

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Preliminary Subdivision Plat 4-00037  
Strayer University, Parcel ■A•

OVERVIEW

The subject property consists of approximately 5.44 acres of land in the I-3 Zone. It is found on Tax Map 88, Grid F-4, and is identified as Parcel 482. The site is currently vacant. Section 24-107(c)(7) of the Prince George's County Subdivision Regulations requires a preliminary plat for an acreage parcel when new development exceeds 5,000 square feet. This preliminary plat application is in anticipation of 25,368 square feet of building development.

The conceptual site plan submitted for reference purposes with this application proposes a 20,944 square-foot private business school known as Strayer University. Provisions for a 4,424 square-foot expansion are provided for on the site plan. The Zoning Ordinance requires the approval of a conceptual site plan (CSP) in the I-3 Zone. The applicant has submitted Conceptual Site Plan SP-00022 which is pending.

SETTING

The subject site is generally located north of the intersection of Branch Avenue and the Capitol Beltway and is a ■through lot• fronting on three streets. Specifically the property is located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Auth Way and Britannia Way, north of Auth Place, west of Capitol Gateway.

FINDINGS AND REASONS FOR STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Environmental - A Forest Stand Delineation (FSD) was submitted in conjunction with Conceptual Site Plan SP-00022 for this property. The FSD was reviewed and found to be acceptable. The Type I Tree Conservation Plan (TCPI/24/00) was also submitted and reviewed in conjunction with SP-00022. TCPI/24/00 was found to satisfy the requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance is recommended for approval.

The 5.44 acre property has a Woodland Conservation Threshold (WCT) of 15% or 0.82 acres and a replacement requirement of 1.40 acres for a total requirement of 2.22 acres. That requirement is being satisfied by 0.50 acres of on-site reforestation and 1.72 acres of off-site mitigation at a location yet to be determined. Prior to the approval of the Detailed Site Plan and the Type II Tree Conservation Plan the applicant will be required to identify the location of the off-site mitigation area and indicate if the mitigation will be preservation or afforestation. TCPI/24/00 is being recommended for approval in conjunction with Conceptual Site Plan SP-00022 which will contain appropriate conditions relating to the off-site mitigation.

There are no streams, wetlands, or areas of 100-year floodplain found to occur within the limits of the subject property. No steep or severe slopes have been found to occur and there

are no significant limitations with respect to soils. An evaluation of the vicinity reveals no historic sites, no scenic roads, no historic roads and no rare, threatened or endangered species.

The property is in Water and Sewer Category 3 and will be served by public systems.

2. Community Planning - The subject site is within the limits of the *Adopted and Approved Subregion VII Master Plan* (1981). More specifically within Planning Area 76A/Auth Road Employment Area. The recommended land use for this site is ■employment.●

Currently there is a master plan and sectional map amendment underway for Planning Area 76A, referred to as the *Heights and Vicinity Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*. The plan has been adopted and the sectional map amendment (SMA) has been endorsed by the Planning Board. There are no land use or zoning changes proposed by the plan for the subject property.

3. Parks and Recreation - In accordance with Section 24-134(a) of the Subdivision Regulations, the subject application is exempt from mandatory dedication of parkland because the proposed application is for a commercial subdivision containing no residential development.
4. Trails - There are no master plan trail issues associated with this application.
5. Transportation - The Transportation Planning Section has reviewed the subdivision application referenced above. The subject property consists of approximately 5.43 acres of land in the I-3 Zone. The applicant proposes a commercial development with the specialized use of a college building for technical and night study. Eventual maximum enrollment is expected to be 2,000 students. With the maximum number of students on campus at one time being 525.

The applicant prepared a traffic impact study dated September 2000, in accordance with the methodologies in the *Guidelines for the Analysis of the Traffic Impact of Development Proposals*.

The transportation staff used counts provided by the applicant or other recent traffic counts to review conditions at the following intersections:

- Auth Way and Auth Place (unsignalized)
- MD 5 and Auth Way (signalized)
- MD 5 and Auth Road/I-95 SB on-ramps (signalized)
- Auth Place/site entrance (future, unsignalized)
- Auth Way/site entrance (future, unsignalized)

During the weekday, Strayer University conducts classes during three time periods:

the morning, the midday, and the evening.

The applicant has proposed a class schedule for this site which ensures that evening classes would not begin prior to 6:15 p.m. The facility would not include significant library, lounge,

or meal service facilities, and would therefore not be expected to attract students or faculty beyond one-half hour prior to the start of classes. The PM peak hour counts are included in the traffic study, and clearly indicate that the PM peak hour in the area ends between 5:45 and 6:00 p.m. Given the proposed class schedule and the lack of impact of the schedule on PM peak hour traffic, the applicant has not studied the PM peak hour in the traffic study. This approach was taken under agreement with M-NCPPC transportation staff, DPW&T and SHA staff.

The existing conditions at the intersections within the study area for this application are summarized below:

EXISTING CONDITIONS		
Intersection	Critical Lane Volume (AM only-see above)	Level of Service (LOS, AM only, see above)
MD 5 and Auth Way	1,198	C
MD 5 and Auth Road/I-95 SB on-ramps	977	A
Auth Way and Auth Place	14.7*	--
Auth Place and site entrance	future	--
Auth Way and site entrance	future	--
*In analyzing unsignalized intersections, average vehicle delay for various movements through the intersection is measured in seconds of vehicle delay. The numbers shown indicate the greatest average delay for any movement within the intersection. According to the <i>Guidelines</i> , an average vehicle delay exceeding 45.0 seconds indicates inadequate traffic operations. Delays of +999 are outside the range of the procedures, and should be interpreted as excessive.		

The traffic study included background conditions for the limited background development in the area. Background development includes the approved but unbuilt Capital Gateway development containing 1,000,000 square feet of development. Background also includes the Branch Avenue Metrorail station, which will include 3,000 parking spaces. The area roadway network includes the Green Line Metro Extension Access improvements which are currently nearing completion by SHA. The roadway network does not include the Branch Avenue Metro Station Access Study improvements which are currently under study by SHA. This study, which is #162162 in the FY2000-2005 State Consolidated Transportation Program, is developing alternates to relieve long-term congestion in the area.

Background conditions within the study area are summarized as follow:

BACKGROUND CONDITIONS		
	Critical Lane Volume	Level of Service (LOS,

Intersection	(AM only-see above)	AM only, see above)
MD 5 and Auth Way	1,403	D
MD 5 and Auth Road/I-95 SB on-ramps	1,260	C
Auth Way and Auth Place	573.8*	--
Auth Place and site entrance	future	--
Auth Way and site entrance	future	--
*In analyzing unsignalized intersections, average vehicle delay for various movements through the intersection is measured in seconds of vehicle delay. The numbers shown indicate the greatest average delay for any movement within the intersection. According to the <i>Guidelines</i> , an average vehicle delay exceeding 45.0 seconds indicates inadequate traffic operations. Delays of +999 are outside the range of the procedures, and should be interpreted as excessive.		

The applicant proposes to construct a college facility for a maximum of 2,000 students. The *Guidelines* contain no rates for a college building, but there are two categories in the Institute of Transportation Engineers *Trip Generation Manual* (sixth edition) which were considered for estimating the impact of the proposed subdivision.

The ■University/College• use includes four-year and graduate educational institutions. However, the associated rates would be more representative of a traditional college with dormitories, ongoing research, daytime classes, and extensive social, library and athletic facilities. The ■Junior/Community College• use includes two-year colleges, and while the rates may consider a greater level of evening activity, most junior colleges include a mix of uses beyond just classrooms. Neither of these uses appears to adequately describe Strayer University or other similar universities.

In response, the applicant gathered trip generation data at its Manassas campus, which is similar in location to the facility being planned at the subject site. Strayer University operates ten campuses in the Washington region. However, Manassas is the only site which is similar in siting to the subject property. Enrollment at the Manassas campus is currently 1,023. The trip generation count sheets are provided in the traffic study.

As a result of the data documented in the traffic study, the 2,000 student campus proposed by the applicant under the proposed subdivision would generate 28 inbound and 4 outbound trips during the AM peak hour. The traffic study assumes a trip distribution for the subject property based upon zip code information for students currently enrolled at Strayer University's existing Marlow Heights campus, which is less than one-half mile from the subject property. The transportation staff recommended this approach to determining a distribution and concurs with the results. Using the trip generation and distribution assumed in the traffic study, total traffic under future conditions is summarized below:

TOTAL TRAFFIC CONDITIONS - NO IMPROVEMENTS		
Intersection	Critical Lane Volume (AM only-see above)	Level of Service (LOS, AM only, see above)
MD 5 and Auth Way	1,411	D
MD 5 and Auth Road/I-95 SB on-ramps	1,262	C
Auth Way and Auth Place	678.7*	--
Auth Place and site entrance	10.4*	--
Auth Way and site entrance	9.4*	--
*In analyzing unsignalized intersections, average vehicle delay for various movements through the intersection is measured in seconds of vehicle delay. The numbers shown indicate the greatest average delay for any movement within the intersection. According to the <i>Guidelines</i> , an average vehicle delay exceeding 45.0 seconds indicates inadequate traffic operations. Delays of +999 are outside the range of the procedures, and should be interpreted as excessive.		

The analysis indicates that the unsignalized intersection of Auth Way and Auth Place would operate unacceptably with the development of the subject property. In response to inadequacies identified at unsignalized intersections, the Planning Board has generally recommended that the applicant provide a traffic signal warrant study and install the signal if it is deemed warranted by the appropriate operating agency. The warrant study is, in itself, a more detailed study of the adequacy of the existing unsignalized intersection.

Discussions with DPW&T since they provided their comments indicate that DPW&T fully anticipates that a signal will eventually be warranted at this location, but they see little value in reviewing a signal warrant study in the short term. Therefore, DPW&T has indicated to staff that the applicant should fund a fair share of the cost of the future signal at the time of building permit. As the applicant primarily would impact one leg of a four-way intersection, DPW&T has suggested that \$20,000 would be a fair share, particularly since DPW&T is not requiring that the signal warrant study be done by the applicant. DPW&T fully anticipates that a signal will eventually be warranted at this location, but they see little value in reviewing a signal warrant study prior to the opening of Metrorail and the start of the construction on the Capital Gateway site. The transportation staff would suggest that \$20,000 should be a maximum amount, but also believes that a final share contribution must be determined by direct discussions between DPW&T and the applicant, with consultation by transportation staff, prior to Detailed Site Plan approval. This fair share will be determined by DPW&T. With such a condition in place, the staff, along with DPW&T, believes that this critical intersection will operate acceptably.

With the signalization, total traffic under future conditions is summarized below:

TOTAL TRAFFIC CONDITIONS WITH IMPROVEMENTS		
	Critical Lane Volume	Level of Service (LOS,

Intersection	(AM only-see above)	AM only, see above)
MD 5 and Auth Way	1,411	D
MD 5 and Auth Road/I-95 SB on-ramps	1,262	C
Auth Way and Auth Place	704	A
Auth Place and site entrance	10.4*	--
Auth Way and site entrance	9.4*	--
*In analyzing unsignalized intersections, average vehicle delay for various movements through the intersection is measured in seconds of vehicle delay. The numbers shown indicate the greatest average delay for any movement within the intersection. According to the <i>Guidelines</i> , an average vehicle delay exceeding 45.0 seconds indicates inadequate traffic operations. Delays of +999 are outside the range of the procedures, and should be interpreted as excessive.		

As noted earlier, the traffic study was referred to DPW&T and SHA. Comments from both agencies have been received. DPW&T had the following comments:

- **The trip generation study may not be representative of up-to-date schedules.**

The transportation staff has verified that the fall 2000 schedule at Strayer University-Manassas is very similar to the schedule offered in spring 1998.

- **The Auth Way/Auth Place intersection may need a signal warrent study.**

Further discussion with DPW&T staff on November 9, 2000, regarding this issue is summarized above.

- **The I-95 SB off-ramp/Auth Road intersection should have been reviewed.**

While the staff considered reviewing this intersection, because only inbound trips to the site use it, only 12.5 percent of the site-generated trips pass through the intersection. The Planning Board would not normally consider this intersection to be critical given the size of the proposal.

SHA had no comments on the submitted traffic study.

While Strayer University has proffered and agreed to a later start time for evening classes to avoid undue traffic impacts in the area of the Metrorail station, there is a recognition that significant transportation improvements are currently being studied.

The Branch Avenue Metro Station Access Study improvements which are currently under review by SHA would include major transportation improvements which, when funded and constructed, would relieve long-term congestion in the area. At such time that transportation adequacy can be shown, the applicant should be allowed to begin classes earlier. This process should not require a new subdivision, but should be subject to review by the Planning Director and the concurrence of SHA and DPW&T.

Existing dedication along adjacent roadways is sufficient, and no further dedication is required along the property frontage. The staff had originally thought that additional dedication was needed along Auth Place, which is a master plan collector facility. However, a review of past plats in the area indicated that there was an intent to hold the existing right-of-way line at this location.

The Transportation Planning Section concludes that adequate transportation facilities would exist to serve the proposed subdivision as required under Section 24-124 of the Prince George's County Code if the application is approved.

6. Schools - The proposal is exempt from the requirements of Section 24-122.02 of the Subdivision Regulations for adequacy of public schools because it is industrial zoned and there are no dwelling units proposed.
7. Fire and Rescue - Growth Policy and Public Facilities Planning has reviewed the subdivision plans for adequacy of fire and rescue facilities in accordance with Section 24-122.01 of the Subdivision Regulations, and concluded the following:
  - a. The existing fire engine service at Silver Hill Fire Station, Company 29 located at 3900 Silver Hill Road has a service response time of 3.84 minutes, which is beyond the 3.25 minutes response time guideline.
  - b. The existing ambulance service at Silver Hill Fire Station, Company 29 located at 3900 Silver Hill Road has a service response time of 3.84 minutes, which is within the 4.25 minutes response time guideline.
  - c. The existing paramedic service at Silver Hill Fire Station, Company 29 located at 3900 Silver Hill Road has a service response time of 3.84 minutes, which is within the 7.25 minutes response time guideline.
  - d. The existing ladder truck service at District Heights Fire Station, Company 26 located at 6208 Marlboro Pike has a service response time of 7.91 minutes, which is beyond the 4.25 minutes response time guideline.

The above findings are in conformance with the *Adopted and Approved Public Safety Master Plan 1990* and the *Guidelines For The Analysis Of Development Impact On Fire and Rescue Facilities*. In order to alleviate the negative impact on fire and rescue services, the Fire Department recommends that all commercial structures be fully sprinkled in accordance with National Fire Protection Association Standard 13 and all applicable Prince George's County Laws.

8. Police Facilities - The proposed development is within the service area for Police District V-Clinton. In accordance with Section 24-122.01(c)(1)(A) and (B) of the Subdivision Regulations of Prince George's County, the staff concludes that the existing County's police facilities will be adequate to serve the proposed Strayer University. This police facility will adequately serve the population generated by the proposed subdivision.

9. Health Department - The Health Department noted that the site is currently overgrown with dense brush and therefore could not be completely evaluated at this time. While no hazardous materials were observed, any hazardous materials encountered on the site during future activity must be removed and discarded in an appropriate manner to be determined by the Health Department.
10. Stormwater Management -The Department of Environmental Resources (DER), Development Services Division, has determined that on-site stormwater management is required in addition to the payment of a fee-in-lieu for on-site attenuation and water quality control measures. A Stormwater Management Concept Plan, # 008006470, has been approved with conditions to ensure that development of this site does not result in on-site or downstream flooding. Development should be in accordance with this approved plan.

## RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Development of this property shall be in conformance with the approved Stormwater Concept Plan, Concept #008006470.
2. Prior to signature approval of the preliminary plat the plan shall be revised to designate the subject property as Parcel ■A.●
3. Development shall be limited to a college with a total enrollment of 2,000 students or different uses generating no more than 32 AM peak hour trips. The applicant shall limit the start of weekday evening classes or other organized weekday evening activities to no earlier than 6:15 p.m. The applicant may amend this condition with evidence of adequate transportation facilities with concurrence from the Planning Director or authorized representative and with the concurrence of DPW&T and SHA.  
  
Development with an impact greater than that identified shall require a new Preliminary Plat of Subdivision with a new determination of the adequacy of transportation facilities.
4. Prior to the issuance of any building permits within the subject property, the applicant shall fund a fair share of the cost of a future traffic signal at the intersection of Auth Way and Auth Place. The amount of the funding shall be determined by DPW&T in consultation with M-NCPPC transportation staff, but shall not exceed \$20,000.
5. Hazardous materials, if encountered on site during future activity, must be removed and discarded in accordance with COMAR regulations and the Health Department.