

# Memo

To: Mayor and City Council

CC: Tracey Nicholson, City Administrator

From: Jim Chandler, Assistant City Administrator and Director, Community & Economic Development  
Kate Powers, City Planner

Date: May 7, 2021

Re: CSP-20007 Clay Property Conceptual Site Plan, Council Discussion

Attachments: Applicant's Presentation  
Statement of Justification  
CSP-20007  
SWMP-CSP-20007  
NRO-CSP-20007  
TCP1-CSP-20007

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council with Staff's analysis of the Clay Property Conceptual Site Plan.

## **Project Summary**

- The applicant is proposing to rezone the Subject Property from R-80 to R-20 to permit a broader range of housing types and residential density on the property.
- The property is located within the "Neighborhood Edge" character area of the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone.
- The applicant is proposing a townhouse development consisting of 135 dwelling units over 12.87 acres, with ten percent (10%) of the total number of future dwelling units reserved for affordable/workforce housing.
- The project will include the creation of a non-motorized, multi-use path connecting the north end of Dean Drive to the western end of Calverton Drive.

## **Subject Property Background**

The subject property is 12.87 acres of undeveloped land located at the north end of Dean Drive and west end of Calverton Drive. The northern end of the subject property fronts the south side of Rosemary Lane,

west of its intersection with Bridle Path Lane. Historic Hitching Post Hill (Historic Site 68-001) is located north of the subject property, on the north side of Rosemary Lane. The site location can be seen in red in Figure 1.

University Hills, an existing single-family residential community is located east of the property (in blue) while Northwestern High School is located southeast of the property. The subject property is approximately 0.75 miles north of the Prince George’s Plaza Metro Station (indicated by a yellow star in the figure)



Figure 1. Site Map, Clay Property

The subject property is located within the Prince George’s Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone (TDDP) and part of the Neighborhood Edge Character area, an area of transition between the downtown core and the surrounding established residential neighborhoods.

The Clay Property is currently zoned R-80 (One-Family Detached Residential), which “provides for variation in the size, shape, and width of subdivision lots to better utilize the natural terrain and to facilitate planning of single-family developments with lots and dwellings of various sizes and styles” (Prince George’s County Code of Ordinances). R-80 zoning limits residential development to single-family detached housing at a density of 4.5 dwelling units per acre.

## Project Background

The applicant has submitted a Conceptual Site Plan proposing to rezone the Clay Property's underlying base zone within the TDDP from R-80 to R-20. The purpose of this requested rezoning is to allow for a wider range of residential uses on the property accommodating future residential development, specifically a townhouse community comprised of 135 dwelling units. Tentative townhouse lotting and location can be seen in Figure 2 on the following page.

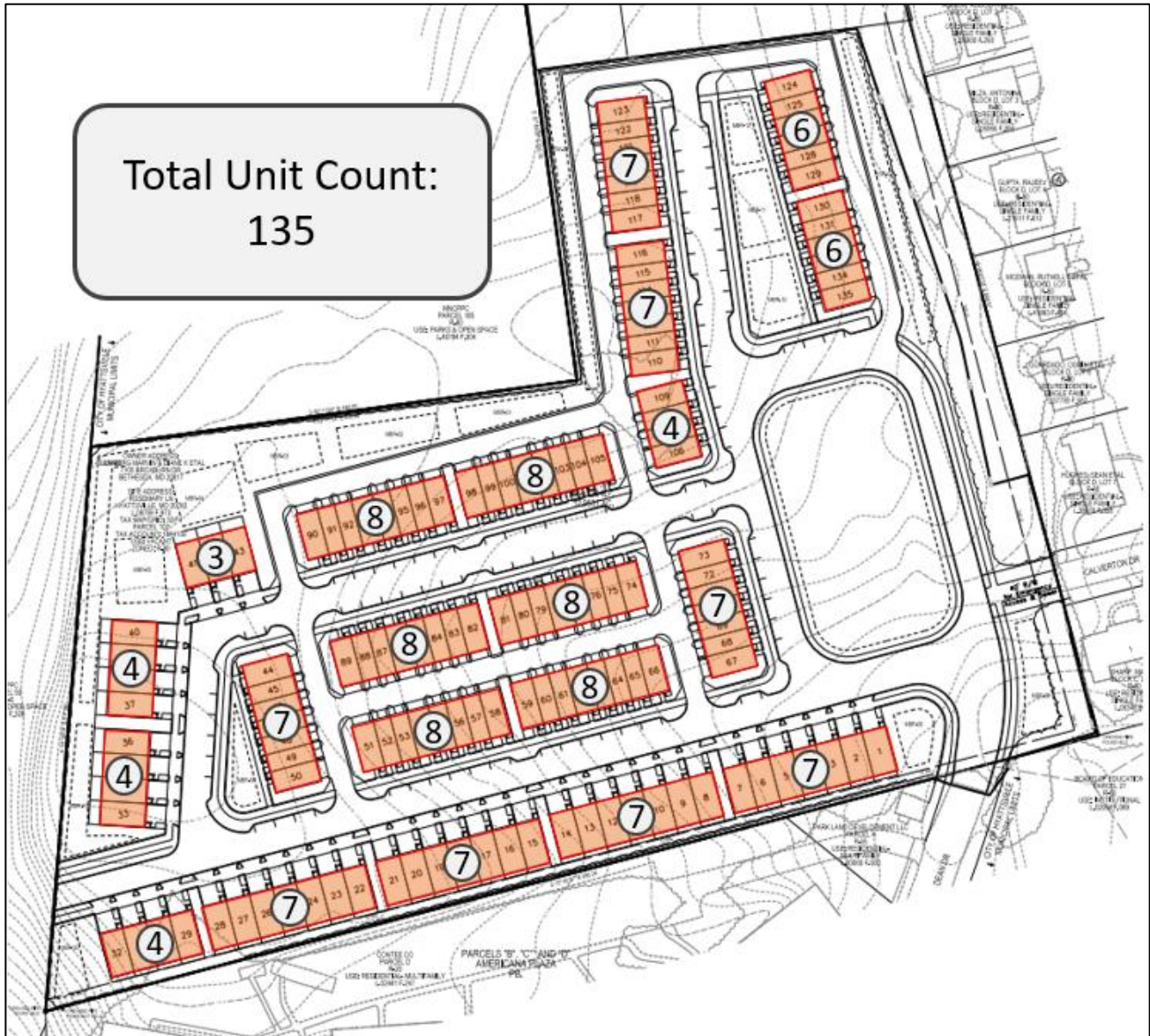


Figure 2. Total Proposed Townhouse Units, Clay Property

The proposed zoning for the Clay Property as part of the submitted CSP is R-20 (Single Family Triple-Attached Residential). This zoning category permits single-family detached, semi-detached and triple-attached, and townhouse development, with Detailed Site Plan approval required for townhouses.



See additional details related to the R-20 zoning category:

- Standard lot sizes
  - 3,200 square feet for end lots
  - 2,000 square feet for interior townhouse lots
- Maximum triple-attached dwellings per net acre: 16.33
- Maximum townhouses per net acre: 6.0
- Estimated average triple-attached dwelling units per net acre: 11

It is the applicant’s opinion that this new zoning is compatible with existing development in the area and aligns with the purposes and recommendations outlined in the TDDP.

### Character Area and Density

The Clay Property is within the Neighborhood Edge area of the Prince George’s Plaza Regional Transit District as defined by *Plan 2035 Prince George’s* and the TDDP. The property’s location within the Neighborhood Edge Character Area can be seen in red in Figure 3 below.

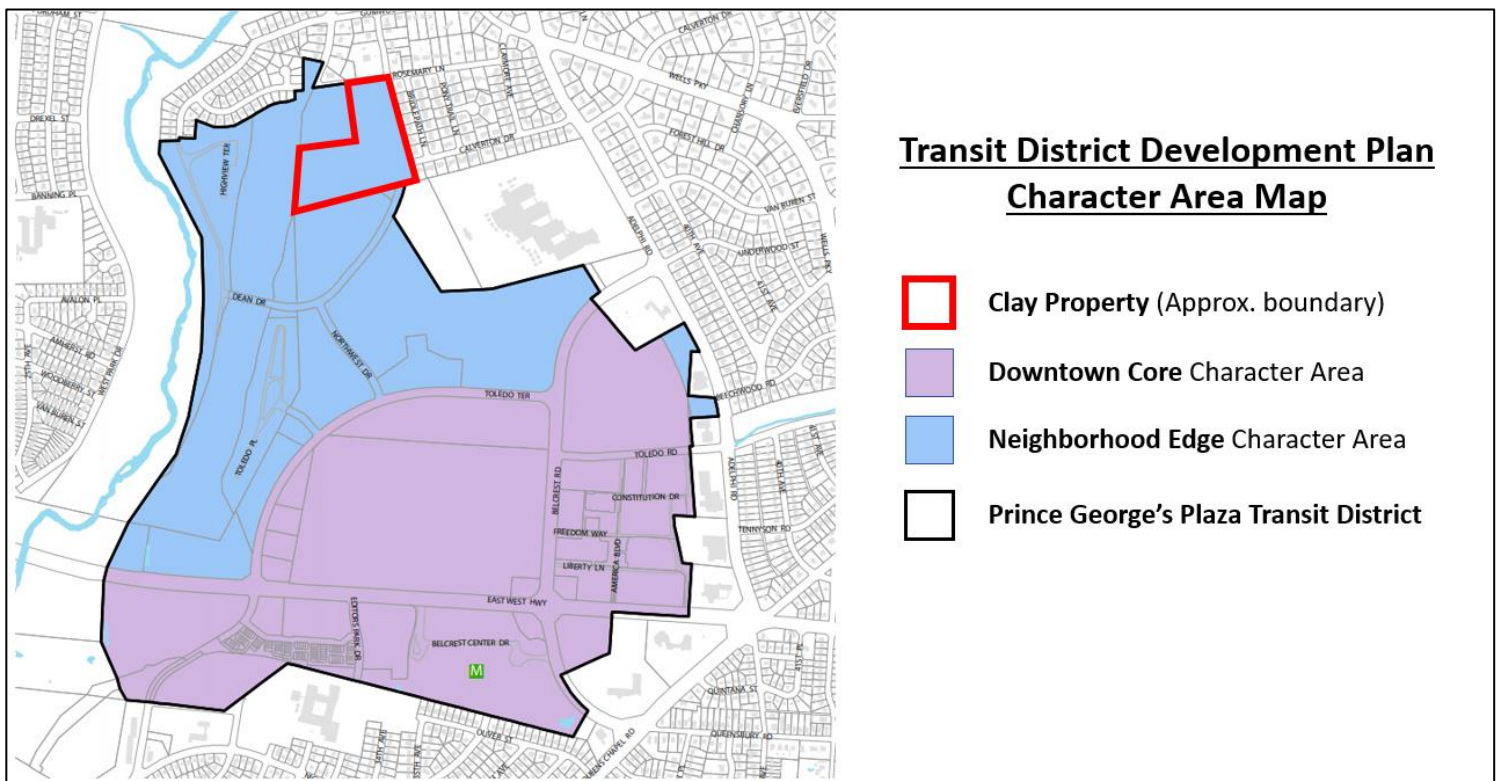


Figure 3. TDDP Character Areas Map

The Neighborhood Edge is “a residential area that transitions the intensity and vibrancy of the Downtown Core to surrounding established residential neighborhoods. A mix of housing types— including townhouses and single-family detached homes—broadens the Transit District’s appeal to current and future residents. Wide tree-lined sidewalks, parks, and public open spaces, including a new greenway,

connect residents to schools, public facilities, the Northwest Stream Valley Park, and other amenities” (pg. 70, TDDP).

As stated in the TDDP, the Neighborhood Edge area is be comprised of various zoning categories which supporting a mix of housing types. These zoning categories can be seen in detail on Figure 4. Zoning categories included in the transitional Neighborhood Edge Character Area include single-family, single-family attached, regional transit-oriented high intensity, reserved open space, and agricultural and preservation.

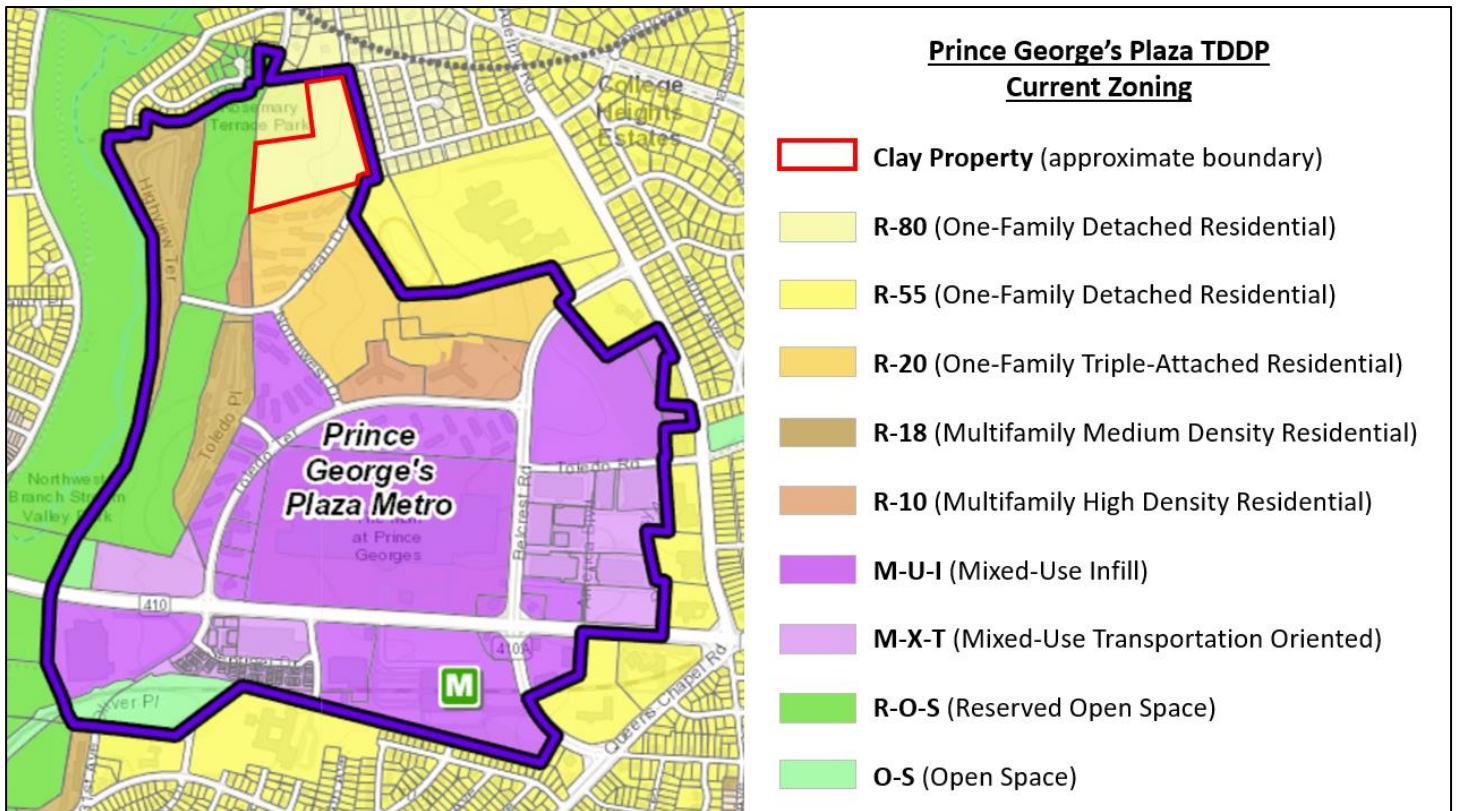


Figure 4. Current Zoning, Prince George's Plaza TDDP

When transitioning to a downtown area in a transit district, it is appropriate to place townhomes adjacent to single-family homes, as single-family attached homes are only slightly more dense than single-family detached homes. Regardless of whether the Clay Property is zoned R-80 or R-20, single family homes will abut townhouses in the Transit District.

The Clay Property's southern border is adjacent to the Highview Apartments property. If the Clay Property maintains a single-family detached standard, the single-family houses on the Clay Property will abut the existing apartments to the south, or whatever residential products are constructed after its eventual redevelopment.

As a R-20 zone, the Highview Apartments property could be redeveloped as two-family products, three-family products, or townhomes. It is also possible that the property maintains the existing multifamily units for an extended period of time.

In its zoning, the County placed R-80 and R-20 properties next to each other, leading Staff to assume they believe it is appropriate for townhouse developments to reside adjacent to single-family detached neighborhoods.

It is staff's opinion that either R-80 or R-20 would be appropriate zoning for the subject property. If the property remains R-80, the subject property will support a continuation of the single-family detached neighborhood to the east. If the property is rezoned to R-20, the subject property will likely mirror the residential redevelopment to the south, including the forthcoming Landy Property townhouse development.

Staff is recommending that if the Clay Property is rezoned to R-20, the related proposed development shall be required to abide by all R-20 standards including a maximum density of 6 townhouses per net acre. For a 12.87-acre property, the maximum number of townhouses would be 77. Note that this calculation likely does not include the totality of the property acreage. If the totality of the property acreage is 22.5 acres or greater, the proposed 135 proposed townhouse units will mean the R-20 density standard.

### ***Vehicular, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Transportation***

The 2016 Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Plan lays out a specific transit-related vision for the area between Calverton Drive and Dean Drive. See excerpt below.

#### ***Policy TM7***

*Provide off-street bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighboring developments and surrounding communities whenever feasible. All connections should be continuously lit, patrolled regularly by police or other security personnel, and clearly visible by adjacent buildings, Connections through parks or school grounds that must be closed during the nighttime hours due to security and safety considerations should have alternative routes that are accessible 24 hours a day.*

#### ***Strategy TM7.3***

*Implement exclusively nonmotorized connections between existing disconnected streets including Dean Drive and Calverton Drive and Highview Terrace and Gumwood Drive (TDDP, pg. 88).*

This vision of an exclusively nonmotorized connection between Calverton Drive and Dean Drive is also reiterated in the City's 2018 Transportation Plan. See excerpt below.

***Project: Install multi-use path connecting Calverton Drive and Dean Drive.***

*Calverton Drive and Dean Drive are dead-end streets that limit accessibility into the University Hills neighborhood. To be consistent with the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Plan, a multi-use path should be installed to connect these two streets and thereby improve connectivity and access between the University Hills neighborhood and amenities in the Prince George's Plaza area, such as the Metro Station and the Mall at Prince George's. (Transportation Plan, pg. 35)*

City Staff is recommending the applicant dedicate to the City the 'Non-motorized Connection' area as improved land area of 50' in width for the purpose of dedication as public Right of Way. The land should be constructed and maintained by the applicant until such time as the City accepts the land through public dedication.

The location of the proposed multiuse, non-motorized connection can be seen in Figure 5 on the following page.

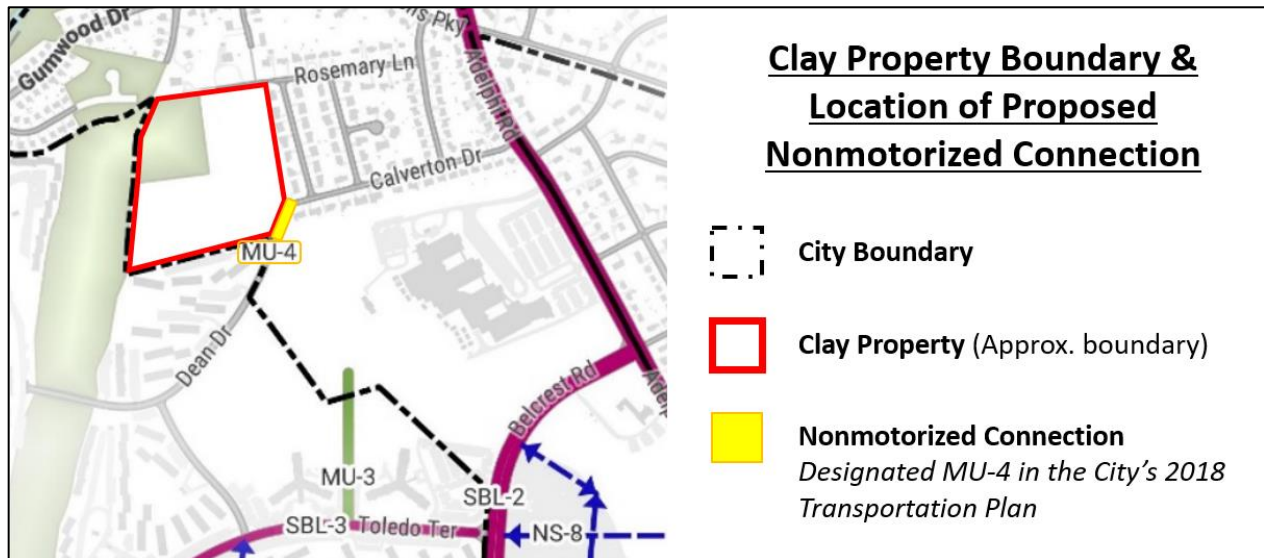


Figure 5. Clay Property Boundary and Location of Proposed Nonmotorized Connection

Staff has concerns that the transit routes envisioned for the area, including the non-motorized trail, may not be sufficient in supporting increased vehicle traffic associated with an intensified use, such as a townhouse development, on the subject property. As part of the development process, a traffic impact study is not ordinarily included with conceptual site plan applications. Rather a traffic impact study is required at time of preliminary plan of subdivision if the proposed development generates 50 trips or more during any peak hour.

The traffic study will be prepared by the applicant and reviewed by M-NCPPC Staff for the Planning Board to make the required findings regarding adequacy of transportation facilities in the Subdivision Ordinance. All traffic impact study must include forecasted future traffic volumes for the roads and streets within the study area, a listing of all properties considered in projecting future traffic volumes, and a map of their locations.

Required transportation findings for approval of preliminary plans of subdivision include:

1. Adequate access roads available to serve traffic which would be generated by the proposed subdivision.
2. Traffic generated by the proposed subdivision will be accommodated on nearby intersections and roadways such that they would function below the minimum peak-hour service levels defined in the Prince George's County General Plan; or roadway improvements and/or trip reduction programs fully funded by the subdivider will alleviate the inadequacy.



- Applicant may proffer a Transportation Facilities Mitigation Plan which provides for roadway improvements, trip reduction programs, or (for developments generating 25 or fewer peak-hour trips), a pro rata share of the cost of roadway improvements.

The proposed vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes are demonstrated in Figure 6 below.

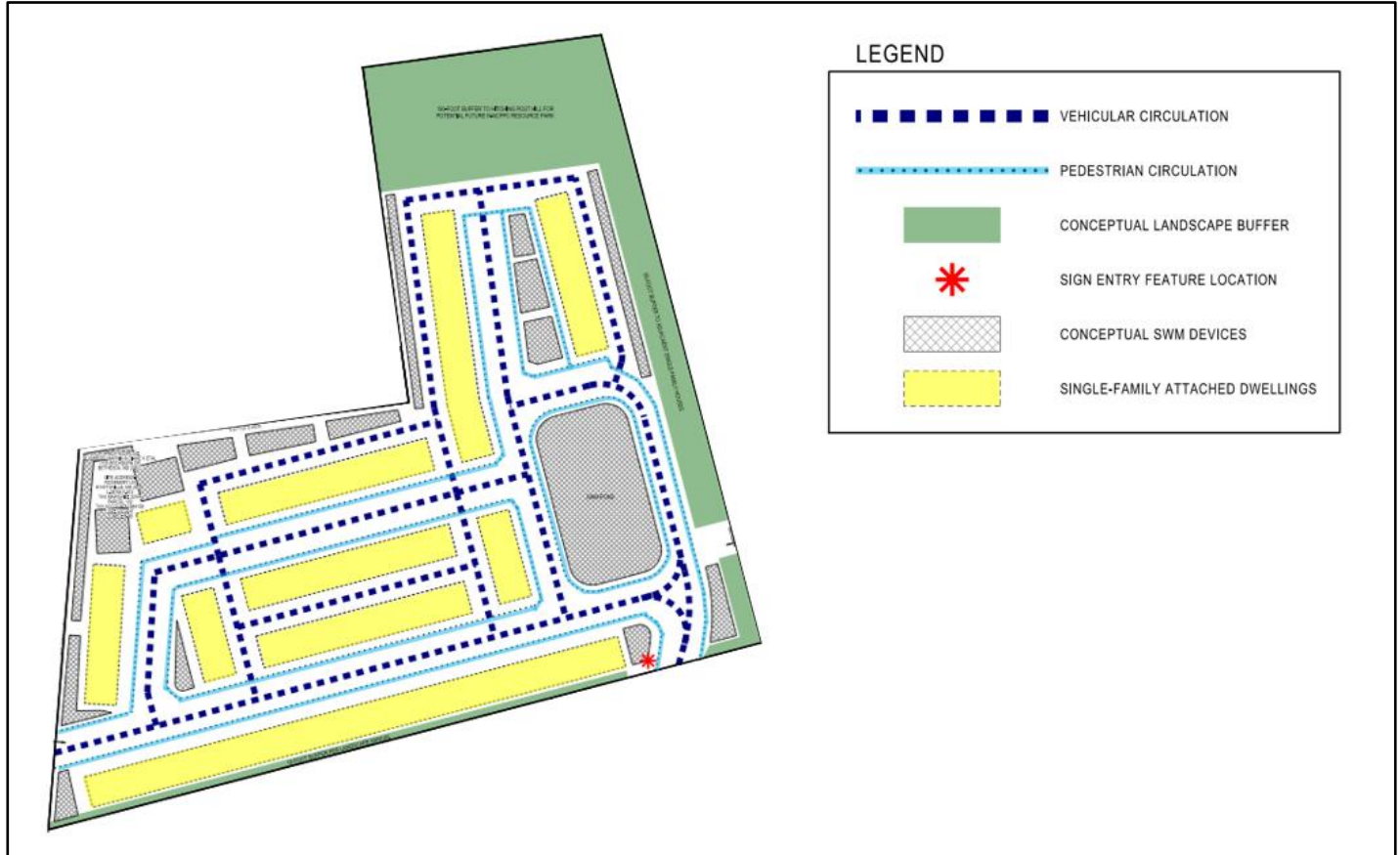


Figure 6. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation, Clay Property

The traffic study will consider the impact of the proposed internal streets within the development. Dean Drive will act as the only vehicular access point to the development. Ideally, the arrangement of the internal roadways should provide for continuation of existing streets. This will create more direct routes, as well as help with orientation and wayfinding. Street continuity will create more ease and clarity of egress.

Though the access to Calverton Drive will be non-motorized, Staff recommends the southernmost internal roadway aligns with Calverton Drive to increase visibility and continuity of the roadway network. The Transit District Development Plan emphasizes the importance of the street networking stating that the street network is “the backbone upon which the entire Transit District will be built and represents the most important public and civic space” (TDDP, pg. 203).

The figure on the following page demonstrates street alignment, with the current street alignment on the left side and the proposed alignment on the right side.





Figure 7. Internal Roadways, Clay Property

### Environmental Considerations

Currently, the subject property is undeveloped forested land and the location of the ridgeline between the Northwest Branch and the Lower Northeast Branch of the Anacostia Watershed. The subject property as it currently exists provides various environmental benefits, including soil stabilization, runoff reduction, and wildlife habitat creation. However, as privately owned property within a Transit District, it is short-sighted to assume that this land will remain undeveloped.

Ideally, the property would include denser, quality housing products in addition to substantial dedicated green space. This would create both the benefits of smaller footprint housing while reaping the environmental and social benefits of public green space.

The Owner has discussed a land swap in connection with the subject property involving land that was donated to the Parks Department by the Owner in December 2005. This land swap could result in the Parks Department's creation of two new parks on the Clay Property as recommended in the TDDP.

Staff recommends the Council support the application's 150-foot buffer to the north (adjacent to Hitching Post Hill) and land swap with M-NCPPC to preserve green space on the property.

City Staff recommends the 50-foot wooded buffer to the east (adjacent to single-family houses) be incorporated within rear of subdivided lots and maintained privately.

The applicant's Tree Conservation Plan identifies the specimen trees currently on the property and which specimen trees are proposed for removal. Sixteen (16) on-site trees are being proposed for removal.

The locations of these trees can be found in the figure on the following page.

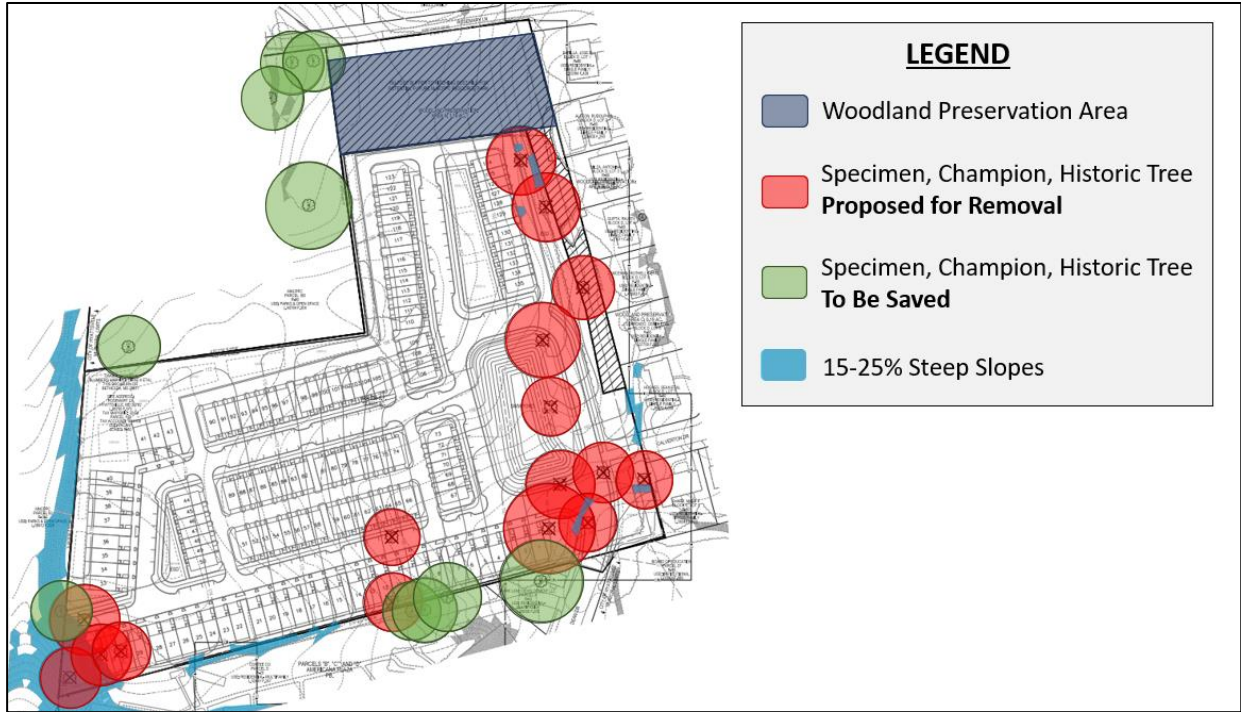


Figure 8. Specimen Trees Proposed for Removal, Clay Property

The land abutting the west side of the Clay Property has a 15% - 25% slope, which can be seen in blue on Figure 9. Staff has concerns about the potential erosion and stormwater issues that may occur if the existing mature trees on the west side of the property are removed. Staff recommends that specimen trees adjacent to the 15% - 25% slope be preserved to avoid potential stormwater issues. The location of these trees can be seen in yellow in Figure 9.

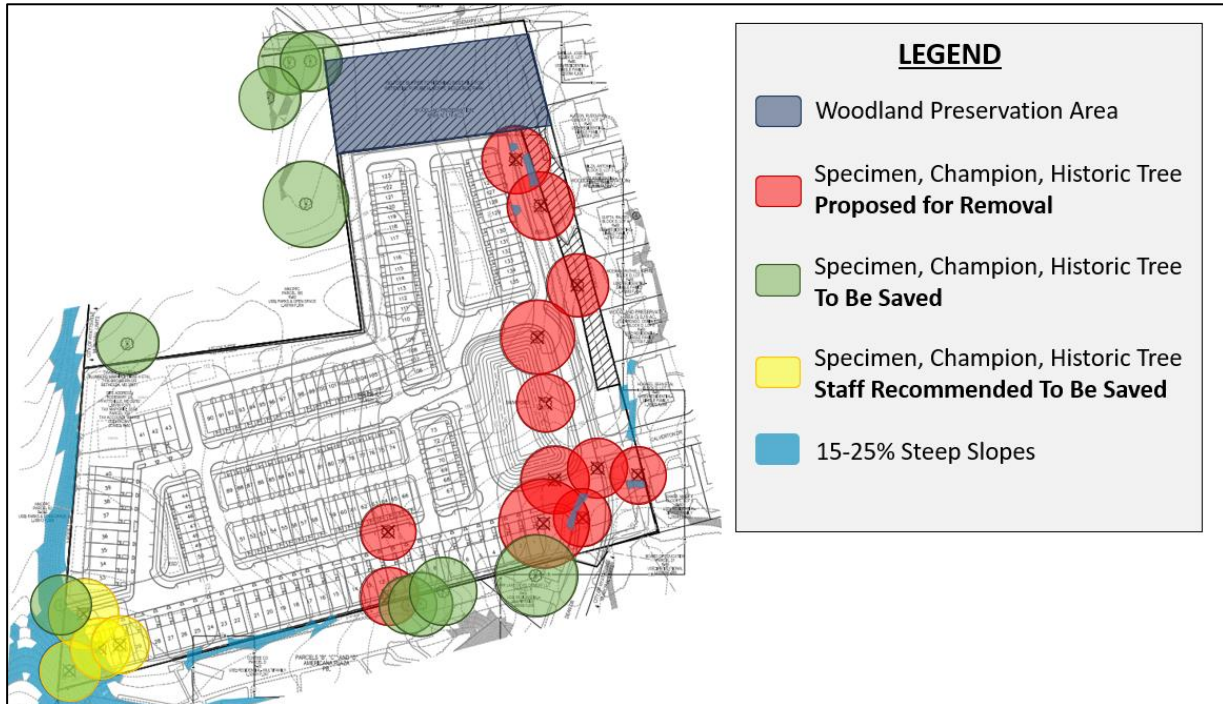


Figure 9. Specimen Trees Recommended for Preservation, Clay Property

In terms of stormwater management, the applicant is proposing thirteen (13) micro-bioretenion areas, three (3) swales, and a stormwater pond (100-year control). The location of these stormwater management devices can be seen in Figure 10.

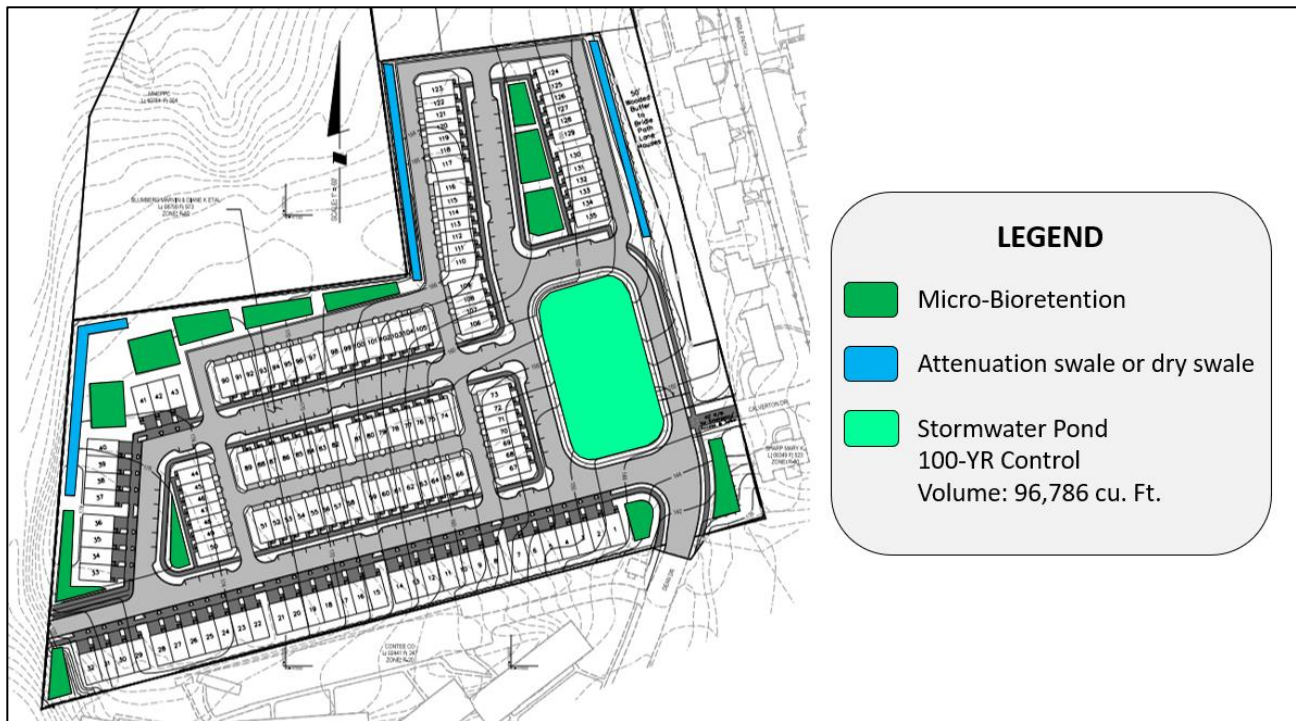


Figure 10. Stormwater Management Devices, Clay Property

### Summary of Recommendations

- If the Clay Property is approved to be rezoned to R-20, the related proposed development shall abide by all R-20 standards including a maximum density of 6 townhouses per net acre.
- The southernmost internal roadway shall align with Calverton Drive to maintain continuity of the existing roadway network.
- Express support for the application’s 150-foot buffer to the north (adjacent to Hitching Post Hill) and land swap with M-NCPPC to preserve green space on the property.
- A 50-foot wooded buffer to the east (adjacent to single-family houses) shall be incorporated within rear of subdivided lots and maintained privately.
- Specimen trees adjacent to the 15% - 25% slope be preserved to avoid potential stormwater issues.
- The applicant shall dedicate to the City the ‘Non-motorized Connection’ area as improved land area of 50’ in width for the purpose of dedication as public Right of Way. The land shall be constructed and maintained by the applicant until such time as the City accepts the land through public dedication.

### Timeline

The City Council will discuss this application at their May 17 meeting and be required to take action no later than June 7<sup>th</sup>.

The Prince George’s County Planning Board has scheduled a hearing for this application on June 24.