



# HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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## TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

### Planning Board Meeting of December 4, 2025

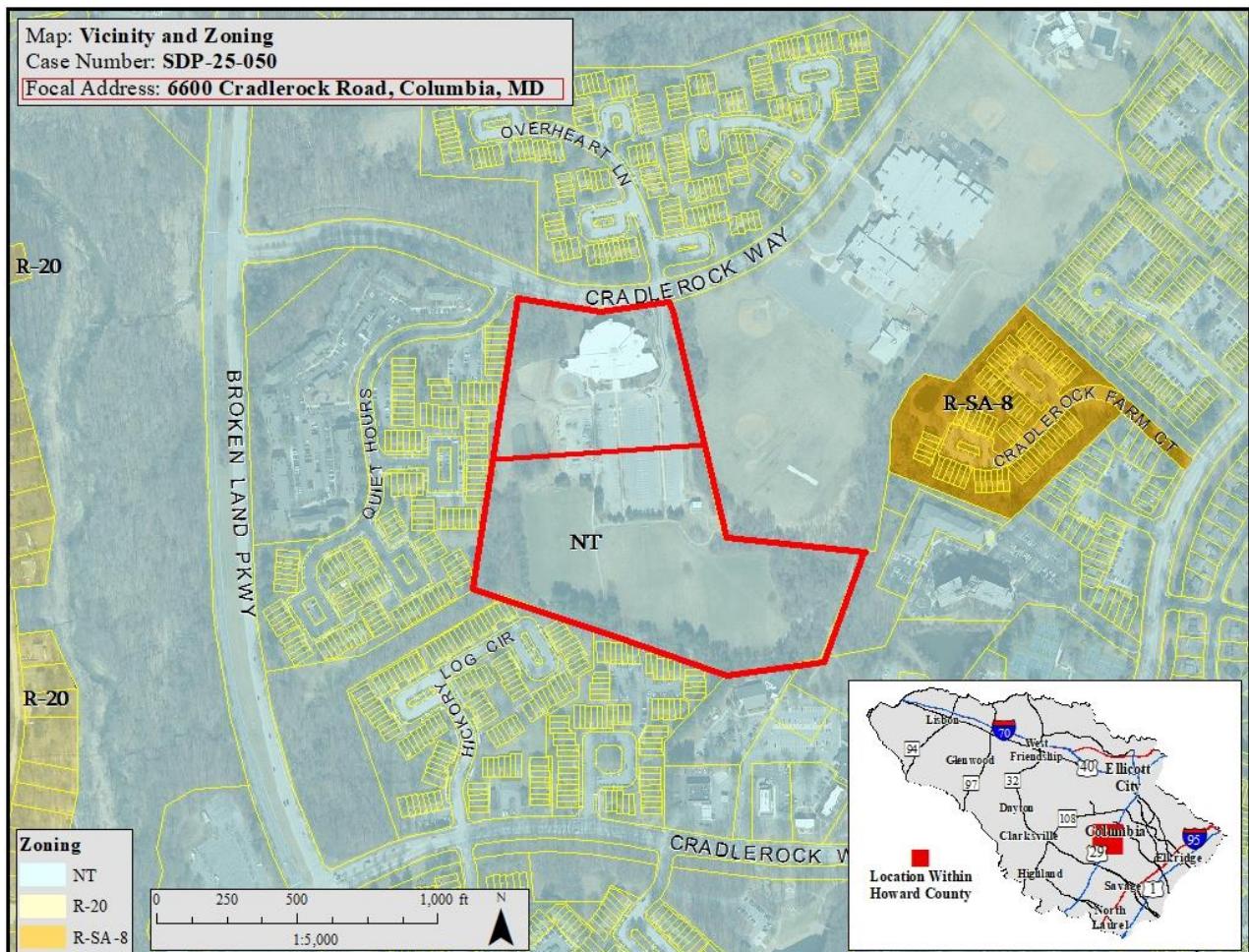
#### Case No./Petitioner: SDP-25-050, Department of Recreation and Parks

Project Name: Cradlerock Park (East Columbia Athletic Fields)

DPZ Planner: Jill Manion  
[jmanion@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:jmanion@howardcountymd.gov)

Request: A Site Development Plan (SDP-25-050) that requests to construct athletic fields, athletic courts, a playground, a pavilion, and associated pathways and other related recreation and park improvements.

Location: The property is located adjacent south to 6600 Cradlerock Way, which is the location of the East Columbia Library and 50+ Center. Athletic Fields exist on the site. The property, also known as Tax Map 36, Parcel 36, Parcel B-1 in the 6<sup>th</sup> Election District of Howard County, MD. The property is zoned NT within the Village of Owen Brown, Section 1, Area 4 as shown on FDP-212-A. The parcels consists of credited and non-credited Open Space. The property is 16.59 acres.



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**Vicinal Properties:**

**To the North:** The north of the property is bounded directly north by the East Columbia Library and 50+ Community Center. Board of Education property is located directly northeast.

**To the East:** Columbia Association open space is located directly east of the site.

**To the South:** A single family attached residential development is located south of the park.

**To the West:** A single family attached residential development is located west of the park.

**General Comments:**

**A. Regulatory Compliance:** This project is subject to compliance with Section 125.0.G.4 of the Zoning Regulations (effective October 6, 2013), "if the Planning Board reserved for itself the authority to approve a Site Development Plan and for all Downtown Revitalization, except as provided in "2" and "3" below, no permit shall be issued for any use until the Site Development Plan is approved by the Planning Board."

The project is also subject to the development criteria listed in the Final Development Plan 212-A, the amended Fifth Edition of the Howard County Subdivision and Land Development Regulations (the October 7, 2007 Edition), and the Howard County Design Manual.

The applicant was advised to submit the plan to the Village Board of Owen Brown. The applicant forwarded the approval from the Village Board's Architecture Review Committee to the County.

**B. Relevant DPZ Plan History:**

- FDP-212-A: An amended Final Development Plan and Criteria for the subject property was recorded in the Howard County Land Records on December 18, 1992 as Plat #3054-A-1258.
- F-92-152, "Columbia, Village of Owen Brown, Section 1, Area 4 Parcels A-1, B-1 and C" was recorded in the Howard County Land Records as Plat #10361 on June 23, 1992.
- SDP-92-075, Site Development Plan for the existing athletic fields was approved on February 12, 1992.
- ECP-25-006, Environmental Concept Plan for the East Columbia Athletic Fields/Cradlerock Park. The ECP received final signature approval on January 27, 2025.

**C. Proposed Development Plan/Site Improvements:** SDP-25-050 proposes 2 new athletic fields, new basketball courts, a new playground, a pavilion as well as new pathway connections and other recreation and open space improvements between surrounding residential communities, public amenities and the nearby school properties. There is limited off-site improvements on the HOA property for the residential development to the west, and on the adjacent school site in order to connect pathways off-site to the proposed park pathways. Letters have been submitted permitted the off-site work.

**D. Existing Site Conditions:**

- Access, Structures, and Parking Area: Currently the property contains athletic fields and parking on Parcel B-1. There is an existing public restroom at the northeast corner of the site that is to remain.

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- **Forest Cover:** There are areas of planted forest using fee-in-lieu funds that will be relocated and areas of existing areas of forest to be retained in easement.
- **Environmental Features:** There are no wetlands, streams, or floodplain located on the subject property. There is a stream and wetland buffer along the eastern boundary on the site for environmental features located on the adjoining parcel. There is an existing stormwater management pond to the northwest corner of the site that straddles the property line and will remain. There will be some moderate slopes impacted by the project, but these impacts do not meet the definition for regulated steep slopes as defined in Section 116(b)(1)(ii) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

**E. Final Development Plan Analysis:** This Amended Site Development Plan has been evaluated for compliance with FDP-212-A. Where the Final Development Plan is silent, compliance with the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Zoning Regulations, and other applicable regulations are required.

**Below is a summary of the major FDP criteria used in this evaluation:**

1. **Permitted Land Uses:** In accordance with FDP-212-A, athletic facilities, playgrounds, pavilions and associated improvements are permitted on site .
2. **Setback Requirements:** This project meets the applicable setbacks as required by the Site Development Plan and FDP-212-A. The new structure meets the 30' setback from the right-of-way and the 25' setback from any property line.
3. **Height Requirement:** In accordance with FDP-212-A, no height limitation is imposed upon structures constructed within this Final Development Plan provided improvements thereon are constructed in accordance with an SDP approved by the Howard County Planning Board. The pavilion is proposed at 14'8" in height.
4. **Coverage Requirements:** The FDP states that buildings may not cover more than 10% of the land devoted to open space uses within the FDP phase except as approved by Planning Board. Proposed major structures account for 0.08 acres of the 16.59 acre property area, well below the 10% threshold.
5. **Parking Requirements:** The FDP states that "*No parking requirements are imposed upon any of the land within this final development plan phase devoted to open space uses. In the event structures are proposed for construction on any portion of such land, parking requirements may be imposed by the Howard County Planning Board at the times a site development plan is submitted for approval.*" The Zoning Code also does not provide parking requirements for any of the proposed uses on the site.

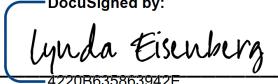
364 parking spaces are shared between the park, library, and senior center on Parcel A and B-1. A parking study was conducted to determine the adequate number of parking spaces that would be required for these open space uses. The consultant used the national average parking demand for each use category published within ITE's Parking Generation-11<sup>th</sup> edition and determined that a maximum of 362 spaces is required. All parking is located on-site within non-credited open space in accordance with the Final Development Plan requirements and Section 125.0.A.8.e.1 of the Zoning Regulations.

**Other considerations:**

1. **Stormwater Management:** Stormwater Management for this site will be met with micro-bioretention facilities in accordance with the 2010 Stormwater Management Act.
2. **Forest Conservation:** There are 3 acres of existing forest on the site. 0.38 acres of existing forest results is planted forest utilizing fee-in-lieu funds that will be relocated. It is not in an existing easement since it was not related to a development obligation. A total of 1.73 areas of forest will be retained on-

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site. An additional 3.8 acres of forest conservation obligation will be met off-site at a forest conservation bank.

3. Landscaping: Landscaping is provided in accordance with the Howard County Landscape Manual which included a Type C buffer to the east, south and west property boundaries to buffer adjacent residential development, as well as shade trees within the redesigned parking area . In addition, the plan was submitted to the Owen Brown Village Board for Architectural Review Committee Approval.

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Lynda Eisenberg, AICP, Director

11/20/2025

Date

Please note that this file is available for public review by appointment at the Department of Planning and Zoning's public service counter, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.