



**TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT**

**Planning Board Meeting of May 21, 2026, 7:00 p.m.**

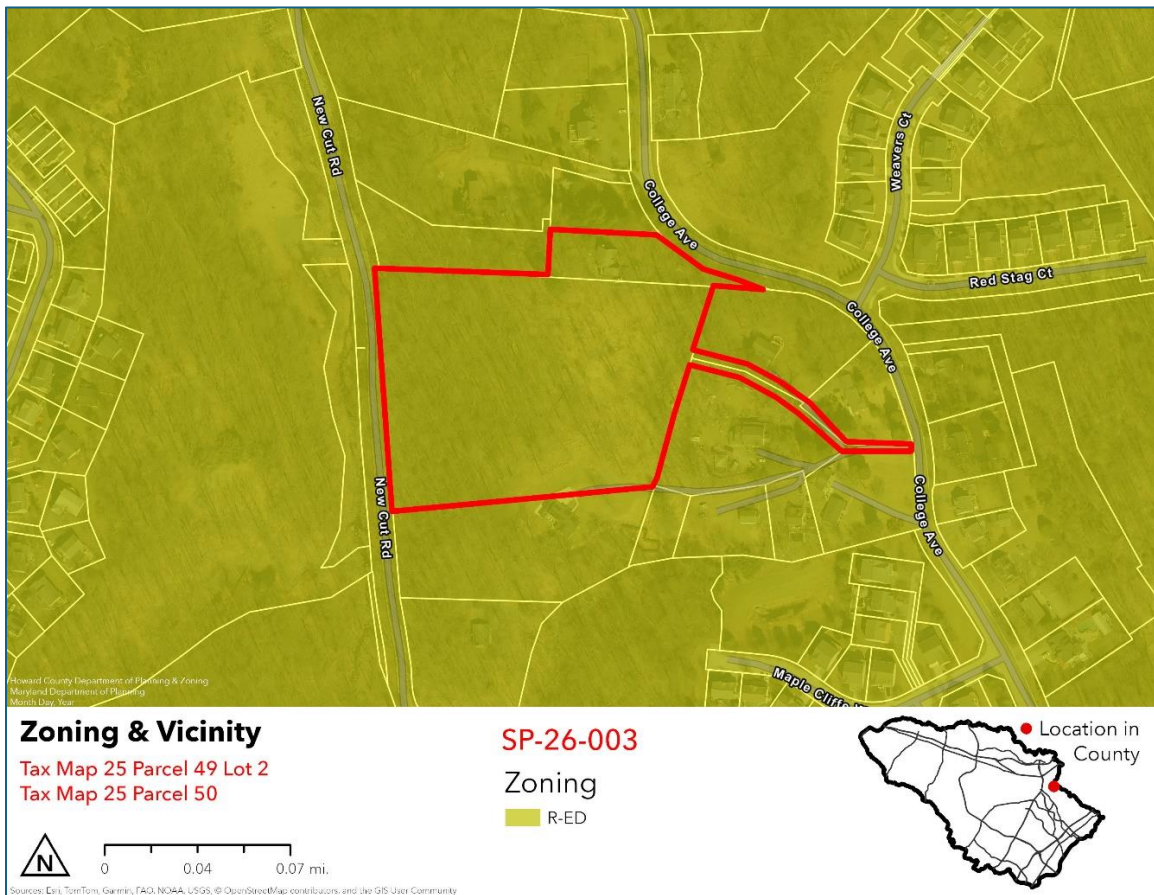
**Case No./Petitioner: SP-24-003 Timber Woods / Historic Ellicott Properties**

**Project Name: Timber Woods Lots 1-6 and Open Space Lots 7 & 8**

**DPZ Planner: Donna Despres, ddespres@howardcountymd.gov**

**Request: Scenic road plan review. A request to review the initial plan submittal, SP-24-003 Timber Woods, in accordance with Section 16.125(c)(1) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for a subdivision that abuts or adjoins a scenic road.**

**Location: The subject property is Parcel 50 of Tax Map 25 and Lot 2 of the Swearer Property Subdivision as shown on Plat 5347. Parcel 50 is located on New Cut Road and accessed from College Avenue by a deeded ROW through adjoining properties.**



## SP-24-004 Timber Woods

### **Vicinal Properties:**

The subject property is adjacent to an existing subdivision to the North known as the Swearer Property. Lot 2 of the Swearer property is part of this proposal. The west boundary of the property is adjacent to New Cut Road, and the opposite side of New Cut Road is property owned by Howard County Department of Public Works. To the south is an existing home on a 2.1-acre deeded parcel. The east boundary is adjacent to several existing homes on deeded parcels. There is a 30 foot wide access ROW that runs between the existing homes and provides access to the proposed subdivision.

### **Legal Notice:**

The property was posted and verified by DPZ in accordance with the legal requirements for Planning Board public meetings.

### **Regulatory Compliance:**

This project must comply with the Amended Fifth Edition of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Zoning Regulations, the Howard County Design Manual, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, the Howard County Forest Conservation Manual, and the Howard County Landscape Manual.

## **I. General Information:**

### **Plan History:**

- F-83-009 Swearer Property Lots 1-4 was recorded as Plat 5347 in January 1983. Lot 2 of the Swearer Property is part of this proposed subdivision.
- Tax Map 25 Parcel 50 is a deeded parcel and has not been subdivided.
- ECP-23-047 Timber Woods, An Environmental Concept Plan was approved by DPZ staff August 15, 2024.
- SP-24-003 Timber Woods Lots 1-6 & Open Space Lots 7 & 8 Parcel 50 and re-subdivision of Lot 2 Swearer Property, began review in May 2024 and completed 7 review cycles. On April 6, 2026, the Subdivision Review Committee found the plans to be approvable pending review of the Planning Board of impacts to the Scenic Roads.

### **Existing Environmental Conditions and Site Improvements:**

Lot 2 of the Swearer Subdivision is 0.667 acres, improved with a single-family home and is accessed from College Avenue. Parcel 50 is 6.33 acres, unimproved, mostly wooded and slopes moderately to steeply down towards New Cut Road on the western boundary. The access to College Avenue on the eastern boundary is through an existing private right-of-way recorded over and through existing properties between Parcel 50 and College Avenue. The private right-of-way area is roughly graded and contains a mix of paved and gravel areas.

### **Character and Quality of the Scenic Road (College Avenue & New Cut Road):**

In 1994, College Avenue and New Cut Road were designated by the County Council as scenic roads.

College Avenue provides 1.98 miles of roadway from New Cut Road to Bonnie Branch Road. The project site has approximately 245 feet of public road frontage along College Avenue and an additional 90 feet of disturbance within the LOD at the private right-of-way access to College Avenue. The County's scenic road inventory describes College Avenue as "...a narrow, rolling, winding road that passes through an area of steep, forested terrain, forest, and streams."<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Council Resolution CR102-1994, July 5, 1994. <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/olis/LegislationDetail/9605/CR102-1994>

## SP-24-004 Timber Woods

New Cut Road provides 1.98 miles of roadway from College Avenue to MD 103. The project site has approximately 484 feet of public road frontage along New Cut Road. The County's scenic road inventory states, "The scenic character of New Cut Road is created primarily by outstanding features: varied terrain with steep, sometimes rocky walls, forest, and a stream which parallels the road."<sup>b</sup> The development does not propose any changes to the frontage along New Cut Road. The forest adjacent to New Cut Road is on steep slopes and will be placed into a Forest Conservation Easement and dedicated to Howard County.

An exhibit with photos for each Scenic Road was submitted as a visual assessment in accordance with Section 16.125(c)(4)(iii) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. The visual assessment complies with the submission requirements listed in subsections a through e. The assessment documents the character and quality of the scenic College Avenue and New Cut Road. New Cut Road is a wooded slope with little to no shoulder along the property frontage. The opposite side of the road also has no shoulder, and a guardrail is present to separate the road from the river. Overhead wires are present and cross the road along this section of road. College Avenue also has no shoulder and overhead lines crossing the roadway. There is a break in the trees at the driveway entrance to proposed Lot 1. This driveway is an existing condition, and the disturbance at this location is limited to installation of public utilities to the proposed new Lots 2 through Lot 6. The next break in the trees happens at the private right-of-way access for the proposed lots. The proposal includes improvements to the road frontage and private driveway construction to meet County standards. There are lawn trees on the adjacent properties to remain. There is no existing forest in this section of the project LOD. The visual change to the scenic road character is minimal.

Finally, the visual assessment suggests that the proposed subdivision has been designed to minimize visual impacts to the character of the scenic road. The access is located at an existing driveway entrance on College Avenue, which is not forested and will not require the removal of trees. Street trees will be planted at the existing driveway for proposed Lot 1. No disturbance along New Cut Road is proposed.

## **II. Planning Board Criteria**

In accordance with Section 16.125(c)(5)(i) and (ii) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Planning Board must consider the following scenic road criteria at initial plan submittal.

- i. Access. Whether the property has frontage on a non-scenic road, the impacts to environmental features, and traffic safety.**
  - a. Wherever practicable, access shall be located along a non-scenic road.**  
Access from a non-scenic road is not an option, however, access is via an existing private right-of-way and through an existing driveway.
  - b. Only to the extent vehicular access cannot be practicably located along a non-scenic road, access along a scenic road shall be permitted at an existing driveway location.**  
Access to the proposed subdivision is at an existing driveway.
  - c. Only to the extent vehicular access cannot be practicably located along a non-scenic road or at an existing driveway, additional access along a scenic road may be permitted.**  
Access to the proposed subdivision does not require a new access point onto the scenic road.
  - d. To the extent that any access is permitted along a scenic road, such access shall preserve the alignment, topography, and surroundings to minimize interference with views from the road while ensuring public safety.**

<sup>b</sup> Council Resolution CR102-1994, July 5, 1994. <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/olis/LegislationDetail/9605/CR102-1994>

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The improvements at the private ROW and College Avenue do not change alignment, topography or other features. Street trees are proposed at the existing driveway access for Lot 1.

ii. **Buffers. The buffer preserves or enhances the visual character of the road and surrounding area, and whether access minimizes the impacts to the buffer.**

This major subdivision is within the Planned Service Area and requires a minimum 100-foot continuous vegetated buffer per Section 16.125(c)(2) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. The proposal maintains 484' LF of existing forest buffer along New Cut Road which measures greater than the 100' as measured from the ROW. Disturbance along the 245' College Avenue frontage of proposed Lot 1 will disturb vegetation in the public ROW for the construction of utilities. Existing trees on the property frontage will be retained. They do not currently meet the 100' measurement from the ROW, so there is not ample existing vegetation to "maintain". The existing 100' buffer area consists of existing lawn owned by adjacent property owners. One specimen tree is being removed within 100' of the edge of the public right-of-way, a 33' Red Cedar, to accommodate the widening of the driveway to meet Howard County Design Manual standards.

DocuSigned by:  
*Lynda Eisenberg*  
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Lynda Eisenberg, AICP, Director

5/7/2026

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.