
MEMORANDUM TO: Mayor and City Council
Planning Commission

FROM: Caroline Seiden, Planner

DATE: August 3, 2018

SUBJECT: Preliminary Background Report:
Application SDP-7974-2018/SP-7975-2018;
Discovery Park, 601 Orchard Ridge Drive

APPLICANT/OWNER

City of Gaithersburg
31 S. Summit Avenue
Gaithersburg MD, 20878

TAX MAP REFERENCE:

Tax Map: FS23

TAX ACCOUNT NUMBER:

Parcel N600
Parcel N532

REQUEST

The City of Gaithersburg has submitted Schematic Development Plan (SDP) application SDP-7974-2018. This application proposes the development of a 14.95 acre City park to further the objective of ensuring resident proximity to parks. The residential communities of Quince Orchard Park, Vistas, and Kentlands all are within .25 miles of the proposed park. The overall project goal is to develop a small, natural-focused, walk-to park to be used for playing, picnicking, and strolling. The plan proposes a park with walking trails, playground equipment, picnic areas and gardens. The proposed park straddles two parcels (N600 and N532) and the properties, both of which are zoned Mixed Use Development (MXD), are located at 601 Orchard Ridge Drive. On July 16, 2018 the Mayor and City Council approved the name "Discovery Park" for the subject properties.

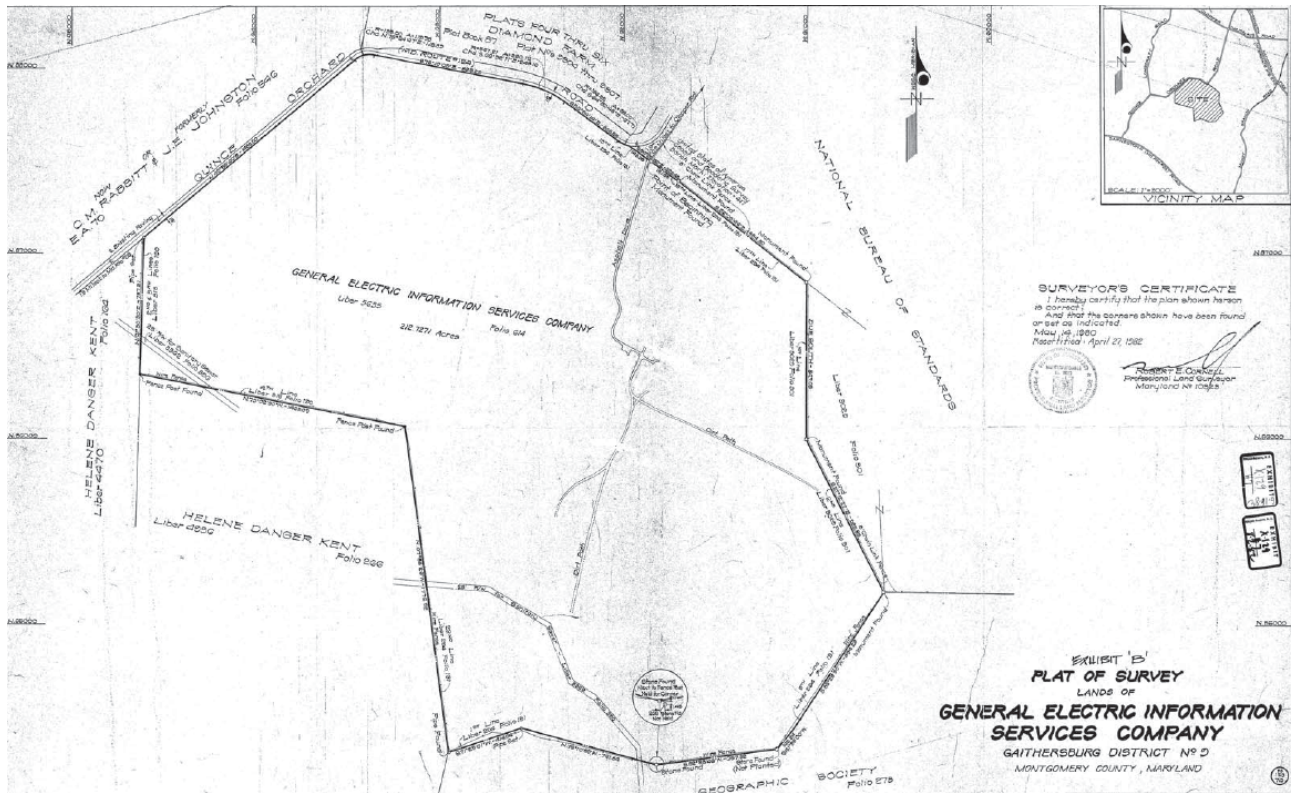


PROJECT BACKGROUND

Medimmune, beginning in 2002, began purchasing the privately owned parcels comprising the Quince Orchard Corporate Park. With all the privately-owned parcels under ownership, (62.6 acres) Medimmune explored options with the City to further expand through an additional Amendment to Annexation Agreement X-129 in order to create a corporate campus. The 6th Amendment to the Annexation Agreement was approved on March 8, 2013. This amendment revised the density of development allowed on the Medimmune properties, dedicated new City parkland, and included transportation and community improvements among other details (Exhibit #16). With the dedication of new City parkland adjacent to an 8.43 acre parcel already under City ownership (originally for a Corridor Cities Transitway station), plans for a new City park were developed.

ANNEXATION, ZONING AND SITE PLAN HISTORY:

The Mayor & City Council approved application X-129, the Quince Orchard Park (then GEISCO Property), annexation and established I-3 zoning for the entire property by resolution R-60-82 and ordinance O-14-82 respectively on September 7, 1982.



The annexation was followed on October 22, 1982 with the approval of the X-129 Annexation Agreement which established certain dedications to be made and dedications required. Subsequently, the Annexation Agreement has been amended six times. These various amendments concerned different development rights and associated issues and site development plans and also included the deeding of land to the City for a future transit station. The following addresses the amendments and associated development applications:

- March 6, 1985: Final Site Plan application S-760 receives approval for 101 Orchard Ridge Drive;
- April 1, 1987: Amendment to Final Site Plan application S-760(C) receives approval for 101 Orchard Ridge Drive. This approval reflects the property use and design as is found today;
- August 5, 1991: First X-129 Amendment approved. Property is partitioned into four separate parcels by conveyance to among others GERECCO, General Electric Real Estate Credit Corporation; agreement to deed land to the City for a transit station is included in the Amendment;
- December 20, 1993: Zoning Map Amendment Z-275 and associated sketch plan approved for Quince Orchard Corporate Center, by ordinance O-22-93. This application granted MXD zoning to approximately 174 acres, but did not include 101 Orchard Ridge Drive which remained zoned I-3. The Z-275 Sketch Plan and its amendments delineated 10.6 acres for a transit center, including the 8.43 acre Parcel N600, already deeded to the City;

- March 8, 2013: 6th X-129 Amendment approved. This amendment revised the density of development allowed on the Medimmune properties;
- May 18, 2015: Schematic Development Plan application SDP-6905-2015 receives approval for a child care facility up to 20,000 square feet to serve the Medimmune/AstraZeneca employees on the Meadows section, by Resolution R-34-15; and
- October 19, 2015: Schematic Development Plan application SDP-7059-2018 receives approval for a 4,000 space parking garage to accommodate future growth within the Medimmune campus.

The aforementioned X-129 Annexation Agreement and subsequent amendments established a density cap of 1.95 million SF of allowable floor area for “intended uses” or “other uses” defined in the agreements.

Sixth X-129 Annexation Agreement:

Medimmune, beginning in 2002, began purchasing the parcels comprising the Quince Orchard Corporate Park. The timeline is as follows:

- May 2002: Initial purchase of Ridges portion
- September 2003: Additional Ridges portion
- December 2007: Purchase of Meadows parcel (portion of the subject property)
- December 2008: Purchase of Summit parcel
- December 2010: Purchase of remaining Ridges parcel (including 200 Orchard Ridge Drive)

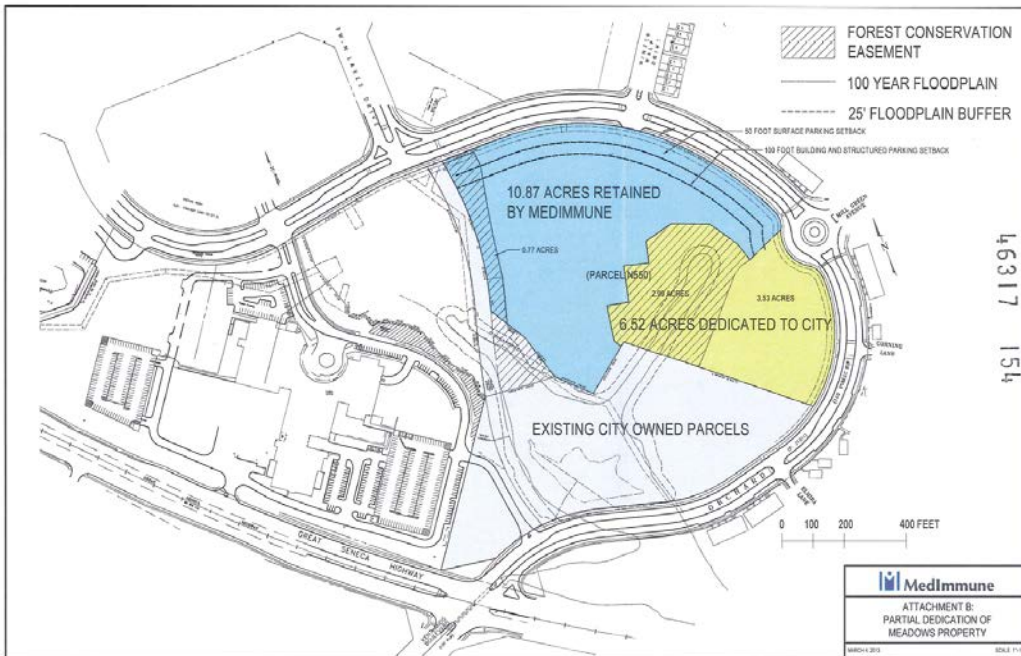
With all the parcels under ownership, (62.6 acres) Medimmune explored options with the City to further expand through an additional X-129 Amendment. The 6th Amendment was approved March 8, 2013 (Exhibit #16). The amendment revised the density of development allowed on the Medimmune properties; dedicated new City parkland that was previously part of the Meadows; and included transportation and community improvements among other details.

The revised density calculations removed the existing square foot limitations and instead imposed the density permitted under the MXD zone in effect at the time of the Amendment for a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.75. In calculating the new allowable density, the acreage of the subject property was considered. Section 9 of the 6th Amendment concerns the property that is the subject of SDP-7974-2018 application.

Section 9 states:

“Dedication of Portion of Meadows Property for Open Space/Parkland. At a mutually agreeable time in 2013, Medimmune will dedicate and Plat a portion of the Meadows Property (Parcel N532), approximately 6.5 acres in size, to the City for open space/parkland, in the approximate location as shown on Attachment B. Medimmune may count the density available from that property towards future development on any or all of the other Medimmune Properties. Medimmune and the City may discuss any additional

conditions in connection with the dedication such as naming rights for any recreational facilities. On or before dedication, Medimmune will pay \$200,000.00 to the City for use in preparing the dedicated land for use as open space/parkland.”



Attachment “B” of 6th Amendment to Annexation Agreement X-129

On April 1, 2014, Parcel N532 was dedicated to the City of Gaithersburg in accordance with the Annexation Agreement. The City had previously owned the remaining park acreage (8.43 acre parcel (N600) south of Parcel N532), originally intended for a Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) transit station and now planned for the south side of Great Seneca Highway.

On July 16, 2018 the Mayor and City Council approved the name “Discovery Park” for the subject properties.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LOCATION:

The Property is located at 601 Orchard Ridge Drive near the intersection of Orchard Ridge Drive and Great Seneca Highway. Adjoining and confronting properties surrounding the Property are zoned MXD and are improved with a mix of use types. Portions of the Medimmune campus are located in close proximity to the north and west. To the south and east, across Orchard Ridge Drive, are residences in the Quince Orchard Park community.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:

A Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) noted that the vegetation existing on site is predominantly non-native invasive and native pioneer species (fast growing, short-lived

species that are typically the first to grow at an abandoned or disturbed site-typically lower value trees) (ENV-7811-2018 - Exhibit #15). Staff performed a field visit while verifying the NRI and found the main species were autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) and ornamental pear (*Pyrus* spp.). Both species are non-native and highly invasive. The removal of these species to make space for the proposed planting will be a great benefit to the urban forest of Gaithersburg generally and to the adjacent forest conservation easement specifically.

The proposed plantings are almost all native species of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. The planting plan utilizes a wide variety of species to achieve a remarkable species diversity.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ORDINANCE (APFO):

In accordance with §24-244, “Applicability,” the following are noted:

Water and Sewer Services

The subject properties are currently serviced by water and sewer categories of W-1 and S-1 and are adequate to serve the proposed park.

Fire and Emergency Services

The following three fire stations provide ten minute response times to the subject property:

Station 8 - Gaithersburg-Montgomery Village
Station 31 - Rockville-Quince Orchard
Station 32 - Travilah

Therefore, the site complies with the requirements for the Adequate Public Facilities requirements for Emergency Services.

Schools

The proposed park use will not generate any students. Therefore, there will be no impact to schools and the schools test for adequate public facilities is not required.

Traffic Impacts

Sections 10 and 11 of the 6th Amendment address transportation impacts. Section 10 defines that Medimmune is responsible for any immediate transportation improvements necessary to facilitate a development project; however, Medimmune is allowed to develop up to 138,518 SF of new building area without any further dedications or payments related to transportation network improvements. The proposed park use does not provide any additional square footage and, therefore, no additional traffic improvements are required in accordance with the annexation agreement.

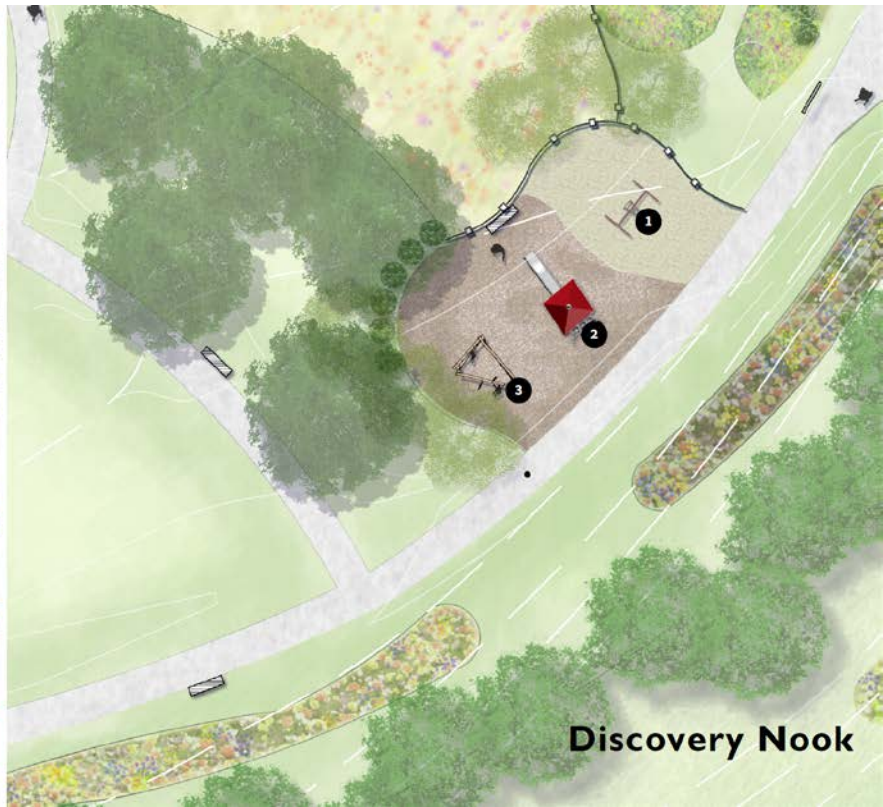
SCHEMATIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROPOSAL:

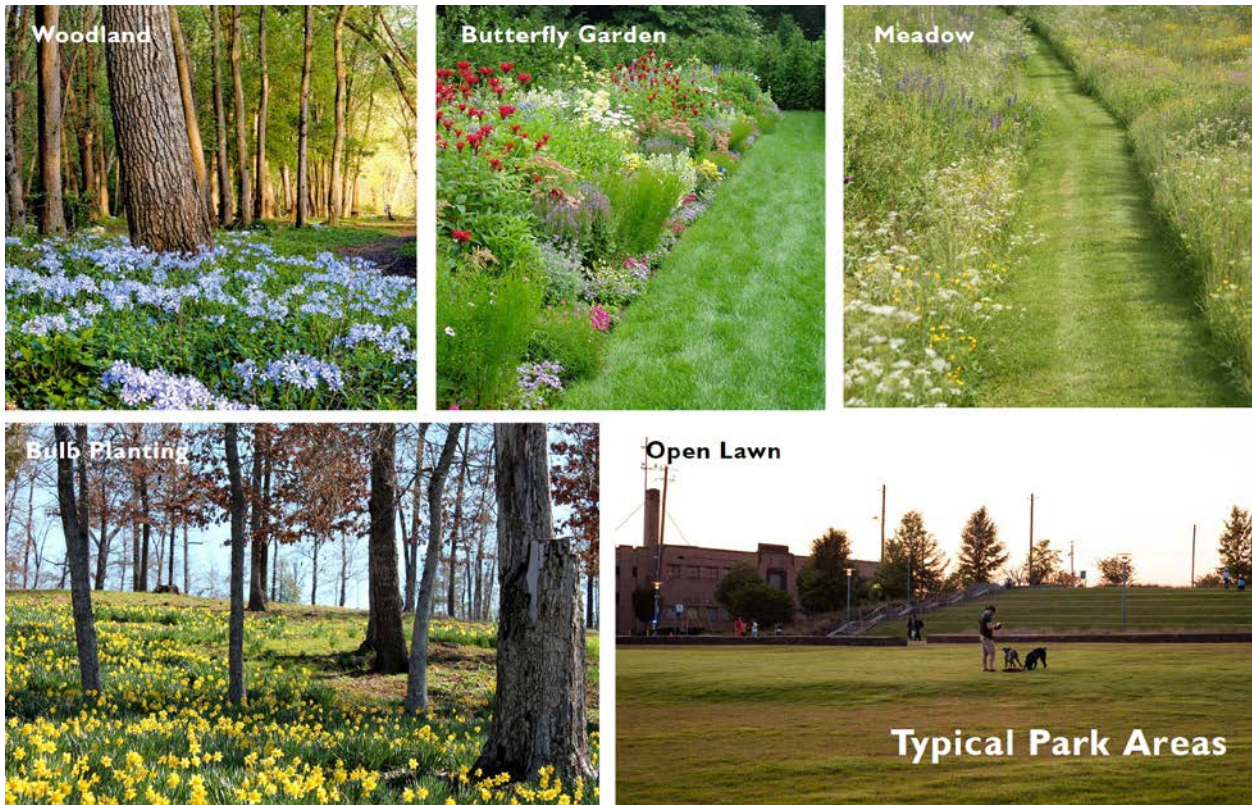
The application, SDP-7974-2018, specifically defines the City park, including a design narrative (Exhibit #2) and site plan (Exhibit #3 - #13). The total subject site is 14.95± acres. The site will be served by existing sidewalks along Orchard Ridge Drive.



Exhibit #14

The proposed park design provides several small picnic areas, pathways, a small nature play area and discovery nook that will include elements comprised of rope and climbing structures, an “Expression Swing,” a “Birds Nest” swing, a wooden “tree-like” house with a slide, a butterfly haven, a Living Willow Simple Dome, and a “GaGa Ball” Pit/Octagon. Additional site furnishings will include picnic tables, individual picnic shelters (a single picnic table with a roof structure), bike rack, trash and recycling receptacles, dog waste station, fencing, signage and benches along the pathways. The pathways will be marked with mile markers. The playground protective surfacing will include Engineered Wood Fiber Mulch, Poured-in-Place Play Surface, and Flexible Pavement.





Park Access:

No new parking is proposed for Discovery Park, although there is some on-street parking available along portions of the east side of Orchard Ridge Drive in the vicinity of the park. A significant number of park users are anticipated to walk to the park from surrounding communities. Pedestrian access to the park is via connections to the existing sidewalk along two locations on the west side of Orchard Ridge Drive, one roughly parallel with the traffic circle north of the park and one on the southern edge of the park close to the intersection with Elmira Lane.

SUMMARY:

The City has submitted for consideration schematic development plan application SDP-7974-2018. This is a complete application as defined by § 24-160D.9.(b) Application for Schematic Development Plan Approval of the City Code. A joint public hearing before the Mayor & City Council and the Planning Commission has been scheduled for August 20, 2018.

A staff recommendation will be provided prior to the Planning Commission recommendation discussion. For the purpose of concluding the public hearing, staff recommends:

1. The Planning Commission make a motion to close the public hearing and hold the record open until 5:00 PM on August 31, 2018 (11 days) with a Recommendation to the Mayor and City Council tentatively scheduled for September 5, 2018.
2. The Mayor and City Council make a motion to close the public hearing and hold the record open until 5:00 PM on September 24, 2018 (25 days) with a Policy Discussion tentatively scheduled for October 1, 2018