**TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT**

Planning Board Meeting of December 1, 2016  
Jill Manion-Farrar, Staff Planner  
Phone: 410-313-4338  
Email: jfarrar@howardcountymd.gov

**Case No./Petitioner:** SDP-16-075, Downtown Columbia, Crescent Area 3, Phase 1 Mass Grading  
The Howard Research & Development Corporation

**Request:** For the Planning Board to approve SDP-16-075, a site development plan for mass grading of a portion of Tax Map 36, Parcel 527, in an area also identified as Downtown Columbia, Crescent Neighborhood, Area 3.

**Location:** Mass grading will occur on a portion of Tax Map 36 Parcel 527; specifically 21.39 acres located on the south portion of the parcel, east of Broken Land Parkway, and south of the Merriweather Post Pavilion property. The area is currently a large gravel surface lot for Merriweather Post Pavilion. The property is zoned New Town (NT) and designated Downtown Mixed Use area per the Downtown Columbia Plan. On future plat F-15-106, the site is identified as Parcel D.

**Recommendation:** Approval subject to complying with Planning Board and SDP review comments dated November 9, 2016. In addition, for Howard Research and Development to record temporary easements in the Land Records of Howard County for 2,100 parking spaces, either within Crescent Area 3, or elsewhere in Downtown, in accordance with Note #15 on FDP-DC-Crescent-1A, prior to April 1, 2017.

---

_Vicinity-Zoning Map: SDP-16-075_
Vicinal Properties:

North: The site is bounded on the north by the future Merriweather Drive. The Merriweather Post Pavilion and Symphony Woods property are located on the north side of this future road.

South: Broken Land Parkway and the Route 29 interchange are located south of the site.

East: The location of the future North-South Connector is immediately east of the site. An environmental restoration site is located further east, between the future road and Route 29.

West: Broken Land Parkway is located west of the site, as is the road’s intersection with Hickory Ridge Road.

Site History:

- **FDP-DC-Crescent-1** encompasses the majority of the land area within the Crescent Neighborhood and includes four designated development areas, a network of roads that expand the overall Downtown road network, and a network of land designated for environmental restoration and Downtown Parkland. The Crescent Neighborhood Concept Plan, the Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines, and the Crescent Neighborhood Implementation Plan were included as part of the FDP package, which was reviewed and approved at a Planning Board Hearing held on March 19, 2015. The Decision and Order was signed by Planning Board on April 16, 2015. The Plans and Documents were recorded on July 2, 2015. “Area 3” is identified on this FDP.

- An Environmental Concept Plan (ECP-16-042) for The Crescent Neighborhood Area 3 was approved on July 1, 2016.

- **F-15-106** was submitted July 2, 2015, to subdivide Parcel 527 into buildable parcels and open space lots, and to construct a portion of the future Merriweather Drive and the future extended Hickory Ridge Road. Environmental Restoration Plans are also part of the Road Construction Plan set. The plan was deemed technically complete on March 23, 2016, and the Road Construction Drawings received signature approval on August 3, 2016. The plat originals must be submitted for recordation by November 18, 2016. Upon recordation, Area 3 will also be identified as Parcel D on this plat.

- **FDP-DC-Crescent-1A** is an amendment to the previously approved FDP for Phase 1 of the Crescent Neighborhood, which identifies final street and block structure of Area 3. It was approved by Planning Board at a public hearing on September 15, 2016. The Decision and Order was signed October 14, 2016. It has not yet been recorded into Land Records.

- **SP-16-009**, a preliminary equivalent sketch plan that provides initial information on road network, utilities, and future proposed uses.

Site Analysis:

**Site Description**: The site is 21.39 acres, the majority of which is currently a large gravel parking area for Merriweather Post Pavilion. A small portion of the disturbed area is wooded.

**Proposed Site Improvements**: The site development plan seeks to allow advanced mass grading of a future development area. 18.20 acres of the 21.39 acre area will be graded. Advanced site grading is desired to allow early site preparation for future final road construction drawings and site development plans and to prepare the site to allow temporary parking on a portion for the 2017 concert season. Any displaced parking must be replaced in accordance with the requirements outlined in Note #15 on FDP-DC-Crescent-1A.

**Environmental Considerations**: There are no floodplains, streams, wetlands or buffers within the proposed area of disturbance, nor are there regulated steep slopes.
Landscaping: Landscaping is not required in association with mass grading and it will be shown on a subsequent development plan.

Stormwater Management: Mass grading requires sediment erosion control and temporary stormwater management, using sediment traps, diversion dikes, and silt fencing per the 2011 Maryland Standards and Specifications for Soil Erosion and Sediment control, as revised. No permanent stormwater management is required.

Forest Conservation: The project is exempt from forest conservation requirements in accordance with Subsection 16.1202(b)(1)(iv) of the Howard County Code, since it is part of a planned unit development (New Town) that had preliminary plan approval prior to December 31, 1992.

Adequate Public Facilities Act – Traffic: Mass grading is not subject to APFO for roads.

Planning Board Criteria:

Section 125.0.G of the Zoning Regulations requires Planning Board approval because more than 5,000 SF is being cleared and graded. There are no prescribed criteria in the Zoning Regulations to evaluate mass grading. Further, while the grading will occur on property identified for Downtown Revitalization, located on FDP-DC-Crescent-1A, the grading itself is not Downtown Revitalization and is not subject to the Planning Board criteria outlined for Downtown Revitalization or criteria within the approved FDP.

DPZ compared the SDP with the approved FDP to ensure grading will be within an area identified for development on the FDP. The proposed clearing and grading complies with all applicable County regulations. Adequate sediment and erosion controls are proposed while grading occurs and to stabilize the site after it is completed.

Note #15 on FDP-DC-Crescent-1A requires any existing Merriweather Post Pavilion parking displaced by development or construction staging to be provided on other downtown properties via a temporary easement recorded in the Land Records of Howard County. This is to maintain a minimum 5,000 parking spaces for each operating season (see Attachment A for the complete text). The SDP-16-075 site area contains approximately 2100 existing parking spaces. The Petitioner hopes that temporary parking will be provided in at least a portion of the site after grading has been completed. To date, the County has not reviewed a temporary parking plan for the site after the mass grading is completed. To ensure that the obligation outlined in Note #15 is upheld, DPZ recommends as a condition of approval that temporary easements for 2100 parking spaces be recorded prior to April 1, 2017.

SRC Action: The Subdivision Review Committee determined the site development plan can be approved, subject to addressing remaining comments provided on November 9, 2016.

Recommendation: Approval subject to complying with Planning Board and SDP review comments dated November 9, 2016, and for Howard Research and Development to record temporary easements in the Land Records of Howard County for 2100 spaces; either within Crescent Area 3 or elsewhere in Downtown in accordance with Note #15 on FDP-DC-Crescent-1A, prior to April 1, 2017.

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 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
ATTACHMENT A
NOTE #15 – FDP-DC-CRESCENT-1A
DISPLACEMENT OF MERRIWEATHER POST PAVILION PARKING

15. A MINIMUM OF 5,000 PARKING SPACES WILL BE PROVIDED WITHIN EXISTING OR PROPOSED PARKING AREAS LOCATED ON THE MERRIWEATHER POST PAVILION (MPP) PROPERTY, WITHIN THE CRESCENT NEIGHBORHOOD (VIA A PERMANENT EASEMENT RECORDED IN THE LAND RECORDS) AND WITHIN ANY PUBLIC GARAGE(S), AND ON OTHER DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES (VIA A TEMPORARY EASEMENT RECORDED IN THE LAND RECORDS FOR HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND), TO SERVE MPP EVENTS BETWEEN APRIL 1 AND OCTOBER 31 EACH YEAR (THE OPERATING SEASON). THE 5,000 PARKING SPACES SHALL BE NON-EXCLUSIVE, AND THE AVAILABILITY THEREOF SHALL BE DETERMINED BY EVALUATING NON-MPP PARKING DEMAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SHARED PARKING METHODOLOGY.

PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CRESCENT NEIGHBORHOOD, THE EXISTING BASELINE OF AVAILABLE SURFACE PARKING IS AS FOLLOWS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPP ON-SITE</th>
<th>CRESCENT AREA 1</th>
<th>AREA 2</th>
<th>AREA 3</th>
<th>CRESCENT SUBTOTAL</th>
<th>TOTAL CRESCENT AND MPP ON-SITE</th>
<th>OTHER DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>390</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>3,350</td>
<td>5,080</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IF AND WHEN SUCH SURFACE SPACES ARE DISPLACED BY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OR CONSTRUCTION STAGING, PARKING MAY BE PROVIDED IN OTHER DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES, VIA THE TEMPORARY EASEMENT RECORDED IN THE LAND RECORDS FOR HOWARD COUNTY, SO AS TO MAINTAIN THE MINIMUM 5,000 TOTAL REQUIRED SPACES DURING EACH OPERATING SEASON. SPECIFICALLY, FOR EACH SDP OR FINAL MASTER PLAN PROPOSING DISPLACEMENT OR DEMOLITION OF EXISTING MPP PARKING SPACES IN THE CRESCENT NEIGHBORHOOD, THE PETITIONER MUST SUBMIT A PARKING ANALYSIS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SHARED PARKING METHODOLOGY TO DEMONSTRATE WHERE THE DISPLACED SPACES WILL BE RELOCATED PURSUANT TO THE PERMANENT AND/OR TEMPORARY PARKING EASEMENT(S) REFERRED TO ABOVE.

AS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARKING SPACES ARE MADE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE CRESCENT NEIGHBORHOOD TO SERVE MPP EVENTS, THE NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES THAT WERE TEMPORARILY REQUIRED IN OTHER DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE TOTAL REQUIRED, CALCULATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SHARED PARKING METHODOLOGY, SHALL BE CORRESPONDINGLY REDUCED. IN ADDITION, PETITIONER MAY RECORD A CORRESPONDING RELEASE OF THE TEMPORARY EASEMENT FROM ONE OR MORE OF SUCH OTHER DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES THAT ARE NO LONGER NECESSARY TO PROVIDE THE REQUIRED TOTAL.

WHEN AT LEAST 5,000 PARKING SPACES ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE CRESCENT NEIGHBORHOOD TO SERVE MERRIWEATHER POST PAVILION EVENTS, CALCULATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SHARED PARKING METHODOLOGY, PETITIONER MAY RECORD A FULL RELEASE OF THE TEMPORARY EASEMENT FROM ALL OF THE OTHER DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES.

AS WITH PAST PRACTICES, THE MPP OPERATOR SHALL SECURE ADDITIONAL PARKING SPACES LOCATED BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE DOWNTOWN AREA FOR ANY EVENTS REQUIRING MORE THAN 5,000 PARKING SPACES. ANY REQUIREMENT FOR SUCH ADDITIONAL PARKING SPACES SHALL BE DETERMINED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF AN EVENT PERMIT BY THE COUNTY.