



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

June 20, 2003

**MEMORANDUM – MANDATORY REFERRAL**

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board  
VIA: John A. Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JAC*  
FROM: Kristin O'Connor, Senior Planner *KO*  
Bethesda-Chevy Chase/North Bethesda Team (301-495-4555)

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral  
PROJECT NAME: Montgomery County Aquatic Center  
APPLICANT: Montgomery County Department of Public Works and  
Transportation (DPWT)  
CASE NUMBER: 03201-DPW&T-1  
REVIEW BASIS: Article 28, Chapter 7-112 of the Regional District Act

ZONE: R-90  
LOCATION: 5900 Executive Boulevard, North Bethesda  
MASTER PLAN: North Bethesda-Garret Park Master Plan (1992)

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval to transmit comments to the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT).

1. Submit final Lighting Plan that uses the same fixtures, wattage, pole height, and fixture spacing that exists on the current site. The Plan must direct the source of lighting away from adjacent residences.

**DISCUSSION**

The Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) has submitted an application for the Montgomery County Aquatic Center (MAC) for the construction of 62 additional parking spaces in a new parking area and 22 more spaces within the existing parking area within the site to meet the current parking demands. The County-owned aquatic center is located at 5900 Executive Boulevard in North Bethesda.

However, none of these trees will have more than 30% of the critical root zone impacted by construction.

**Parks**

The Parks staff recommends approval of the plan. Staff approves the proposed landscaping and preliminary lighting plan.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Setbacks</b>			
Front	30 ft	412 ft	412 ft
Side	9 ft	15 ft	15 ft
Sum of Sides	25 ft	210 ft	210 ft
Rear	25 ft	128 ft	128 ft
Building Height	35 ft	50 ft	50 ft
Coverage	35%	7%	7%
<b>Parking</b>			
Spaces	135	167	247
Landscaping			
<b>Setbacks</b>			
Front Yard	20 ft	88 ft	88 ft
Rear Yard	20 ft	206 ft	206 ft

**CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends approval of this plan. Based on the information provided by the applicant and the analysis in this report, staff concludes that the proposed project would provide the much-needed parking capacity to the Montgomery County Aquatic Center to meet the parking demands for the North Bethesda facility.

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**Attachments**

- Attachment 1: Vicinity Map
- Attachment 2: Landscaping Plan
- Attachment 3: Preliminary Lighting Plan
- Attachment 4: Tree Save Plan
- Attachment 5: Environmental Planning Memo
- Attachment 6: Transportation Planning Memo

Lead-in asphalt walkways exist on the site from Executive Boulevard and Nicholson Lane to the main entrance of the aquatic center. The existing parking area has marked pedestrian pathways to delineate vehicular and pedestrian movements.

Ride-On Routes 5, 26, and 81 run along Executive Boulevard or Old Georgetown Road. The aquatic center is also approximately 1,500 feet from the White Flint Metrorail Station. The availability of transit is beneficial in providing alternative non-auto modes of transportation rather than making a vehicular trip that requires on-site parking.

### *Master Plan Roadways and Bikeways*

According to the *North Bethesda/Garrett Master Plan*, the nearby roadways and bikeways are classified as follows:

1. Executive Boulevard from Old Georgetown Road to Huff Court is classified as a north-south, four-lane undivided business street, B-7, with an 80-foot right-of-way and a Class 2 bikeway.
2. Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) from the Capital Beltway (I-495) to Rockville Pike (MD 355) is classified as a north-south to east-west, six-lane divided major highway, M-4, with a 120-foot right-of-way and no bikeway.
3. Nicholson Lane is classified as an east-west, four-lane arterial, A-69, with an 80-foot right-of-way a Class 3 bikeway.
4. Marinelli Road is classified as an east-west, four-lane business street, B-6, with an 80-foot right-of-way and a Class 2 bikeway.

A Class I bikeway is extended through the site between Executive Boulevard and Old Georgetown Road.

### *Local Area Transportation Review*

The extra parking spaces are needed because the parking demand exceeds the available on-site spaces at certain times of day. The site-generated traffic is not generated by the parking area, but by the actual land use. A traffic study is not required to satisfy Local Area Transportation Review because the applicant proffered not to expand the existing aquatic center or change the hours of operation as discussed in the Recommendation.

### Environment

Environmental Planning staff recommends approval of this Mandatory Referral.

### *Forest Conservation Law*

The application is exempt from providing a Forest Conservation Plan because it is a modification of an existing developed property with no more than a total of 5,000 square feet of forest cleared. A Tree Save Plan has been submitted and approved. There are seven specimen trees that will be impacted by the expansion of the parking lot.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Center is constructed on the M-NCPPC parkland (Wall Park). The center has a 50-meter main pool, a warm-water leisure pool, two hot tubs, a diving platform and water slide, racquetball courts, an exercise room, jogging track, snack bar, and locker rooms. During the operating hours of the facility, County residents were facing a shortage of available parking, especially during peak evening hours. The proposed work will provide additional parking capacity on the site. The project will not affect the traffic flow on the streets surrounding the MAC. This project is not a part of an expansion of the center and will not affect the hours of operation. No public utilities will be impacted by the proposed work and poles and lighting fixtures will match those existing on the site, meeting Montgomery County standards.

The thirteen-year old aquatic center is closed this summer to undergo a \$2 million renovation that includes installing a new air-conditioning, heating and ventilation system. To accommodate the center's parking needs, DPWT is submitting this application to construct additional parking spaces at this time to coordinate with the closing of the center. The new parking will be available when the center reopens in mid-September.

## **ANALYSIS**

### Master Plan

According to the 1992 North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan, "public parkland and recreation facilities play an important role in the well-being of a community" (page 229). The Plan recommends maintaining the area's community facilities that help "create and reinforce a sense of social cohesion—a sense of community" (page 227). The Plan recommends upgrading older facilities to meet the demands of the current population (page 227).

### Transportation

Transportation Planning recommends approval of this project. The Mandatory Referral will not result in expanding the existing aquatic center or changing the hours of operation.

The center is located on the southwest side of Executive Boulevard with Nicholson Lane to the south and Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) to west. The existing access is from Executive Boulevard. A second rear access exists for deliveries from Old Georgetown Road. The access to the new parking area is directly from the existing main drive aisle. Motorists using the new parking area would not adversely impact the internal vehicular circulation.

Additional parking spaces are proposed in three areas within the existing parking area on an existing main drive aisle and where other existing spaces are now located. Motorists using the new parking spaces would not adversely impact the internal vehicular circulation.