TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

Robinson Overlook

Planning Board Hearing of January 9, 2020

File No./Petitioner: PB-449/Howard County Housing Commission in collaboration with Woda Group, LLC (Andrew B. Cohen)

Project Name: Robinson Overlook

DPZ Planner: Tanya Krista-Maenhardt, AICP, Planning Supervisor 
(410) 313-2350, tmaenhardt@howardcountymd.gov

Request: For the Planning Board to approve a Site Development Plan (SDP-19-055) for a Housing Commission Housing Development consisting of 48 apartments contained within five, 4-story buildings in the POR (Planned Office Research) zoning district in accordance with Section 128.0.J.2.d. of the Howard County Zoning Regulations.

Location: The property is located at 7410 Grace Drive, Columbia, Maryland; Tax Map 35, Grid 22, Parcel 86.

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Zoning recommends approval of the Site Development Plan, SDP-19-055 subject to any conditions imposed by the Planning Board.

Vicinal Properties: North: Residential property zoned R-ED (Residential: Environmental Development)

East: Open Space, zoned NT (New Town) and commercial property, zoned B-1 (Business: Local)

West: Residential property zoned R-ED (Residential: Environmental Development)

South: Grace Drive, a Minor Collector
Vicinity Map:

The property was properly posted with one Planning Board poster, verified by Department of Planning and Zoning staff, and the case was advertised in two local newspapers, a minimum 30 days prior to the hearing date.

Regulatory Compliance:

This project is subject to the Amended Fifth Edition of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the 2013 Howard County Zoning Regulations (effective October 6, 2013), the Howard County General Plan, the Howard County Design Manual, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, the Forest Conservation Manual, and the Landscape Manual.

Plan History:

A Pre-Submission Community Meeting was held on November 7, 2018 at the Hawthorn Center.

An Environmental Concept Plan (ECP-19-005) was approved on March 19, 2019.
An Alternative Compliance Petition (WP-20-025) to the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations Section 16.116(b)(1) was submitted. This section prohibits grading, removal of vegetative cover and trees, new structures and paving on land with existing 25% or greater steep slopes (over 10 vertical feet) with a contiguous area of 20,000 square feet or more.

The petitioner has provided written justification for the SRC to consider. On September 25, 2019 the Planning Director determined that no action would be taken until after the Planning Board reviewed and considered SDP-19-055 at a public hearing.

An Administrative Adjustment (AA-19-011) was approved on September 12, 2019 to reduce the 75’ structure and use setback from a residential district to 68.7’ for Building #2 and 60’ for Building #3; and to reduce the 30’ right-of-way structure and use setback to 26.2’ for Building #4.

### Site Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACREAGE INFORMATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Acreage of Property</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of 100-year Floodplain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of wetlands, streams and buffers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of 25% or Greater Steep Slopes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Units proposed</td>
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<td>Amenity Recreation area, (includes Community Center)</td>
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<td>Total Open Space Provided</td>
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### Site Proposal:

Site Development Plan, SDP-19-055, initially submitted in April, 2019, proposes 48 apartment units contained within four 10-unit buildings and one 8-unit building (which will include community space), on 3.83 acres. An entrance drive fronting Grace Drive will provide access to the apartment campus. Parking will be provided at 1.8 spaces per unit, similar to other Housing projects in the County. Total number of parking spaces is 87.

Four amenity areas and a community center are proposed for the community, along with 1.01 acres of open space, which contains area of steep slopes and forest conservation easements.

Forest was cleared under a previous project proposal (SDP-06-102), which created three forest conservation easements that were deeded and platted. Additionally, a fee in-lieu was paid for 0.68 acres of required reforestation. While the church facility, approved in SDP-16-102 was never built, the easements remain and will be transferred to this newly proposed project through a revised Developer’s Agreement. A small portion (.044 acres) of the easement is to be abandoned/relocated on site to accommodate the new apartment design. However, reforestation will occur on site and there will be no net loss of forest easement.

The site does not contain any floodplain, wetlands, wetland buffers, streams or stream buffers, but does contain 1.16 acres of steep slopes.
Planning Board Review: Per Section 128.0.J.2.a., for Housing Commission Housing Developments located in non-residential zones, the Site Development Plan must be approved by the Planning Board at a public hearing.

Planning Board Criteria: In accordance with Section 128.0.J.2.b., when reviewing a Site Development Plan for a Housing Commission Housing Development by the Planning Board shall consider the following criteria:

1. Whether the plan is consistent with the Howard County General Plan:

   Plan Howard 2030, Chapter 9, Housing, identifies the need for affordable housing within Howard County. Specifically, the proposed SDP is consistent with the following General Plan policies:

   Policy 9.2- Expand full spectrum housing for resident at diverse income levels and life stages, and for individuals with disabilities, by encouraging high quality, mixed income, multigenerational, well designed, and sustainable communities.

   - Implementing Action a. - Range of Affordable Options. Continue to expand current options to full spectrum, affordable housing through affordable housing requirements in additional zoning districts. This project is located in a Planned Office Research (POR) zoning district.

   Chapter 9 also discusses the desire for housing to be “location efficient”. The subject site is close to services, including Howard County General Hospital, shopping, including The Mall in Columbia and two village centers, Howard County Community College and other employment centers, which also helps to decrease potential transportation costs.

2. Whether the plan results in a logical arrangement of land uses within the development:

   The Robinson Overlook project provides pedestrian connectivity within the site and amenities, including a community center, tot-lot/playground, seating areas and other passive recreational areas. The project includes five apartment buildings and associated parking, including handicap accessibility and electric charging stations. Most of the project perimeter is comprised of forest conservation easements, which provide a buffer to vicinal uses and generally conforms to the previous grading conducted from the former church proposal. This arrangement minimizes disturbance beyond prior site development activity.

3. Whether there is convenient pedestrian access between uses and pedestrian connection to the surrounding community:

   There is no established community directly adjacent to this proposal. The WR Grace facility is located to the west. Sidewalk may ultimately be completed along the WR Grace frontage, connecting this development to the future.
“Cedar Creek” residential development and to the Riverhill community. The “Cedar Creek” project will be providing a pathway which will connect (by bridge) to the Robinson Nature Center. Potential exists to connect this project to that pathway system via existing adjacent public open space. Sidewalk will be provided throughout the project to facilitate pedestrian movement between parking areas, amenities and buildings. The project is located along Grace Drive, which includes an area for a bike lane that is separated from the vehicular travel lanes.

4. **Whether the relationship between the location of proposed dwelling units, required open space, landscape design requirements, setback requirements and existing dwelling units on adjacent properties is such that the existing dwelling units will be buffered from the proposed development:**

There is one adjacent residential dwelling located to the north of the site, approximately 190’ from the closest proposed apartment building. The existing dwelling does not directly face (front or rear) the proposed units and the perimeter of the site will be buffered by forest conservation easements and landscaping. The Petitioner proposes a 6’ fence located between the dwelling and buildings #2 and #3, which was requested by the adjacent property owner.

5. **Whether the roads serving the development will be adequate, as determined by the capacity and mitigation standards of the adequate public facilities ordinance (Title 16, Subtitle 11 of the Howard County Code); Whether necessary water and sewer facilities are available to serve the proposed development:**

The proposed SDP is subject to pass the test for adequate road facilities according to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. A Traffic Impact study was prepared in December 2018, which concluded that the project meets the requirements without mitigation and that the roads serving the development will be adequate.

The previous partial development of the subject property included the construction of a public water main from Grace Drive onto the site. Similarly, public sewer was previously extended through Howard County open space to the subject property. Public water and sewer are available for this development.

6. **Any other factors which affect the orderly growth of the County:**

There are no factors associated with this project which would adversely affect the orderly growth of the County.

**SRC Action:** The Subdivision Review Committee has recommended approval of SDP-19-055, Robinson Overlook.

**Recommendation:** The Department of Planning and Zoning recommends approval of the Site Development Plan (SDP-19-055) in accordance with Section 128.0.J.2. of the
Howard County Zoning Regulations and subject to any conditions imposed by the Planning Board.

Amy Gowan, Director  
Department of Planning and Zoning

Date 12-24-19

Please note that this file is available for public review, by appointment, at the Department of Planning and Zoning’s public service counter, Monday – Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
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NUTRIENTS FROM NATURAL CYCLING. THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE BIORETENTION STRUCTURE IS TO
SPECIFICATIONS.
GRASSES AND LEGUME SEED SHOULD BE DRILLED INTO THE SOIL TO A DEPTH OF AT LEAST ONE INCH.
5. PLANT INSTALLATION
STORAGE. THE PLANT ROOT BALL SHOULD BE PLANTED SO 1/8TH OF THE BALL IS ABOVE FINAL GRADE
IN THE INVERT AND OTHER LOW AREAS. MULCH SHOULD BE PLACED IN SURROUND TO A UNIFORM
THE FACILITY SHALL BE CLEANED IMMEDIATELY AFTER PETROLEUM SPILLS.
D.  THE FACILITY SHALL BE CLEANED IMMEDIATELY AFTER PETROLEUM SPILLS.
THERE SHALL BE AT LEAST ONE SOIL TEST PER PROJECT.  EACH TEST SHALL CONSIST OF BOTH THE
BE MIXED IN TO THE SOIL TO INCREASE OR DECREASE PH.
MIXTURE OF LOAMY SAND (60%-65%) AND COMPOST (35% TO 40%) OR SANDY LOAM (30%), COARSE SAND
HINDRANCE TO THE PLANTING OR MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS.  THE PLANTING SOIL SHALL BE FREE OF
WITHIN THE MICRO-BIORETENTION PRACTICE THAT MAY BE HARMFUL TO PLANT GROWTH, OR PROVE A
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CLEANING.
HARRIS COUNTY

1. No trees shall be planted within 10' of the top of the groundfloor.
2. Retaining wall shall be constructed under the supervision of a registered professional engineer and a certified soil technician.
3. The required bearing pressure beneath the wall, over the soil, shall be verified with the geotechnical consultant prior to the start of construction.
4. Roadway loads and dynamic loads shall be considered by the consultant.
5. The suitability of fill material shall be confirmed by the on-site soils technician. If fill material is to be used, the consultant shall approve the fill material.
6. retaining wall shall be constructed on an existing foundation.
7. retaining wall shall be constructed within a Howard County right of way clearance.

APPROVED: DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

N.T.L.

1. All loose fill materials shall be compacted to 95% of the maximum density as determined by ASTM D698. The maximum density as determined by ASTM D698.
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INSTALL INLET BOX I-114 AND ASSOCIATED PIPE DURING WALL CONSTRUCTION. BACKFILL WITH 4-8 INCHES OF SOIL. EMBED 6\' LONG MIRAGRID 3XT GEOGRID AT 45° TO WALL. DOUBLE CAP AS NEEDED TO PROVIDE SMOOTH GRADE TRANSITION. NOTE: CONFIRM REQUIRED TOP AND BOTTOM WALL FINISHED GRADES AND ADJUST WALL BLOCK ACCORDINGLY.

NOTE: TOP GEOGRID LAYER DOWN AS NEEDED TO AVOID CONTACT WITH CURB AND PAVEMENT INSTALLATION.

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December 17, 2019

Ms. Tanya Maenhardt
Planning Supervisor, Plan Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
Howard County Government
3460 Court house Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

RE: Robinson Overlook Apartments
Parking Study- Revision
Howard County, MD
T/C 3503

Dear Ms. Maenhardt:

The proposed Robinson Overlook Apartment project will create 48 apartment units and 87 parking spaces. In order to determine the sufficient number of parking spaces needed to accommodate the peak period parking demand, we offer the following information.

1. Estimate of the parking need for the Apartment use.

The estimated peak parking demand is 71 spaces for 48 apartment units. This number of spaces is based on the 85th percentile peak parking demand rate of 1.47 that is published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Generation Manual 5th Edition (ITE). However, 87 spaces are planned for the 48 apartment units, which equals to 1.8 spaces per apartment/townhouse/condominium. A parking rate of 1.8 spaces per apartment/townhouse/condominium was previously approved by Howard County for other similar housing projects.

2. A thorough explanation of the basis for the estimate.

As stated, the peak parking demand estimate is determined with data contained in the Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Generation Manual 5th Edition (ITE). The specific data set contained in the ITE manual that applies to the proposed Robinson Overlook Apartment project is the Multifamily Housing - Mid-Rise (LUC 221) land use. This land use is defined by ITE as housing that includes apartments, townhouses, and condominiums that are located within a single building with at least three other units and with three to ten floors of residence.
The weekday parking data for this use provides the peak parking demand for vehicles per unit in a suburban area with no rail transit. The peak parking demand occurs between the hours of 11:00 PM and 5:00 AM. According to the ITE data, the average peak period rate is 1.31 parked vehicles per unit and the 85th percentile rate is 1.47 parked vehicles per unit. Therefore, using the 85th percentile rate, 48 units would require 71 spaces.

Historically, Howard County has accepted a parking rate of 1.8 spaces per apartment/townhouse/condominium. The proposed 87 parking spaces created for 48 apartment units would meet this standard.

3. Any data used in calculating the estimate, including parking generation studies, previous experience with similar uses, and other information such as a comparative analysis with other approved projects in Howard County should be presented.

In addition to the ITE parking data, two parking studies were conducted in Howard County at similar apartment communities. The studies were conducted on Wednesday, August 28, 2019 after 11:00 PM.

Site #1 - Elliott Gardens Apartment Community
The site is located at 5511 Waterloo Road and has 70 apartment units and 128 parking spaces. The parking ratio is 1.83 spaces per unit.

The actual peak hour parking demand is 108 (occupied) spaces or 1.54 occupied spaces per unit.

Site #2 – Monarch Mills Apartment Community
The site is located at 7600 Monarch Mills Way and has 269 apartment units and 569 parking spaces. The parking ratio is 2.12 spaces per unit.

The actual peak hour parking demand is 324 (occupied) spaces or 1.20 occupied spaces per unit.

Based on the data obtained from the two Howard County parking studies, we conclude the average peak period parking demand per apartment dwelling unit is 1.37 spaces per unit. The published ITE peak average rate is 1.31 and the ITE 85th percentile rate is 1.47. As stated, the proposed Robinson Overlook Apartment project will create 48 apartment units and 87 parking spaces or 1.81 spaces per unit. Based on the Howard County parking studies and the ITE data, the proposed 87 parking spaces for 48 units is adequate to serve the project.
4. *Provide an assessment of the impacts attributable to the availability of public transit, vicinal employment resources, and pedestrian accessibility.*

The Robinson Overlook Apartment location does not have major employment centers or mass transit stops nearby that could reduce or eliminate the need for passenger cars. Therefore, based on the ITE and local parking data, a parking supply ratio of 1.8 spaces per apartment is adequate.

The ITE data is attached for your review. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

TRAFFIC CONCEPTS, INC.

Mark Keeley, PTP
Project Manager
MKeeley@traffic-concepts.com

Attachments: ITE Parking Data