



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

September 22, 2017

To: Khalid Afzal, Master Planner Supervisor,  
Montgomery County Planning Department Area 2

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Montgomery County Planning Department Area 2

Via: Mitra Pedoeem, Deputy Director, Administration  
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Park Planning and Stewardship Division

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From: Dominic Quattrocchi, AICP, Planner Coordinator  
Park Planning and Stewardship Division

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**SUBJECT: VIVA WHITE OAK 320180040, 280 ACRES, GLOBAL LIFE SCIENCE  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION / MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**

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The Department of Parks has significant concerns with size and location of the proposed local park depicted in the Concept Plan Submission- 320180040. The White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan (approved July 2014) specifies a collocated school and local park for the Life Sciences/FDA Village Center. Based on MCPS and M-NCPPC standards, a collocated site should generally involve at minimum 15-20 acres of unconstrained land-not 8 acres as proposed.

Applicable area master plan language states:

- Provide a Local Park with a large adult-sized rectangular athletic field and other amenities such as community gardens, dog park, basketball courts, community open space, urban wooded areas and play areas. Provide on-street parking to the extent possible and assume a reduction from the typical parking standards applied by the Department of Parks, since many park users could walk or take transit. For the athletic fields, consider synthetic turf and lighting to provide longer hours of use and higher overall capacity. To maximize efficiencies of parking and community use, co-locate with a proposed elementary school, which will be needed if potential residential densities are achieved. If other potential public amenities, such as a community meeting space or a library are proposed, also consider co-location with the park. (White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan (July 2014) pg. 89)

The Department of Parks is enthusiastic about the potential benefits of colocation but views the sharing of an 8-acre site (4 for Parks and 4 for MCPS) as unrealistic and a negative acquisition for the Department of Parks. Four acres for a local park is too small to accommodate standard local park amenities, especially when considering the specificity of the master plan recommendations and recognized PROS needs for the White Oak area. As MCPS minimum standard for an elementary school site is nearly 8 acres, the Parks Department would be placed in a service delivery and maintenance dilemma as the school will consistently be utilizing the entire acreage for physical education classes, recess, and special events- effectively negating dedicated park use, field permitting, and the intangible but important feel of a stand-alone public park. Further, the MCPS has cited concerns about locating elementary schools on main roads such as the proposed FDA Boulevard and has also cited that 4 acres for a school site limits the potential for standard elementary school amenities.

approved July 19, 2012

Figure 3 - The 2005 M-NCPPC Montgomery County Park Classification System

PARK TYPE	PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL FACILITIES*	APPROXIMATE SIZE
<b>COUNTY-WIDE PARKS - Parks in this category serve all residents of Montgomery County</b>			
<b>- Recreational Oriented Parks</b>			
<b>Regional Parks</b>	Large parks that provide a wide range of recreational opportunities but retain 2/3 of the acreage as conservation areas.	Picnic / playground areas, tennis courts, athletic fields, golf course, campgrounds, and water-oriented recreation areas.	200 acres or more
<b>Recreational Parks</b>	Parks larger than 50 acres in size that are more intensively developed than Regional Parks, but may also contain natural areas.	Athletic fields, tennis courts, multi-use courts, picnic/playground areas, golf course, trails, and natural areas.	50 acres or more
<b>Special Parks</b>	These parks include areas that contain features of historic and cultural significance.	Vary, but may include agricultural centers, gardens, small conference centers, historic structures, etc.	Varies
<b>- Conservation Oriented Parks</b>			
<b>Stream Valley Parks</b>	Interconnected linear parks along major stream valleys providing conservation and recreation areas.	Hiker-biker trails, fishing, picnicking, playground areas.	Varies
<b>Conservation Area Parks</b>	Large natural areas acquired to preserve specific natural archaeological or historic features. They also provide opportunities of compatible recreation activities.	Trails, fishing areas, nature study areas, and informal picnic areas.	Varies
<b>COMMUNITY USE PARKS - Parks in this category serve residents of surrounding communities</b>			
<b>Urban Parks</b>	Very small parks, serving highly urban areas.	Landscaping, sitting/picnic areas, play equipment, courts, and shelters.	1 Acre
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	Small parks providing informal recreation in residential areas.	Play equipment, play field, sitting area, shelter, tennis and Multi-use courts. (Do not include regulation size ballfields).	2.5 Acres
<b>Local Parks</b>	Larger parks that provide ballfields and both programmed and un-programmed recreation facilities.	Ballfields, play equipment, tennis and multi-use courts, sitting/picnic area, shelters, buildings and other facilities.	15 Acres
<b>Neighborhood Conservation Areas</b>	Small parcels of conservation oriented parkland in residential areas, generally dedicated at the time of subdivision.	Generally undeveloped, may include a stormwater management pond and related facilities.	Varies

\* This list is not all-inclusive, but includes facilities typical of each park type.

Figure 1: Program of Requirements (POR) and acreage recommendations for park types from PROS 2017 (see the Park Type Summary Chart in Chapter 2 – Policy Framework and Plan Foundation. Note 15 acre approximate size for Local Parks.

An important consideration, part of but not limited to the Viva White Concept Plan, is the potential geographic inequity creation of parks and schools on undersized sites create. Undersized locations minimize the public benefits that less dense area of the county are afforded, create hardships and limited opportunities solely based on geography. The ability to maintain grass and provide meaningful open space, trees, and diverse public amenities are essentially forfeited on undersized sites. An “urban park paradigm” may have entered the current Planning vernacular but comes with significant consequences.

Also, the concept plan for Viva White Oaks show trails, bridges, and connections in Paint Branch Stream Valley Park that don't exist and that aren't feasible. The Department of Parks looks forward to working with the applicant to determine appropriate connections through PBSVP as this project moves forward.

As the Viva White Oak Concept Plan is in a preliminary stage and involves 279 acres of largely undeveloped land, a significant portion of which was prior public land, the Department of Parks is confident that there is enough design flexibility to come up with a larger and more appropriately located combined elementary and local park site for the Viva White Oak Project.

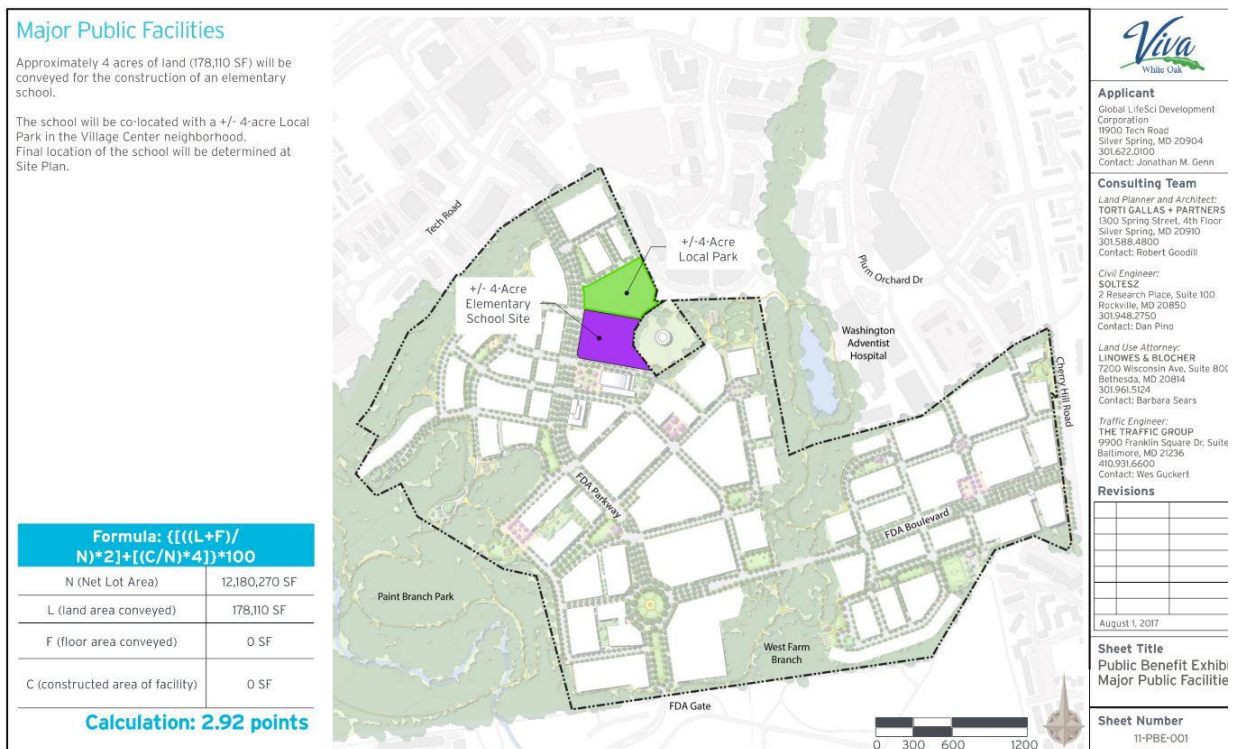


Figure 2: Proposed Concept Plan, Public Benefits, Viva White Oak