



MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan – Worksession #6 (Preserve and Sustain Sections Recommendations)

RVD

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Staff Recommendation

Approve the Germantown Preserve and Sustain sections recommendations for the MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan with the necessary revisions based on discussions during the worksession.

Summary

This is the sixth worksession for the MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan. At the previous worksession, the Planning Board discussed the results of transportation modeling for the Germantown MARC station area and directed technical staff to undertake additional modeling studies. This worksession will focus on the Plan's recommendations for historic preservation and environmental issues in the sector plan. It will highlight public hearing testimony.

The Germantown Preserve and Sustain testimony focused on the following areas:

1. Preservation of historic structures and open space in the Germantown portion of the study area;
2. Open space and environmental recommendations for the Trevion property (area GJ).

Staff has included a summary of public comments received to date on the Germantown recommendations pertaining to the Preserve and Sustain sections of the plan. The summary includes staff's proposed responses.

Attachments

1. Table 1: Individuals Providing Testimony
2. Table 2: Public Testimony on the Preserve and Sustain Sections

MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan Public Hearing—February 1, 2018

The Planning Board Public Hearing on the MARC Rails Communities Sector Plan Public Hearing Draft was held on February 1, 2018, at the BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown. Testimony was provided during that hearing, and has continued to be received since then.

The first two tables below summarize the testimony we have received and the individuals delivering it. The first table identifies those who have given testimony together with details about the individual or the group or property the individual represents. The second table summarizes the testimony arranged by topic, as the topics generally appear within the Sector Plan. The third table is the comments received from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT).

Table 1: Individuals Providing Testimony

NAME/FIRM	REPRESENTING	RESIDENT	COMMENTS
Perry Berman, David Edgerly Scherr Partners	Mr. Fallahi et al 19430 Walter Johnson Road, Germantown (vacant land)	No	
Timothy Booth		Germantown	
Jeri Crist	PTSA, Seneca Valley HS	Germantown	
Ronit Dancis	Action Committee for Transit (ACT)	No	
Addi Davis		Boys	
Audra Dove	PTSA, Roberto Clemente MS	Germantown	
Jennifer F. Fuss		Germantown	
Samuel Hahn (with American Sign Language translator Carl DuPree)		Germantown	MARC rider
Hammet Hough	Boys Civic Association	Boys	Former MARC rider
Kathie Hulley		Boys	Citizens Advisory Committee for the 2009 Germantown Sector Plan
Shreya Jha		Clarksburg	9 th grade student Clarksburg High School
Vagmi Luhar		Germantown	9 th grade student Clarksburg High School
Melissa Regan	PTSA, Seneca Valley HS	Germantown	

NAME/FIRM	REPRESENTING	RESIDENT	COMMENTS
Mike Rubin		Boys	
Christopher Ruhlen Lerch, Early and Brewer	Owner of U-Haul property, 19525 Waters Road, Germantown	No	
Charlotte Sanford		Boys	9 th grade student Clarksburg High School
Louisa Sanford		Boys	6 th grade student Roberto Clemente MS, Germantown
Elizabeth and Robert Schleichert		Boys	
Margaret Schoap	TAME (Coalition for Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended)	Germantown	
Miriam Schoenbaum		Boys	MARC rider
Elena Shuvalov	Boys Historical Society	Boys	
Stacy Silber Lerch, Early and Brewer	Clark Enterprises for Rolling Hills Apartments, Germantown	No	
Faith Skordinski		Germantown	
Cindy Snow	Action Committee for Transit (ACT)	Germantown	
Bob Stoddard SVN Wright Commercial Real Estate	Owner of 19115 Liberty Mill Road, Germantown	No	
Ruthanne Stoltzfus		Germantown	
Susan Soderberg	Germantown Historical Society	Germantown	
Jane Thompson		Barnesville	Former MARC rider
Clark Wagner Pleasants Development, LLC	Gunners Lake properties Germantown site GJ	No	

Table 2: Germantown Public Testimony on the Connect Section

TOPIC	NAME(S)	COMMENT
General		
<i>Support plan</i>	Hammet Hough (Association rep) Elena Shuvalov (Assoc)	Support the working draft as written without any changes.
<i>Support plan</i>	Miriam Schoenbaum (Ind)	The staff draft guides change in the direction that the current and future Montgomery County residents want and need change to go.
<i>Support plan</i>	Susan Soderberg (Assoc)	This is a good and balanced plan.
Staff Response: The plan recommendations were developed with significant stakeholder input.		
<i>MARC service</i>	Ronit Dancis (Assoc)	Support two-way weekday and weekend MARC service.
Staff Response: Addition to the Public Hearing Draft. Add language expressing that while staff supports two-way weekday and weekend service on the Brunswick line, the line is owned by CSX and service enhancements would have to be negotiated between CSX and MTA.		
Introduction		
<i>Community engagement</i>	Addi Davis (Individual)	Residents were included in every step of the process. Hope to see the plan come to fruition.
<i>Community engagement</i>	Clark Wagner (Representative for property owner)	We were not contacted by staff about this plan.
Staff Response: Staff has conducted an extensive outreach process since the plan was initiated in November 2015, including presentations to community groups, notices in the Upcounty Today! E-newsletter, community surveys and questionnaires, posters in bus shelters, informational posters placed at prominent and well-traveled locations and meetings with property owners. We are continuing meetings with stakeholders during the worksession process.		

TOPIC	NAME(S)	COMMENT
Vision		
<i>Future</i>	Charlotte Sanford (Ind)	Make Montgomery County a place students will want to live when they become adults.
Staff Response: Consistent with the Public Hearing Draft. The intent of this master plan and all of our master plans is to ensure that the vision and recommendations within the plan promote vibrant communities for people of all ages.		
<i>Transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections to MARC</i>	Cindy Snow (Assoc) Ronit Dancis (Assoc)	Support the plan's recommendations to promote better transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections to the MARC stations in Boyds and Germantown, and to promote a range of alternatives.
Staff Response: Consistent with the Public Hearing Draft. The plan's purpose and recommendations are to promote a range of safe transportation alternatives, improvements to the existing transportation systems and better connections to the station areas that respect the residential neighborhoods and historic resources of each community.		
Connect		
<i>Walking, biking and public safety</i>	Cindy Snow (Assoc)	Support Vision Zero and the plan's recommendations for making the areas safe to walk, bike and drive.
Staff Response: Consistent with the Public Hearing Draft. The road classification recommendations and proposed street sections provide designated areas for pedestrians and bicyclists.		
Appendix		
<i>ULI Study</i>	Susan Soderberg (Assoc)	Move the ULI Study in the appendix to the published plan.
Staff Response: Change from the Public Hearing Draft. The public hearing draft has already incorporated many of the ideas found in the ULI mTap Study for the Germantown MARC Station area in its recommendations.		

TOPIC	NAME(S)	COMMENT
Other		
<i>Expand boundary</i>	Bob Stoddard (Rep)	Representative for the owner of 19115 Liberty Mill Road requests the expansion of the Germantown MARC boundary to include the property in order to rezone it to a Townhouse zone.
<p>Staff Response: Change from the Public Hearing Draft. The boundary was established on January 28, 2016, when the Scope of Work for the MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan was approved the Planning Board. Staff has used this boundary during all advertised meetings for the past two years.</p>		

TOPIC	NAME(S)	COMMENT
Germantown		
Preserve		
<i>Preserve "gorgeous old homes" and forest</i>	Timothy Booth (Ind)	Keep gorgeous, old homes and forest. Does not want poorly built apartments, townhouses and strip malls (already have empty strip malls).
Staff Response: Consistent with the Public Hearing Draft. The draft does not anticipate or recommend removal of the historic homes in Germantown, and recommends preserving and enhancing Germantown's natural assets and tree canopy. Recommendations for tree retention (especially for the Walter Johnson oaks) and goals for tree planting to achieve a desirable canopy coverage are included in the Draft Plan.		
Sustain		
<i>Designated open space</i>	Clark Wagner (Rep)	Concerns that a large part of the Gunners Lake Thirteen (Site GJ) property will be designated as open space; thereby reducing the density and land value of the property.
Staff Response: Consistent with Public Hearing Draft. The recommendation in the Draft reads: "Establish a community focal point and gathering place at the northeast corner of Wisteria Drive and Walter Johnson Road to complement the linear open space created by naturalizing streambeds," (p. 89 c). This area is the low point of the site and currently contains a stormwater facility and a piped stream in a storm drain easement on a diabase outcropping. At development or redevelopment of other portions of this property, the stormwater facilities can become a site feature and amenity. No impact to the proposed density or land value is anticipated.		
<i>Grading and tree preservation recommendations</i>	Clark Wagner (Rep)	Concerns about language regarding grading and the preservation of existing trees.
Staff Response: Change from the Public Hearing Draft. The plan recommends minimizing the extent of grading and the removal of existing vegetation, and the preservation of mature trees, including the Walter Johnson oaks. In this location, plants growing on the Germantown diabase has developed a special habitat on limited soil depths. Retaining this habitat, including the rock outcroppings and historic trees as unique site features supports both the stewardship and water quality goals of the plan, but also enhances the sense of history and sense of place for Germantown.		