

Developer of WMAL Radio Towers Site Proposes Dog Park, County Park As Part of 328-Home Project

Toll Brothers filed a concept plan last week with the Planning Department

BY AARON KRAUT



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The developer hoping to build a new neighborhood on Bethesda's WMAL radio towers site is promising a public dog park and offering to set aside 5 acres that could one day become a Montgomery County park.

Pennsylvania-based Toll Brothers, picked earlier this year by property owner Cumulus Media to buy and develop the 75-acre site bracketed by the Beltway and I-270, unveiled the plans in a concept plan filing with the Planning Department last week.

It comes after Toll Brothers representatives spent months meeting with members of the surrounding community, including some who have expressed concerns about the impact the 328 proposed homes may have on nearby roads and schools.

A spokesperson for Toll Brothers said the developer plans to file a formal preliminary plan detailing the project early next year.

The concept plan shows 328 units, 42 of which would be moderately priced dwelling units (MPDU) and all of which would have two parking spaces, for a total of 656 parking spots.

The homes would come in one of six basic models, ranging from the smallest MPDU town home units to a single-family detached "Estate Home."

Most of the units would have parking in the back and the homes would be built along a "loosely curvilinear grid" pattern of streets and blocks that would be mostly parallel to the existing street grid of the adjacent West Fernwood neighborhood.



Toll Brothers concept plan for 75-acre WMAL radio towers site, via Planning Department

There would be a system of walking trails and the dog park, a publically accessible area in one of the site's wooded sections designed to mimic the dog park at Cabin John Regional Park in Bethesda.

Toll Brothers is also proposing to set aside a 5-acre area along the Greentree Road section of the site that Montgomery Parks could use for a public park. The county would have to purchase the area within three years of the project's completion.

If the county isn't able to purchase the site, Toll Brothers said it plans to seek approval for 20 more home lots.

Erica Leatham, the attorney representing Toll Brothers, wrote in a memo detailing the concept plan that the developer worked with Montgomery Parks staff to identify the best location for the potential park site.

Leatham also wrote that Toll Brothers “cannot place any additional land in reservation and efficiently pursue the development program while providing other amenities to the adjoining communities.” The development is a “by-right” project, meaning Toll Brothers isn’t required to reserve any of the 75-acre property for the county or provide additional amenities.

The developer also said “it appears” that three nearby existing intersections will require improvements, though a full traffic study hasn’t been completed. In past meetings with the community, Toll Brothers representatives have suggested those improvements might consist of widening intersections.

Leatham wrote that, in response to community concerns, the developer’s traffic studies would also take into account traffic levels in non-rush hour periods.