



# HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

3430 Court House Drive

Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-313-2350

Voice/Relay

Amy Gowan, Director

FAX 410-313-3467

## TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

### Planning Board Meeting of August 4, 2022

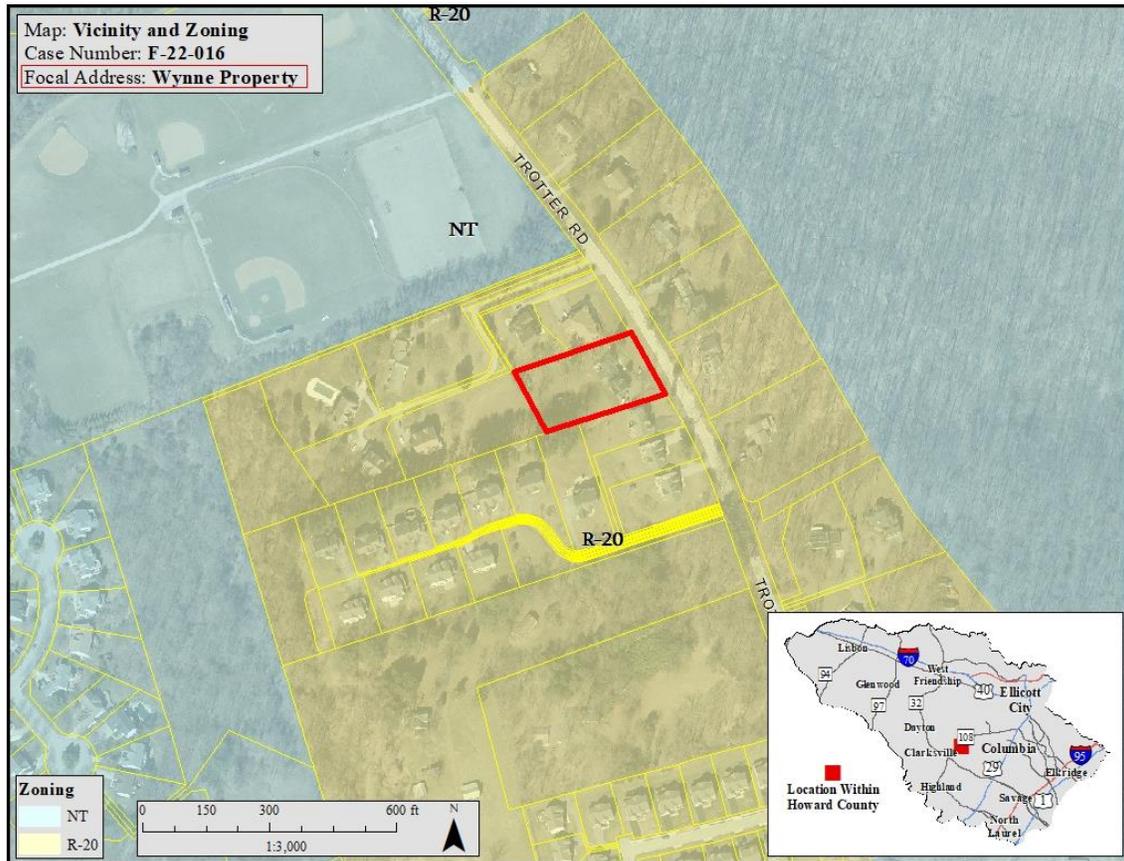
**Plan No./ Applicant:** F-22-016, Kevin Wynne

**Project Name:** Wynne Property

**DPZ Planner:** Jennifer Wellen, jwellen@howardcountymd.gov

**Request:** Scenic road plan review. A request to review Final Subdivision Plan (F-22-016) in accordance with Section 16.125(c) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for a subdivision that abuts or adjoins a scenic road. The subject property is 1.05 acres, zoned R-20 (Residential: Single) and will be subdivided into two (2) lots.

**Location:** The property is located at 5664 & 5668 Trotter Road in Clarksville, MD 21029. The property is found at Tax Map 35, Grid 11, Parcel 167 in the 5th Election District.



**Vicinal Properties:** The subject property is surrounded by existing residential development, Taj Property to the north, Trotter Crossing to the south, and Trotter Hill to the west.

**Legal Notice:** The property was properly 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:**

- Plat Book 5, Page 4 – A Final Plat was previously recorded on October 6, 1955 as Map of Forest Hill.
- ECP-21-045 – An Environmental Concept Plan was approved and signed by DPZ staff on September 2, 2021.
- F-22-016 – A Final Plan was submitted for review October 4, 2021. The plan proposes to resubdivide existing Lot 19 into two residential lots that are a minimum of 20,000 SF in size.
- WP-22-100 – An Alternative Compliance Petition was submitted for review April 21, 2022 to allow a separate driveway for the two houses and to remove one of the two specimen trees onsite. The petition was approved with comments on June 9, 2022.

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

The property contains 1.05 acres and is improved with a single-family detached residence, to remain, and is accessed from Trotter Road. The property is partially landscaped and has two specimen trees onsite with one specimen tree being removed. The topography gently slopes to the southwest side of the property and there are no forest or wetlands.

#### **Character and Quality of the Scenic Road (Trotter Road):**

The subject property has just under 170 feet of public road frontage along Trotter Road. In 1994, Trotter Road was designated by the County Council as a scenic road. The County's scenic road inventory described Trotter Road as, "a narrow, winding road that passes through wooded stream valley and a residential neighborhood. Views from the road are confined by forest and residential structures."

The scenic character of Trotter Road is created primarily by forested valley located on both sides of Cricket Creek. The section of road passing through this valley provides views of the creek and forested valley walls. Other scenic features include varied terrain, two ponds, an additional stream crossing, and mature trees. Residential development is frequent, interspersed with forested areas and the stream valleys. Most of the houses are in a wooded setting and buffered from the road by trees. This section of Trotter Road contains overhead power lines and matures trees which are set back from those lines. There are also a number of resubdivided lots containing single family detached homes with mowed lawns and landscape trees visible from the street

A visual assessment was provided 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 describes the character and quality of scenic Trotter Road. At the site,

Trotter Road has a gentle curve, and the slope changes from about three percent to nearly flat slope. The existing pavement of Trotter Road is approximately 24 feet wide and is in good condition. The character of the scenic

road along this stretch is single-family homes that face Trotter Road. There are no curbs, shoulders or sidewalks along the perimeter of the site and there are no significant improvements along this stretch of road. An overhead utility line is located along the east side of Trotter Road approaching from the north and it crosses the road at the southern property corner with a utility pole located in the front yard.

There are 12 trees, 12 inches or greater in caliper on-site. Of those trees, one is along the perimeter of the scenic road and is proposed to be removed for the proposed driveway. The remaining trees are mostly along the perimeter of the rear lot. They are a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees and range in size from 12 inches to 31 inches caliper. The remaining frontage of the site has understory vegetation and shrubs.

Finally, the visual assessment suggests that the proposed subdivision has been designed to minimize visual impacts to the character of the scenic road. The lots have been designed so that fronts of houses will face Trotter Road and no road improvements are proposed along Trotter Road, other than the access driveway for the proposed house. The applicant is proposing to remove one tree along the scenic road. No new trees are proposed to be installed along the scenic road frontage.

## **II. Planning Board Criteria**

In accordance with Section 16.125(c)(5)(i) and (ii) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the following criteria must be considered by the Planning Board when evaluating the initial plan submittal.

### **1. 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 for this subdivision will be from Trotter Road. There are no other potential access points for this site from a non-scenic road.

#### **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 this proposed subdivision can only be from Trotter Road. The existing lot has just under 170 feet of public road frontage onto Trotter Road and will be subdivided into a frontage lot and a pipestem lot. The existing driveway is located along the southern property line leading to a sideload garage. The new house will be situated behind the existing house via a pipestem lot property along the northern property line.

Given the existing house location, there are two design options to allow the additional lot to access at the existing driveway location. One option would be to place the required 20-foot wide pipestem along the southern property line. This design would provide 10 feet from the existing sideload garage to the property line of the pipestem and make it impracticable to provide a 16-foot wide shared driveway, 10-foot wide landscape buffer and park vehicles in the driveway for the sideload garage. This option would also provide access to the proposed house from the lower side of the lot which could potentially cause drainage issues. There would not be adequate space to provide a micro-bioretenion facility to treat runoff for the driveway.

The second option would be to provide a shared driveway along the front of the existing house to allow access to the existing garage and provide a driveway for the new house along the northern property line. This would allow the proposed driveway for the new house to be placed at a higher elevation which will allow for proper grading for the proposed stormwater management but increase the amount of impervious driveway. This would also result in a parallel driveway from Trotter Road that is 100 feet long which would result in a less desirable visual impact to the scenic road, which aims to minimize grading and retain existing slopes along the scenic road frontage

and preserve the foreground.

Given the visual and practical implications associated with these options, the applicant is pursuing a new, independent driveway access from the scenic road to the new home. The proposed driveway along the northern side of the property would place the driveway at a higher grade, which best suits the proposed stormwater management and will allow for runoff to the proposed micro-bioretention facility.

**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.**

The proposed driveway access allows for appropriate placement and orientation of the new home, reduces impervious surface, and maintains the character of the neighborhood and the scenic road overall. Access to the proposed subdivision must be from Trotter Road. There are no other public roads to provide access to the lot and constructing a driveway going through the front yard to connect with the existing driveway would be impracticable. The proposed and existing driveways will have over 100 feet of separation, which is like other driveway separations for existing houses on Trotter Road and will allow the site to adequately address SWM.

**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.**

Access to this proposed subdivision is to be located from Trotter Road. Lot 1 is currently occupied by a single family 2-story home to remain, with a single 12' driveway access point. Much of Lot 2 is a flat open mowed lawn with a gentle slope along the south and west points. There are no other means of access.

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

This resubdivision is within the Planned Service Area but is not considered a new major subdivision that requires a minimum 100-foot continuous vegetated buffer per Section 16.125(c)(2) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. While the lots must be accessed via Trotter Road, there are no frontage improvements proposed along the scenic road.

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 Amy Gowan, Director  
 Department of Planning and Zoning

7/21/2022

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 Date