

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
 Prince George's County Planning Department  
 Development Review Division  
 301-952-3530



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## PRELIMINARY PLAN 4-02041

Application	General Data
Project Name:	Date Accepted 05/22/02
MELWOOD COMMERCIAL	Planning Board Action Limit 11/08/02
Location:	Tax Map & Grid 09/E-1
North side of Marlboro Pike, approximately 700 feet east of its intersection with Dower House Road	Plan Acreage 1.70
Applicant/Address:	Zone C-S-C
Patel, Manek Lal	Lot 0
7001 SW Crain Highway	Parcels 1
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772	Planning Area 77
	Council District 09
	Municipality N/A
	200-Scale Base Map 207SE08

Purpose of Application			Notice Dates	
COMMERCIAL SUBDIVISION			Adjoining Property Owners (CB-15-1998)	N/A
			Previous Parties of Record (CB-13-1994)	N/A
			Sign(s) Posted on Site	8/21/02
			Variance(s): Adjoining Property Owners	N/A
Staff Recommendation			Staff Reviewer: Whitney Chellis	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION	
	X			

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-02041  
Melwood Commercial, Parcel A

OVERVIEW

The proposed subdivision consists of approximately 1.70 acres of land and is in the Commercial Shopping Center (CSC) Zone. The property is found on Tax Map 9, in Grid E-1 and is known as Parcels 43 and 124. The properties are acreage parcels, never having been the subject of a record plat of subdivision. Parcel 43 is approximately 1.6 acres and Parcel 124 is approximately 4,356 square feet.

Parcel 43 is improved with an existing building and associated parking. The existing use is known as the Meadows Market, which fronts on Marlboro Pike to the south. Access to the existing use is located on and crosses Parcel 124, which is located abutting Marlboro Pike. Parcel 43 is adjacent and north of Parcel 124 and has frontage on MD 4 to the north. The applicant is proposing to construct a hotel and associated parking on Parcel 43. The applicant proposes to retain the existing building and use. Access to MD 4 will be denied if this application is approved.

SETTING

The subject property is located on the north side of Marlboro Pike, approximately 600 feet northwest of its intersection with Old Marlboro Pike in the Melwood community. The subject parcel is a "through" parcel with frontage on Marlboro Pike to the south and MD 4 to the north. Access is proposed via Marlboro Pike. Adjacent to the east is the Melwood Mall, zoned C-S-C. To the west is C-S-C zoned land improved with several small buildings. The property is currently improved with the Meadows Market, which is to remain.

FINDINGS AND REASONS FOR STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Development Data Summary—The following information relates to the subject preliminary plan application and the proposed development.

	Existing	Proposed
Zone	CSC	CSC
Use	Market	120-room hotel and retention of the existing market
Acreage	1.70	1.70
Parcels	2	1

2. Environmental Issues—This site is not subject to the provisions of the Woodland Conservation Ordinance. The site is more than 40,000 square feet in area, however, it contains less than 10,000 square feet of woodland. A Standard Letter of Exemption will be required prior to the issuance of a permit and can be obtained from the Environmental Planning Section.

The site is physically bounded on the north by Pennsylvania Avenue and to the south by Marlboro Pike, both major noise generators. The site will be subject to transportation-generated noise levels above 65 dBA Ldn. The proposed use as a hotel is similar to a residential use in that people will be sleeping on the premises. Interior noise levels should be reduced to 45 dBA Ldn or less.

A review of the available information and a site visit conducted on May 30, 2002, indicates that the site is about five to six percent wooded. The site is characterized by terrain sloping to the north, which drains into unnamed tributaries of the Cabin Branch watershed in the Anacostia River basin. There are no streams, wetlands, 100-year floodplain, severe slopes, or areas of steep slopes with highly erodible soils found on the property.

The predominant soil type found to occur on the subject property, according to the Prince George's County Soil Survey is Westphalia. This soil series generally exhibits moderate limitations to development due to poor stability. According to available information, Marlboro clay is not found to occur on this property. The sewer and water service categories are S-3 and W-3, respectively. According to information obtained from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program publication, entitled *Ecologically Significant Areas in Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties*, December 1997, there are no rare, threatened, or endangered species found to occur in the vicinity of this property.

3. Community Planning—The subject property is located in the Developed Tier, as identified in the 2002 *General Plan*. The site is within the limits of the 1994 *Melwood-Westphalia Master Plan*, in Planning Area 77 in the Melwood Community. The *Sectional Map Amendment for the Melwood-Westphalia Master Plan* (1994) retained the subject property in the C-S-C Zone. The master plan land use recommendation for this site is commercial.

The site is improved with an existing grocery store and lunch counter use known as Meadow's Market; the remainder of the site is undeveloped. The applicant is proposing to develop a hotel to the north of the existing store.

The subject property is located in the middle of an area designated as the Melwood commercial center by the *Melwood-Westphalia Master Plan*. This area is located along Old Marlboro Pike, parallel to MD 4. This area was evaluated for physical and functional deficiencies in the master plan. The Meadows Market and lunch counter has been an established feature of the community for several decades and is located on the subject property fronting on Old Marlboro Pike. The use is proposed to remain. Both uses will access the site via the existing access drive from Marlboro Pike.

The *Melwood-Westphalia Master Plan* rated commercial establishments on three performance levels (good, average and poor) in the following categories: landscaping, ingress/egress, off-street parking lot condition, sidewalks, internal circulation, sign condition, structural condition, and external storage areas. The Meadows Market rated a "poor" in every category save two, structural condition and off-street parking lot condition. A recent field inspection shows that little has changed since the approval of the master plan and the recommendations contained therein.

The *Melwood-Westphalia Master Plan* provides specific recommendations for development of the Melwood commercial center and recommends that they should be fully applied when considering redevelopment or new development:

- The Melwood commercial center should be planned and constructed as a cohesively designed, well-coordinated development, particularly concerning its land use, its overall con-

cept, architectural style, materials (brick or comparable), building heights (generally limited to three stories); vehicular and pedestrian circulation and access (minimizing curb cuts); landscaping, screening and buffering; and sign display.

- The design of lamps, street lighting, benches, litter receptacles, and other street/landscaping furniture should be unified to help identify the several commercial buildings on a number of separate parcels of land as one entity.
- Development along MD 4 should minimize the visual impact from the highway by providing substantial landscaping.
- Cinderblock, corrugated metal, plastic, or similar building surfaces, which detract from the county's goal of quality development, should not be allowed.
- Dumpsters or similar unsightly objects, waste collection, and loading areas should be screened from the view of public streets or adjacent residential areas.
- Signs shall be limited to those necessary for directional or business identification purposes (as opposed to advertising or publicity).
- Not less than 15 percent of the lot area shall be devoted to landscaping and green area (as defined in the Zoning Ordinance).
- Conflicts between pedestrian circulation, vehicular circulation, and loading should be precluded.
- Large expanses of parking should be avoided by providing parking in small lots near the buildings and uses they serve.
- Parking should be separated from loading areas.
- Parking compounds should be designed so that they will not be used as through access drives.
- Pedestrian circulation should be designed to be free of barriers to the handicapped.

The master plan also recommends that the Urban Design Guidelines provided in the master plan should be applied to new development or redevelopment in the Melwood commercial center. Staff recommends, in order to assure conformance to the recommendations of the master plan, a Detailed Site Plan (DSP) should be required prior to the approval of building permits.

Without substantially improving the appearance of Meadows Market, the proposed hotel business, with questionable access and low visibility from the main road, will do little to improve the overall appearance of this commercial strip. Through the review of the DSP, the timing and trigger for the improvement to the Meadows Market should be determined. It will be through the review of the DSP that the improvements necessary to conform to the master plan recommendations will be identified.

The master plan's discussion of the Melwood commercial center concluded with the statement: "Generally, other old commercial establishments need upkeep maintenance and additional landscaping to upgrade the image from Marlboro Pike."

Noise generated by aircraft from Andrews Air Force Base (AAFB) at this location is an issue. The 1998 AICUZ (Air Installation Compatible Use Zone) study for Andrews Air Force Base identified this property in the 65-70 dB noise contour. According to the AICUZ study, transient lodging is a compatible use at this location but noise reduction measures should be incorporated into the design and construction of structures exposed to this level of aircraft noise. The *Melwood-Westphalia Master Plan* addresses the effect of aircraft noise by recommending the following:

- residential development in the moderate (65-70 Ldn) noise contours be acoustically buffered to reduce interior noise levels to 45 DNL (Ldn);
  - a professional engineer with competency in acoustical analysis should be required to certify that the residential structure will attenuate exterior noise to an interior level not to exceed 45 DNL (Ldn) or less.
4. Parks and Recreation—In accordance with Section 24-134 of the Subdivision Regulations, the site is exempt from the requirement of mandatory dedication of parkland because the use is non-residential and the property is zoned commercial.
  5. Trails—There are no master plan trail issues associated with this preliminary plan application.
  6. Transportation—The Transportation Planning Section has reviewed the subdivision application referenced above. The subject property consists of approximately 1.70 acres of land in the C-S-C Zone. The property is located on the north side of Marlboro Pike about 700 feet east of its intersection with Dower House Road. The applicant proposes to construct a 120-room hotel (in addition to the restaurant/market building which exists) on one lot that is to be created by this subdivision.

The transportation staff determined that a traffic study, while warranted by the size of the proposed development, was not needed because two other traffic studies in the area had been reviewed in the past year for special exception SE-4428 and preliminary plan 4-01097. The applicant was given the option to submit a study, however, and did not. Therefore, the findings and recommendations outlined below are based upon a review of relevant materials and analyses conducted by the staff of the Transportation Planning Section, consistent with the *Guidelines for the Analysis of the Traffic Impact of Development Proposals*.

The subject property is located within the developing tier, as defined in the *Adopted General Plan for Prince George's County*. As such, the subject property is evaluated according to the following standards:

Links and signalized intersections: Level-of-service (LOS) D, with signalized intersections operating at a critical lane volume (CLV) of 1,450 or better.

Unsignalized intersections: The *Highway Capacity Manual* procedure for unsignalized intersections is not a true test of adequacy but rather an indicator that further operational studies need to be conducted. Vehicle delay in any movement exceeding 50.0 seconds is deemed to be an unacceptable operating condition at unsignalized intersections. In response to such a finding, the Planning Board has generally recommended that the applicant provide a traffic signal warrant study and install the signal (or other less costly warranted traffic controls) if deemed warranted by the appropriate operating agency.

Staff Analysis of Traffic Impacts.

The transportation staff is basing its findings on the traffic impacts at two critical intersections:

MD 4/Dower House Road  
Marlboro Pike/Dower House Road

Existing Conditions				
Intersection	Critical Lane Volume (CLV, AM & PM)		Level-of-Service (LOS, AM & PM)	
MD 4/Dower House Road	1,862	1,578	F	E
Marlboro Pike/Dower House Road	388	665	A	A
*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 50.0 seconds indicates inadequate traffic operations. Delays of +999 are outside the range of the procedures, and should be interpreted as excessive.				

Under existing traffic, the MD 4/Dower House Road intersection operates unacceptably during both peak hours. The *Guidelines* identify signalized intersections operating at LOS D or better during both peak hours as acceptable. The other critical intersection operates within acceptable parameters.

The transportation staff has reviewed approved development in the area and assumed a two percent annual growth rate for through traffic along MD 4 over three years. The county Capital Improvement Program includes a project along MD 4 at Dower House Road, and this is included in the roadway network. Approved development in the area (or pending projects in the latter stages of review) includes the following:

Marwood, 306 residential units—retirement community  
Andrews Employment Park, 1,082,000 square feet—heavy industrial space  
Fallard Drive Industrial Park, 367,000 square feet—light industrial space  
Dower House Road Transfer Station, 376 daily truckloads

Background conditions are summarized below:

Background Conditions				
Intersection	Critical Lane Volume (CLV, AM & PM)		Level-of-Service (LOS, AM & PM)	
MD 4/Dower House Road	1,585	1,811	E	F
Marlboro Pike/Dower House Road	665	1,556	A	E
*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 50.0 seconds indicates inadequate traffic operations. Delays of +999 are outside the range of the procedures, and should be interpreted as excessive.				

The site has an existing market/restaurant. The remainder of the site is proposed for development as a 120-room hotel. Using trip generation rates in the *Guidelines*, the proposed use would generate 78 AM (42 in, 36 out) and 96 PM (54 in, 42 out) peak-hour vehicle trips. These trips are assumed to be distributed as follows:

10%—east along Marlboro Pike

15%—south along Dower House Road  
 10%—east along MD 4  
 65%—west along MD 4

Given these assumptions, we obtain the following results under total traffic:

<b>Total Traffic Conditions</b>			
Intersection	Critical Lane Volume (CLV, AM & PM)		Level-of-Service (LOS, AM & PM)
MD 4/Dower House Road	1,602	1,831	F F
Marlboro Pike/Dower House Road	705	1,610	A F

\*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 *Guidelines*, an average vehicle delay exceeding 50.0 seconds indicates inadequate traffic operations. Delays of +999 are outside the range of the procedures, and should be interpreted as excessive.

Based on the staff's review of transportation adequacy issues in the area, the transportation staff notes that both intersections fail in at least one peak hour. Under SE-4428, the applicant identified and proffered conditions which would mitigate the impact of the site at the MD 4/Dower House Road intersection and which provide an acceptable service level at the Marlboro Pike/Dower House Road intersection. In that case, it was recommended that the northbound approach of Dower House Road at MD 4 be modified to provide two left-turn lanes (as currently exist) and a third lane which would operate as a shared left-turn/through/right-turn lane. There was also a proposal to widen the northbound Dower House Road approach at Marlboro Pike to provide two through lanes through the intersection. The improvements at the MD 4/Dower House Road intersection are suggested to mitigate the impact of the applicant's development in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 24-124(a)(6). The impact of the mitigation actions at this intersection with regard to the subject application is summarized as follows:

<b>Impact of Mitigation</b>				
Intersection	LOS and CLV (AM & PM)		CLV Difference (AM & PM)	
Background Conditions	E/1,585	F/1,811	--	--
Total Traffic Conditions	F/1,602	F/1,831	+17	+20
Total Traffic Conditions with Mitigation	E/1,464	F/1,645	-138	-186

As the CLV at MD 4/Dower House Road is between 1,450 and 1,813 during the AM peak hour, the proposed mitigation action must mitigate at least 150 percent of the trips generated by the subject property during this peak hour, according to the *Guidelines*. As the CLV at this intersection is greater than 1,813 during the AM peak hour, at least 100 percent of the trips must be mitigated to a level no greater than 1,813, according to the *Guidelines*. The above table indicates that the proposed action would mitigate at least 150 percent of site-generated trips during either peak hour. Therefore, the proposed mitigation at MD 4 and Dower House Road meets the requirements of Section 24-124(a)(6)(B)(i) of the Subdivision Ordinance in considering traffic impacts.

The improvements at Dower House Road/Marlboro Pike would result in LOS B, with a CLV of 1,078 during the PM peak hour. Under total traffic, this intersection operates acceptably during the AM peak hour and would continue to do so with the improvements.

The improvements at MD 4/Dower House Road and Marlboro Pike/Dower House Road were made

conditions of approval for special exception SE-4428 and preliminary plan 4-01097. They have been reviewed and approved by the Planning Board and have also been reviewed by way of a submitted traffic by both the state and county operating agencies. Because this application has been reviewed with the understanding that a 120-room hotel is the sole additional development intended for this property, the application should be capped at that level of development.

Staff has no comments or proposed changes to the subdivision plan. Sufficient right-of-way exists along MD 4. The site shall not have direct access to MD 4.

The applicant has submitted a subdivision application, and staff has reviewed traffic information in the area of that application. In order to achieve adequacy as required by Section 24-124, recent traffic studies have identified a geometric improvement that would attempt to address transportation problems at the development's critical intersection. This improvement, at the MD 4/Dower House Road intersection, is recommended to mitigate the impact of the applicant's development in accordance with the provisions of Section 24-124(a)(6) of the Subdivision Regulations. This intersection is eligible for mitigation under the fourth criterion in the *Guidelines for Mitigation Action*, approved as CR-29-1994.

An analysis by staff indicates that the proposed mitigation at MD 4/Dower House Road meets the requirements of Section 24-124(a)(6)(B)(i) of the Subdivision Regulations in considering traffic impacts. Comments received from DPW&T and SHA in connection with past applications have affirmed the proposed mitigation action.

Therefore, based on the preceding findings, 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 with conditions.

7. Schools—The Growth Policy and Public Facilities Planning Section has reviewed the subdivision plans for adequacy of school facilities in accordance with Section 24-122.02 of the Subdivision Regulations and the Adequate Public Facilities Regulations for Schools (CR-23-2001) and concluded that the subdivision is exempt from APF test for schools because it is a commercial use.
8. Fire and Rescue—The Growth Policy and Public Facilities Planning Section has reviewed the subdivision plans for adequacy of fire and rescue facilities and concluded the following:
  - a. The existing fire engine service at Forestville Fire Station, Company 23, located at 8321 Old Marlboro Pike, has a service response time of 2.94 minutes, which is within the 3.25- minute response time guideline.
  - b. The existing ambulance service at Forestville Fire Station, Company 23, located at 8321 Old Marlboro Pike, has a service response time of 2.94 minutes, which is within the 4.25- minute response time guideline.
  - c. The existing paramedic service at Marlboro Fire Station, Company 20, located at 14815 Pratt Street, has a service response time of 8.11 minutes, which is beyond the 7.25-minute response time guideline. The nearest fire station Forestville, Company 23, is located at 8321 Old Marlboro Pike, which is 2.94 minutes from the development. This facility would be within the recommended response time for paramedic service.



- d. The existing ladder truck service at Marlboro Fire Station, Company 45, located at 7710 Croom Road, has a service response time of 8.15 minutes, which is beyond the 4.25-minute 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 due to the inadequate service discussed, the Fire Department recommends that a fire suppression system be installed in all commercial structures in accordance with National Fire Protection Association Standard 13 and all applicable Prince George's County laws.

9. Police Facilities—The proposed development is within the service area for District V—Clinton. In accordance with Section 24-122.1(c) of the Subdivision Regulations, the police facilities will be adequate to serve the proposed Melwood commercial development. This police facility will adequately serve the population generated by the proposed subdivision.
10. Health Department—The Health Department has determined that there is an abandoned well and septic tank on the property. The tank should be pumped, backfilled and/or sealed in accordance with COMAR 26.04.04 by a licensed well driller or witnessed by a representative of the Health Department prior to final plat.
11. Stormwater Management—The Department of Environmental Resources (DER), Development Services Division, has determined that on-site stormwater management is required. A Stormwater Management Concept Plan, #16728-2002-00, has been approved with conditions to ensure that development of this site does not result in on-site or downstream flooding. Development must be in accordance with this approved plan.
12. Public Utility Easement—Section 24-122(a) of the Subdivision Regulations provides for a public utility company to require an easement for the purposes of providing public utilities to a development. The preliminary plan of subdivision should depict the location of the required ten-foot public utility easement or provide a note referencing the easement.
13. Access Easement—The preliminary plan demonstrates that a portion of the access drive for the Melwood commercial center to the east is located on the subject property. The applicant is proposing no disturbance to that portion of the access that is located on the subject property.

The preliminary plan should provide for the perpetual use of that portion of the drive which serves Parcel B to the east, recorded in the County Land Records by NLP 122 @ 47. The applicant prefers to secure this portion of the driveway in an access easement to serve Parcel B rather than create a separate outlot of approximately 320 square feet. By creating an easement through the final record plat process, both Parcel B and the proposed parcels will remain in their current configurations and no transfer of land from one property owner to another will be required.

Notwithstanding, the applicant may determine a preference to create an outlot. If so, the outlot should contain only that portion of the driveway located on the subject property. The outlot would be created for the purpose of conveyance to the adjoining property owner only that portion of the access drive serving Parcel B to the east. The outlot would be conveyed at the time of record plat.

## RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the approval of building or sign permits for new or existing development, a Detailed Site Plan (DSP) shall be approved by the Planning Board or its designee. The site plan shall be evaluated for conformance to the recommendations of the *Melwood-Westphalia Master Plan* for development within the Melwood commercial center.
2. The Detailed Site Plan (DSP) shall establish the triggers for improvements to the Meadows Market required by the DSP, which may include signage, façade, parking lot circulations and location, and landscaping.
3. The DSP shall evaluate the possibility of shared parking between the abutting mall to the east, the proposed hotel, and the existing Meadows Market.
4. Prior to the issuance of building permits for the hotel building, the applicant shall submit certification by a professional engineer with competency in acoustical analysis to the Environmental Planning Section demonstrating that the design and construction of building shell within the noise corridor MD 4 and noise generated by aircraft from Andrews Air Force Base will attenuate noise to interior noise levels of 45 dBA (Ldn) or less.
5. Prior to signature approval, the preliminary plan shall be revised:
  - a. To graphically depict the ten-foot public utility easement or to include a note referencing this easement.
  - b. To remove reference to a “hotel” and correctly indicate that the proposed use is a “hotel.”
  - c. To accurately reflect that Marlboro Pike is a 70-foot right-of-way and clearly depicts the dedication of 35 feet from the centerline of the roadway.
  - d. To label the proposed subdivision as Parcel A.
  - e. To delineate a potential easement area to contain that portion of the driveway apron for the Melwood Mall to the east, which is located on the subject property.
  - f. To revise the general notes to provide the Conceptual Stormwater Management plan number and the approval date.
  - g. To identify the location of the well and septic system which served the existing.
6. Development of this site shall be in conformance with the approved conceptual Stormwater Management Plan #16728-2002-0.
7. Prior to the approval of the final plat, the applicant shall determine that either that portion of the access drive serving Parcel B to the east be located in an access easement or be placed in an outlot to be conveyed to the adjoining property owner.

8. The abandoned septic tank and well shall be pumped and crushed or backfilled in place in accordance with COMAR 26.04.04 by a licensed well driller or witnessed by a representative of the Health Department prior to final plat approval.
9. Prior to the issuance of any building permits within the subject property, the following road improvements shall (a) have full financial assurances, or (b) have been permitted for construction through the operating agency's access permit process, and (c) have an agreed-upon timetable for construction with the appropriate operating agency:
  - a. At MD 4/Dower House Road, provision of modified striping along the northbound Dower House Road approach to provide two exclusive left-turn lanes and a shared left-turn/through/right-turn lane.
  - b. At Marlboro Pike/Dower House Road, provision of a second northbound through lane.
10. The subject property shall not have direct access to MD 4.
11. Total additional development within the subject property shall be limited to a 120-room motel, or equivalent development permitted within the C-S-C Zone that generates no more than 78 AM and 96 PM peak-hour vehicle trips. Any development other than that identified herein above shall require an additional preliminary plan of subdivision with a new determination of the adequacy of transportation facilities.