



MCPB

Item No.: 5

Date: 10-19-17

MARC Rail Communities Plan Preliminary Recommendations

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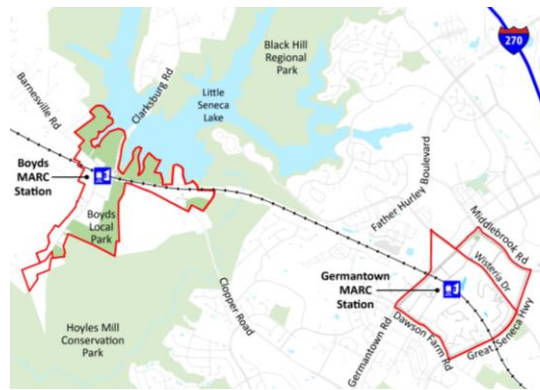
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Completed: 10/11/17

Description

Staff will present preliminary recommendations for the MARC Rail Communities Plan to the Planning Board.



Staff Recommendation

Discussion and provide guidance.

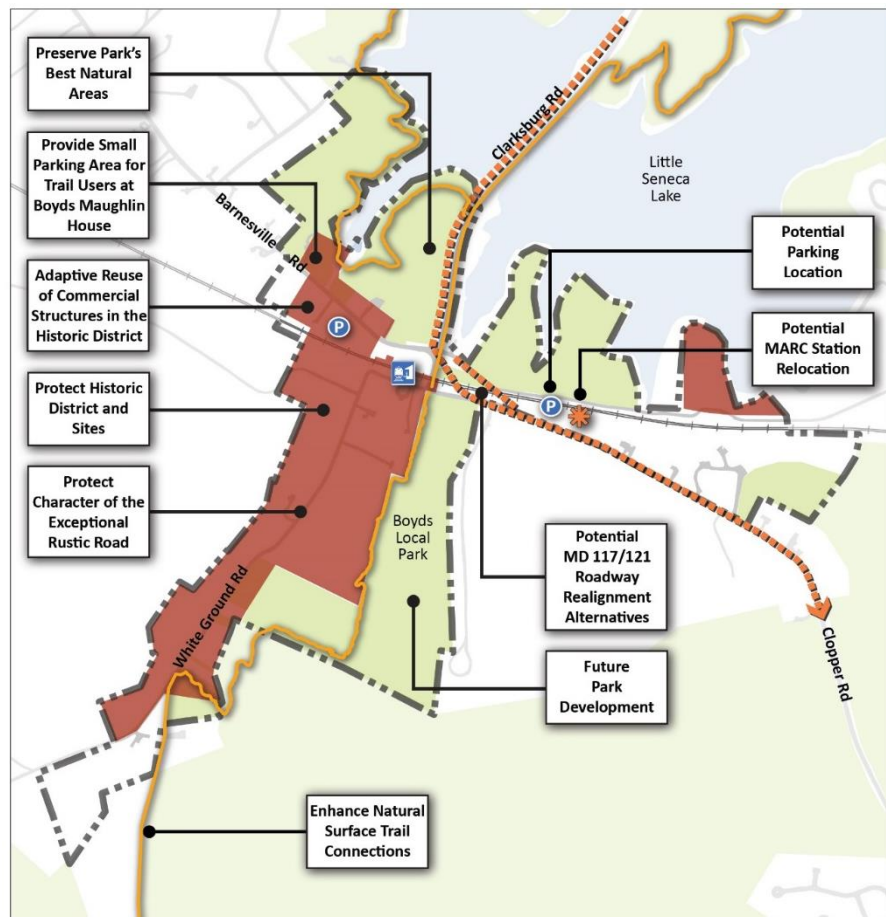
Summary

The MARC Rail Communities Plan is located in the upper portion of Montgomery County, west of I-270 and approximately 15 miles north of the Capital Beltway (I-495). The Plan is focused on the two MARC rail stations along the CSX-owned railroad tracks in Boyds and Germantown.

Staff initiated the planning process on November 4, 2015 with an Open House at the Sidney Kramer Upcounty Regional Services Center to receive formal input from residents on the Plan’s purpose. This input was developed into a Scope of Work that was approved by the Planning Board on January 28, 2016. Staff held a four-day Design Workshop in the community during March 2016 to begin an in-depth conversation with the community that helped create a future vision for each station area. These concepts were refined and presented to residents on November 30, 2016.

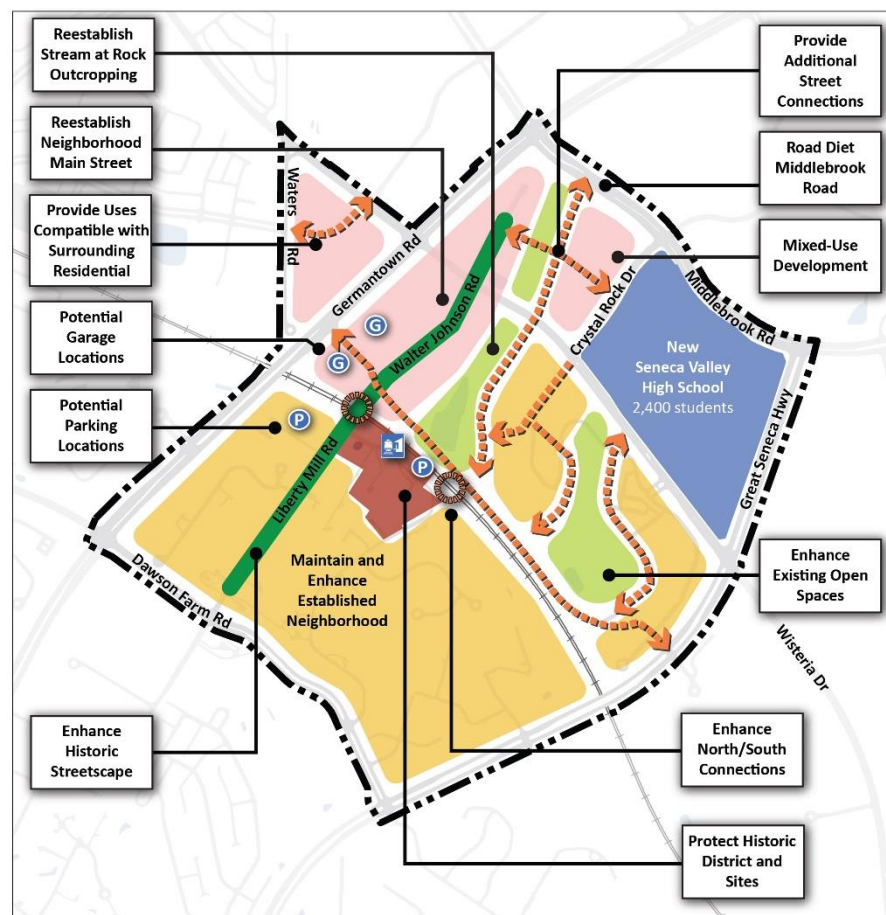
For Boyds, the main concepts are as follows:

- Protect the integrity of the historic and natural environmental setting.
- Promote uses and designs that are compatible with the historic district and sites.
- Increase MARC ridership.



For Germantown, the main concepts are as follows:

- Protect the historic and established residential areas.
- Safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Take advantage of the natural features.



Additionally, planning staff met with residents and stakeholders on other occasions, including quarterly Boyds Civic Association meetings, an Upcounty Advisory Board meeting in May 2017 and agency meetings, to receive their input on the concepts and the Plan.

The concepts have been developed into four planning principles that were presented to stakeholders on October 5, 2017 at the Sidney Kramer Upcounty Regional Services Center and serve as an outline for this Plan. They are:

- **Preserve** the historic character of the Boyds and Germantown communities.
- **Connect** Boyds and Germantown, both internally and beyond, to ensure a viable range of transportation choices, including expanded MARC ridership, improved pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and efficient vehicular travel.
- **Sustain** the area's natural resources while acknowledging and respecting the area's environmental and infrastructure constraints.
- **Renew** the Boyds and Germantown station areas with new uses that support MARC commuter rail service, preserve and enhance community character, and serve community residents.

Each planning principle has a vision and a set of recommendations. Following this presentation, planning staff will incorporate any guidance received from the Planning Board and then present a Working Draft of the Master Plan to the Planning Board in November, with a request to publish the Public Hearing Draft and set the public hearing date.