



Revised February 20, 2020

Meadowbrook Stables Phase II

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. Why are the Stables seeking to build a structure to cover one of the riding rings?

To fulfill its mission and to ensure that Meadowbrook Stables remains financially and programmatically strong and viable, the Stables has determined that a covered riding arena is crucial to its operations. A covered arena is:

- Beneficial to horse health and wellness.
- Vital to rider training, ensuring that riders can train on a year-round basis despite inclement weather and extreme temperatures.

2. How will the structure improve the operation of the stables?

It will allow the Stables to safely operate its existing programs, regardless of the season or weather, and to avoid critical lost revenue due to weather-related event cancellations.

3. Why is the building being built over ring C?

Rider training. In order to maximize the number of riders that can benefit from a covered riding ring in bad weather, a 125' x 225' enclosure is needed. The existing Ring C is 200' x 300', which allows the enclosure and supporting site work to be installed within the existing footprint. Although Ring D was initially proposed as a site for the arena 20 years ago, the understanding of the space needed for horses to safely canter and jump has evolved (increased) since then. Today, the US Equestrian Federation recommends a minimum ring size of 20,000 sf for hunters, and up to 30,000 sf for jumpers. This is in keeping with other covered or indoor riding rings in the region. For example, lessons currently take place in rings A, B, C, and D, with ring C being large enough to accommodate two lesson groups, one with a jump course. Currently, in the event of bad weather, all lessons are cancelled or are replaced with indoor activities without riding. In the event of poor weather conditions, the proposed ring C covered arena will be large enough to accommodate the two lessons that occur simultaneously now. If Ring D were covered it would not be large enough to accommodate as much use as Ring C. Therefore, Ring C was the best candidate for being covered.

Horse welfare. To maintain the health, soundness, fitness and mental well-being of its horses, Meadowbrook is committed to giving each of its 50 horses at least 2 to 3 hours daily of free, unstructured time. To this end, horses are turned out in Rings A, B and D (the rings closest to the barn) where they can be observed by staff from the barn. Since Ring C is used for training and skill-building and not used for turn-out it is the best choice for being covered.

4. Will the new riding ring impact traffic or parking?

The proposed riding ring is not expected to impact traffic or parking, as there will be no increase in the number or frequency of the Stables lessons or clients. The Stables lease with M-NCPPC limits the number of horses on the property to 50, as well the days and hours that the Stables can be open and the number of horse shows it can have each year. Thus, the addition of a covered riding ring will not result in any increase in the number of horses, riders, staff, lessons, or horse shows on the property, and so it is expected that there will not be any increase in Stables-related traffic or parking.

5. Will the new covered riding ring impact noise in the neighborhood?

The proposed riding ring is not expected to increase noise levels, as it will not result in an increase in the numbers or frequency of lessons, shows, or events. The only short-term impact on noise levels would occur during the approximately 8-10 week time period needed for construction.

6. What will be the impact of the structure on the environment?

It is expected that the covered arena will be an improvement environmentally over the status quo in terms of ambient dust, light spill, sediment/nutrient runoff, and renewable energy production.

- The proposed project will result in reduced ambient dust to the surrounding community because dust from existing exposed Ring C – where the jumping lessons take place – will be reduced. The covered arena will both reduce the operational area and allow better moisture control to keep dust down.
- The project proposes to remove 20 existing light poles around Ring C, and interior lighting will be better directed to the riding area. The riding ring cover will dramatically reduce light spill to the surrounding area. According to the photometrics study, the project will reduce light levels extending beyond Meadowbrook Lane by 38%, from 0.2 to 0.0 foot-candles.
- The covered arena and access surfaces will cover approximately two-thirds of the existing exposed sand riding Ring C. The balance of the area will be planted with native trees, shrubs, and grasses that will help capture and filter sediment and nutrients. By reducing the amount of sand surface exposed to rain, potential sediment/nutrient runoff into Rock Creek will be greatly reduced from the existing Ring C.
- The proposed solar installation on the south side of the roof will generate over 150,000 kWh of power per year. This is the equivalent of planting over 70,000 trees or taking over 500 cars off the road. The proposed solar installation will help Montgomery County meet its Energy and Climate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2027.

7. How can construction of the covered arena be allowed in the floodplain?

Construction within the floodplain in Montgomery County is regulated at the Local, State, and Federal levels. Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services must issue a Floodplain District Permit and Maryland Department of the Environment must issue a Letter of Authorization before construction can occur. Both agencies require hydraulic modeling to show there will be negligible impact to the floodplain elevations as part of their review and approval process. Additionally, they will look at what alternatives were considered, how impacts are being minimized, and floodproofing measures. While

these agencies and Montgomery Parks look to minimize building construction in the floodplain, they do recognize the practical limitations of the existing stables facility, which was constructed prior to any floodplain regulations. Several floodplain impact reduction measures have been incorporated into the project design including lowering the finished floor elevation of the covered arena, making the building flow-through to prevent blocking floodwaters, and lowering exterior grades around the covered arena to provide additional floodplain storage. Additionally, by siting the proposed covered arena within Ring C, it will be located as far back from Rock Creek as is possible within the site. While the hydraulic modeling has not been finalized, initial reviews indicate the project will not increase the floodplain elevations.

8. Who is paying for construction? Are tax dollars being used?

No public funds are being used for this project. The construction is being entirely financed through a \$1.5 million capital fundraising campaign by the Meadowbrook Stables Foundation. Donors to the campaign include current and past riders and their families, as well as several private or family foundations with an interest in horses and equestrian sport.

9. Will the viewing area be open to the public?

Yes, like the rest of the Stables grounds and facilities, the viewing area will be open to the public seven days per week.

10. How will the historic character of the property be affected?

The building will be located within Ring C, which is outside the designated Historic Environmental Setting which includes the main barn, the farrier shed, and about half of Ring D. Nevertheless, the proposed design concept for the new arena has been reviewed by the Maryland Historical Trust, which found that the building will not have an adverse effect on the character of the historic site. That said, the Stables is working with Parks, the architect, and the builder to design the proposed building to be contextually appropriate within the existing campus and reduce impacts on the viewshed.

11. What will be the public benefit of adding this structure?

Meadowbrook Stables is a community-based, community-focused organization. This structure will help Meadowbrook improve the quality of its programs, take better care of its horses, and help ensure the long-term viability of the Stables facility.

Meadowbrook Stables is one of the oldest and last remaining urban riding facilities in the United States. Since 1934, Meadowbrook has played an important role in the Maryland and National Capital region, and in the local community. Thousands of children and adults have ridden at Meadowbrook, attracted by its positive culture, commitment to horse welfare, and tradition of excellence in riding and horsemanship. Most importantly, Meadowbrook's riders and staff reflect the qualities of kindness, responsibility, sportsmanship, teamwork, and compassionate care for animals that are central to our mission.

Meadowbrook is also a place where members of the public, including schools, families, seniors and others, can come to watch and interact with the horses, and learn about them. Unlike virtually any other equestrian facility in the country, Meadowbrook welcomes the public to visit seven days per week, on a

year-round basis. Visitors will now be able to watch horse shows and lessons under cover of the viewing area as well.

And Meadowbrook supports the community. The Stables employs 13 full time staff and up to 25 part time staff, including many local youths in summer camp programs. The Stables also provides scholarships to committed students who couldn't otherwise afford to ride.

There were once many urban equestrian facilities like Meadowbrook Stables in cities across the country – New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, among others. But due to increasing pressures of urbanization, most of these places have closed. Meadowbrook Stables is a place where children and adults, both riders and non-riders alike, can keep alive the bond with horses that Americans have long enjoyed and celebrated.

12. What impact will the proposed riding ring have on flooding in the Candy Cane Park area and along Meadowbrook Lane?

Candy Cane City, Meadowbrook Lane, and the stables are all located within the floodplain of Rock Creek. The Rock Creek watershed above East-West Highway is very large and receives stormwater runoff from the middle third of Montgomery County. This accounts for much of the flooding of Candy Cane Park and Meadowbrook Lane. While the covered arena is proposed to be built within the floodplain the riding ring elevation is being set to minimize impacts to the floodplain. As noted in #7 above, the building is being designed to allow floodwaters to pass through the structure, so it will not obstruct or alter the elevation of the floodplain. Meadowbrook's engineers are conducting hydraulic modeling to inform the design and ensure no increase to the floodplain elevations. As noted, this design and analysis will be reviewed and approved by both the County and State prior to permit issuance. Stormwater runoff impacts to Candy Cane Park or Meadowbrook Lane are addressed in Question 13.

13. How will stormwater from the roof of the new building be managed?

With approval from MCDPS, stormwater runoff from the roof will be captured in bio-swales that are designed to recharge groundwater in smaller storms, treat runoff from moderate storms, and convey water around the building in larger storms. In addition, the project calls for converting over 30,000 sf of area that is currently a sand riding surface with microtopography and native planting, including trees, shrubs, and grasses to capture and further filter runoff. The bio-swales and the riparian enhancements will work together to capture and filter sediment and nutrients before runoff enters the permanent sediment trap and then into the stormwater pond prior to draining into Rock Creek.

14. What was or is the public outreach strategy for the proposed covered arena?

Meadowbrook Stables submitted a concept proposal to Montgomery Parks in the fall of 2019 that began the staff review process. Starting in December, Parks worked with the Stables to develop a public outreach process to further discussions about the concept design. The outreach plan included a project page on the Parks website and scheduling a public meeting for after the holidays. Parks sent out mailings and posted a sign on-site inviting the public to attend a mid-January meeting. The public meeting was well attended and produced significant public input, especially from residents in the adjacent community. Parks also established an on-line "Open Town Hall" that will remain available for comment until the project goes before the Planning Board.

As the review process continues, Meadowbrook Stables and/or Montgomery Parks have also submitted applications to various regulatory review agencies such as the National Capital Planning Commission and the Maryland Department of the Environment. Opportunities to comment on regulatory review by other agencies will be posted on Parks Department's Projects page. Note that construction will not be permitted until all Federal, State, and Local regulatory agencies have issued their final approvals and the Planning Board has approved the concept. The Stables has requested a Planning Board hearing for mid-April 2020, which will provide another opportunity for public testimony comments on the concept plan.