

County of Loudoun
Department of Planning
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 7, 2010

TO: Jane McCarter, Project Manager
Land Use Review

FROM: Kelly Williams, Planner
Community Planning

SUBJECT: SPEX 2010-0001 – Ryan Road Property Child Care Center

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed application requests a Special Exception to allow a childcare center located within Suburban Policy Area. The property is currently zoned R-1, Residential.

The proposed special exception is consistent with the Plan's vision for this area. It is recommended that, prior to approval, the application address stormwater management, landscaping, pedestrian and bicycle access, signage and lighting as outlined in this referral.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Van Metre Communities, LLC, has submitted a Special Exception application to permit a child care center for up to 208 children in the R-1 (Residential) zoning district. The existing single family home will be removed and replaced with a 9,600 square foot child care facility.

Vicinity Map



The site contains approximately 2 acres and is located on the north side of Ryan Road approximately 500 feet east of Belmont Ridge Road. (see Vicinity Map). The property is bordered by an approved but un-built townhouse development to the west (Brambleton), a single-family development to the north, and a single-family parcel to the east. The entire

parcel consists of approximately 7.7 acres, with the special exception request for 2 acres in the southwest corner of the property.

A review of the County's GIS records indicates that a small amount of forest cover is present on the subject property toward the rear of the property. It appears that those areas will not be disturbed as part of this application. Several specimen trees have been identified within the area of the special exception and are proposed to be retained as part of this application. There are no floodplains, steep slopes, or natural drainage ways present. A Phase I archaeological survey was conducted on November 2008 as part of the previously filed rezoning application ZMAP 2009-0002 Ryan Road Property.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The property is located in the Ashburn Community of the Suburban Policy Area and is specifically governed by the land use policies of the Revised General Plan. The Revised Countywide Transportation Plan (CPT), the Countywide Retail Policy Plan Amendment (Retail Plan), and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Master Plan (Bike/Ped Plan) also apply.

The proposed application has been reviewed under the Revised General Plan Suburban Policies of Chapter 6; the Green Infrastructure policies of Chapter 5 and the Design Guidelines in Chapter 11. The General Policies, Service Area-Based Retail Policies and the Retail Design guidelines of the Retail Plan were applied. Additionally, the policies of Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the Bike/Ped Plan apply.

ANALYSIS

Land Use

The Revised General Plan identifies the subject site as suitable for Residential uses Chapter 7, *Planned Land Use Map*). The County's overall land-development strategy is to encourage compact, mixed-use developments that provide people with the opportunity to live, work, recreate and shop in a pedestrian-friendly environment (Revised General Plan, Chapter 5, Residential, text). The Plan envisions retail commercial and service uses to be an integral component of residential communities. In general, such uses should be located within the areas they serve and fulfill the routine daily and weekly shopping needs of neighborhood residents (*Retail Plan, Service Area - Based Retail Policies, General Policies, policies 1 and 2*).

Child care centers are appropriate uses within residential communities because they will provide support services and local employment opportunities to the surrounding residents. The proposed site is located in an area surrounded by residential uses.

The Plan envisions that residential neighborhoods will have a peaceful character suitable for private domestic life (Revised General Plan, Chapter 11, Design Guidelines, Residential Neighborhoods, text). A larger-scale center serving many children and

generating a large amount of noise, traffic, etc. may require mitigation measures. Staff notes that the Revised 1993 Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance requires all child care facilities to comply with the County and State Codes regarding number of employees and the amount of indoor and outdoor space required per child.

Staff finds that a child care center could be an appropriate use of the property. Staff requests commitments to ensure that the proposed center will be compatible with its surroundings given that the property is located adjacent to existing residential uses.

Existing Conditions

The Green Infrastructure is a collection of natural, cultural, heritage, environmental, protected, passive, and active resources that are integrated into a related system. The County uses integrated management strategies for the Green Infrastructure to ensure that all land use planning and development respect and preserve the holistic nature of the elements of the Green Infrastructure (Revised General Plan, Chapter 5, Green Infrastructure Policies, policy 2). The County's GIS records and a visit to the site reveals that limited forest cover and trees are present on the subject property. There are no floodplains, steep slopes, or natural drainage ways present.

Forest, Trees, and Vegetation

There is limited vegetation which consists of a few specimen trees within the area of the special exception. The application proposes to retain the trees and integrate them into the site plan.

Staff recommends the applicant for preserving the existing specimen trees on-site and recommends a condition of approval to ensure maintenance and protection of those assets during construction and over the long term.

Stormwater Management

The County promotes water conservation through low impact development (LID) techniques which integrate hydrologically functional designs with methods for preventing pollution (Revised General Plan, Chapter 5, Green Infrastructure, Surface Water Policies, policy 2). LID approaches seek to control runoff discharge, volume, frequency, and quality in order to mimic predevelopment runoff conditions through a variety of small-scale design techniques.

Stormwater management has not been addressed in this application. Information should be provided regarding stormwater management and best management practices (BMPs) on site.

Staff recommends depicting how this development is addressing stormwater management in the Special Exception application. In addition, staff recommends

the use of BMPs on site and defers to ERT regarding the most appropriate BMP for this site.

Site Design

Neighborhood retail uses are intended to serve immediate, convenience shopping needs, on a routine daily and weekly basis, within residential neighborhoods (*Retail Plan, Service Area-Based Retail, B, policy 2*). They are to be designed to mitigate the impacts of parking, signs, lighting, waste storage, loading, and traffic on the adjacent uses (*Retail Plan, Service Area-Based Retail, B, policies 5 and 8*).

Landscaping

The Retail Plan calls for all buildings and parking areas to be sufficiently screened and buffered from adjoining residential areas by distance, transitional uses, landscaping and/or natural vegetation to mitigate the effects of noise, lighting and traffic on the surrounding residences (*Retail Plan, Design Guidelines, Landscaping and Buffering, policy 4*).

The proposed day care center is located adjacent to residential uses along the western property line. The application provides a buffer along the western property line that indicates an eight foot planting area and a three and one-half foot fence within the required twenty foot Type 2 Buffer yard required by the zoning ordinance.

Staff recommends additional buffering given the adjacent residential to mitigate the potential noise impacts associated with the play area.

The Retail Plan further specifies that landscaping will be provided in the parking areas to “reduce the visual impact, provide shade and reduce heat absorption of the parking area.” (*Retail Plan, Design Guidelines, Landscaping and Buffering, policy 2*) Trees should line the street frontages in order to create a “green edge” along streets. (*Retail Plan, Design Guidelines, Landscaping and Buffering, policy 2*) The application proposes to retain four specimen trees within the parking area and along the ingress and egress easement.

Staff finds that these trees meet the intent of the policies by preserving existing vegetation and providing shade for the parking area. Staff recommends additional plantings be incorporated into the design along the frontage of the property to reduce the visual impact of the parking along Ryan Road.

Lighting & Signage

Lighting within retail areas should reduce glare and spillage of light onto adjoining properties and streets (*Retail Plan, Design Guidelines, Signs and Lighting, policy 1*). Further, signage should be developed as an integral part of the overall center design

with a unified graphic design scheme (*Retail Plan, Design Guidelines, Signs and Lighting, policy 2*). No information on signage and lighting has been provided.

Given the site's close proximity to a residential area, a detailed lighting plan should be provided for review that includes information on lighting for the building, roadways, play areas and parking areas. Staff recommends shielding the proposed lights to reduce or eliminate glare and light trespass on adjacent residential properties. Further, staff requests details regarding any proposed signage to ensure design compatibility with the development.

Architecture

The Retail Plan anticipates a high quality architectural design for proposed retail developments, including the provision of recesses and offsets to reduce the building massing; a preference for pitched, mansard, and other distinctive roof forms; the screening of rooftop and/or ground-mounted mechanical equipment; and the provision of measures to provide pedestrian weather protection, such as a continuous arcade (*Retail Plan, Building Placement and Design, Policies 6-9*).

Staff recommends that the application be revised to include detailed information regarding the design of the building and how it achieves the design objectives of the Retail Plan.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

All land development applications are to provide bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access linkages to the County Bicycle and Pedestrian Network (*Bike/Ped Plan, Chapter 4, Land Development Policies, policy 5*). Developments should enhance bicycle and pedestrian mobility throughout the County with attention to mobility both within a site and between adjacent sites (*Bike/Ped Plan, Chapter 4, Land Development Policies, policies 3, 5, 6, & 7*). The CTP states that all development proposal site plans will show safe, direct, and barrier-free pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems (*CTP, Chapter 2, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Policies, policy 5*). All land development applications shall also include appropriate forms of bicycle parking (*Bike/Ped Plan, Chapter 4, Land Development Policies, policy 8*). On-site, pedestrian travelways that provide a safe route from the parking areas to the buildings via a demarcated pathway and directional signage should be provided (*Retail Plan, Design Guidelines, Circulation, Parking and Lighting, policy 1*).

Pedestrian and bicycle linkages have not been address in this application. Staff recommends that the application be revised to demonstrate compliance with the Bike/Ped Plan policies as outlined above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed day care center in general is consistent with the policies of the Revised General Plan and the Retail Plan for retail development within residential areas. However, prior to approval, the issues related to site design, stormwater management, landscaping, pedestrian and bicycle access, signage and lighting as outlined in this referral should be addressed and incorporated into the plan. Staff would be happy to meet with the applicant to discuss any comments or questions.

cc: Julie Pastor, AICP, Planning Director
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