

SPECIAL REPORT
to the
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission
June 21, 2022

Prepared by
Kierstin Eggerl, Bureau of Development Review

SUBJECT: GRO-21-0013, Meadow Branch Road Realignment

LOCATION: West of Littlestown Pike (MD 97), southwest of Carroll County Airport, E.D. 7

OWNER: Carroll County Commissioners, 225 N. Center Street, Westminster, MD 21157

DEVELOPER: Carroll County Commissioners c/o Department of Public Works, 225 N. Center Street, Westminster, MD 21157

SURVEYOR: Delta Airport Consultants, Inc., 3544 North Progress Avenue, Suite 200, Harrisburg, PA 17110

ZONING: Light Industrial (I-1) in County; Industrial Restricted (I-R) in City of Westminster

WATERSHED: Double Pipe Creek

MASTER PLAN: City of Westminster Municipal Limits – 2014 Carroll County Master Plan – 2019 Amended

PRIORITY FUNDING AREA: Westminster

DESIGNATED GROWTH AREA: Westminster

❖ **Action Required:**

In accordance with §158.049 of the Carroll County Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances and with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Land Use Article § 3-205, this plan is before the Planning and Zoning Commission for a determination of consistency with the Master Plan. **Action is required.**

❖ **Existing Conditions:**

The subject site is a portion of Meadow Branch Road, which is a public road located immediately southwest of Carroll County Regional Airport. Meadow Branch Road begins on the west side of Littlestown Pike (MD 97) and continues northwest, through an intersection with Buckshot Road, before making a sharp turn to the southwest. It then reconnects to Buckshot Road and terminates at Baltimore Boulevard (MD 140). The northern portion of the site is in the County, and the southern part is within the City of Westminster's municipal limits.

To the south of the site lies Buckshot Road. This is a new road which was constructed in conjunction with the Meadowbranch Industrial Park subdivision (recorded in 2004 in plat book 48 page 119). Buckshot Road contains 4 lanes for through traffic and connects MD 97 to MD 140. It begins on the west side of Meadow Branch Road, just south of the subject site, and ends to the west where it becomes Meadow Branch Road and continues to MD 140.

❖ **Master Plan:**

The *2014 Carroll County Master Plan – 2019 Amended* includes a reference to “Meadow Branch Road Realignment” in its table “CH7-Table 3: Planned Neighborhood Connections (County & Municipal)” on page 62 and cites the *City of Westminster’s Comprehensive Plan* as its source.

The *City of Westminster 2009 Comprehensive Plan* states the following regarding the alignment:

- *Chapter 12: Transportation, page 237, Section 4: Local System* – “Once complete, the reconstructed Meadow Branch Road will be a significant collector road between MD 97(N) and MD 140. This critical road will serve as a primary through movement for the MD 97 Industrial Corridor as well as the residential development occurring in the area.”
- *Chapter 12: Transportation, Page 257* – “Meadow Branch Road will serve as a major collector street for the connection between MD 97(N) and MD 140. Once reconstructed, the alignment will be shifted and vehicular traffic will move more efficiently as the radius of the turn towards MD 97 will be more gradual. This primary road will have very few direct connections to it from the Meadow Branch Industrial Park. The Bolton Hill development will have only a single access point which is the main entrance to the development. There will be no individual residential access points to Meadow Branch Road.”

Per the attached memo, the Carroll County Department of Planning is in agreement with the City of Westminster that Buckshot Road fulfills the City’s Comprehensive Plan’s objectives related to the plan’s alignment of Meadow Branch Road. The County’s Planning department is currently drafting a new Transportation Master Plan (TMP) for the County as a whole. Planning and the City of Westminster are in agreement that the Meadow Branch Road Realignment will be removed from the TMP, and by effect the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the County’s Master Plan as well. Future revisions of these plans will no longer show the connection currently specified in the City’s and County’s plans.

Additionally, the *2014 Carroll County Master Plan – 2019 Amended* also references the future expansion of the Carroll County Regional Airport.

- *Chapter 6 : Public Facilities & Services, Carroll County Regional Airport, Page 48* – “In 2007, the Board of County Commissioners adopted an Airport Master Plan which called for the extension of the runway using a preferred alternative that relocated the existing runway 250 feet to the west and north, 600 feet to the north and extended it for a total length of 6,400 feet. After an Environmental Assessment concluded that this alternative would create “no significant impact” to a number of environmental features, in 2009, the Board of County Commissioners voted to proceed with this alternative.”

❖ **Plan Review:**

On December 21, 2021, a grading only plan for the Meadow Branch Road Realignment project was submitted to the Bureau of Development Review (see attached sketch). The development site consists of the existing roadbed of Meadow Branch Road between Buckshot Road and Vision Way, as well as a portion of the Airport property and 2 parcels owned by the Carroll County Commissioners. The County is the developer and the proposal entails relocating a

portion of Meadow Branch Road in order to accommodate the future expansion of the Carroll County Regional Airport. The portion of the road between Buckshot Road and Vision Way is proposed to move southwest of its existing location. The angle of the replacement road is parallel to the existing road, and the impacted intersection with Buckshot Road will remain near its present location.

Although the grading-only plan is still under review and requires additional approvals from various agencies, the project needs to be reviewed and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission for consistency with the Master Plan, in accordance with §158.049 of the Carroll County Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances:

§ 158.049 COUNTY PUBLIC BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND USES.

Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, uses of land, buildings, structures, or premises by the County Commissioners, including the location, erection, reconstruction, extension, enlargement, conversion, or alteration of buildings or structures or parts thereof may be located in any district as principal permitted uses and exempt from all subdivision regulations and bulk requirements. However, no land, building, structure, or premises owned or leased by the County Commissioners may be used without the approval of the County Planning Commission pursuant to Md. Code, Land Use Article, § 3.205.

Thus, in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Land Use Article § 3-205 the following is required:

(b) A publicly or privately owned street, square, park or other public way, ground, or open space, a public building or structure, or a public utility may not be authorized or constructed in the local jurisdiction or in geographic section of the local jurisdiction until the planning commission has approved the location, character, and extent of the developments as consistent with the plan.

❖ **Action Required:**

With recognition from the Carroll County Department of Planning and the City of Westminster that Buckshot Road meets the intent of the Master Plan's Meadow Branch Road realignment, its impending removal from the Master Plan, and the future expansion of the Carroll County Regional Airport as an objective of the Master Plan, staff recommends that the Planning Commission find the road alignment as consistent with the Carroll County Master Plan.