

Montgomery Planning department m-ncppc

# DRAFT

Staff Draft

#### Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan

Design Guidelines

September 2011

Abstract

These guidelines are intended to provide direction in meeting the goals of the *Takoma/Langley* Crossroads Sector Plan. They are approved by the Planning Board for staff use in reviewing development proposals and should be used as well by developers in shaping their projects, and by citizens interested in the pattern and character of development in their community.

Source of Copies The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission 8787 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20910

Online at MontgomeryPlanning.org/community/takoma\_langley\_crossroads

# Staff Draft



Design Guidelines

September 2011

Montgomery Planning Department M-NCPPC

MontgomeryPlanning.org



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# Context

The Takoma/Langley Crossroads (TLC) area is a densely populated, urbanizing suburban community of starter homes, garden apartments, and strip shopping centers. Centrally located along Maryland's International Corridor (a two-mile stretch of University Boulevard from Piney Branch Road to West Park Drive that is home to the one of Maryland's most diverse populations ) and adjacent to Prince George's County, the area has a distinct international character and has served as a gateway community for persons new to the region and immigrants alike.

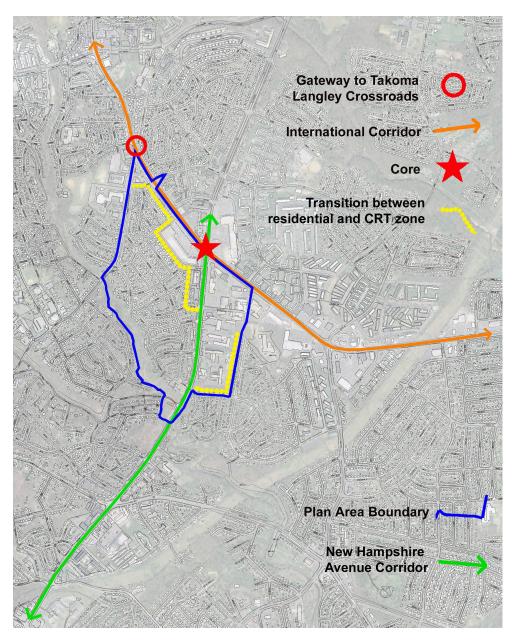
Redevelopment in the area will be focused around a transit center in the Crossroads District, the community's core. This core should be the center of community activity and have the tallest buildings with the most density amid public use spaces and a connected network of sidewalks and green streets. The surrounding residential neighborhoods should be connected to the core, but buffered from its density.

Development in the TLC area will be primarily under the jurisdiction of Montgomery County. Within the City of Takoma Park, the streets are the responsibility of the City. Since University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue are state roads through two counties, they are within the purview of the State Highway Administration in consultation with Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. Development proposals should respond to these jurisdictional policies, which are outlined in the Resources section.









Takoma/Langley Crossroads will be a transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly community that celebrates and builds on the cultural diversity of the Crossroads community.

To fulfill this vision, five design elements that represent existing and future opportunities form the framework around which the guidelines are organized. The five guidelines reflect the way they would be experienced entering the Plan area through a **gateway**, travelling down the **International Corridor** on University Boulevard, entering the **core** at the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue, experiencing the **pedestrian realm**, and **transitioning** from CR-zoned mixed uses to singlefamily residential uses.

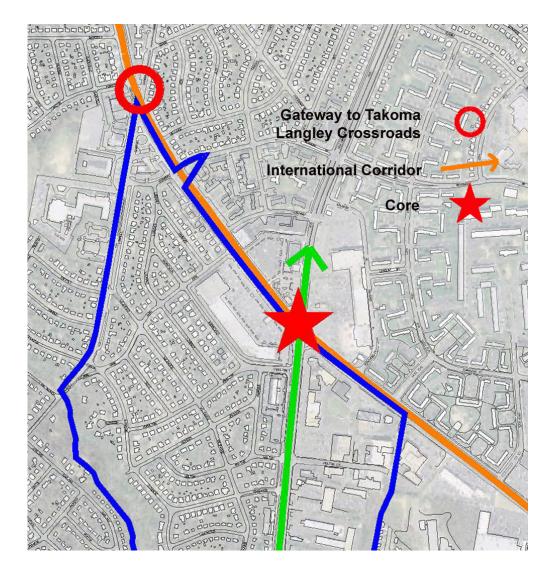


#### Gateway

Gateway elements create a sense of entering a unique place. The intersection of University Boulevard and Carroll Avenue is a gateway into the Crossroads District (Plan, page 50). This commercial area will be zoned CRT-1.5 with 60-foot maximum building heights.

Gateways can be marked with:

- an architecturally significant building
- iconic art
- public amenities
- thematic streetscaping
- place markers.





# an architecturally significant building







iconic art

# public amenities



#### thematic streetscaping

- banners
- flags
- specialty pavingstreet furnishings





#### place markers

- symbolic structure piers or columns

# **International Corridor**

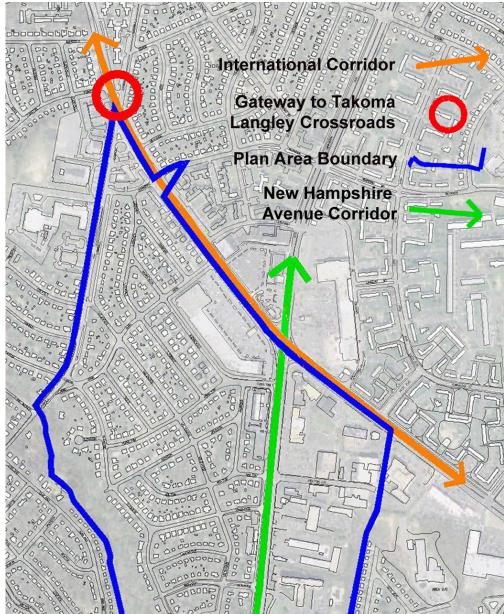
Creating a unifying design theme can provide for a well maintained, safe, attractive, and festive environment with design elements that celebrate the community's history as a draw for people from around the world.

There should be high quality design elements that preserve and enhance the corridor's ethnic and cultural diversity and capture the interest and imagination of people as they move throughout the corridor.

Design features could include:

- building form
- signage
- art
- streetscape.











#### building form

Building form will contribute to establishing the physical character of Takoma/Langley Crossroads. Attention must be given to setbacks, building heights, and massing to form a public realm in the International Corridor that is welcoming to the pedestrian. Materials and building design should also be used to help give an identity to the Crossroads area.

#### Consider:

- siting the building at front lot lines to create a consistent street wall
- varying building heights to achieve more visual interest and distinct building character
- using distinctive building materials that help lend a unique character
- creating eyes on the street with windows and doors.
   Neighborhood safety relies on natural surveillance, the positive effect that happens when people may be watching
- striving for the imaginative use of traditional or contemporary styles that evoke a look.

CPTED environmental design strategies seek to influence offender decisions by affecting the built and social environments. Strategies include:

- Designs that increases pedestrian and cyclist use
- Windows overlooking sidewalks and parking lots
- Lighting design
- Clear entry points and access control.

#### signage

- artistic
- store signage as an integral element of the building facade















#### art

Public art can celebrate local culture or history. It can emphasize culture and history that otherwise remains hidden. It often becomes a focus of civic pride as well as a landmark that gives identity to a place.

- Iconic art becomes a symbol for place.
- Embedded art is incorporated into the existing structure of buildings and streetscape.
- Transitory art, often in varied media or seasonally inspired, is displayed for a limited time.

#### streetscape

- street furniture that combines art and function
- lamppost banners
- innovative paving



#### Core

The Crossroads District is the Plan's core and is a regional destination due to its concentration of internationally diverse shops, restaurants, institutions, and other multicultural services (plan, page 50). It has the largest number of storefronts and the area's highest traffic volume. The Plan seeks to enhance the District's capacity and vitality by defining it as the focus of retail and commercial activity with distinctive public art and architecturally significant buildings.

The guidelines support this goal by giving the core a distinctive feel and a sense of arrival and departure. It recommends using pedestrian paths and defined corridors to connect public use spaces that are visible, defined, usable, inviting, interconnected, and activated.

The Plan recommends:

- a civic green
- a neighborhood common
- small urban spaces.

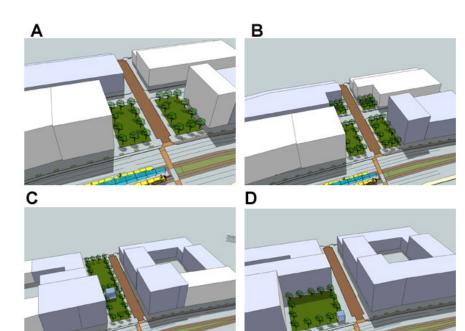




#### civic green

The green will function as a major outdoor public gathering space (Plan, pages 26 and 52). It should:

- be programmable
- be approximately <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to 1 acre
- include significant lawn area (the proportion to be established at time of development)
- include art.



There are several ways to configure the civic green











#### neighborhood common

The common will act as an outdoor living room (Plan, pages 26 and 53). It should:

- provide opportunities for passive recreation and public interaction (gardens, fitness nodes and kiosks)
- be ½ to 1 acre
- be primarily green with shaded lawn areas and extensive planting
- open on to a public right-of-way
- be easily visible and accessible to adjacent buildings
- include artistic and functional seating areas, public art, and other amenities.





#### small urban spaces

A series of these will act as intimate gathering spaces within major mixed-use developments (Plan, page 26). They should:

- be intentional
- be activated
- include street furniture
- combine landscape and hardscape
- include culturally significant artwork.



#### **Pedestrian Environment**

The character of the TLC community will be most visible in the pedestrian environment (Plan, page 25). A welldesigned pedestrian environment provides safety, pleasure, and transportation alternatives. The location of parking, and the creation of defined streets and active street walls contribute to the pedestrian environment.



#### Parking

Parking shouldn't dominate the street, but should be located on-street, in mid-block structures, or in structures lined with street activating uses.

- Locate pedestrian access from parking structures at designated crossing points.
- Cars should access parking structures from alleys or side streets.



#### Defined streets

A street's public realm is defined by the orientation of its buildings to the street (Plan, page 27). Consistent street walls create a comfortable sense of enclosure for the pedestrian.

- Create defined corridors by placing buildings close to the street, along both sides of the street.
- The distances between buildings along a street, which are determined by buildto lines or zero setbacks, should create a consistent sense of enclosure.



#### Active street wall

Locate activating uses at street level along streets and public use spaces within mixed-use developments, including:

- sidewalk cafes
- main entryways to buildings and residences
- retail uses.

The pedestrian environment is also created through:

- the pedestrian realm
- pedestrian-friendly grid
- green streets
- private streets.

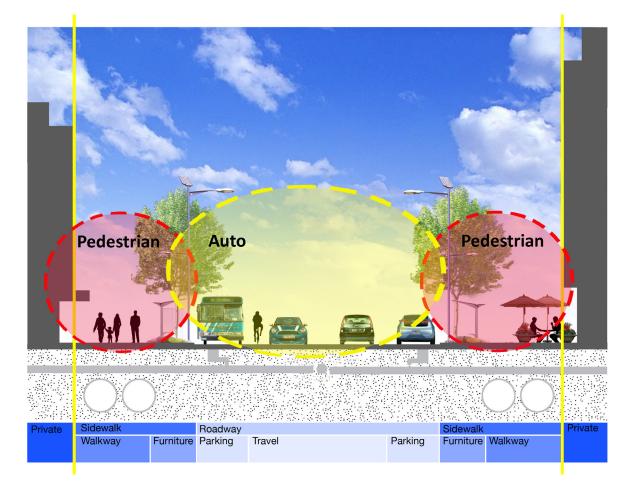


#### the pedestrian realm

There are two interfaces with the pedestrian realm that can be identified on streets:

- the interface between the building and the pedestrian realm
- the interface between the auto realm and the pedestrian realm.

On New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard the pedestrian realm of the streetscape is established with the use of public improvement easements (PIEs). This is a 15-foot easement outside of the public right-of-way where sidewalks, street trees, light poles, and street furniture will be installed.



#### pedestrian-friendly grid

The Plan area contains one of the highest concentrations of transit-dependent residents in the region. Daily bus ridership at the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue routinely exceeds the offpeak boardings at all but four Montgomery County Metrorail stations.

A network of streets resulting from short, walkable blocks provides several routes to and from a destination, allowing the dispersal of traffic and shorter backups. People who live in neighborhoods with a pedestrian friendly grid walk more, drive less and have easier access to transit.

#### Short, walkable blocks

The Plan recommends short, 300- to 400foot long blocks to establish a human scale environment that is easy and pleasant to negotiate on foot and that provides a travel alternative to the car (Plan, pages 25 and 28).



#### green streets

A green street right-of-way treatment gives priority to pedestrian circulation and open space, and will provide attractive, environmentally-friendly connections from the New Hampshire Gardens community to the Crossroads District and New Hampshire Avenue (Plan, page 25). Green Streets are efficient, safe, and accessible for pedestrians and vehicles.

Elements include:

- traffic calming features
- appropriately scaled tree-lined sidewalks
- marked pedestrian crossings
- shared facilities (bike/trails)
- attractive and sustainable design elements.



#### private streets

Private streets have a similar look and feel to public streets, but they can be more flexible in dimension, design, and programming.

They can:

- allow the temporary expansion of the pedestrian realm for special events by closing them automobiles to create space for pedestrian traffic, venders, and performers
- be paved in special materials
- have depressed curbs that allow the street and surrounding paving to act as a single space
- have street furnishings distinct from surrounding public streets
- follow or improve upon the Road Code standard
- have underground utilities
- use sustainable design elements (see Green Streets).

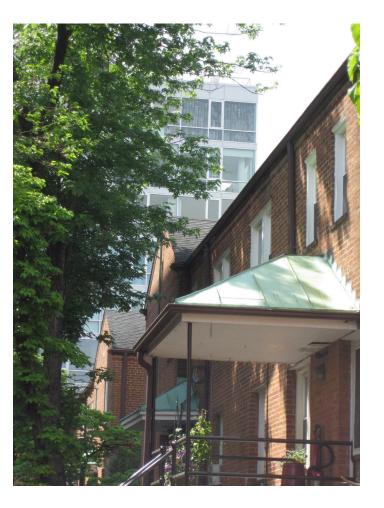


#### **Transitions**

In the Crossroads District, the Plan recommends the CRT and CRN Zones with maximum densities and building heights up to 100-feet (Plan, pages 25, 51, 60). On properties adjacent to an existing single-family neighborhood these heights and densities should transition to a single-family scale.

Transitions should be ensured through:

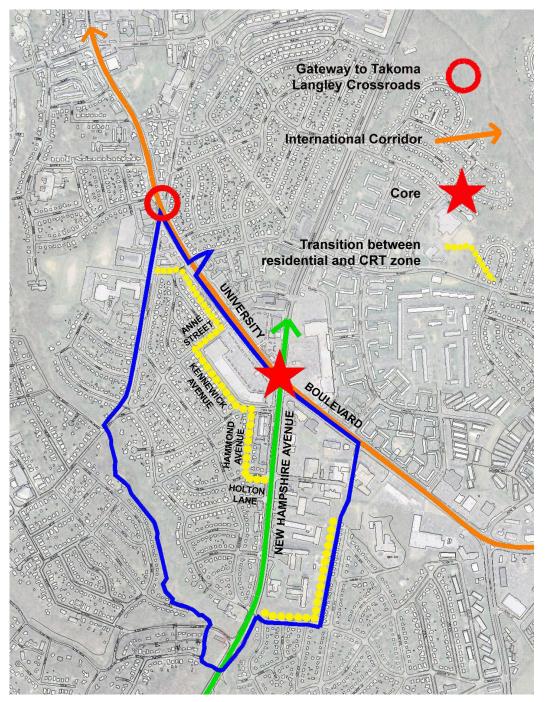
- clustering higher density development around transit stations
- stepping down building heights
- appropriately scaled streetscape.



#### clustering development

New development, with the greatest densities and tallest buildings, should be located close to the station.





#### stepping down building heights

Building heights in CRT Zones adjacent to residential communities should be a maximum of 40-45 feet including bonus density to achieve compatible transitions.

- Consider limiting heights of buildings on Kennewick Avenue and Anne Street to 40 feet for the first 25 feet of the building's depth.
- Consider limiting building heights on Hammond Street (West of New Hampshire Avenue) to 40 feet for first 25 feet of building's depth.
- New development should be compatible in scale and architectural style.

#### appropriately scaled streetscape

Commercial development abutting the New Hampshire Gardens neighborhood should have streetscape consistent with residential neighbors.

On CR-Zoned developments, consider:

- appropriately scaled pedestrian realm (sidewalk, tree panel, and bike path where appropriate)
- residential units facing the street that emulate the architectural style of the existing community
- appropriate landscaping to soften transitions
- on-street parking.



Kennewick Avenue - Before



Kennewick Avenue - After



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) http://www.cpted.net/

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design http://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards\_index.htm

Environmental Site Design http://www.mde.state.md.us/assets/document/Design%20Manual%20Chapter%205%2003%2024%202009.pdf

Takoma Langley Crossroads Development Authority http://takomalangleycrossroads.com/

#### **Montgomery County**

Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 59 http://www.amlegal.com/montgomery\_county\_md/

Montgomery County Code http://www.amlegal.com/montgomery\_county\_md/ Chapter 19 Erosions, Sediment Control and Stormwater Management Chapter 22A Forest Conservation-Trees Chapter 47 Vendors Chapter 49 Streets and Roads Chapter 50 Subdivision

Montgomery County Road Code http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/SCANNED\_DOCS/20070715\_48-06.pdf

Department of Permitting Services, Outdoor Café Seating Guide http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/permitting/pdf/OutdoorCafeSeating.pdf

Department of Permitting Services, Sidewalk Vendor Operation and License http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/SCANNED\_DOCS/20070227\_1661.pdf

Department of Permitting Services, Building Construction – Building Codes & Standards http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/dpstmpl.asp?url=/permitting/bc/nfbldc.ap

Department of Transportation, Pedestrian Safety http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dottmpl.asp?url=/Content/dot/dir/pedsafety/index.asp

#### **Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission**

Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/takoma\_langley\_crossroads/documents/TakomaLangleyCrossroadsplanningboarddraft\_web.pdf

County Bikeways Functional Master Plan http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation/bikeways/A\_A/contents.shtm

Development Review Manual http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/development\_manual/index.shtm

Commercial Residential Zone Overview http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/com\_res\_zones.shtm

# **Prince George's County**

Approved Takoma Langley Crossroads Sector Plan http://www.pgplanning.org/Resources/Publications/Takoma Langley.html

Pedestrian Access and Mobility Study http://www.pgplanning.org/Assets/Planning/Programs+and+Projects/Community+Plans/Takoma+Langley+Crossroads+Sector+Plan/TLC+PedStudy.pdf

International Corridor Legacy Study http://www.pgplanning.org/Assets/Planning/Programs+and+Projects/Community+Plans/Takoma+Langley+Crossroads+Sector+Plan/ICC2003.pdf

International Corridor Issue Identification Study http://www.pgplanning.org/Assets/Planning/Programs+and+Projects/Community+Plans/Takoma+Langley+Crossroads+Sector+Plan/international\_corridor.pdf

International Corridor Market Study http://www.pgplanning.org/Assets/Planning/Programs+and+Projects/Takoma+Langley+Crossroads+Sectional+Map+Amendment/ICC+Market+Study.pdf

#### **City of Takoma Park**

Forms, Permits, and Fees http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/hcd/permitslicenses.html

New Hampshire Avenue Concept Plan http://www.thenewave.com/ files/docs/new-hampshire-avenue-concept-plan-web.pdf

Holton Lane Improvement Vision http://www.thenewave.com/\_files/docs/8-18-09-holton-lane-vision.pdf

Takoma Park Memorandum of Understanding: (See following)

#### Introduced By: Councilmember Williams

Resolution No. 2001-37

#### Resolution Authorizing City Administrator to Sign Development Review Memorandum of Understanding

- WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park recognizes the importance of attractive, well-designed properties in maintaining the livability and economic health of the community; AND
- WHEREAS, the City was successful in its request to have the recently adopted Takoma Park Master Plan recommend that site plan review be required for significant new development in its commercial areas; AND
- WHEREAS, many development proposals require approvals from the City, Montgomery County and the Maryland-Natuonal Capital Park and Planning Commission before development may proceed; AND
- WHEREAS, the City wishes to coordinate and streamline the development review process so as to encourage appropriate economic development in Takoma Park; AND
- WHEREAS, the Takoma Park Master Plan recommends the adoption of a development review memorandum of understanding to establish this coordinated review process; AND
- WHEREAS, such a memorandum of understanding has been prepared and reviewed by the involved parties and found to be acceptable to each.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND, THAT the City Council authorizes the City Administrator to sign the attached Memorandum of Understanding Between the Montgomery County Planning Board and the City of Takoma Park regarding development review.

ADOPTED THIS 29<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2001

The City, the Department and MCDPS agree to cooperate in sharing development and permit data and will seek ways to provide opportunities for the City to access both the Department's computerized development-review system and the MCDPS computerized permitting system. The City should be able to review the status of permit applications and to provide comments electronically, as appropriate, so as to further streamline the development approval process.

Attached to this memorandum are flow charts depicting the subdivision and site plan processes, the record plat process and the proposed building permit review process. This Memorandum of Understanding will become effective upon the approval of the Takoma Park Sectional Map Amendment by the Montgomery Council, sitting as the District Council.

Richard M. Finn, City Administrator City of Takoma Park -0

William H. Hussmann, Chairman Montgomery County Planning Board

5/31/01 Date

Robert Hubbard, Director

Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services

6/14/01 Date

Attachments

#### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD AND THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK MAY 31, 2001

This Memorandum of Understanding represents an agreement between the City of Takoma Park and the Montgomery County Planning Board concerning the City's role in the development review process for subdivision applications and Division 59-D-3 site plan applications. In addition, the City, the Planning Board and Montgomery County agree that a coordinated review. process, including approval of various City permits, involving staffs of the City, the Planning Board and the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) is needed for certain projects to assure that future commercial development or redevelopment proposed within the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone is in accordance with the recommendations and guidelines of the Takoma Park Master Plan and satisfies all applicable regulations, guidelines and laws administered by the City, the Planning Board and Montgomery County.

This memorandum describes how the elected officials and professional staff of the City of Takoma Park and the Planning Board and staff of the Department of Park and Planning will participate in each phase of the development approval processes for subdivisions and site plans submitted within the corporate limits of the City. In addition, this memorandum establishes a coordinated review process for how the City and its staff will participate with staff of the Department of Park and Planning (the Department) and staff of MCDPS in the review of building permits submitted for properties located within the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone.

#### SUBDIVISION AND SITE PLAN APPLICATIONS

The Takoma Park City Council and the Montgomery County Planning Board agree on the following points relating to the review and approval of subdivision applications and Division 59-D-3 site plan applications filed for properties located within the corporate limits of the City of Takoma Park:

- When an application for a preliminary plan of subdivision, a site plan or a record
  plat is submitted to the Department, it will be forwarded to the City for review and
  comment within two weeks of submission of the complete application. The
  transmittal will include a copy of the application, the proposed plan, any
  supporting information submitted by the applicant and, if applicable, the schedule
  for presentation of the application to the Development Review Committee (DRC).
- An application for a preliminary plan of subdivision will not be complete for initiation of review by staff unless a stormwater management (SWM) concept is submitted to the City prior to submission of the application to the Department. A site plan application will not be complete for staff review unless a final SWM concept, approved by the city, is submitted to the Department with the application.

- The City's staff will review the application packet and prepare preliminary comments and recommendations for presentation to the DRC at the scheduled DRC meeting. The City's staff will also attend pre-DRC meetings to discuss application issues involving the reviewing agencies. The pre-DRC meeting is normally held on the Wednesday preceding the scheduled DRC meeting. The Department and City agree to notify the other of all meetings concerning an application involving the applicant, interested citizens or other reviewing departments or agencies.
- The City's staff will attend the scheduled DRC meeting and provide comments and written preliminary recommendations concerning an application. The City will provide specific comments regarding access to public streets, stormwater management, tree permits and other issues of significance to the City. The Department will provide the City with minutes of the DRC discussions within one week of the DRC meeting.
- The City and the Department will cooperate in scheduling any preliminary plan of subdivision or site plan application for Planning Board action recognizing the County Council mandated review periods for processing such applications. The City will provide written recommendations and resolutions to the Department for inclusion into the public record at least ten days prior to the scheduled Planning Board public hearing.
- The City, at its discretion, may attend public hearings for preliminary plans of subdivision and site plans and present testimony to the Planning Board concerning. all issues of relevance to the City. In accord with the provisions of Article 28, a two-thirds majority vote of the Planning Board is required to take any action relating to land use planning within the City that is contrary to a Resolution of the Mayor and City Council.
- All Planning Board actions on preliminary plans and site plans for land within the City will be transmitted to the City at the same time that such actions are transmitted to applicants and all other parties of record.
- Record plats are not reviewed by the DRC and follow a different approval process, as reflected on the attached flow chart, included as Attachment # 2. Record plat applications will be transmitted to the City within one week of receipt by the Department, as stipulated for other types of applications described above. The City's staff will review plats for compliance with City regulations and requirements that may apply in addition to conditions of preliminary plan and site plan approvals, if applicable. City's staff will transmit comments to the Department

within one week of receipt of the application noting if there are any errors, omissions or deficiencies on the plat, as submitted. The Department will then schedule the record plat for Planning Board approval, in accordance with the normal plat approval procedures. Any comments provided by the City's staff will be provided to the Planning Board for their consideration prior to taking action on the record plat.

- Where appropriate, the City may recommend specific conditions to be noted on a record plat relating to matters within the City's authority; such as stormwater management, tree save and street access. In such instances, the plat should be signed by the City Administrator prior to recordation.
- Upon recordation, a copy of the new record plat for property within the City will be transmitted to the City by the Department for the City's records.

#### BUILDING PERMIT REVIEW PROCESS

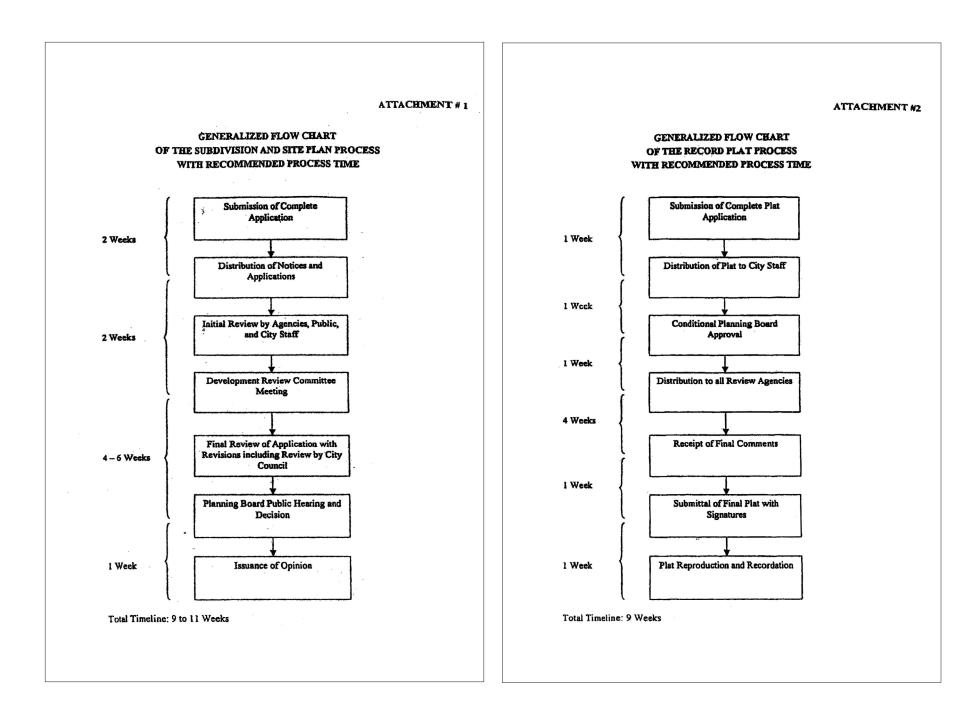
The City of Takoma Park, the Montgomery County Planning Board and Montgomery County agree on the following points relating to the implementation of a coordinated review process for building permits submitted for projects located in the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone located in Takoma Park. A joint review of County building permit applications and City building permits will provide an opportunity for the City's staff and the Department to coordinate project reviews so that Master Plan recommendations, conditions of subdivision and site plan approval and any development regulations or guidelines intended to apply to new development or redevelopment within the Zone can be implemented in a timely manner that assures implementation of public plans, regulations, policies and guidelines. The major points of the permit review process are as follows:

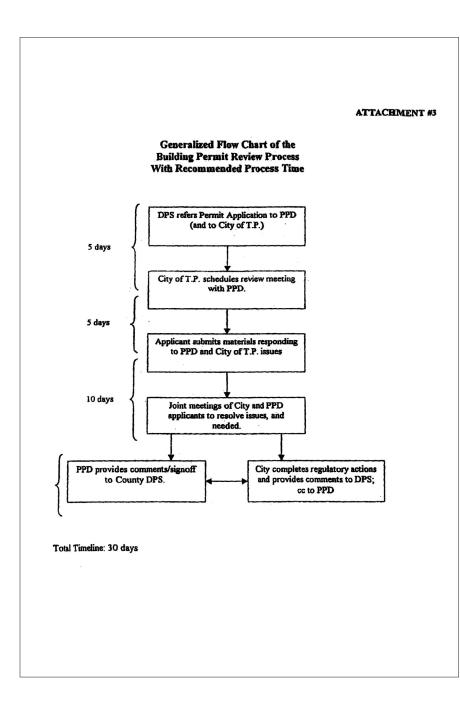
- When a County building permit is submitted for any project involving land located within the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone located within the corporate limits of the City of Takoma Park, MCDPS will promptly forward copies of the permit application to the Department and the City of Takoma Park for building permit review and "sign-off", as currently required by applicable laws and regulations. In addition, MCDPS will advise the applicant to contact the City to initiate the review process for the City's permits and thus facilitate the expedited review desired by this process. The County building permit application instructions will also be revised to provide notice to applicants that for projects located within the City of Takoma Park, in the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone, certain permits must be approved by the City prior to commencing construction.
- The City's review team will consist of staff of the Departments of Housing and

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Community Development, Public Works and other staff, as appropriate. The Department's review team will consist of staff of the Community Based Planning, Development Review and other Divisions, as appropriate.

- City's staff will schedule a meeting to be held in City offices and invite staff of the Department to attend and discuss the application for purposes of identifying all issues and proposing solutions that assure implementation of applicable laws, plans, policies, regulations and guidelines. The intent is to provide for coordinated, concurrent review by the City and the Department. In order to assure that the review is timely, the meeting should occur within five working days of receipt of the application packet from MCDPS by both the City and the Department. The application packet consists of the application form and site plans of the proposed development. The meeting will be conducted by appropriate City staff who will be responsible for preparing and distributing minutes of the review team meetings. Minutes must be finalized and distributed to the meeting participants within one week of the meeting. Additional meetings may be scheduled, as necessary, to assure that issues are resolved in an expeditious manner.
- The City and Planning Board agree that new development and/or redevelopment projects within the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone are of critical importance to the long term viability of these areas and are crucial to the interests of both Montgomery County and the City of Takoma Park. Therefore, the implementation of applicable laws, plans, policies and guidelines within this overlay Zone must occur in a coordinated approach as described in this memorandum. The reviews must be expedited by both staff of the City and the Department in order to assure a timely review process that will not unduly delay projects.
- The Department will provide comments concerning a building permit review to MCDPS and the applicant in accordance with current procedures. The Department will perform the normal electronic "sign-off" for a building permit so that MCDPS will know that the Department's review has been completed. As the City completes its review and action on stormwater management plans, street access permits, tree permits and other permits required by the City, City staff will provide comments/notice to MCDPS. Both the Department and the City staff will inform the other of permit approvals and "sign-offs".
- It is understood by the City and M-NCPPC that the building permit approval by MCDPS cannot be delayed if the project meets all of the requirements for building permit approval as established in County law. MCDPS will provide weekly reports to the City identifying the location of properties subject to new building permit applications and sediment and erosion control permit applications filed during the preceding week.





# Staff Draft



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September 2011

Montgomery Planning Department

MontgomeryPlanning.org

