



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

October 3, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Community-Based Planning Division

Sue Edwards, Team Leader
I-270 Team

FROM: Karen Kumm, Project Planner *KKM* Sandra Tallant
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SUBJECT: Staff Draft of the Shady Grove Sector Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Staff Draft as a Public Hearing Draft and schedule the public hearing for December 4, 2003.

DISCUSSION

At the hearing, the enclosed Staff Draft of the Shady Grove Sector Plan will be presented with an overview of the I-270 Corridor Framework.

OVERVIEW OF THE I-270 CORRIDOR FRAMEWORK

The presentation will begin with a brief overview of a Framework for the I-270 Corridor. The Framework provides a unique opportunity to identify some of the key planning issues that provide a context for decision making for each of four master plans. The Shady Grove Sector Plan is the first of the four plans to be reviewed by the Planning Board. The Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan, the Twinbrook Sector Plan and the Germantown Master Plan will follow the Shady Grove Sector Plan in accordance with the Master Plan Schedule.

The I-270 Framework establishes a series of targets and issues at the corridor level to be addressed in each master plan and sector plan. The recently completed Transportation Policy Report and the Council's 10 Year Transportation Plan provide the basis for the I-270 Framework. The targets and issues include the following:

1. Vision - Communities of the I-270 Corridor (Establishing communities of choice including transit and pedestrian oriented communities)
2. Challenges -
 - a. Allocation of Jobs and Housing in the I-270 Corridor:
 - Targets for Jobs in Each Planning Area - Supporting our advanced technology and biotechnology companies in a manner that is competitive in the world market place
 - Targets for Housing in Each Planning Area – Providing the necessary housing for our work force
 - b. Transportation System (Projects identified in the Transportation Policy Report and the Council's 10 Year Transportation Plan):
 - Roads
 - Grade separated interchanges and intersection improvements
 - Regional bike paths and trails
 - Transit Facilities
 - Parking Garages and Lots
 - c. Additional Issues - Providing the necessary sites for universities and schools, extending the park and open space system, protecting the environment, providing community facilities, improving the character of MD 355, and addressing zoning issues.

OVERVIEW OF THE SHADY GROVE SECTOR PLAN

Over the past 15 months, staff worked with the community, property owners, transportation and zoning experts, and representatives of public agencies to develop the Staff Draft of the Shady Grove Sector Plan. Staff met with community members in workshops, civic meetings, and focus groups to discuss the issues and alternatives.

The staff held seven focus groups to identify needs for housing, advanced technology and biotechnology employment, environment, transportation, and County Service Park operations. The team worked closely with the WMATA, a major property holder in the Shady Grove planning area, to address redevelopment issues. Staff also coordinated the recommendations with the adjacent municipalities of Washington Grove, Gaithersburg, and Rockville.

Through these focus groups, public meetings, and workshops staff developed recommendations that address many of the needs and desires of community members and stakeholders.

Issues

The Plan strives to address the concerns of both the community and property owners. Residents are concerned with traffic congestion, school overcrowding, and inadequate recreation facilities. While many of them support the Plan's recommended level of development, others feel the Plan recommends too much development. Property owners generally support the Plan, but many property owners feel that more development is warranted at the Metro station. Public agencies are concerned that relocation plans meet their operational needs.

Summary

This Plan recognizes the potential of the Shady Grove Metro area to become a mixed-use community that generates increased use of the Metro station, and expands public amenities and facilities for new and existing residents. The Plan also creates a technology corridor along Shady Grove Road providing new jobs. While recommending significant land use changes in the Metro station area, the Plan also recommends preserving and enhancing the existing single-family communities by addressing traffic impacts, increasing public parks, including a new elementary school, and providing a network of trails and sidewalks.

The Plan's fundamental recommendation is to change land use around the Metro station from industrial uses to a mixed-use community with a substantial amount of housing. This change improves the area's community character and traffic situation. Residential development at appropriate densities generates less future traffic than the existing Sector Plan's proposed industrial land uses. While much of the area's traffic comes from beyond the planning area's boundaries, the recommended land use changes will help decrease future traffic and make the best use of Metro.

Creating a new residential community will also meet the County's goal to increase housing choices in the I-270 Corridor. The Plan recommends approximately 4,000 new units. It includes a fair share of affordable housing, and housing for the elderly.

Relocating some County service facilities is central to creating the mixed-use community. The Plan recommends alternative sites within the planning area that were identified through work with private and public property holders. Other relocation sites beyond the planning area may also be considered.

The Plan's housing recommendations generate the need for a new elementary school and contribute to the need for a new high school cluster. The Plan provides a site for a new elementary school within its boundaries. An additional high school and elementary school will be needed outside the planning area.

The Plan's public facility recommendations include maintaining existing parks, providing new parks, and providing a new library or aquatic center. The natural environment is addressed by maintaining stream buffers and increasing wooded areas, supported by the transition from industrial to residential uses. Trails and sidewalks that will serve new and existing residents will link new parks and environmental areas.

CONCLUSION

The planning team appreciates the time and thought contributed by the area's residents and property owners, the knowledge contributed by agency staff, and other individuals and interest groups. We look forward to the public hearing and the work sessions.

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