



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Memorandum

To: Montgomery County Planning Board

From: Karl Moritz, Research and Technology Chief

Re: FY08 Special Appropriation to the Planning Department Operating Budget for Funding of Work Program in the Adopted Growth Policy

Date: December 17, 2007

Recommendation

The Montgomery County Planning Department recommends that the Planning Board forward this special appropriation to the Montgomery County Council. The appropriation request is for resources to support two aspects of the Growth Policy work program: implementation of the new Growth Policy, and completion of studies requested by the Council.

- \$28,400 to fund a new position in the Countywide Planning (Transportation Planning) division to implement the increased workload due to the adoption of Policy Area Mobility Review. (Funding request is for a senior planner position for the final four months of the fiscal year).
- \$32,200 to fund a new position in the Research & Technology Center, partially to manage the increase development tracking, reporting and analysis required by the changes to the school test and the adoption of PAMR. In recruiting for this position the department will be looking to add development economics expertise to better support the Growth Policy as well as the broad range of land use planning and regulation analyses conducted by the Department. (Funding request is for a planner/coordinator position for the final four months of the fiscal year).
- \$300,000 in consultant funds and \$28,400 to fund a new Senior Planner position in the Countywide Planning (Transportation Planning) division to work on the following Growth Policy studies: the comprehensive parking management study and the comprehensive review of options for revising Local Area Transportation Review. (Funding request is for final four months of the fiscal year).

- \$150,000 in consultant funds to conduct traffic counts for approximately one-third of the County's signalized intersections. The Council directed Planning Board to include this request in our FY09 budget request.

The total amount of this special appropriation request is \$539,000.

Background

The Montgomery County Council adopted the 2007-2009 *Growth Policy* on November 13, 2007. On November 29, 2007, Planning staff discussed the budget implications of the new Growth Policy with the Planning Board. The Planning Board directed Planning staff to prepare a special appropriation request reflecting the additional staff and consultant resources needed to implement the new Growth Policy and conduct the special studies requested by the County Council.

Attached to this memorandum is the Transportation planning staff memo from November 29. The special appropriation also includes the additional position in the Research & Technology Center to support Growth Policy. This position was discussed by the Planning Board in the context of the FY09 budget.

Resources to Implement the New Growth Policy

The new policy area transportation test (Policy Area Mobility Review, or PAMR) in the Growth Policy requires full or partial mitigation from proposed development projects in much of the County. In addition, the new policy identifies *trip mitigation agreements* as the preferred mechanism for meeting PAMR Requirements.

These changes, while entirely welcome, will require an increased level of staff resources to implement. In general, trip mitigation agreements are more complicated to negotiate than other forms of mitigation. Moreover, these agreements require regular mechanisms to ensure compliance.

In addition, during the Growth Policy discussions, the some County Council members expressed a view that in the past trip mitigation agreements have not always been successful. Those comments raised expectations that the Department will take extra time in the next few months to make sure that we are proceeding with trip mitigation agreements in the most effective way.

This special appropriation includes \$28,400 to fund the addition of one senior planner in the Countywide Planning (Transportation Planning) division to implement the increased workload due to the adoption of Policy Area Mobility Review. These funds would cover salary and benefits for the balance of the fiscal year (final four months).

Reintroduction of an areawide transportation test and the adoption of staging ceilings in the school tests will add to the workload of the Research & Technology. Among the new tasks will be the maintenance of a queue of pending development in

policy areas and high school clusters, the tracking of reductions in school capacity as each residential development projects is approved. The objective is to automate as much of the Growth Policy's development tracking activities as possible by integrating GIS and Hansen.

In the Research & Technology Center, these new tasks are estimated to increase the work load by 0.3 work years. The Department is requesting a *full* additional work year in the Research & Technology Center, however, because the Growth Policy discussions revealed that the Department's work would benefit from the additional of staff expertise in development/redevelopment economics. The Department has staff with a general economics background, and these staff prepare market studies supporting master plans, general economic reports, and critical issues such as TDR tracking and analysis and the analysis underpinning the Planning Board's Growth Policy infrastructure financing recommendations.

For a variety of purposes, it would be very helpful to have on staff someone with experience in the private sector analyzing the financial aspects of residential and commercial development projects. The purpose is to have, for the Planning Board and County Council's information, access to objective analysis of the probable effect of potential changes to land use plans and regulations on the private sector's bottom line. The Growth Policy (and related) discussions suggest a future where the expectations placed on new development will continue to increase: greater emphasis on sustainability and design quality, greater support from the TDR and affordable housing programs, less impact on transportation and other public facilities, etc.

This special appropriation includes \$32,200 to fund the addition of one planner coordinator in the Research & Technology Center to support these needs. These funds would cover salary and benefits for the balance of the fiscal year (final four months).

Resources to Support Growth Policy Studies

There are eleven special studies requested by the County Council in the Growth Policy resolution that are the primary responsibility of the Planning Board. This does not include the special studies that will be led by the County Executive, the Sustainable Quality of Life Indicators project, or the core components of the Biennial Growth Policy, which will have several expanded elements next time.

Planning staff has determined that this work program will require the addition of one staff person and \$450,000 in consultant funds. Specifically, these resources would be allocated to support the following special studies requested by the Council:

“The Planning Board must prepare the following studies to be included in the 2009-2011 Growth Policy:

- ***F1 Enhanced Intersection Data Collection:*** *The Planning Board must include in its recommended FY2009 budget a request for additional funds to expand its database of*

current traffic counts to allow a more comprehensive analysis of congestion conditions and verify developer-provided traffic counts.

- ***F12a:*** *With the aid of the Executive, a comprehensive parking management study, which must include recommendations to improve the use of parking as a travel demand management tool, particularly in Metro station policy areas.*
- ***F12b:*** *With the aid of the Executive, a study of options to revise the local area transportation tests, including using proximity to various levels of transit service and pedestrian connectivity as a basis for mitigation requirements; developing a multi-modal quality of service requirement to provide a more seamless integration of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and auto modes; considering feasible revisions of or alternatives to the Critical Lane Volume method to measure intersection congestion; the duration of Transportation Mitigation Agreements; and identifying more pedestrian and transit-oriented urban areas, in addition to Metro Station Policy Areas, which may be eligible for different standards. The Planning Board must convene a technical working group, consisting of staff from the Planning Commission, the Department of Public Works and Transportation, the State Highway Administration, transportation consultants, and interest groups such as the Action Committee for Transit and Coalition for Smart Growth, to work with an independent consultant to consider and test various proposals and practices in other jurisdictions and recommend appropriate changes in approaches, standards, and measures used in the Growth Policy.”*

The Planning Department has is therefore requesting **\$150,000** for the purpose of contracting for traffic counts at approximately one-third of the County’s signalized intersections. Because traffic counts remain valid for approximately three years, on average, this amount will put the County on a schedule to have up-to-date traffic counts in all areas. This information is critical for transportation planning and analysis and for development review, where it will allow staff to verify that developer-submitted traffic counts are reasonable.

The Planning Department is requesting **\$300,000** in consultant funds and **\$28,400** to fund the addition of one senior planner in the Countywide Planning (Transportation Planning) division. Both the parking management study and the new direction for Local Area Transportation Review will require not only a level of expertise that is not currently resident in the Department but these projects also anticipate taking a fresh perspective on these issues that will be facilitated by outside assistance.

As useful as consultants are, they must be managed and supported by staff within the Department. Because the balance of the substantial work program will keep existing staff fully engaged, the Department is requesting a new position to support these projects.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

November 29, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

FROM: Richard Hawthorne, Transportation Planning Chief
Dan Hardy, Transportation Planning Supervisor

SUBJECT: Accommodating Growth Policy studies in FY 08 and FY 09 budgets

We have recently recognized that the resources in our adopted FY 08 and draft FY 09 budgets do not reflect the resources needed to complete study F12a through F12d in the November 13 Growth Policy resolution (Attachment A) and have not yet been included in our FY 08 supplemental requests.

As discussed with you at a recent roundtable discussion, we estimate these studies will require 3.0 staff years and \$300,000 in consultant services. We believe this effort to be of very high interest to the County Council, as most of the resources are required to:

- Complete the comprehensive parking management study evaluating the potential for parking management changes as a travel demand management (trip reduction) tool (F12a), and
- Complete the comprehensive review of options for revising the County's LATR tests to consider more multimodal and operational options, including those suggested by the Action Committee for Transit and the Coalition for Smarter Growth (F12b).

We recommend that the necessary consultant services be requested as a supplemental FY 08 budget request. These studies are all due to be completed for inclusion in the 2009-2011 Growth Policy, for which the Planning Board's recommendations to the County Council will be due June 1, 2009 (essentially at the end of FY 08). There may be some flexibility in how resources are used between FY 08 and FY 09. However, there is a significant amount of interagency and stakeholder consensus building required in both F12a and F12b, so we believe the technical analysis needs to be started as soon as practical; we cannot wait until FY 09 to obtain specialized consultant assistance and begin these studies.

We recognize that additional positions for this work are not warranted. We have identified four options for amending our work program to accommodate the Growth Policy studies. **We recommend pursuing Option A as described below.**

Option A – Defer the two transportation Functional Master Plan efforts by two years and reduce Community-Based Planning Master Plan efforts by about one-third

- Defer ICC bikeways master plan amendment by 2 years to FY 10 (1.0 WY)
- Defer Master Plan of Highways amendment by 1 year to FY 10 (1.0 WY)
- Reduce support to Community-Based Planning Master Plan efforts in FY 08 and FY 09 by about one-third (1.0 WY)

Further coordination is needed with Community-Based Planning regarding future master plan efforts and effects as schedules for both existing and future plans are reconsidered. Our study scope for considering alternatives to CLV analyses in F12b includes some limited pilot testing of alternative methods. It is possible that some economy of scale could be achieved by developing a pilot study area at one of our smaller geographic master plan efforts (either Takoma/Langley Crossroads or Kensington/University Boulevard). The risks to this approach would be that analysis and productions schedules may not mesh well or that the pilot analyses would not yield answers suitable for master plan findings.

Option B – Defer transportation Functional Master Plan efforts by two years and increase consultant services for Growth Policy Studies to \$450,000

- Defer ICC bikeways master plan amendment by 2 years to FY 10 (1.0 WY)
- Defer Master Plan of Highways amendment by 1 year to FY 10 (1.0 WY)
- Transfer 1.0 WY for Growth Policy Studies from staff to consultant.

We believe some shifting of analytic and administrative work could be shifted from staff to a consultant, particularly regarding :

- Analysis of travel demand elasticities for parking management
- Analysis of test cases for alternatives to CLV (which would have the likely effect of increasing staff training requirements for adopted policy changes to FY 10).
- Stakeholder outreach efforts, and
- Report preparation and production efforts

Option C – Combination of either Option A or Option B with a reduced work scope for the Growth Policy Studies

We believe that both the comprehensive parking management study (F12a) and the comprehensive review of LATR (F12b) are needed studies that require substantial analysis and deliberation. There are two suboptions:

- Suboption C1 would defer entirely one of these two studies, as they are generally independent of each other.
- Suboption C2 would reduce the scope of either or both studies to a focused, short-term interagency literature review. However, we expect that the outcome of a shorter literature review would essentially be a similar list of items needed for further study and therefore do not recommend Suboption C2.