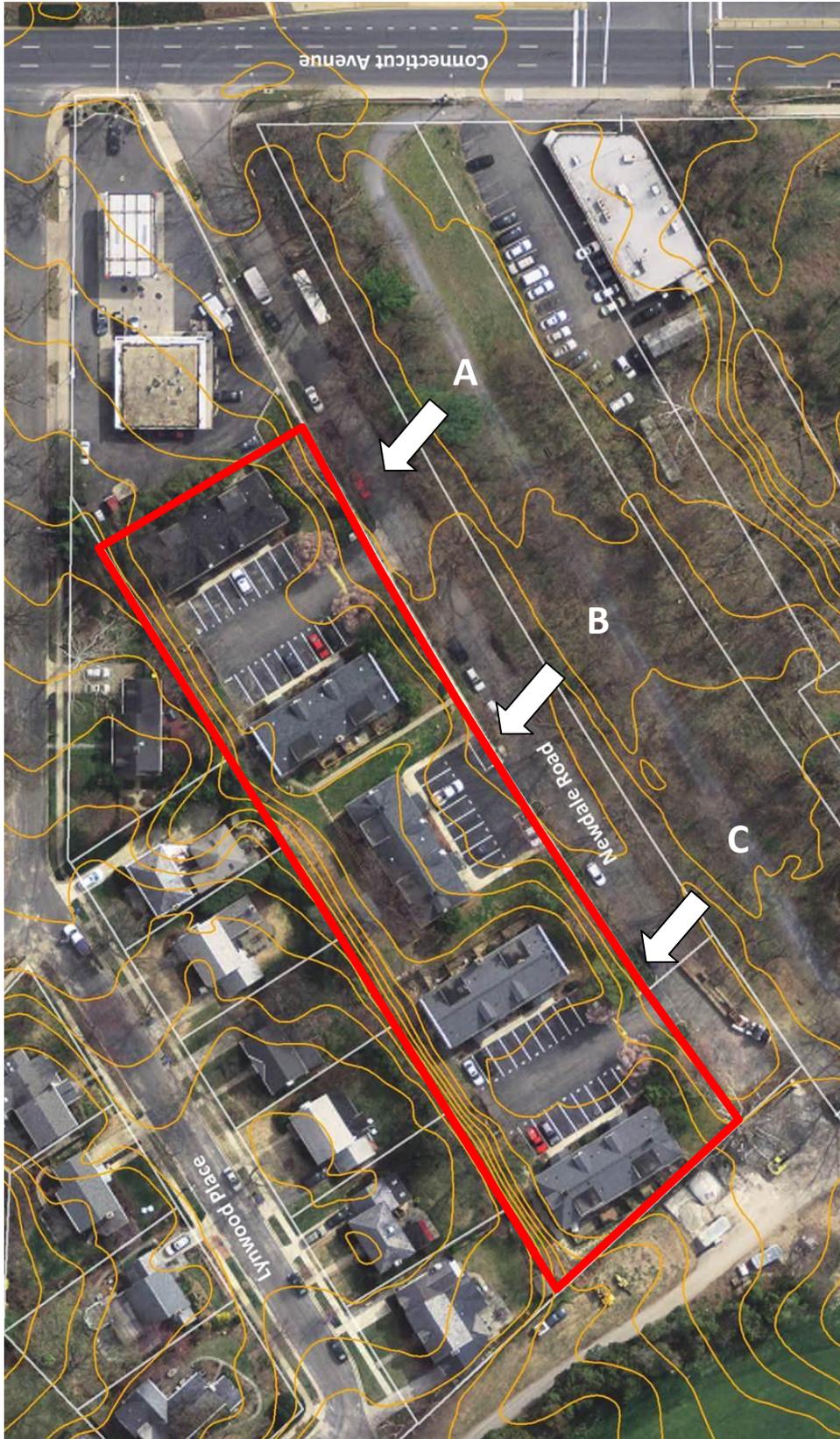
The Town Center, viewed along the east side of Connecticut Avenue above Chevy Chase Lake Drive, Staff Draft recommended building heights



The Town Center, viewed along the east side of Connecticut Avenue above Chevy Chase Lake Drive, with building heights requested by property owners

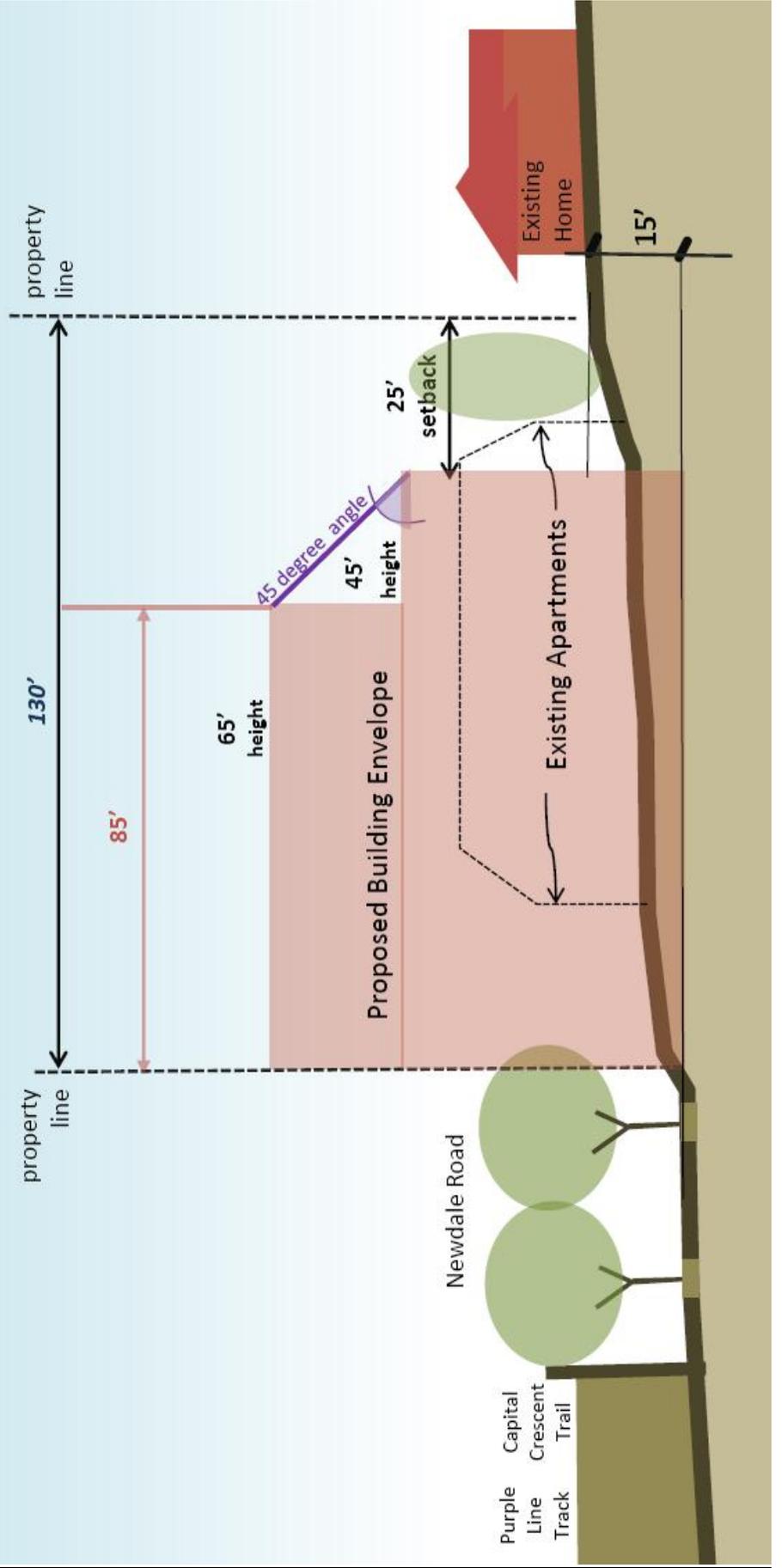
What are the potential impacts of additional building height at Newdale Mews?

Staff has looked at the slope and height differential between the Newdale Mews property on Newdale Road and the single-family homes immediately to the north on Lynwood Place. The following diagrams illustrate this relationship at three points along Newdale Road.

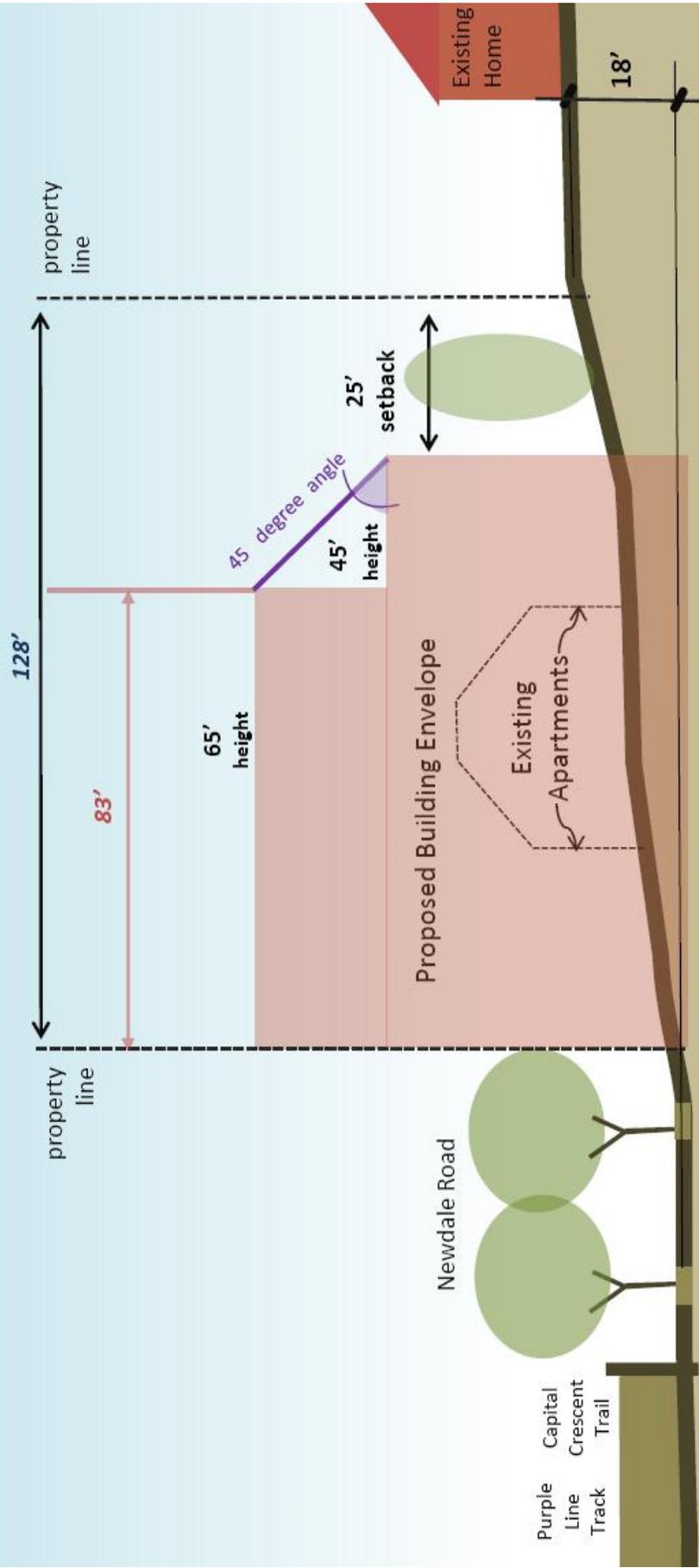


The Newdale Mews site and immediate context

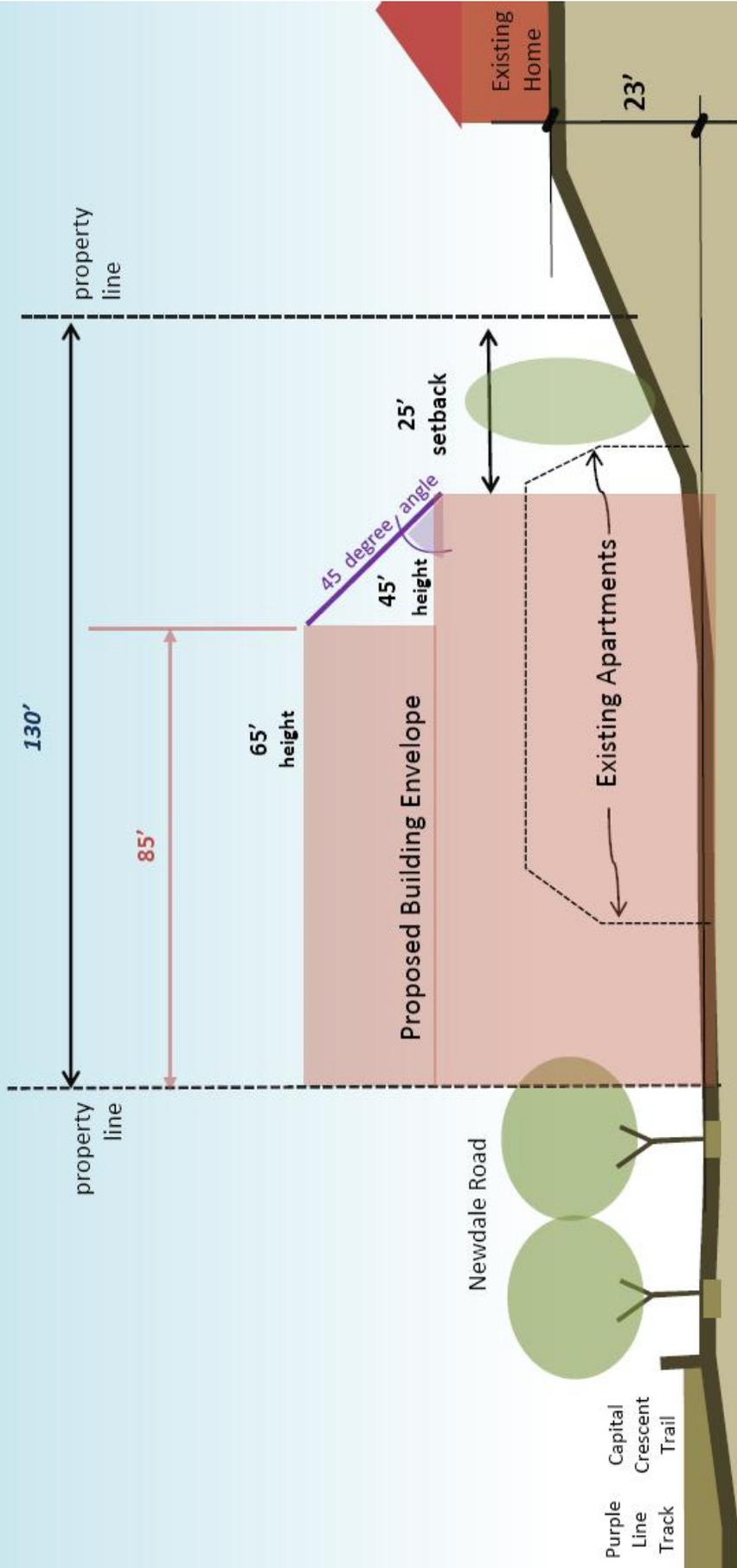
A



B



C



How might the level of density recommended in the Staff Draft fit on the ground? How would additional density fit?



An aerial view of the Town Center, looking north, showing distribution of density recommended in the Staff Draft Sector Plan (with 8401 Connecticut Avenue remaining)



An aerial view of the Town Center, looking north, showing distribution of density recommended in the Staff Draft Sector Plan



An aerial view of the Town Center, looking north, showing distribution of additional height and density requested by property owners

By modifying the land use mix of the Chevy Chase Land Company's approved preliminary plan for the Chevy Chase Lake Shopping Center, could the approved traffic impact accommodate more development on that site before the Purple Line?

The Staff Draft Sector Plan recommends limiting development before the Purple Line to the Chevy Chase Lake Shopping Center. The Chevy Chase Land Company received preliminary plan approval in 2005 for approximately 250,000 sf. of development at the Chevy Chase Shopping Center, with 74,356 sf. of office uses and 174,016 sf. of retail uses. This approval, which remains valid, also includes the traffic that would be generated by the redevelopment.

Different land uses generate traffic at different rates, with residential uses generating less traffic than office uses. Using trip generation rates from our Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) guidelines, the Land Company produced two alternative land use scenarios for the redevelopment of the Chevy Chase Lake Shopping Center site that resulted in traffic that would be at or below the traffic generated by the existing approved development. (See Attachment 1 for the Land Company worksheets.)

Land use scenario	Total AM Peak Hour trips	Total PM Peak Hour Trips
Existing approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74,356 sf. office • 174,016 sf. retail 	503	1,051
Alternative 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 708 apartments • 120,000 sf. retail 	486	786
Alternative 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 140-room hotel • ~598 apartments* • 120,000 sf. retail 	503	834

*to be reduced as necessary to achieve the trip cap

What is the traffic impact of increasing density beyond the staff draft recommendation?

Property owners have requested additional density beyond the Staff Draft recommendation:

Property	Staff Draft recommended density	Requested density
Howard Hughes Medical Institute	Remain special exception use in R-90 zone	Approximately 775,000 sf.
Chevy Chase Lake Apartments (Housing Opportunities Commission)	Approximately 230 apartments	Approximately 400 apartments
8401 Connecticut Avenue (Chevy Chase Land Company)	260,000 sf., office/retail/residential	Approximately 512,000 sf., incl. 300,000 sf. office, 44,000 sf. retail, 168 apartments
Chevy Chase Lake West Shopping Center Parking Lot (Chevy Chase Land Company)	15 townhouses	Approximately 65 apartments

Staff has prepared an updated analysis (included as attachment 2), which compares the traffic impacts of the staff draft recommended densities, the “maximum build-out” scenario (which incorporates the requested density increases listed above), and a number of increments in between.

Are we able to perform economic analyses to determine the appropriate level of density in Chevy Chase Lake?

There was not sufficient time to engage our economic consultant in advance of the September 6, 2012, work session. We requested economic analyses from the Chevy Chase Land Company, the Housing Opportunities Commission, and the owner of Newdale Mews, but were not provided with any.

Why should the new public parks be publicly owned?

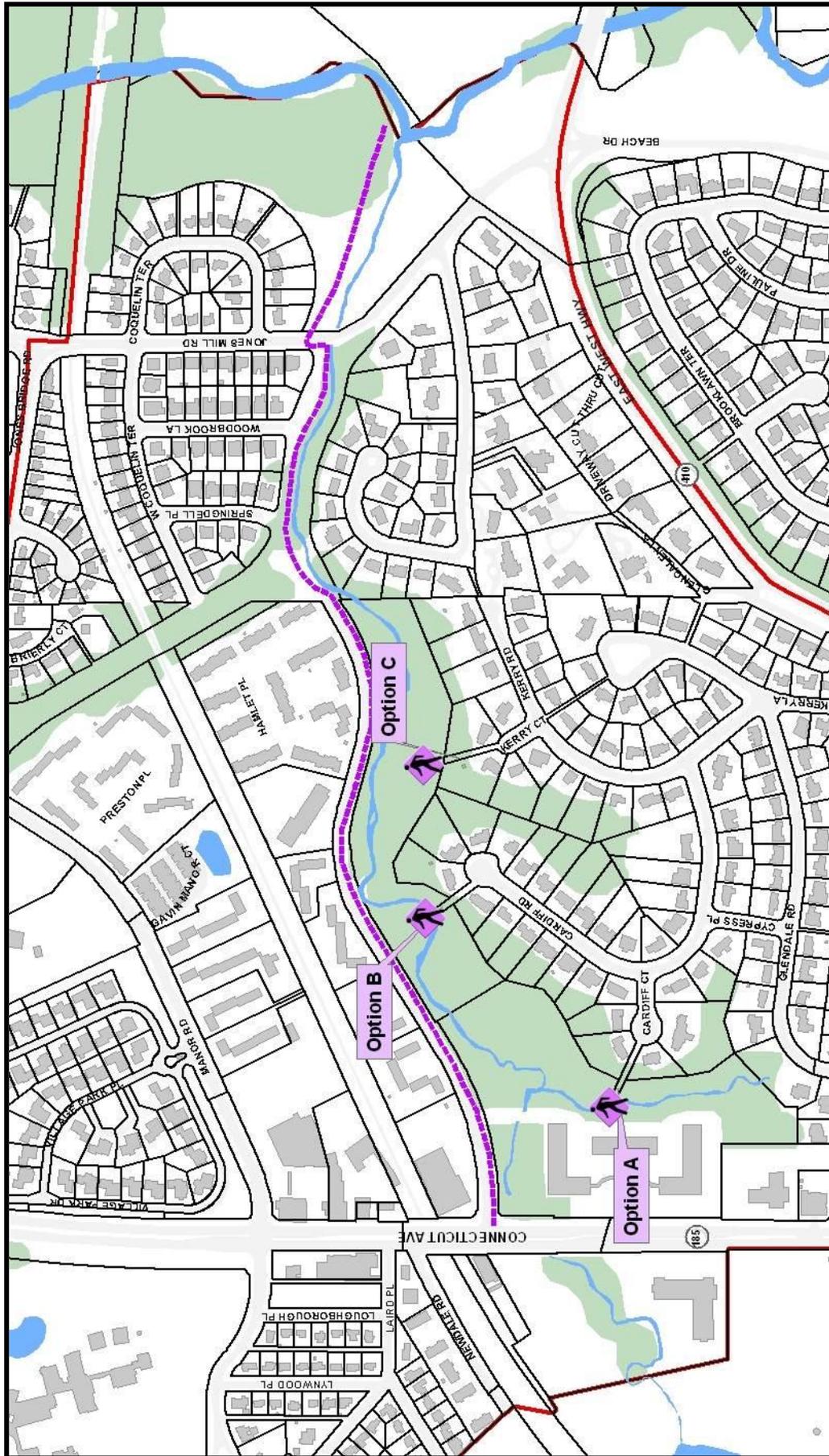
Parks Department staff will address this question in a broader context in an upcoming presentation to the Planning Board, currently scheduled for September 20, 2012. Parks staff will be available for questions at the September 6th work session.

What would be required to provide a pedestrian connection from the Hamlet neighborhood across Coquelin Run to Chevy Chase Lake Drive?

East to west the Sector Plan area is bisected by the Coquelin Run stream valley, which has forested, steep slopes, springs, and rare, threatened and endangers species. The undeveloped condition of the valley is primarily due to the topographic constraints. These make access to the stream challenging for the residents living on either side of the valley.

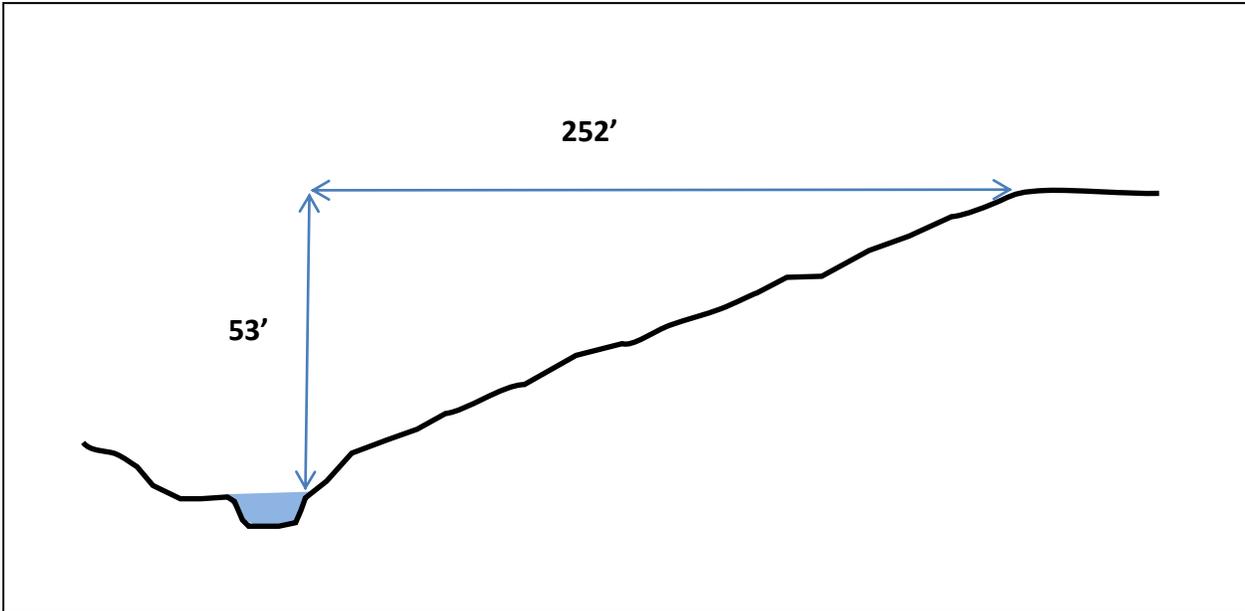
Three potential access points and stream crossings opportunities have been evaluated at rights-of-way from three cul-de-sacs along the southern side of Coquelin Run: Cardiff Court (Option A), Cardiff Road (Option B), and Kerry Court (Option C).

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Slope, top of bank to stream	21% / ~5:1	36% / ~3:1	19% / ~5:1
Ownership	8101 Connecticut Avenue	Chevy Chase Land Company	Chevy Chase Land Company
Erodible Soils	Yes		
Rare, Threatened & Endangered Species	No	No	Yes
Natural Resources	High Quality Forest		
Wildlife	Urban Diversity		

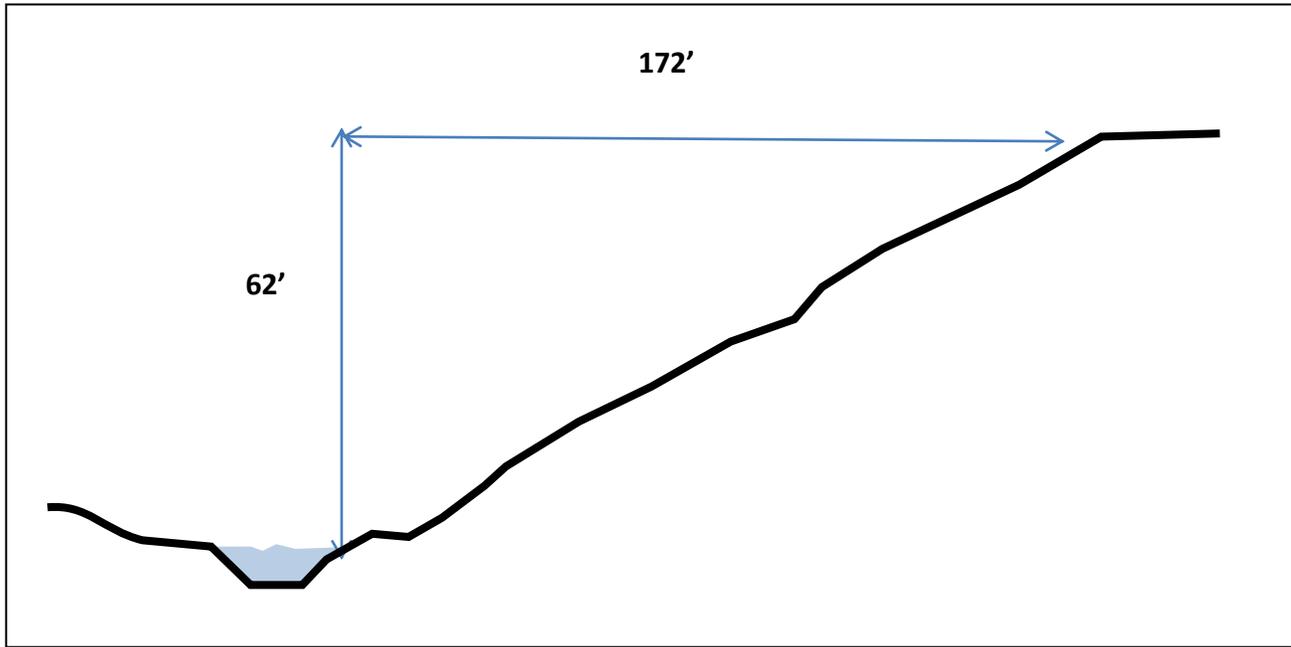


Coquelin Run Access Options from the Hamlet Community

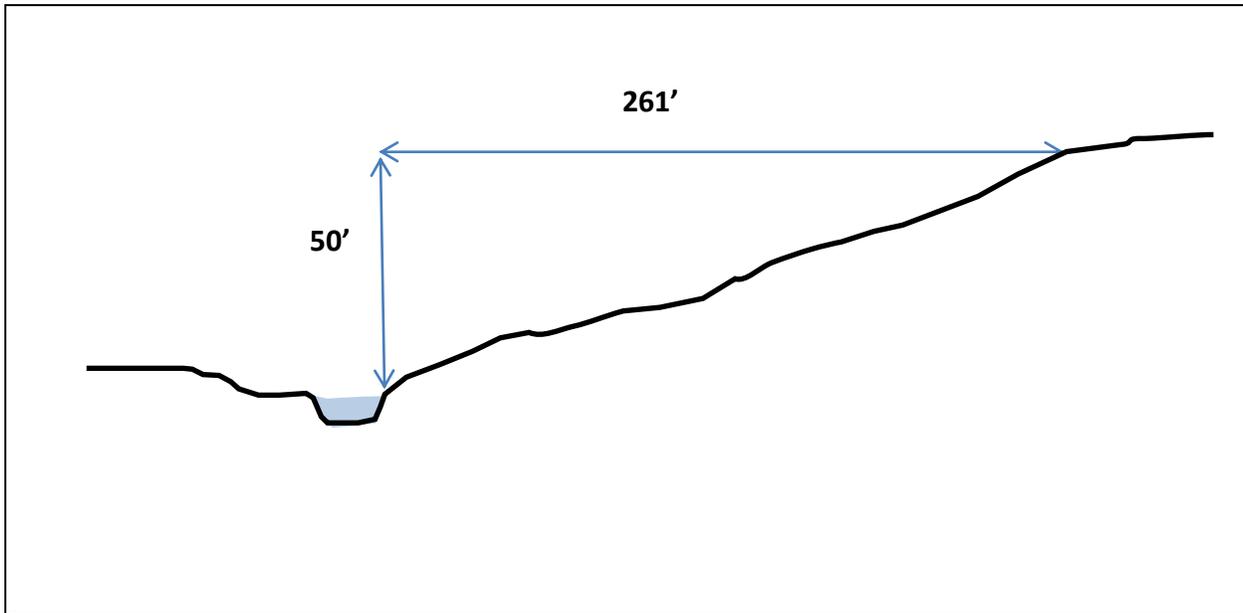
Option A



Option B



Option C



Given the steep slopes at each of the potential locations, an accessible route would require significant switch-back pathways. An accessible route would be further complicated by the narrow width of the right-of-way extensions (about 20 feet).

Community Correspondence

Since the July 16, 2012, Planning Board meeting, staff and the Planning Board have received correspondence from interested parties. We have attached the correspondence received (attachment 3). The correspondence is grouped by property owner, civic/neighborhood organization, and individual.

Attachments

1. Chevy Chase Land Company Trip Distribution Calculations for Chevy Chase Lake Shopping Center
2. Staff CLV analysis
3. Community correspondence received since the July 16, 2012, Planning Board meeting