



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

July 24, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Community-Based Planning Division

Khalid Afzal, Team Leader *KA*
Georgia Avenue Planning Team

FROM: Frederick Vernon Boyd, Community Planner *FVB*
Georgia Avenue Planning Team (301/495-4654)

SUBJECT: Planning Board Draft Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION: *Approval* to transmit Planning Board Draft to County Executive and County Council

Attached for the Planning Board's final review is the Planning Board Draft Upper Rock Area Master Plan. This draft reflects recommendations for land uses, zones, environmental resources, streets and highways and community facilities that were made during the Plan's nine previous worksessions. It was made available for public comment on July 16. Written comment received on or before July 25 is included with this memorandum. Correspondence received thereafter will be forwarded to the Planning Board prior to its discussion on July 31.

In addition to the proposed changes reviewed and approved by the Planning Board on July 3, the Planning Board Draft includes several additional revisions that arose from Board discussion. The Planning Board sought a more detailed description of east-west roadway alternates evaluated as part of the planning process. That description appears on pages 63 and 64. Additional language on meeting public transit objectives appears on page 74.

Finally, the land use recommendations for the four undeveloped properties have been revised. The allowable density for the Dungan, Casey, Freeman and Woodlawn properties has been revised downward, to 0.33 units per acre with community sewer service. This allows Moderately Priced Dwelling Units to be accommodated on these properties (should the proposed Zoning Text Amendment be approved) while maintaining an absolute maximum density of 0.4 units per acre. The revised recommendation may be found in the Planning Board Draft narrative for the properties and in the Housing Plan.

*Written Comment on the Proposed
Planning Board Draft Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan*

Greater Shady Grove Civic Alliance

July 25, 2003

Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Dear Chairman Berlage,

The Greater Shady Grove Civic Alliance wishes to express concern with two proposals in the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan.

The first area of concern deals with the Redland Road widening and road classification change. The Park Overlook community, which is adjacent to Redland Road, is very concerned that the widening design will adversely impact their neighborhood. This concern is shared by many others in nearby communities. The officers of the Park Overlook HOA and I met with Albert Genetti, Edgar Gonzolas and Bruce Johnston from DPWT to express their concerns and suggest ways to improve the design to make it more acceptable to the community. Mr. Genetti assured the community representatives that their concerns would be considered. Among the specific concerns is the space that was needed by bike paths planned for both sides of Redland Rd. This necessitates taking additional property from homeowners adjacent to the road and removing the green buffer between the sidewalk and the road. We ask that Park and Planning change the recommendation from a class II bikeway to a class I bikeway. Another concern is the visually unappealing use of large overhead sign to signal lane direction. It is felt that this negatively detracts from the character of the existing community and from the design that Park and Planning staff is recommending for the Shady Grove Metro area. The Alliance is also concerned with changing the classification of Redland Road from a residential road to an arterial. Many homes front Redland and have their driveways on the road. Redland Road has historically been a two lane residential road serving a residential community and we encourage Park and Planning to recommend that that use and classification be continued. We ask you to delay approval of the Redland Road recommendations until after the Public Hearing which is scheduled for the fall. The Alliance and the Park Overlook HOA wish to continue to be involved in giving input on the Redland Road design to the staff of DPWT and Park and Planning.

The second area of concern deals with the rezoning of the Catherine Fraley property to allow for high density housing in a part of the property currently zoned R90. In the housing section of the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan there is a suggestion that the affordable housing for the Upper Rock Creek Area be located at the Fraley site. While we support the county in establishing a goal of making housing available to people of all economic levels we feel that affordable housing units should be widely and evenly distributed throughout all areas of all master plans. We do not feel that Derwood or any

other community should be used to solve the county's affordable housing need. To concentrate affordable housing in specific communities does a disservice to those communities and to those living in the affordable housing units. The only other units mentioned in the Upper Rock Creek area that has existing affordable housing units are the 160 low income units on Crabbs Branch Way located in Derwood. The townhouses located on two of the other corners of Muncaster Mill and Redland Road has a large number of low income residents. To place an additional 60 more units on a third corner would not be in the best interest of that neighborhood or the low income resident who live there. This would create a disproportionate number of students from economically disadvantaged homes in the same school. In addition Derwood is bordered on the west by Laytonia and Amity Gardens both of which serve a large number of low income residents. The Derwood community is willing to accept its share of affordable units, but we respectfully recommend that the 60 affordable housing units suggested for the Fraley property be located in another part of the Rock Creek area.

We thank you for you consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,



Pat Labuda

President, Greater Shady Grove Civic Alliance

Derick P. Berlage, Chairman
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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JUL 16 2003

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman:

I write regarding the Master Plan proposals for the major properties in the Upper Rock Creek Area (Casey, Dugan, Fraley, Hendry, Freeman).


1. My first preference would be that this area should NOT be developed AT ALL. Rather that it be left in a rural state indefinitely. We have allowed enormous amounts of woodland and farmland in the county to be turned into residential housing. Eventually we will again want to grow food on this land, but it will be terribly expensive to buy out the development, if not impossible. Any development in this area will increase traffic on the area roads and threaten the quality of the Rock Creek watershed. The ICC may be viewed by some as a solution on the horizon. I view it simply as another source of the problem...too many people living too far out into the country.

2. If development is totally unavoidable, I favor high density development on a portion of the land with the majority of the acreage left in an undeveloped state or as parkland with limited park development. I would say high density should be even greater than that implied by the proposed "clustering of houses on 1/2 acre lots". This still disperses the homes over a very large area compared to 1/4 acre lots in the Rock Creek Village area where I live or zero lot line development as condos and town homes. I utterly despise the estate lot phenomenon that has resulted in large numbers of excessively large, extremely expensive homes on large lots that truly gobble up the country side. This would be the worst possible development plan. Another proposal I have heard would ring the undeveloped areas with houses only along the major roads. This is another extremely bad design. This is well enough for the privileged few who live on the border and can look out their back porch across an expanse of undeveloped rural landscape, but denies the rest of us passing by a vista of such beauty.

3. As an occasional visitor to the undeveloped areas (actually they are mostly hayfields at the moment) behind MacGruder High School...I truly value the impression of unending undisturbed country side one gets looking out to the north. There are few such vistas still in the county. I hope that M-

NCPPC will consider the inspirational value of a rural landscape and preserve as much of this as can be preserved while there is still the chance. Is it too late to convert this area into part of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve? I for one would not mind my taxes going to this purpose. Better that than to more concrete.

Sincerely yours,


Peter C. Preusch
5423 Amberwood Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20853

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Preller, Barbara

From: ScooterZan@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2003 8:53 AM
To: MCP-Chairman; Preller, Barbara
Cc: Boyd, Fred
Subject: Upper Rock Creek

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JUL 17 2003

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Chairman Berlage,
Thank you for your response to my electronic message originally sent on May 19, 2003. I appreciate receiving a prompt response regarding the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan. The main concern of my original letter was the 2002-2003 Upper Rock Creek Master Plan would increase the housing units allowed to be built when compared with the old master plan. As I stated in that letter, the community strongly opposes such a change and wishes to keep the number of housing units that can be built similar to prior Master Plans.

The proposed changes in zoning, while upholding the three major public policy goals of Park and Planning, go strongly against the public's desire to see an increase in allowable housing units under the new Master Plan. Frankly, your letter, while a nice explanation of general policy goals does not address that specific concern.

There are three major reasons the local community opposes an increase in housing allowed under the new master plan and change of zoning.

1. The overcrowding of schools in the Upper Creek area, specifically the Magruder High School cluster.
2. The use of sewer lines into environmentally sensitive areas.
3. The increased traffic congestion.

In your response back on July 17th, you write, "The Planning Board's decisions in Upper Rock Creek uphold three important public policies--preservation of undeveloped open space, maintenance of low density residential character and provision for affordable housing." I am aware of the belief of the importance of these three public policies by Park and Planning staff. I would tend to agree with their importance, however your staff's master plan draft, while attempting to implement these three policy goals, has ignored the wishes of the local public by proposing changes to the zoning that would allow more houses to be built.

For example, you note in your response back that the county council "has begun a comprehensive review" of school overcrowding. While this is an important and long overdue task, it ignores the fact that for the last year or more the community has repeatedly informed Fred Boyd and the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Committee of the fact that multiple schools in the Magruder cluster are horribly overcrowded. I've been to meetings where parents, teachers and students from these schools have publicly commented on the overcrowding. As a teacher at Magruder High School, I can testify to the severe overcrowding. This year my department will have at least six members without their own classroom. Simply put the community doesn't want a zoning change to allow more houses to be built as it will drastically impact the school population size.

The above is an example of how the community has attempted to communicate their concerns, but appear to have yet to be heard. This is the disturbing part. In this case the local community is in near agreement about the desire to keep the zoning the same. You rarely find such agreement about any public policy issue (just witness the ICC).

Government exists to represent the will of the people and implement policies for the good of the community. Admittedly, your organization faces tough decisions relating to land use. However, I would suggest these are not mutually divergent goals. If Park and Planning proposed a master plan that mandated MPDU's, allowed cluster development while preserving some open space AND kept the new housing allowed as in the prior master plan, the local community would by

and large support that decision. This way, your policies can be implemented
AND supported by the public.

Thank you again for listening.

Scott Zanni
Magruder High School Social Studies Teacher

Preller, Barbara

From: Linda [lprueter@usinternet.com]
Sent: Friday, July 25, 2003 7:49 AM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan

Dear Mr. Berlage,

I would like to support the objectives of the board as quoted in the July 9 Gazette, "to protect the residential quality and the environment." In doing so, I feel that I need to oppose any additional residential development in the area in question.

The infrastructure has already been vastly affected by recent development, and I fear that it is currently being stretched practically beyond its capacity. Traffic congestion is one of my primary areas of concern. When it takes me 10 minutes to get out of my own driveway and my commute time has doubled on the way home simply because of volume of traffic, I cannot believe that additional residents can be adequately accommodated.

The environment has already sustained a drastic change, as well. The number of animals that have been displaced from their homes is too many, in my estimation.

Thank you for considering my opposition to this latest building project.

Sincerely,
Linda R. Prueter
7205 Needwood Road
Derwood, MD 20855
301-869-5709

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JUL 21 2003

Preller, Barbara

From: Snee, James [James.Snee@MWAA.com]
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2003 1:47 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Cc: snees@estart.com
Subject: Stop the re-classification of Redland and Muncaster Roads (URC Master Plan)

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

> Good Day Mr. Berlage and fellow Board Members,
>
> I am writing today as a concerned Derwood Resident and an officer of the Shady Grove Civic Alliance, who has lived in a neighborhood adjacent to Redland Road for over twenty years. We as a community are strongly opposed to the destruction of residential roads and upgrading of them to become arterial thru-ways for the needs of all other communities. This topic has been brought up within the Mill Creek Towne neighborhood, and the Greater Shady Grove Civic Alliance, as well as other civic groups within Derwood, all organizations are strongly opposed to the re-classification of both Muncaster Road and Redland Road. We fully understand what it means to take residential roads with dozens of private residential driveways and upgrade them to 6 lane arterial roads. When residents along Randolph Road, (the alternate Beltway) try to pull into or out of there own driveways, they must accomplish death-defying feats. We don't want Derwood dissected by that Randolph Road type dilemma. Now the planning staff wants the Muncaster and Redland Road residents to do the same thing while a never ending destruction of our residential community continues.
>
> The current Derwood community was established years ago as a low-density buffer zone (between Rockville and Gaithersburg) and a transportation hub for the Metro. With those two goals in mind, the community was then sub-divided into different Master Plans, so the Master Plan could be modified to meet the particular needs of a transit hub. Then another Master Plan sub-division occurred so low density housing with sewers and low density housing on septic systems could be modified under two more Master Plans. In the history of watching communities grow, many within our community refer to this as "DIVIDE AND CONQUER". Derwood is a total community, our children go to schools within the Derwood zip code (20855) and even though some of the children must attend three different schools within three different Master Plans, they reside and attend schools all within one community that was inappropriately cut-up by some of your predecessors within the Planning Board. "Derwood is more than a zipcode". The community should be treated as one community, not multiple little pieces.
>
> During the years gone by, Derwood has been cut into pieces a little at a time. First the Shady Grove Road development, then the Shady Grove extension onto Air Park and onto Rte 124, then Mid-county Highway, (future M-83 extensions to follow) and I-370, (future ICC to follow). Now we have a grid that has even cut the small community of Mill Creek Towne into two separate pieces. Now without any input from local residents or the MPAG working with the planning staff, the staff are entering transportation requirements into the Upper Rock Creek (URC) Master Plan that directly affect the communities of Upper Rock Creek Master Plans and the adjacent properties within the Shady Grove Sector Master Plans and the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan. We have had monthly Alliance meetings to discuss these issues and as an officer of the Greater Shady Grove Civic Alliance, I want to clarify that we had a unanimous vote by our membership, to oppose the re-classification of the two "RESIDENTIAL" roads (Redland and Muncaster) that dissect our community.
>
> The current plan of intersection improvements along Redland Road is a phony facade. The intersection upgrades are being used to hide the real motivation of dissecting the Derwood community again by using the 6 lane wide right-of-way along Muncaster and claim the upgrade will not effect the two lane Redland Road in the future, even though Redland is also being re-classified as arterial. Eventually, a 6-lane path will exist between Rte 108 and the Shady Grove Metro, so that residents on the eastside and northside of Montgomery County can access the Metro and destroy our low density residential community.>
>
> I am not a hard core NIMBY and do not advocate ZERO Growth. I just expect future growth to consider the concerns of established communities and not establish new processes that would destroy existing communities. When developing new growth within an established

community, our community wants to ensure that adequate public facilities are in place and compatible with already existing infrastructure. If the addition of new public facilities means destroying another community, maybe the new growth development is inappropriately planned. Adding public facilities to meet the needs of communities does not always have to mean the destruction of other neighborhoods. Those of us that are able to see through the phony facade of intersection upgrades on Redland Road, understand that arterial re-classification is just the first step to adding many lanes of traffic dissecting Derwood with a high density Redland, Muncaster, Needwood, and Bowie Mill Road.

>
> As a officer within several civic associations, I understand that you cannot be held accountable by Derwood residents within the next series of elections, but we hope you are reasonable individuals. But if you desire to fully understand how the Derwood community feels about the piecemeal destruction of our community, mark your calendar and join us on the evening of August 26th at the "Outta Way Cafe" adjacent to the Derwood Post Office for a Derwood Dinner and Night Out with Friends and Family, fund raiser. Proceeds of the fund raiser will be used to support legal battles against the various Master Plan process violations and systematic attempts to destroy our community.

>
> Again, I want to re-inforce our position, re-classification of Muncaster and Redland Road is wrong. It will permit high volumes of traffic down roads that little children cross daily to go between Candlewood Elementary School and Blueberry Hill Park. We strongly oppose this action as a unified community. We know the next step is eliminating the speed bumps on Needwood and connect it to Bowie Mill Road, so two high-volume paths will be available for the North and East county commuters to the I-270 corridor or the Metro area. With the two Route 108 paths going West (either Bowie Mill to Needwood or Muncaster to Redland) the future need of a 10 lane Redland Road between Briardale and I-370/Metro is a destructive path that is bound to occur.

>
> Please consider the negative impact on the Derwood community if the roads are allowed to be re-classified. Following the large increase in traffic, will be the re-zoning of property adjacent to these re-classified roads and the destruction of Derwood proceeds.

>
> Sincerely,

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>
> James Snee
> 18006 Mill Creek Drive
> Derwood, Md 20855

>
> Concerned Derwood Citizen;

>
> Secretary, Greater Shady Grove Civic Alliance;

>
> Committee Member, (Community Liaison), Mill Creek Towne Civic Alliance

>
> Vice President, another community coalition

Preller, Barbara

From: Christi Schaefer [cschaefer@haifire.com]
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2003 11:56 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Stop the re-classification of Redland and Muncaster Roads (URC Master Plan)

Mr. Berlage and fellow Board Members,

We are writing today as concerned Derwood Residents, who live in a neighborhood adjacent to Redland Road. While we purchased our home only three years ago, we plan to be here for the next 20+ years. As concerned residents, we reviewed the master plan on file before we purchased our home. Most of the plans (we border three) have been revised in the three years since our move to Derwood.

The reclassification and widening of Muncaster and Redland Roads will surely put the final nail in the Town of Derwood's coffin. Already the widening of Muncaster Mill/Shady Grove/Airpark Roads has increased traffic speed and traffic flow through our area -- only to benefit those building houses outside our area.

We oppose the re-classification of the two "RESIDENTIAL" roads (Redland and Muncaster) that dissect our community.

Please consider the negative impact on the Derwood community if the roads are allowed to be re-classified. Following the large increase in traffic will be the re-zoning of property adjacent to these re-classified roads and the destruction of Derwood.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rob & Christi Schaefer
17808 Cliffbourne Lane
Derwood, MD 20855

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JUL 21 2003

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION**

Preller, Barbara

From: Williamson, Beth [bwilliamson@MSS-INC.com]
Sent: Friday, July 18, 2003 5:09 PM
To: mcp-chairman@mncppc-mc.org.
Subject: Upper Rock Creek Master Plan

To whom it may concern:

PLEASE do NOT re-classify Redland Road and Muncaster Road as arterial roads. I don't want the noise, traffic or commercialism that could come about because of the re-classification.

I live in the Park Overlook neighborhood next to Redland Road and I drive on Muncaster Road frequently. One of the reasons I moved to Derwood is because it is a quiet community. Please don't ruin Derwood by changing the road classifications.

Keeping the roads as residential slows down the travel (keeping people safer), prevents the addition of ugly commercial properties and keeps the quiet community we love. More traffic will make our neighborhood less safe, increases the noise and generally degrades our town. There are plenty of other alternatives to Redland Road and Muncaster Road, like the ICC.

I don't want another Randolph Road splitting Derwood in half. PLEASE listen to the residents. KEEP REDLAND ROAD AND MUNCASTER ROAD CLASSIFIED AS RESIDENTIAL! Thank you for your support.

Beth Williamson
Concerned Derwood Resident

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JUL 21 2003

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MICHIGAN NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND TRAINING COMMISSION**

Preller, Barbara

From: Jo Ann Koffman [jrkoffman@msn.com]
Sent: Friday, July 18, 2003 3:48 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Redland and Muncaster Roads

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JUL 21 2003

July 18, 2003

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mr. Derick P. Berlage
Chairman, MNCPPC

Dear Chairman Berlage:

We are adamantly opposed to any proposal to turn Redland and Muncaster Roads in arterials. A change in these roads will further subdivide our neighborhood and make it even more difficult for residents to back out of their driveways or to turn onto these roads. Nor do we want the commercial development that would accompany an arterial classification. For the past 36 years that we have lived in Derwood, it has been a residential community, and we see no reason for any government agency to force Derwood to become otherwise.

We have seen what the county has done to Randolph Road and we do not want a similar fate for Redland and Muncaster.

Very truly yours,

Boyd and Jo Ann Koffman
16613 Frontenac Terrace
Derwood, MD 20855

7/21/2003

(13)

Preller, Barbara

From: Jackie & Chris Suzich [jsuzich@erols.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2003 8:09 AM
To: county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Reland Road Widening Supporter

Dear Council President and all Council Members,
I am writing to express my support for the widening of Redland Road between Crabbs Branch Way and Baederwood Lane in Derwood. Similarly, I support the intersection improvements that Mr. Jon Hutchings and the DPW&T staff have proposed. As a 10-year resident of Derwood, I can attest to the increasing traffic congestion at this intersection. The intersection's current design and capacity, combined with the current configuration of Redland Road, fails to effectively move vehicles, particularly during rush hours.

I regret the loss of trees and the loss of the berm near Park Overlook. But DPW&T have provided assurances that many trees will be planted to compensate for the lost trees. I also want to state my strong support for the addition of bike paths with the proposed improvements. These bike paths, which will also be heavily used by pedestrians and Metro riders, are needed desperately.

I support the widening of Redland Road and the Crabbs Branch Way intersection improvements. I urge you to support the current widening and intersection improvement plans. I look forward to hearing your position.

Thank you for your time.

Christopher Suzich
16831 Bethayres Road
Derwood, MD 20855
jsuzich@erols.com
301.417.9522