

December 1, 2016
 February 28, 2017
 August 9, 2017
 August 31, 2017

VIA EPLANS

Deepak Somarajan, PE, LEED AP BD&C
 Engineer III – Development Review Team
 Montgomery County Department of Transportation
 101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor
 Rockville, MD 20850

**Re: Bloom Montgomery Village
 Preliminary Plan # 120170150
 Design Exceptions Request
 VIKA PROJECT VM1920B**

Dear Mr. Somarajan,

On behalf of our client, USL2 MR Montgomery Village Business Trust c/o Monument Realty (the “Applicant”), we are requesting Design Exceptions pertaining to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation’s (“DOT”) design standards to implement a proposal for new residential uses and convey significant parkland and open space (the “Project”).

There are two design exceptions that we would like you to consider while reviewing the proposed Master-Planned extension of Stewartown Road, MA-298:

- A-1: Modification to MCDOT Suburban Minor Arterial Road Section
- A-2: Modification to Monumental Entrance

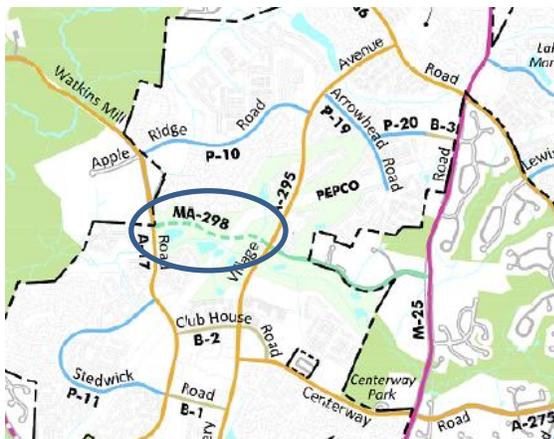


Figure 1: Master Plan Street Network Map with MA-298 circled

VIKA Maryland, LLC

20251 Century Boulevard, Suite 400 * Germantown, Maryland 20874 * 301.916.4100 Fax 301.916.2262
 Tysons Corner, VA * Germantown, MD * Washington, DC

www.vika.com

Overall Consideration

In this particular case, the Applicant was involved with the Montgomery Village Foundation and Property before the Master Plan began. In fact, the purchase of the land for redevelopment was a key factor that got the planning process moving. Thus, they were intimately involved with Planning, Council, and Executive Staff over several years and coordinated closely on the resulting Montgomery Village Master Plan roadway design recommendations. Thus, much of our request is a summation of discussions made during that process.

Early in the process it was the Applicant's position that the road was better classified as a residential street given the existing built condition of Stewarttown Road. As a compromise, however, Planning and Council Staff agreed to support the character of a residential street, but maintained the Minor Arterial classification. This resulted in the cross section below (page 72) and the following statement in the Master Plan (from Page 71, last bullet in the center column):

Because of the unique environmental constraints and the particular character of the existing and proposed residential neighborhoods, several methods for slowing traffic should be considered for design modifications. These modifications may include:

- Reduced horizontal baseline radius
- Reduced horizontal distance between curve tangents
- Reduced monumental entrance lengths
- Increased maximum vertical slope (up to 10% grade maximum)
- Allowance of median islands
- Enhanced pedestrian and bicyclist circulation, and
- Reduced planting strip width.

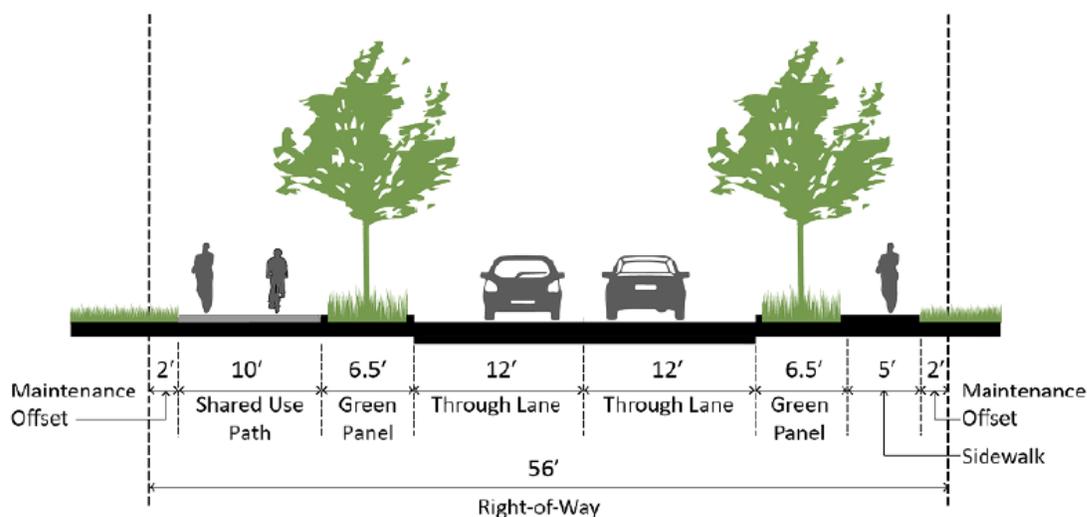


Figure 18: Stewarttown Road Extension Cross-Section (2-lane section West of Montgomery Village Avenue, looking West)

Figure 2: Stewarttown Road cross-section (Figure 18 in the Master Plan)



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We have provided several of these in combination to calm traffic and create a road in compliance with the Master Plan and compatible with the existing community.

These general parameters, then, establish the framework of our design and the following sections of the report detail each design exception, followed by the rationale for the request including other measures reviewed and anticipated impacts and benefits as justification.

Design Exception A-1 “Modification to MCDOT Suburban Minor Arterial Road Section”

Written Explanation:

The Applicant is seeking a waiver from MCDOT Suburban Minor Arterial Road Standard No. MC-2004.27 for Stewartown Road between Watkins Mill Road and Montgomery Village Avenue. Existing Stewartown Road between Montgomery Village Avenue and Goshen Road is a 2-lane minor arterial road with on-street parking which approximately matches MC-2004.27. The Applicant is proposing a 56' right-of-way 2-lane tertiary residential road section. We have also added traffic-calming measures, such as median islands and neck-downs at pedestrian crossings, as well as parallel parking along the road near the community garden. These are all illustrated on the preliminary plan with applicable dimensions.

Rationale for Request:

As shown in Figure 2, above, the Montgomery Village Master Plan adopted the Applicant's proposed reduced right-of-way width of 56' for Stewartown Road between Watkins Mill Road and Montgomery Village Avenue (Section 6.1.1, pg. 71 & 75). The proposed 56' section from right-of-way to right-of-way is described as a 2' maintenance offset, 10' shared use path on the south side, 6.5' green panel, (2) 12' travel lanes, 6.5' green panel, 5' sidewalk on the north side, and a 2' maintenance offset. On-street parking is proposed near the community garden and Montgomery Village Foundation Park; it is not feasible in other areas because of environmental and slope constraints. The shared use path on the southern side will improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the east and west sides of the Village. As necessary, the section has been increased above 56' to accommodate the median islands, additional path widths, and parallel parking.

As noted in the Master Plan, the reduced right-of-way is appropriate due to the environmental constraints including a stream valley buffer, floodplain, and the desire to protect existing plantings along the perimeter of the property. This reduction of 14' allows greater protection of these environmentally sensitive features while accommodating all appropriate vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist circulation as envisioned by the Master Plan. In some cases, we have followed adjacent paths – such as a fitness trail near the Montgomery Village Foundation Park or around median islands – resulting in a right-of way that is variable.

Evaluated measures deemed unacceptable:

MCDOT Suburban Minor Arterial Road Standard No. MC-2004.27 from right-of-way to right-of-way (70') is described as a 2' maintenance offset, 5' sidewalk, 9' green panel, 8' parking, (2) 11' travel lanes, 8' parking, 9' green panel, 5' sidewalk, and a 2' maintenance offset. This section width would negatively impact the unique environmental constraints demonstrated within the subject property. Additionally, the proposed character of the existing and proposed residential neighborhoods does not necessitate this



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right-of-way width. Finally, any increase beyond that depicted would result in greater environmental impacts with no functional difference in the roadway elements and additional dedications will result in loss of land area that is proposed for conveyance to Montgomery County Parks and the Montgomery Village Foundation.

Anticipated impact on vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic:

We do not expect an adverse impact on vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic. A shared use path (LB-3) is being provided along the south side of the road and a 5' sidewalk is proposed on the north side per the Master Plan's recommendation: compliance to the MC-2004.27 standard (with 5' sidewalks on each side) is in conflict with this specific recommendation.

Further, adequate horizontal baseline radius, vertical slope, and vehicular sight distance lengths are still provided with approval of this waiver request. We are also seeking a design exception for horizontal distance between curve tangents as described in A-3 below.

Anticipated impact on future County maintenance operations:

We anticipate no negative impact on maintenance operations; in fact, maintenance operations may be less than if the full right-of-way was dedicated and constructed.

Anticipated structure lifespan:

Not applicable to this design exception.

Impact on the project if MCDOT does not approve the request:

If MCDOT Suburban Minor Arterial Road Standard No. MC-2004.27 is required the MDPS-approved floodplain will be adversely affected as well as reduced open space and reduced developable area. Bicycle connectivity will be adversely impacted without the provision of the shared use path. And, as noted above, any increase beyond that depicted would result in greater environmental impacts with no functional difference in the roadway elements and additional dedications will result in loss of land area that is proposed for conveyance to Montgomery County Parks and the Montgomery Village Foundation.

Perceived benefit to the public and private sectors of allowing the modification:

The Montgomery Village Master Plan's transportation goal is to increase mobility, reduce automobile dependency, and implement a complete street approach to ensure the transportation network is safe and efficient for all users regardless of mode of travel. One of the key components is to provide new connections within the Village to expand and enhance walking, biking, and transit opportunities. Proposed Stewartown Road will provide these opportunities as well as increase safety by reducing the width and limiting the design speed to 25 mph.

Design Exception A-2 "Modification to Monumental Entrance"

Written Explanation:

MCDOT Monumental Entrance Standard No. MC-224.01 for a primary road classification exceeds that which is necessary for the proposed Stewartown Road, which is classified as minor arterial. The Applicant requests to provide the monumental entrance designed to the secondary residential road standard, as we have requested subdivision waivers to similar standards.



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Rationale for Request:

Based on design exception A-1 above, Stewartown Road is proposed to have a 56' right-of-way with a design speed of 25 mph. These design criteria are more consistent with the secondary residential road standard, which includes lane widths of 10' to 12' and tighter radii and shorter tangent lengths. Likewise, the monumental entrance for a secondary road requires the following standards, which we meet, with one caveat because we are providing a wider exit dimension to accommodate turn lanes:

- 26' of pavement within 245' of the start of the entrance
- 18'/20' entry and exit lanes
- 16' island width is required, but we have reduced to 12' to accommodate two exit lanes
- A taper of 1:15
- An end of the monumental entrance 140' from the start of the entrance to the 2' radius at the end

This design is more in keeping with the neighborhood and the desired target speed limit of 25 miles per hour.

Evaluated measures deemed unacceptable:

Design of the larger monumental entrance would add an excessive amount of pavement requiring increased storm water management measures, additional floodplain impacts, and a shift of the developable area into the buffer. Each of these results would negatively impact the environmentally sensitive areas around the adjacent stream and would not fit the character and scale of the road being proposed.

Anticipated impact on vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic:

There is no adverse impact to vehicular traffic, which should be encouraged to slow to the posted 25 mph. Pedestrian traffic will not be negatively impacted as it will be easier to make the crossing of this entrance with the more narrow entrance width. Bicycle traffic will not be affected since they will be crossing the more narrow entrance or turning into the site via the proposed 10' shared use path.

Anticipated impact on future County maintenance operations:

Reducing the monumental entrance will not impact county maintenance as the County currently maintains curb and gutter within the right-of-way, which will not change.

Anticipated structure lifespan:

Not applicable to this design exception.

Impact on the project if MCDOT does not approve the request:

Installation of the larger monumental entrance would decrease pedestrian and bicyclist safety at crossings, increase storm water management measures, negatively impact the adjacent environmentally sensitive area, and shift or decrease the development footprint.



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We appreciate the opportunity to present this information to you and look forward to working with you as you review it. Please let us know if there is any further information that you need in review this request.

Sincerely,
VIKA Maryland, LLC

Joshua C. Sloan

Joshua Sloan, RLA, ASLA, AICP, LEED AP ND, SITES AP
Director of Planning and Landscape Architecture
Vice President

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