



MCPB
Item No.
Date: 07.15.2021

Montgomery County Brookville Smart Energy Depot, Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment MR2021021



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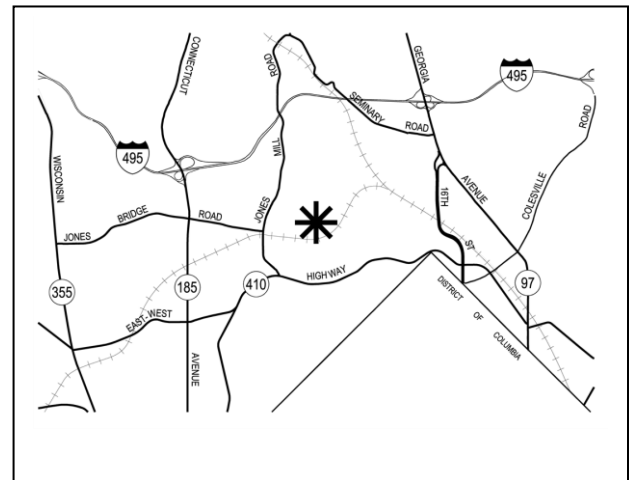


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Completed: 7/2/2021

Description

- Request for approval of a Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment associated with Mandatory Referral No. MR2021021 for the incorporation of electric vehicle charging, along with several clean energy production technologies within the existing Montgomery County Brookville Maintenance Facility Transit Shop.
- Location:** 8710 Brookville Road
- Zone:** IM-2.5 H-50
- Master Plan:** 2017 *Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan*
- Property size:** 17.47 acres
- Applicants:** Michael Yambrach, Montgomery County DGS
- Acceptance Date:** May 18, 2021
- Review Basis:** Chapter 22A



Summary

- Staff recommends **APPROVAL** with conditions of Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment MR2021021.
- This Application for a Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment seeks to amend previously approved Final Forest Conservation Plans for this site to update site conditions to reflect the proposed solar canopies; previous onsite plantings credited to Forest Conservation requirements will now be met offsite.
- In alignment with Montgomery County's goals to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, the proposed project will provide 2 megawatts (MW) of solar photovoltaic canopies that will provide electrical power to the County's growing electric bus fleet and battery storage systems as well as 1.2 MW of natural gas generation.
- This application is associated with Mandatory Referral Application No. MR2021021, which is being reviewed by the Planning Board on an advisory basis and is described in a separate Staff Report.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

Staff recommends approval of Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment No. MR2021021, with the following conditions:

1. Prior to any clearing, grading or demolition on the site, the Applicant must submit and receive approval of a Certified Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment.
2. Prior to plan certification, the Applicant must coordinate with M-NCPPC Staff to address updates and clarifications to the Forest Conservation save plan and associated notes for accuracy across plan sheets.
3. Prior to demolition or any land disturbing activities occurring onsite the Applicant must receive approval of a Certificate of Compliance in a form approved by the M-NCPPC Office of the General Counsel for use of an off- site forest mitigation bank within the same watershed as the subject property or any watershed within Montgomery County upon approval, if there is no available credits within the same watershed for an equivalent total credit of 3.83 acres (or as determined on the Certified Final Forest Conservation Plan) unless the Applicant chooses to retain and/or replace trees previously credited to Forest Conservation requirements onsite. The Applicant may satisfy this requirement by making a fee-in-lieu payment if there are no available credits within an approved mitigation bank.
4. Prior to any demolition, clearing, grading or construction for this development Application, the Applicant must submit a five-year (5) Maintenance and Management Agreement (“MMA”) in a form approved by the M-NCPPC Office of General Counsel. The MMA is required for all forest planting areas, mitigation tree plantings, and landscape plantings credited toward meeting the requirements of the FCP. The MMA includes invasive species management control measures.
5. The Applicant must install any applicable Afforestation/Reforestation plantings as shown on the Certified FFCP or as directed by the M-NCPPC Forest Conservation Inspector, in the first planting season following stabilization of the applicable disturbed area.
6. The Applicant must comply with all tree protection and tree save measures shown on the Certified Final Forest Conservation Plan. Tree save measures not specified on the Final Forest Conservation Plan may be required by the M-NCPPC Forest Conservation Inspection Staff.
7. The Applicant must schedule the required site inspections by M-NCPPC Forest Conservation Inspection Staff per Section 22A.00.01.10 of the Forest Conservation Regulations.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Site Description

The Subject Property (“Property” or “Site”) is located at 8710 Brookville Road in Silver Spring. The Site currently serves as the Brookville Maintenance Facility Transit Shop, otherwise known as the “Brookville Depot” or “Depot”. The Site is subject to the 2017 *Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan*.



Figure 1 – Aerial photo of the Subject Site (shaded in red)

The 17.47-acre Site, zoned Moderate Industrial (IM), is located at the terminus of Brookville Road, lies just east of Rock Creek near its crossing with the Capital Crescent Trail. The Depot has a main entrance for buses which exits to the right off of Brookville Road and runs along the Site’s northern property line. The Site is also served by a secondary entrance for passenger vehicles which pick up as Brookville Road ends and enters the Site along the southern property line. The Site includes multiple buildings to support the Depot’s functions, a refueling station near Brookville Road, a salt storage facility, as well as an asphalt area near the western side of the Property which is proposed to serve as the installation area for the solar photovoltaic canopies.

The Subject Property is within the Lower Rock Creek watershed which is a Use I watershed¹. In addition to the watershed, there is an adjacent, but off-site, area of forest to the west of the Site between the Subject Property and Rock Creek. The Site is also associated with the FEMA 100-year flood plan from Rock Creek, but it does not extend onto the developed and paved portions of the Site. There are no cultural facilities or historic sites located within or adjacent to this Site nor any known endangered species or critical habitats.

¹ WATER CONTACT RECREATION, PROTECTION OF AQUATIC LIFE. Waters that are suitable for: water contact sports; play and leisure time activities where the human body may come in direct contact with the surface water; fishing; the growth and propagation of fish (other than trout); other aquatic life, and wildlife; agricultural water supply; and industrial water supply.

Previous Approvals

The available regulatory history of this Site dates back to August of 2004 at which time the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation submitted a Mandatory Referral Application (No. MR2004801) for a two-phased development to improve site circulation, operations, and maintenance needs through the creation of an additional access point at the north of the Site for buses, building improvements, parking layout modifications, and improved stormwater management. The second phase of the project consisted of building improvements associated with the highway depot.

Along with MR2004801, an associated NRI/FSD and Forest Conservation Plan was required due to the then proposed clearing of 1.08-acres of forest and removal of six (6) specimen and eight (8) significant trees which fell within the LOD of the improvements. The Applicant used a mix of onsite and off-site methods to meet the calculated Forest Conservation requirements; 3.72-acres of reforestation/afforestation requirements were met offsite through credits from a forest bank. The remaining 0.11-acres of reforestation/afforestation requirements were met through retention of existing onsite landscaping plantings as well as offsite reforestation plantings.

In April of 2017, the Subject Property was included in an additional Mandatory Referral Application (No. MR2017012). The purpose of this plan was to construct three salt/material storage buildings to replace their aging predecessors. With this proposal, site layout was also modified in coordination with the needs of the construction of the MTA Purple Line which required the transfer of land. The then proposed work took place in the southern portion of the Site and resulted in minor impacts to, but retention of, two specimen trees.

The current Application amends the original Mandatory Referral, previously filed under No. MR2004801; the Amended Final Forest Conservation Plan associated with this Application will be carried forward under plan number MR2021021.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposal

The current Application proposes to support Montgomery County's growing electric transit bus fleet through the creation of a "smart energy depot" at the Brookville Maintenance Facility Transit Shop. In total, the smart energy depot is sited to serve as a microgrid to power the electric bus fleet through the installation of 2 megawatts (MW) of photovoltaic canopies which will be arranged in four sections (Figure 1). These solar canopies will provide electrical power to the buses as well as a battery storage system located to the north of canopies 1 and 2 as shown in Figure 1. In addition to the solar arrays, there will be battery storage of approximately 1.5 MW/4.3 MGW, 1.2 MW of natural gas generation separate from the solar facilities, as well as a system of microgrid controllers to manage the system.

The Brookville Depot will continue to serve as the hub for maintaining, servicing, and parking over 200 County Ride-On buses. The proposed facilities will contribute to meeting Montgomery County's 2035 goal of achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions. Efforts began in 2019 with the first electric buses coming into service; another 10 buses will be added in 2021, and in total this microgrid system is planned to support the power requirements of the first 44 electric buses which will be added over the coming years.

This project is proposed to be delivered in two phases; Phase 1 will consist of all the electric infrastructure: the installation of the solar canopies, the battery energy storage system, one generator and up to seven additional e-bus chargers. The start of construction for Phase 1 is estimated to begin in September 2021 with completion planned for February 2022. Phase 2 will consist of the installation of an additional generator and up six additional e-bus chargers; this phase is anticipated to occur in 2024.

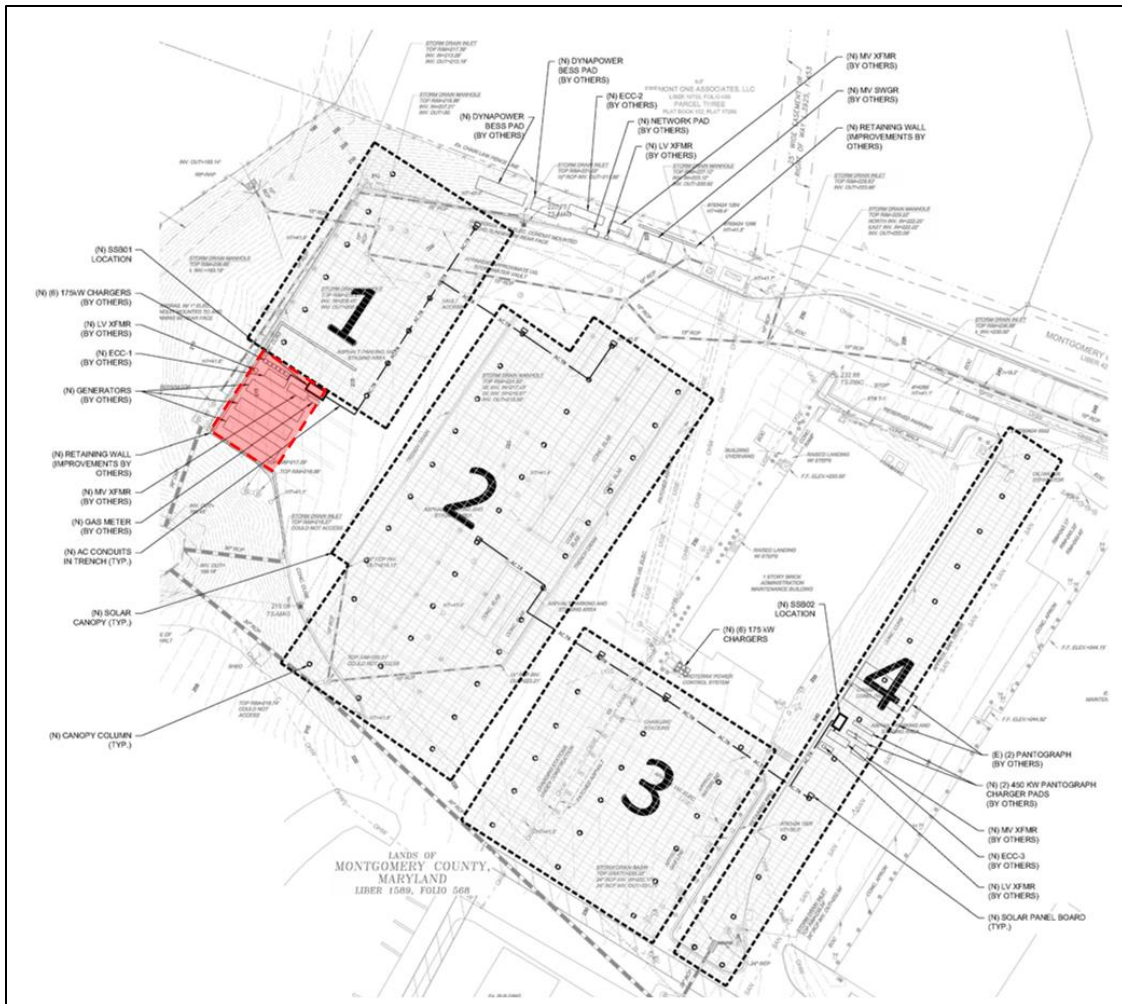


Figure 2: Layout of Photovoltaic Solar Canopies and other proposed features (area included in Phase 2 installation shaded in red)

Environmental Guidelines

As previously mentioned in the project description, the Subject Property is located within the Rock Creek Watershed. While the Subject Property does not contain any forest area, it is adjacent to forest and areas of steep slopes given that it lies uphill from Rock Creek. There are no known rare, threatened, or endangered species onsite. As shown in Figure 3, the Subject Property does intersect slightly with the 100-year floodplain, however this lies within an undeveloped portion of the Site and will not be impacted with this Application. There are no streams, stream buffers, or wetlands onsite.



Figure 3 – 100-year floodplain (shaded in blue)

Forest Conservation

As described above, this site is subject to an existing Final Forest Conservation Plan which was last revised via an application for a Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment approved administratively in 2017. With the previously approved FFCP, the Applicant maintained onsite plantings as well as off-site credit in a Forest Conservation Bank to meet a total of 3.84-acres of forest conservation credit.

As proposed by the current application, the project will impact 0.11-acres of the approximately 0.43-acres of forest onsite. The forest conservation worksheet shows a calculated 2.52-acres of reforestation required for this impact. Portions of the forest proposed to be cleared contains plantings previously credited to forest conservation requirements of the site, however these plantings are now fully incorporated within the forest and thus will be mitigated by the Applicant as part of the required reforestation. In doing so, the site will now fully meet all Forest Conservation Requirements offsite. Staff is supportive of this direction given the constraints onsite which limit the location for plantings to be free of obstructions while simultaneously avoiding shading the proposed solar canopies or impacting the circulation for transit vehicles.

With this Application, there will be no increase in the net tract area associated with this project and construction efforts. As conditioned, this Application meets all applicable requirements of Chapter 22A Forest Conservation Law.

CONCLUSION

As conditioned, the Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment No. MR2004801 meets the requirements of Chapter 22A, Forest Conservation Law. The proposed project will maintain compliance with the previously approved forest conservation credits. Further, this project conforms to all recommendations of the 2017 *Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan*. Therefore, Staff recommends approval with conditions enumerated at the beginning of this report.

Attachments

Attachment A – Amended Final Forest Conservation Plan

Attachment B – Redlined Final Forest Conservation Plan