



Memorandum:

To: Whitemarsh Park Master Plan Steering Committee
From: Elisabeth Lardner, LKLA
Date: August 19, 2010
Subject: Draft Concept for Whitemarsh Park Master Plan
Update based upon meeting with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)

As promised in our earlier memorandum, this is an update based upon the information that the Consultant Team and City Staff learned in the meeting on August 17, 2010 with the SHA regarding additional or improved vehicular access points to Whitemarsh Park.

As noted in the excerpts from the August 10, 2010 memorandum below, we have been concerned that the Master Plan **not** over program the park **if** additional or improved access to Whitemarsh Park is not viable in the near future. Between conversations with the Prince George's County Planning Department's Environmental Planning Section staff and SHA staff, none of the four potential access points prove viable as new or improved access points in the next fifteen to twenty year period.

New Stormwater Regulations and Tree Cover

The new regulations for tree mitigation are extensive, and therefore expensive. In addition to the base cost for the road itself, the costs to mitigate the impact on tree cover, the stream crossings (and bridge construction required) make both the Spur Way and Annapolis Road access options unsupportable economically or environmentally.

Route 3 Corridor Improvements

Funding has been pulled from the study for the improvements to Route 3, a two-county effort between Prince George and Anne Arundel Counties and the SHA. Regardless of the lack of current funding, the selected alternative relocates the southbound lane adjacent to the northbound lane and turns the existing southbound alignment of Route 3 into a service drive with access to the service drive only at Route 450 and near Route 50. It is unlikely that these improvements will be funded in the near future, as this is a lower priority segment of a lower priority project in Prince George's County queue. Any intersection or signalization improvements would have to meet warrants and be funded by the City of Bowie, if by chance such improvements were even approved. Approval is less plausible as Prince George's County prefers to see the future of the Route 3 corridor as a highway rather than as a boulevard as Anne Arundel County has endorsed for their portion. A highway implies moving traffic quickly with few obstructions to flow and that philosophy, added to the proximity of the interchange with Route 50 presents a significant challenge to garnering support for any signalization at either location proposed on Route 3 at Whitemarsh Park.

What Does this Mean for the Whitemarsh Planning Effort?

Bottom line, without the ability to increase and improve access to the park, it does not make sense to increase the programming on the site beyond what is accommodated today. For example, if BBGC wished to expand its football program beyond the 350 players currently accommodated, a different site needs to be identified.

The Consultant Team and the City of Bowie Staff would like to reconvene the Steering Committee the week of September 13 to discuss these issues. The proposed Community Workshop, tentatively scheduled for September 29 is, of course, on hold until the Steering Committee weighs in on this turn of events.

Please feel free to call if you have questions.

Excerpts from memo dated 8/10/10

The most significant and unresolved issue on this Draft Concept is the issue of an additional vehicular access point to the Park. As directed by the Steering Committee, all four potential access points are shown on the Draft Concept Plan. A separate sheet delineating the pros and cons related to each of the four points is included in this package. Very preliminary cost estimates for each of the access points are being generated. City of Bowie staff and the consultant team are meeting with the Maryland State Highway Administration on August 17 to discuss the four potential points of access. That information will be shared with the Steering Committee.

Questions to Consider

1. *How much is too much? If no additional access point proves to be viable, what is the ultimate capacity of the site (traffic becomes the determining factor, not for parking but for ingress and egress.)? Does the Steering Committee wish to state that field expansion as shown is contingent upon construction of an improved access point(s)?*
2. *At what point does it make economic sense to buy land elsewhere for athletic fields versus spending a similar amount of money on a new access drive to Whitmarsh? (presumption is that the western and northern access points will cost in the millions of dollars – consultant team is still working on cost projections)*
3. *Can parking in F5 and F6 be removed upon construction of C1? Perpendicular parking at the main entry point adds to an already congested situation.*