



# HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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## TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

### Planning Board Meeting of May 4, 2023

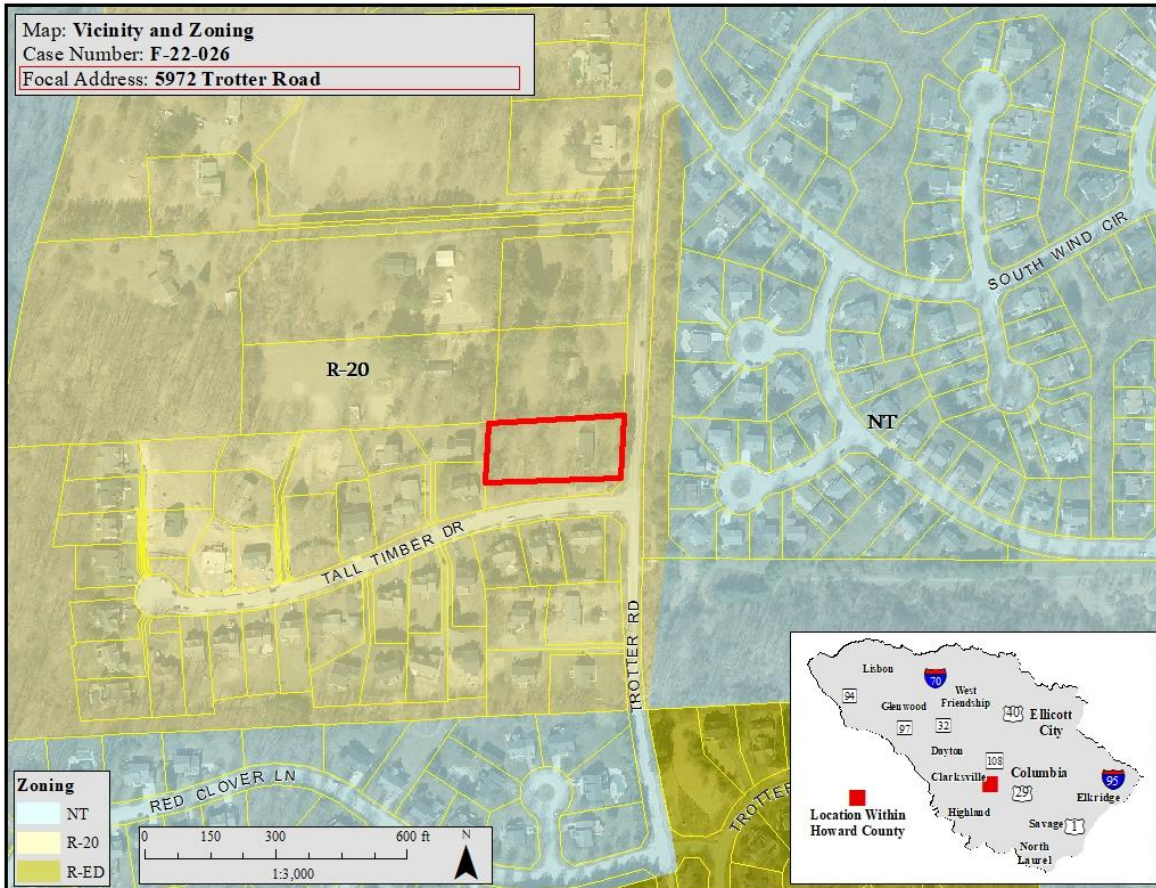
**Plan No./ Applicant:** F-22-026 / Huan Wu & Yali Li

**Project Name:** Yali Li Property

**DPZ Planner:** Justin Schleicher, jschleicher@howardcountymd.gov

**Request:** Scenic road plan review. A request to review Final Subdivision Plan (F-22-026) 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 1.00 acres, zoned R-20 (Residential: Single) and will be subdivided into two (2) lots.

**Location:** The property is located at 5972 & 5976 Trotter Road in Clarksville, MD 21029. The property is found at Tax Map 35, Grid 8, Parcel 19, Lot 4 in the 5th Election District.



**Vicinal Properties:** The subject property is surrounded by existing residential development, Forest Hill Lot 5 to the north and Trotter Woods to the west and south.

**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-21-034 – An Environmental Concept Plan was approved and signed by DPZ staff on November 17, 2021.
- F-22-016 – A Final Plan was submitted for review March 4, 2022. The plan proposes to resubdivide existing Lot 4 into two residential lots that are a minimum of 20,000 SF in size.

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

The property contains 1.00 acre and is improved with a single-family detached residence, to remain, and is accessed from Trotter Road. The property is partially landscaped and has five (5) specimen trees onsite with three (3) specimen trees proposed to be removed. The topography gently slopes to the north side of the property and there are no forest, floodplain, steep slopes, streams or wetlands. There are no rare or endangered species on this site.

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

The subject property has just under 120 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 a 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 is straight and gently slopes south to north. The existing pavement of Trotter Road is approximately 22.4 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 south.

There are 24 trees, 12 inches or greater in caliper on-site. Of those trees, zero are along the perimeter of the scenic road that are 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 inch to 48 inch 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 frontage lot contains the existing house, which faces Trotter Road and is accessed by an existing driveway to the south. The proposed house on the pipestem faces north and will be accessed by a separate driveway to the north. The road width at the frontage will be extended four feet to provide a bike lane in accordance with the Bike Howard Plan. No sidewalk or curb and gutter are proposed. The applicant is not proposing to remove any trees along the scenic road to accommodate the new driveway. The plan proposes to plant three ornamental trees along the frontage to enhance the visual quality of the scenic road.

## **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 120 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 carport. The new house will be situated behind the existing house via a pipestem lot along the northern property line.

The applicant originally provided a design that would utilize a shared driveway to access the proposed lot. This design was reviewed, and it was determined that the driveway location would not provide the adequate stopping sight distance required by Section 2.1.E.1 of Design Manual Volume 3, Complete Streets. This design also would not allow for the proposed lot to have the full 20 feet of road frontage required by Section 16.120(c)(2)(i) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. Due to the public safety concerns and the conflicts with the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the applicant has proposed a separate driveway along the northern property line which provides the adequate stopping sight distance and required 20 feet public road frontage.

#### **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.**

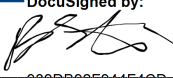
The proposed driveway access allows for appropriate placement and orientation of the new home, adequate stopping sight distance, adequate public road frontage and maintains the character of the neighborhood and the scenic road overall. Access to the proposed subdivision must be from Trotter Road. There are no other public roads to provide access to the lot. 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 and stopping site distance requirements.

- 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 to the north. Allowing a separate driveway for Lot 2 provides adequate stopping sight distance and the safest means of access for the proposed lot.

- 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, changes to the scenic road will be minimized by installing three additional ornamental tree plantings along the frontage of the properties.

DocuSigned by:  


4/18/2023

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Brian Shepter, Acting Director      Date  
Department of Planning and Zoning