



**THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION**  
Planning Department, Montgomery County, Maryland  
8787 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

MCPB Date: 1/17/19  
Agenda Item #

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 10, 2019

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Gwen Wright, Planning Director  
Tanya Stern, Deputy Director *TS*

**FROM:** Khalid Afzal, Special Projects Manager, General Plan Update, Director's Office *KA*  
Caroline McCarthy, Chief, Research and Special Projects Division *CM*

**SUBJECT:** General Plan Update Briefing

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive briefing from staff and the consultant and provide comments.

**Introduction:**

The Planning Department's approved FY19 Work Program includes a major planning effort to update the county's General Plan. Since staff's last briefing on General Plan Update to the Board on July 27, 2018, staff has been working to lay the groundwork for the update. At today's briefing, staff will summarize the status of the General Plan Update project and the consultant team from Rhodeside & Harwell will provide a briefing on their work to date.

**Consultant Work**

In June 2018, the Department hired Rhodeside & Harwell to develop: 1) a strategic framework for the plan update; and 2) a comprehensive communication strategy that staff will use for community outreach and gather input at the local, county and regional level. Between August 13, and September 26, 2018, the consultant, along with Planning staff, conducted 23 individual and group interviews with more than 75 leaders from the county government, the County Council, Planning Board, Planning Department staff, academia, and regional entities (WSSC, MWCOG) about their views regarding big picture trends, uncertainties, and threats that could shape the future of the county and the region. The consultant also reviewed past plans, studies, and planning literature and provided expertise based on their experience with comprehensive plans in other communities.

**Planning Staff Comments (The Morris Column)**

In June 2018, after an all-staff meeting on the General Plan Update, staff conducted a quick workshop and created a "Morris Column" that was circulated around the building allowing all staff the opportunity to post their comments on the column, which were then conveyed to the consultant.

**Expert Roundtable**

The consultant team synthesized all these comments and, based on this input, created several options for themes/concepts to define what the major focus of the update should be. On December 10, 2018, they presented this draft framework to a group of six experts/thought leaders from the county and the region to get their ideas and comments about the conceptual framework for the Update. At today's briefing, the consultant team will present the summary and the result of deliberations by the expert panel.

The expert panel consisted of the following:

1. Royce Hanson, Former Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board.
2. Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board.
3. Dr. Stewart Edelstein, Executive Director of the Universities at Shady Grove.
4. Andy Altman, Principal, Five Square Development and Former Planning Director, Washington DC
5. Matt Hopkins, Commissioner, City of Gaithersburg Planning Commission.
6. Jana Lynott, Senior Strategic Policy Advisor with AARP Public Policy Institute's Livable Communities team.

Other attendees were:

Deana Rhodeside, consultant team (Rhodeside & Harwell)  
Jenny Koch, consultant team (Rhodeside & Harwell)  
Shana Johnson, consultant team (Foursquare ITP)

Planning Department Staff:

Gwen Wright, Director, Montgomery County Planning Department  
Tanya Stern, Deputy Director, Montgomery County Planning Department  
Robert Kronenberg, Acting Deputy Director, Montgomery County Planning Department  
Carrie McCarthy, Chief, Research and Special Project Division, Co-Lead General Plan Update  
Khalid Afzal, Co-Lead, General Plan Update  
Juan Castro, Analyst, General Plan Update

### **Winter Speaker Series**

The Montgomery County Planning Department hosts an annual winter speaker series on topical issues affecting planning and development in the county. This year's speaker series focuses on topics that will be relevant to General Plan Update. The series consists of three sessions:

- 1) recent general/comprehensive plan updates in the DC region;
- 2) planning for resilience; and
- 3) equity and the economy of the future.

The first session on Wednesday, January 16 is a discussion of recent General Plan amendments from other jurisdictions in the region comprising Howard and Loudoun Counties and the District of Columbia. The speakers are Valdis Lazdins, Howard County Planning Director; Ricky Barker, Director of Community Planning and Development Services for the City of Rockville and former Planning Director, Loudoun County; and Tanya Stern, Deputy Director of the Montgomery County Planning Department who was the initial project director for Washington DC's Comprehensive Plan amendment (currently underway) before joining the Montgomery County Planning Department.

The second session on Wednesday, February 13 will feature Harriet Tregoning, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Community Planning and Development at the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, and former Director of Planning for Washington DC. This session will examine the probable disruptive technological, social, environmental and economic changes coming our way over the next few decades and the impacts these changes may have on the region, county and our cities and towns. What can we do to position ourselves to not just endure, but thrive with the changes headed our way?

The third session on Wednesday, March 20, will feature Joe McAndrew, Director of Transportation Policy, Greater Washington Partnership, who will discuss the recently released report *Capital Region Blueprint for Regional Mobility* by Greater Washington Partnership, which examines solutions for our region's most pressing transportation challenges and a strategy for prioritizing smart policies and investment in

infrastructure.

### **The Trends Report**

The Research and Special Projects Division has completed a comprehensive analysis of changes to population, housing, and employment since the 1993 General Plan refinement. This work will serve as a baseline of information for the General Plan Update deliberations and analyses. The report will be published and the Planning Board will receive a briefing on major findings on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Next Steps**

Staff will continue to work with the consultant to finalize the framework and comprehensive communications strategy that will guide the work of the staff team working on the General Plan Update in 2019 and beyond. The consultant's work is expected to be completed in the next few weeks. Staff will then prepare a detailed Scope of Work for the project and present it to the Board for review and approval in March 2019.

