

The Capital

South County

Target site plan for Waysons Corner is withdrawn, for now

By E.B. FURGURSON III, Staff Writer

The developer seeking to build a Target shopping center in Waysons Corner has withdrawn its site plan application, but the project isn't going away.

Petrie/Chaney Waysons Corner LLC sent a letter to county planners Friday asking to have its plan withdrawn. It was a day shy of an extended deadline to re-submit alternative plans to answer the county's requirements on the project.

Petrie attorney Fred Delavan said Tuesday the move came after the developer found it was taking much longer to resolve several issues with the plan, primarily stormwater management.

"This gives us time to take a breath. It gives us more time to address the issues before us without having to constantly ask for extensions," he said. "It does not signal anything up or down about the project itself."

George Perry, interim president of the Lothian Civic Association, a group representing hundreds of households in the area, said he and his group appreciate the developer taking the county's requests seriously.

"But we still think what they have proposed is too intense a use for the site," he said. "We hope as they continue to move forward they will resubmit a plan that is more consistent with the South County Small Area Plan."

When they do, it will be treated as a brand new plan by the county.

"They will have to meet all requirements of a new submission," county spokesman Pam Jordan said. "And that includes a public meeting prior to submission."

The first time Petrie had a public meeting, it attracted a raucous crowd of some 400 people, most of them opposed to the plan.

The company's grading permit application was not withdrawn, further indicating work on the plan will continue.

"You can't get a grading permit without a site development plan approval," Mr. Delavan said. He indicated in his letter the grading permit application would be modified to match any changes, "in the event my client files a revised site development plan application," he wrote.

Petrie vice-president Terry Richardson did not return calls in time for this stories.

To address environmental concerns raised since the plan was first put forward last fall, developer Petrie Ross Ventures said it's changing its stormwater plan from a common holding pond to innovative bio-retention techniques designed to reduce runoff. The firm asked for the extra time to do that re-engineering in October and was granted a 60-day extension, which expired Saturday.

The developers moves caused the Maryland Department of the Environment to cancel a scheduled public meeting slated for Tuesday public hearing on the proposed sewage plan for the Target shopping center.

Petrie/Chaney Waysons Corner LLC would be seeking a state permit to discharge a maximum 19,500 gallons of treated wastewater per day into local groundwater via a septic system.

The proposed shopping center would create a Target store in the first phase, then other retail and restaurant space. Altogether, nearly 500,000 square feet of what's now wooded land along Route 4 and Southern Maryland Boulevard would be covered with pavement and rooftops. Much of that could change when a new plan is submitted.

No matter what shape the project might take, concerns abound among local residents and people involved with the Jug Bay Wetlands Preserve across the highway from the project site. They are worried about increased traffic, the environmental impact of stormwater and other issues.

The potential of flushing up to 19,500 gallons of treated wastewater into the ground is another concern.

"What will happen if the system fails?" said Mr. Perry. "There are already septic issues in the Waysons Corner area. What happens to this water and where does it go?"

*Published January 18, 2007, The Capital, Annapolis, Md.
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