



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item #2
5/27/10

May 21, 2010

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Urban Design and Preservation Division

FROM: Luis Estrada *LE*
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SUBJECT: Hearing, Worksession and Action:
White Flint Urban Design Guidelines

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Review the Testimony and Approve the White Flint Design Guidelines

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Planning Department developed the Urban Design Guidelines to assist in implementing the recommendations in the Approved and Adopted White Flint Sector Plan. These guidelines are intended to accomplish the following:

- **Foster Design Excellence** - Provide design ideas instead of mandates that will build a community in accordance with the Approved and Adopted White Flint
- **Clarify Design Expectations** - Illustrate the recommendations in the White Flint Sector Plan for each district, and for the streets, open spaces and buildings in accordance with the Sector Plan
- **Promote Creativity and Provide Flexibility** - Provide guidance in accordance with the Sector Plan that recognizes the need for flexibility and for creative solutions in community building

The attached document is the Draft Report for review and discussion by the Planning Board. In accordance with the Planning Department practice:

- The document will go through final layout, design and production in accordance with the recommendations from the Planning Board
- The document has been edited for tone, organization and consistency with the Twinbrook, Germantown and Great Seneca Life Science Center Design Guidelines in the I-270 Corridor
- Illustrations and renderings are integral to the recommendations and help tell the story
- A useful, interactive web site for each of the design guidelines will be created and located on the M-NCPPC site

The combination of the comprehensive White Flint Sector Plan and the Design Guidelines provides a unique planning tool for Montgomery County. This new planning tool is necessary in the White Flint area as density increases, the mix of land uses becomes more complex, and transitions to the existing neighborhoods, including the City of Rockville, need to be compatible. The Design Guidelines are not mandates, except for the streets in the Road Code and designated open spaces in the Sector Plan.

The Planning Board reviewed the Staff Draft of the White Flint Design Guidelines prior to sending the Sector Plan to the County Council, and received limited testimony. This hearing and worksession provides the opportunity for the Planning Board to finalize comments prior to final publication. The Urban Design Guidelines for the White Flint area will be followed by Design Guidelines for the Germantown and Gaithersburg areas to complete the master plan process for the I-270 Corridor. A similar format will be used for each of these documents.

Scope of Urban Design Guidelines

With direction from the Planning Board, the White Flint Guidelines include a description of the relationship between the Sector Plan and the Design Guidelines in the Foreword and in a “sidebar” located at the beginning of each section of the document.

The document provides design guidance for the basic building blocks of a community as follows:

- **Streets:** In accordance with the White Flint Sector Plan and the Road Code, the Design Guidelines illustrate and provide ideas that will help establish the character for the streets. The guidelines for streets will identify elements that create attractive streets, reinforce the sense of identity for each district, and promote walking and biking in accordance with the recommendations in the Sector Plan.
- **Open Spaces:** Based on the Approved and Adopted White Flint Sector Plan, guidelines have been established for open space. The Design Guidelines are intended to assist in creating a variety of high quality open spaces within the districts.
- **Buildings:** The Design Guidelines for buildings are not mandates. They illustrate examples of building forms that implement the recommendations in the Sector Plan. The intent is to ensure a form of development that will be attractive, sustainable and compatible with the adjacent residential communities including the City of Rockville.

How to Use the Urban Design Guidelines

With the exception of street standards and specific recommendations included in the Master Plan, the Design Guidelines are not regulations that mandate specific forms and locations for buildings and open space. They illustrate how Master Plan recommendations and principles might be met, and encourage applicants to propose designs that create an attractive and successful public realm. The examples and case studies are intended to frame discussions regarding street, open space and building design in a flexible way, without proscribing specific standards.

The structure of the planning process follows:

- Master Plans and Sector Plans - Provide the vision for a specific geographic area
- Zoning Ordinance - Establish the regulations and implementation tools
- Design Guidelines - Provide the inspiration and paint a graphic picture of the vision

NEXT STEPS

- Approve the Urban Design Guidelines with all modifications recommended by the Planning Board
- Publish the Urban Design Guidelines for the White Flint Sector Plan area including the following:
 - Printed document
 - Useful interactive, web design resource to be located on the M-NCPPC site

Attachments:

- Urban Design Guidelines for the White Flint Sector Plan

G: White Flint Design Memo May 21