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SOUTH KENT ISLAND GROWTH IMPACT MITIGATION CONSIDERATIONS

The County is aware the impacts of growth arising from the South Kent Island (SKI) sewer project must be mitigated. Below is a discussion of considerations for addressing the mitigation.

The SKI project plan significantly mitigates the impact of growth by reducing the number of vacant lots that can access the project. Without this access, lots cannot generally develop because septic systems cannot meet applicable regulatory standards.

There are presently 1600 vacant lots in the project area. Through a lot consolidation ordinance and by limiting access to only those lots interspersed among existing developed lots, lots available for development are reduced from 1600 to 658. The County expects the agreement required to access State funding needed for the project will limit public sewer access to only these remaining lots. Historically, no more than 85% of those lots develop, so the County envisions no more than 560 of these lots developing. This two-thirds reduction from the 1600 lots significantly mitigates growth impacts arising from the development.

The development of the lots will be phased over many years for both project implementation and economic reasons. This phasing provides ample opportunity to mitigate growth impacts.

The project implementation of the phasing arises from the project being now planned for construction in four stages over eight years. The access to the project of the 560 vacant lots for the four stages would be 22, 372, 81 and 85 lots, respectively.

The economic reasons for the further phasing arise from new single-family home construction still reflecting the recession's impact and building permit costs for the vacant lots. To obtain a building permit for new home construction on a vacant lot that can be served by the project, the permittee, in addition to normal costs, such as an impact fee of between \$10,000 and \$12,000, would have to pay a sewer allocation charge and the cost of the individual STEP system. These additional costs are currently estimated to total \$20,250.

The phasing will permit a continuing assessment of mechanisms most appropriate and needed to mitigate growth impacts. An evaluation of the demographics of the new residents, e.g. retirees v. families, will be a valuable tool for this continuing assessment.

Impacts fees and new property and income tax revenues generated through the new development will provide a viable resource for funding infrastructure needed to accommodate new growth. This resource will be continually enhanced

through improvements to existing properties and the sale of these properties, which will rebase the homestead credit enjoyed by the existing residents.

The phasing of the development will enable an assessment of the most effective allocation of this resource. The infrastructure investments to be considered would be for transportation, public schools, public safety, and recreation.

In-so-far as transportation, the sole route to which traffic from the new development, as with the existing development, flows is Maryland Route 8. There has been extensive planning for improvements to this corridor commensurate with specific actions, including right of way acquisition along most of Route 8, south of US Route 50/301, sufficient to add two additional lanes. SHA's Highway Needs Inventory already proposes this dualization of Route 8 for the 1.3 mile segment beginning south of Route 50/301 to the Matapeake School Complex.

The County has acquired additional right-of-way to improve traffic flow at the Route 8 and Route 50/301 interchange. The 2001 Maryland Route 8 Corridor Plan was the basis for this new connector road which will permit east-bound traffic to exit Route 8 at Airport Road with a connection to the Thompson Creek Service Road on the east side of the Kmart Shopping Center. This new roadway link will alleviate congestion by providing additional access and route alternatives for both local traffic and pedestrians.

Constructed in 2009, the Kent Island South Trail extends from Romancoke Pier in Kent Island Estates to the Matapeake Clubhouse and Beach facility along Route 8. This trail system provides for an alternative mode of transportation between all of the communities to be served by the project

An assessment of the demographics of the new development will be needed to determine whether it impacts existing traffic flow challenges along Route 8. This assessment should be viable at the initial phasing of development. It will determine whether acceleration in the planned Route 8 improvements will be needed.

It is likely that the new development will reflect Department of Planning projections indicating an accelerating trend in the County toward a more senior population. A more senior population would ameliorate traffic flow challenges for Route 8.

These same demographic trends affect public school infrastructure needs. While present protocols project one school age child for every two households, or 280 children, if there is ultimately a full build-out, a more senior population will reduce this projection. Again, this assessment should be viable at the initial phasing of development.

Regardless, currently according to State standards, there is capacity in the County school system to accommodate growth arising from a full build-out of the project. Overall, the County school system is operating at approximately 81 percent of the State rated capacity accordingly to the June 2013 Educational Facilities Master Plan. That Plan reports the State rated capacity of the County system is 9,408 with a full time equivalent enrollment of 7,628 students, meaning there is capacity for 1780 more students.

This capacity is similarly reflected for the elementary, middle, and high school districts that serve the SKI communities. These schools, in the aggregate, are operating at 83 percent of the State rated capacity, with a full time equivalent aggregate enrollment of 2082. The State rated capacity is 2512 students, meaning there is now capacity for 430 more students.

While these State rated capacity considerations indicate present capacity for the student population possibly generated by the new development, the County Board of Education will continue to diligently monitor aggregate enrollment trends. Future capacity challenges arising from enrollment growth from other development should be gradual, providing sufficient opportunity for appropriate and targeted allocation of resources.

The United Communities Volunteer Fire Department house, which is located in the midst of the project area, is currently the first provider of fire suppression and emergency medical transport services. To accommodate the new residents additional equipment may be needed. A more senior population may increase the need for emergency medical services provided by the Department with County personnel support. It appears any needed additional service can be accommodated with the existing physical plant. Funding generated by the development, including impact fees specifically dedicated to these purposes, will provide a viable resource for any needed service enhancements.

Existing recreational opportunities are sufficient to accommodate the new development. There are six County park and public landing facilities on South Kent Island and four additional County park facilities located within 10-miles of the project, near Stevensville. These recreational facilities, located on over 700 acres, include, Romancoke Pier, Batts Neck Park, Mowbray Park, Matapeake Pier, Greenberg Equestrian Trails, Kent Island South Trail, Matapeake Clubhouse and Beach, Terrapin Nature Area, Cross Island Trail, and Old Love Point Park. Recreational opportunities available within these facilities include hiking, biking, running, ballfields, public beaches, multi-purpose fields, playground equipment, horseback riding, boating, wind surfing, roller skating and tennis.

Present law limits redevelopment of the two locations for commercial properties in the project area, minimizing growth impacts. These two properties, the Kentmorr Restaurant and Marina and the Queen Anne Marina and Silver Swan, front on the Chesapeake Bay in the Kentmorr and Queen Anne Colony subdivisions,

respectively. While these commercial uses are grandfathered, any expansion would require compliance with existing zoning and environmental laws.

For State Critical Area law purposes, both properties are classified LDA, which limits impervious surface coverage to 15 percent. The development on these properties now exceeds this limitation. So, any meaningful redevelopment would require a reduction in the present lot coverage, which is a significant economic and practical impediment to any expansion.

County law further impedes meaningful redevelopment. All standards of the Kent Island Suburban Commercial District (KISC) in which these properties are located would also apply upon redevelopment. In relevant part the total floor area for redevelopment would be limited to 20 percent of parcel's size with the maximum height being 30 feet, which is at the most three stories. Additional restrictions may arise from application of stormwater and flood plain regulations.

In conclusion, the County will have the means and plans available to mitigate the impacts of growth arising from a full build-out of the 560 vacant lots. The gradual phasing of this build-out offers a most beneficial opportunity to assess the needs as the growth pattern becomes apparent.