



Zoning_County I-2 Blue: Band_3
Orthos2023
Zoning RGB
Conservation Red: Band_1
R-20,000 Green: Band_2
C-2

Griffith West, Section IV
Major Subdivision
P-22-0068


Property line shown hereon
are from tax maps and therefore
are approximate and are shown
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Photograph date: Spring 2020



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CONCEPT SUBDIVISION REPORT
to the
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission
December 16, 2025

Prepared by
Amy Barcroft, Development Review Division

SUBJECT: P-22-0068 – Griffith West Section IV
LOCATION: Griffith Road at the intersection of MD RT 144, C.D. 4
OWNER: Highland Development Corporation, PO Box 228, Clarksville, MD 21029
DEVELOPER: Same as Owner
SURVEYOR: CLSI, 439 E. Main St., Westminster, MD 21157
ZONING: Conservation
ACREAGE: 28.51 acres
WATERSHED: Liberty Reservoir
NO. OF LOTS: 8
FIRE DISTRICT: Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company
MASTER PLAN: Resource Conservation – 2014 Carroll County Master Plan, Amended 2019
PRIORITY
FUNDING AREA: Outside
DESIGNATED
GROWTH AREA: Outside

❖ **Action Required:**

The plan is before the Planning and Zoning Commission per Chapter 155 of the Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County for concept plan review and a determination regarding a cluster plan of subdivision.

❖ **Existing Conditions**

The subject property is 28.52 acres which is split by Griffith Road, with frontage at both Old Frederick Road (MD Route 144) and Griffith Road. With consideration of the existing road area, there are approximately 27.28 acres available for development.

The property is undeveloped and zoned Conservation. The land is mostly open field, unencumbered by streams or floodplains. The property slopes upward from the Griffith Road on either side. Adjacent properties are zoned Conservation and developed with single-family homes. Previous sections of Griffith West subdivision are located to the south of the property along Griffith Road.

The property is outside of priority funding areas, designated growth areas, and public water and sewer service areas.

❖ **Plan Review:**

The developer proposes to create 8 lots on the property; 7 new subdivision lots and the Resulting Lands, Lot 8. The proposal is a cluster plan of subdivision. Clustering is permitted in the Conservation zoning district in accordance with Chapter 155.036 of the Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County:

§ 155.036 CLUSTER SUBDIVISIONS.

(...)

- (B) **Conditions requisite to approval in C District.** In the C District, the Planning Commission may approve a residential cluster subdivision, which includes the division of land into lots which may be smaller than otherwise required in this district, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Individual lots shall be a minimum of one acre in size, a minimum of 150 feet in width. The front yard shall be 40 feet, the side yard shall be 20 feet, and the rear yard shall be 50 feet;
 - (2) The total number of lots and dwelling units shall not exceed the number that would be permitted for the zoning district based on the gross area of the parcel or tract being subdivided;
 - (3) All individual lots shall be designed and located to minimize potential environmental degradation of the natural resources;
 - (4) The land derived from reduction of lot sizes shall be provided and maintained as open space or recreational areas;
 - (5) The open space shall be offered to the county and conveyed in fee simple if accepted by the county. If the county rejects the offer, the open space may be owned in common by the residents, conveyed to the Carroll County Land Trust or a similar organization, or recombined with one buildable lot in the subdivision and owned privately;
 - (6) Access arrangements to open space shall be carefully designed and located to enable perpetual maintenance and accessibility;
 - (7) Lots may not be further subdivided, and the record plat shall so indicate;
 - (8) In addition to easements required by any chapter of the County Code, all land lying within 300 feet as measured horizontally of the 100-year planned reservoir flood pool shall be designated as open space. All land lying within 100 feet of the thread (or centerline) of any tributary of a public water supply, whether now used or planned to be used for such a purpose as reflected by the Master Plan, shall be designated as open space or for use as agricultural land;
 - (9) Any private open space created shall be subject to a conservation easement, which shall be in a legal form satisfactory to the County Attorney and provide for such restrictions in accordance with any chapter of the County Code;
 - (10) In order to be eligible for clustering, all lot yield from the entire property shall be included on the preliminary subdivision plan. No piecemeal clustering plans may be approved by the Planning Commission; and
 - (11) No application for further subdivision of a property or any lots created through the minor subdivision process may be filed or approved prior to five years from the date of final plan approval of a minor subdivision of the property.

Since the property is outside of a public sewer area, development is restricted to 7 new lots in accordance Chapter 155,

§ 155.031 SUBDIVISION REQUIREMENTS.

(M) Septic minor subdivision.

(1) A septic minor subdivision will be defined as up to seven new lots for purposes of the Carroll County Health Department approval of on-site disposal systems. The preliminary plan will indicate the number of lots that have been created from the parcel since October 1, 2012. All development proposals will be required to comply with all other processing and County Code provisions applicable to subdivisions.

(2) This division (M) and the changes herein shall be applicable to any preliminary subdivision plan, or amendment thereto, that is submitted to the Bureau after October 1, 2012 and is effective December 31, 2012.

On January 22, 2024, a concept conventional plan of subdivision for 8 lots for Griffith West Section IV was submitted to the Development Review Division and distributed to technical review agencies. During the concept review phase, the engineer and developer decided to modify the plan and pursue a cluster plan of subdivision. The concept cluster plan of subdivision was submitted on August 1, 2025, and distributed to technical review agencies. It proposes the same number of lots.

In regard to clustering in the Conservation zoning district, the Code states, “The total number of lots and dwelling units shall not exceed the number that would be permitted for the zoning district based on the gross area of the parcel or tract being subdivided.” With a gross acreage of 28.51 acres and a bulk lot size requirement of 3.0 acres in Conservation, the maximum number of lots is 9. The development proposes 8 lots; 7 new lots in accordance with the septic minor subdivision provisions.

Code specifies that, “All individual lots shall be designed and located to minimize potential environmental degradation of the natural resources.” The site is an open field with no streams, floodplain, or forest. Whether the cluster subdivision meets the condition of Chapter 155.036(B)(3), minimization of potential environmental degradation of natural resources, is questionable.

Within the subdivision plan, the developer proposes to create 8 lots with 40’ front, 20’ side, and 50’ rear setbacks to comply with code. All lots meet the minimum 150’ lot width requirement.

Per the code, “Individual lots shall be a minimum of one acre in size.” All lots meet this requirement. Lot 1 is 2.99 acres, Lot 2 is 3.15 acres, Lot 3 is 3.76 acres, Lot 4 is 3.02 acres, Lot 5 is 2.49 acres, Lot 6 is 2.56 acres, Lot 7 is 3.42 acres, and the Resulting Lands, Lot 8, is 4.72 acres. Three lots, Lots 1, 5, and 6, are smaller than otherwise required in this district.

The Code states, “The land derived from reduction of lot sizes shall be provided and maintained as open space or recreational areas.” A calculation table is provided on sheet 1 of the plan set. The reduction of the three lots sized below the 3.0-acre bulk lot size requirement totals 0.96 acres. 0.96 acres of Open Space is required, and 0.96 acres is provided.

Chapter 155.036(B)(5) reads, “The open space shall be offered to the county and conveyed in fee simple if accepted by the county. If the county rejects the offer, the open space may be owned in common by the residents, conveyed to the Carroll County Land Trust or a similar organization, or

recombined with one buildable lot in the subdivision and owned privately.” The current proposal designates the required Open Space on the Resulting Lands, to be owned privately. The code requires, “Any private open space created shall be subject to a conservation easement, which shall be in a legal form satisfactory to the County Attorney and provide for such restrictions in accordance with any chapter of the County Code.” The plans annotate the Open Space on the Resulting Lands with a conservation easement area of 0.96 acres.

All lots shown on the plans will utilize private well and septic systems as the area is outside of existing and planned water and sewer service areas. Access to all lots is proposed as private driveways from Griffith Road.

The proposed subdivision plan was subject to citizen involvement during the February 26, 2024, Technical Review Committee meeting. No citizens attended or submitted comments at that time. Recently, a citizen emailed to ask for an update on the status of the project.

Comprehensive Planning noted in a comment letter from February 27, 2024, that the plan is consistent with all applicable policies and recommendations.

Engineering Review issued a letter regarding three of the proposed lots’ failure to meet sight distance requirements. This will need be addressed in the preliminary plan phase. The Carroll County Health Department has comments which will also need to be addressed in the preliminary plan phase.

Stormwater Management has issued concept approval for the plan with grass swales and a submerged gravel wetland to meet requirements. A Stormwater Management parcel will be deeded to the County. Forest Conservation has granted approval and will be met with off-site banking. As currently designed, landscaping is not required. Grading, Floodplain, and Water Resource Management have provided approval of the plans. Fire Protection and Zoning had no comments, and the site is outside of the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Utilities. Soil Conservation has approved of the concept plan.

The project is subject to the provisions of Concurrency Management, Chapter 156 of the Code, and will be tested prior to presentation of the plan to the Commission for approval of the Preliminary Plan.

Planning Commission may, at their discretion, approve a residential cluster subdivision, the pursuit of which is being proposed by the developer. A determination from the Commission as to the developer’s proposal of a cluster plan of subdivision is requested.