

October 24, 2003

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Jeffrey Zyontz, Chief  
County-wide Planning Division *JZ/KH*

Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief  
Transportation Planning *RCH*

John Carter, Chief *JC*  
Community-Based Planning

**FROM:** Larry Cole: 301-495-4528, for the Park and Planning Department

**PROJECT:** Greencastle Road  
From 400 feet south of Robey Road to Greencastle Ridge Terrace  
CIP No. 500100

**REVIEW TYPE:** Mandatory Referral No. MR No. 03812-DPW&T-1

**APPLICANT:** Montgomery County Department of  
Public Works and Transportation

**APPLYING FOR:** Plan Approval

**COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING TEAM AREA:** Eastern County

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH COMMENTS TO DPWT**

Staff recommends that the Board approve the proposed project (see Attachment 1: Vicinity Map) with the following comments to DPWT:

1. Construct a median with a pedestrian refuge at the intersection of the Fairland Recreational Park entrance and Wildlife Lane. Stripe the crosswalk and provide advance warning signage at the intersection.

2. Provide a connection between the proposed trail and the existing park trail at Greencastle Ridge Terrace, including a striped crosswalk and advance warning signage on Greencastle Road.
3. Light all intersections and crosswalks to the standards of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA).
4. Undertake a before-and-after study of similar projects to show the effects of roadway widening and turn-lane additions on speeding.
5. Construct a lead sidewalk from the Wildlife Lane intersection to the nearest parking lot driveway in the park.
6. Provide a two-foot to six-foot offset from the curb to the proposed trail on the northwest corner of the Wildlife Lane intersection.
7. Minimize disturbance to trees along the west side of Greencastle Road between Wildlife Lane and Greencastle Ridge Terrace and use tree protection measures to save as many trees as possible.
8. Modify the typical fifty-foot spacing of street trees as necessary and consider minor modifications to the alignment of the proposed trail to minimize the removal of existing trees.
9. The area of disturbance on park property shall be planted to re-establish the wooded buffer between the park and Greencastle Road.
10. Coordinate with parks staff to reserve the use of some parking spaces in the Fairland Recreational Park for the use of the contractor.
11. No storage of equipment/materials and no staging will be allowed on park property without prior approval from Park Inspector and/or Park Manager. Public access to Fairland Recreational Park must be maintained. The Park manager must be notified sixty days in advance of any proposed change in park access.
12. Submit landscape plans to staff for review.

**PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION:** None.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This project would reconstruct Greencastle Road from 400 feet south of the Robey Road intersection to Greencastle Ridge Terrace (approximately 2,100 feet). The improved road would have concrete curb and gutter. Landscaping and stormwater management facilities would be included. An eight-foot wide shared-use trail would be built on the west side of the road.

The 900-foot section of roadway from south of Robey Road to Wildlife Lane at the Fairland Recreational Park entrance would be fifty feet wide and would have two travel lanes, left- and right-turn lanes to the park and on-road bike lanes. The remaining 1,200-foot section of the roadway from Wildlife Lane to Greencastle Ridge Terrace would be 34 feet wide, consisting of two twelve-foot travel lanes and two five-foot on-road bike lanes.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

This project was initiated by DPWT to provide entrance improvements for Fairland Recreational Park.

### Traffic and Safety

The proposed improvements would provide better access to Fairland Recreational Park by providing a northbound right-turn lane and a southbound left-turn lane into the park (see Attachment 2). Traffic safety would be enhanced by removing turning vehicles bound for the park from the through lanes, greatly reducing the likelihood of rear-end collisions.

One concern expressed at the public meeting was that the existing speeding problem along this road could be exacerbated by the proposed project. Staff believes that this is a reasonable concern since, by removing the obstacle posed by vehicles waiting to turn, drivers would not be forced to slow down at the park entrance.

The above safety advantages and speeding disadvantages are typical of almost every project to add turn lanes. On balance, it appears that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages but **staff recommends that DPWT undertake a before-and-after study of similar projects** to ensure that this is the case. Because this is such a typical improvement, the results would be useful to all concerned. This topic also came up recently in the Planning Board's review of the Mandatory Referral of the Fairland Road project on January 9, 2003. Should the study show that there is a problem, mitigation alternatives should be explored to avoid this problem before it occurs.

### Bicyclist and Pedestrian Accommodation

The options for traffic calming on arterials are now fairly limited but the pedestrian crossing of Greencastle Road between the park entrance and Wildlife Lane should be made as safe as it can be. A left-turn lane is not proposed to be provided to Wildlife Lane because of the low traffic volume, so there is room in the proposed roadway to provide a median opposite the left-turn lane for the park (see Attachment 2). A median could accommodate a pedestrian refuge and would provide some traffic-calming benefit. **Staff recommends that a median with pedestrian refuge be provided on the east leg of Greencastle Road at the park entrance. The crosswalk should be striped and advance warning signage provided.** The recommended median could provide some traffic-calming benefit by breaking up the uninterrupted expanse of pavement at the widened intersection.

On the northwest corner of the Wildlife Lane intersection, the trail is proposed to be directly adjacent to the curb. This is an undesirable situation because it would put trail users too close to traffic and this proximity could encourage them to cross on the north leg of the intersection rather than the south leg, which would have the recommended pedestrian refuge. **While there is a conflicting objective to preserve existing trees, staff believes that an offset is necessary and recommends that a two-foot to six-foot offset be provided from the curb to the proposed trail.**

As discussed below in Parks Impacts, the proposed storm drain installation would require the reconstruction of a short segment of trail in Fairland Recreational Park that now dead-ends just short of the Greencastle Ridge Terrace intersection (see Attachment 3). **Staff recommends that the park trail be extended to the intersection and a crosswalk striped on Greencastle Road.**

Adequate light levels are needed to ensure that drivers can see people crossing between the proposed trail and the park. At a minimum, **staff recommends that all intersections and crosswalks be lighted to IESNA standards.**

## **Landscaping**

One of the concerns expressed at the public meeting was that the landscaping that was done as part of the nearby Robey Road project seemed very haphazard, that the design did not seem thoughtful. Also, several of the trees that were planted on that project died and were not replaced. As a response to this comment, DPWT now plans to replace these dead trees as part of the subject project.

Street trees would be provided between the curb and sidewalk on the subject project but no landscape plans have yet been produced. **Staff recommends that landscape plans be submitted for comment.**

## **Environmental**

DPWT is required to comply with the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) stormwater management requirements. Stormwater flow from all outfalls must be non-erosive and disturbed areas should be seeded and mulched.

## **Forest Conservation Law Compliance**

The project has an approved Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation. It is exempt from Forest Conservation Plan requirements because construction will occur entirely within a public utility or highway right-of-way and forest clearing will not exceed a total of 40,000 square feet. The project is not in a stream buffer and no specimen trees will be affected.

The project is not subject to a Tree Save Plan but care should be taken during the pre-construction establishment of the limits of disturbance to make adjustments to save as many trees as possible along the west side of Greencastle Road between

Wildlife Lane and Greencastle Ridge Terrace. Tree protection measures such as fencing should be installed where appropriate. The typical fifty-foot spacing of street trees should be modified as necessary and minor modifications to the alignment of the proposed trail should be made to minimize the removal of existing trees.

## **Parks Impacts**

As noted above, left- and right-turn lanes would be built to improve vehicular access to Fairland Recreational Park opposite Wildlife Lane. The unfinished park entrance would be paved as part of this project.

In addition to the median pedestrian refuge, striped crosswalk and lighting recommended above, **staff recommends that a lead sidewalk be constructed as part of this project from the Wildlife Lane intersection to the closest parking lot driveway in the park**, a distance of about 150 feet, to ensure that safe pedestrian access to the park is provided as well.

Storm drain piping and a sand filter basin would be constructed in the park opposite Greencastle Ridge Terrace. The storm drain installation would require the reconstruction of a segment of trail in the park that now dead-ends just short of the Greencastle Ridge Terrace intersection. As recommended by staff above, when this trail is reconstructed, it should be extended to the intersection and a crosswalk striped on Greencastle Road.

**The two park connections recommended by staff would greatly improve bicyclist and pedestrian access to Fairland Recreational Park's extensive trail system** (see Attachment 4).

The proposed construction would require the removal of a large number of small trees on park property that form a wooded buffer between the park and Greencastle Road. **Staff recommends that DPWT replant the disturbed area to re-establish this buffer.**

One of the concerns raised by residents was that during the nearby Robey Road construction, contractors' vehicles were parked on residents' private parking spaces and on private streets. The staffs agreed that **DPWT should work with Parks staff to reserve the use of some parking spaces in the park for the use of the contractor** since the project is being done to improve park access.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

A public meeting was held for this project on September 25, 2003 at the Greencastle Elementary School. Attendance was very light, perhaps affected by the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel.

## **RELATED PROJECTS**

Two recent proposed developments are within the project limits and are shown on Attachment 5.

The Preliminary Plan and Site Plan for the Greencastle Towns were approved by the Board on October 20, 2003. The developer is required to build the trail along his frontage and a crosswalk on Greencastle Road at the Wildlife Lane/Fairland Recreational Park entrance or to contribute to DPWT's project.

The Preliminary Plan and Site Plan for the Day Property are anticipated to be reviewed by the Board in the near future. Staff will recommend that the developer be required to build the trail across his frontage or to contribute to DPWT's project.

LC:kcw  
Attachments



Fairland Recreational Park

Park entrance to be paved

Staff recommends a median with pedestrian refuge and a striped crosswalk.

Staff recommends a sidewalk be provided to the park's parking lot.

Staff recommends that the proposed trail be pulled back from the road.



Wildlife Lane

Greencastle Road

SOLID CURVE NO. 2

61+00



Fairland Recreational Park



Existing Park Trail

Staff recommends the Park trail be extended to the intersection and a crosswalk provided.

Temporary roadway widening during construction

71+00

Greencastle Road

Proposed Trail

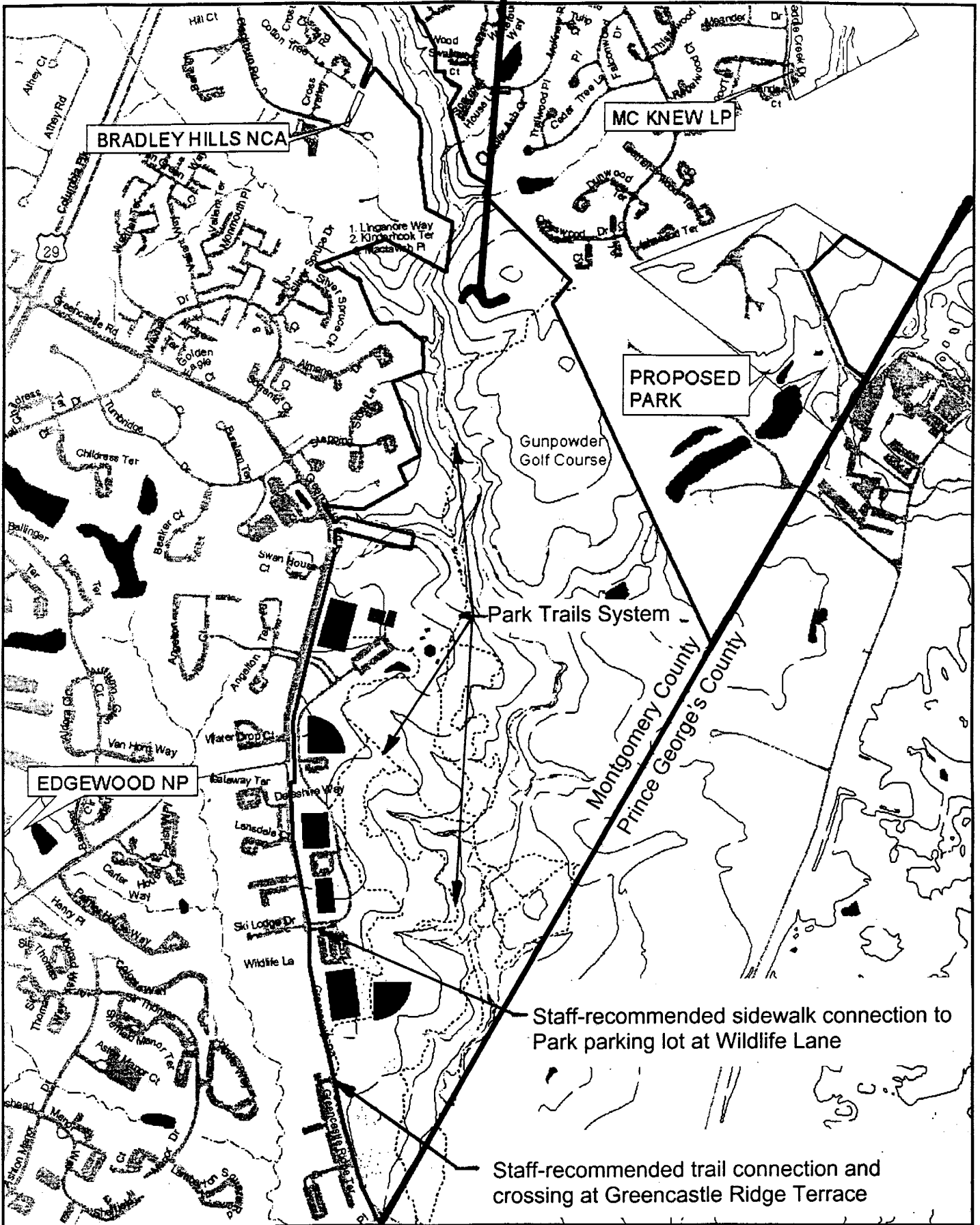
Greencastle Ridge Terrace

LIMIT OF STA 79

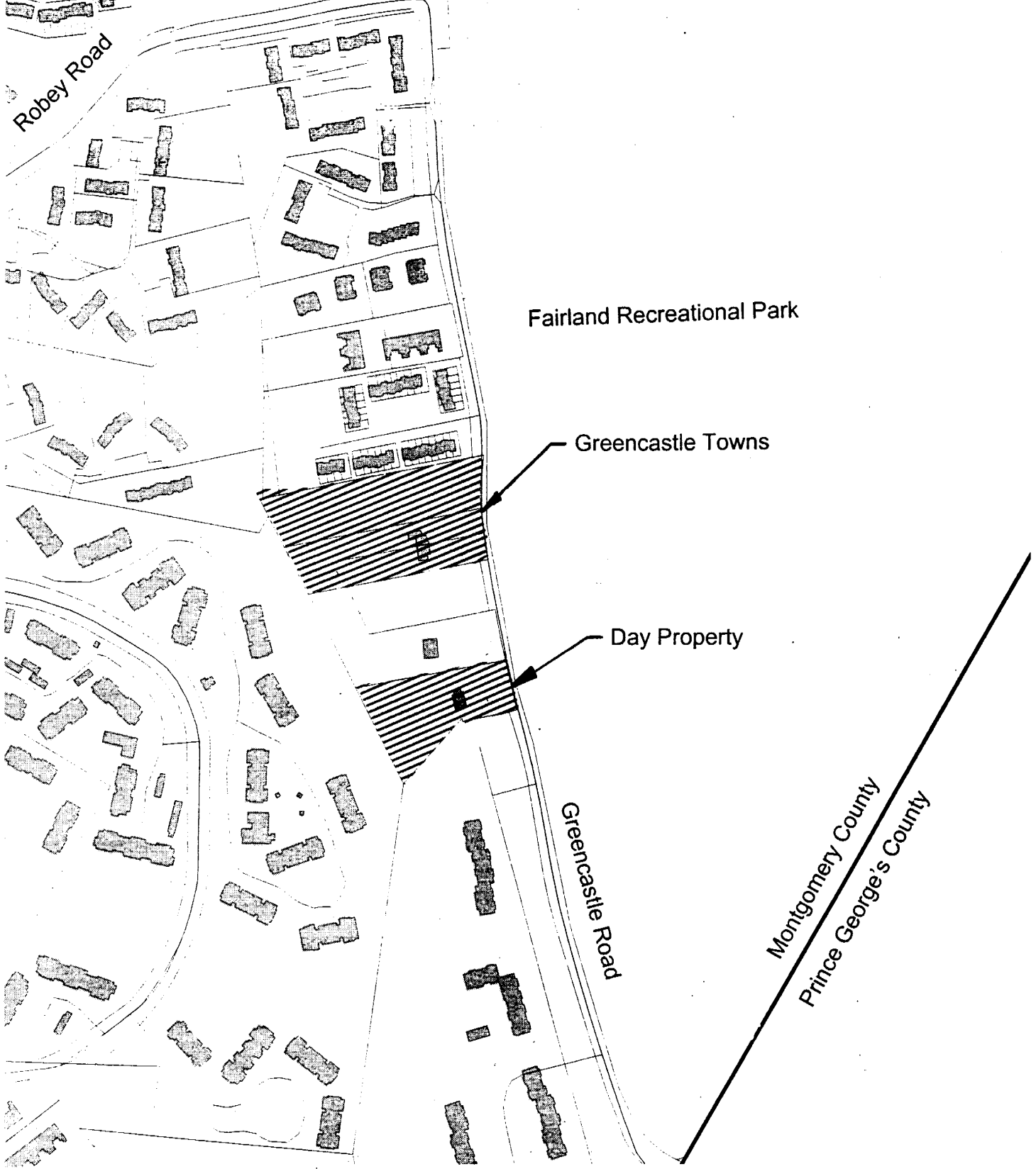
EX RIGHT OF

# Fairland Recreational Park

3928 Greencastle Road, Fairland

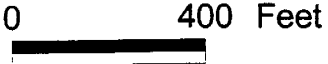


# Greencastle Road Improvements



Attachment 5

Map Compiled On 10-22-2003 at 05:04 PM  
Map Scale: 1 inch = 400 feet or 1:4800



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- Master Plan of Highways Centerline 2
- DPWT DIME 2000 Street Centerlines
- MCPPD Planimetric Street Centerlines
- Buildings
- Property
- Municipalities
- Montgomery County