

From: [Barbara N](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Thursday, February 6, 2020 12:23:55 PM

Hello,

I'm concerned and have possibly missed in reviewing the latest update/plan. I had expressed specifically during meetings held at the museum **a need for a right turn only lane** at the intersection of 650 New Hampshire Avenue in Ashton for drivers turning right onto westbound Rt. 108. I don't see this in the latest information. I'm certainly hoping/praying that this is part of the plan. I must tell you I have had enough and others as well to have to wait in the right-hand turn lane while 50% of the people are heading south rather than turning onto Rt. 108. I've lived in the area for over 20 years and why the county/state can't recognize this need is so hard to understand. I have written several times regarding this issue to the county, I've called and have attended meetings with regard to the Ashton plan. The state/county has done this on the southbound lanes of **650 NH at this exact intersection**. This intersection is grossly outdated. Left-hand turn arrows for the east and westbound Rt 108 turning north and south are desperately needed as well. Here is exactly what we are looking for:

1. Rather than adding sidewalks and more green space to the northbound side of 650 add a right turn lane only (exactly what has been done on the opposite side of this location) then use the existing two lanes for southbound 650 and put a desperate needed left turn arrow signal on the current traffic light for the eastbound 650 cars, just like the opposite side has. The recent modification to this intersection where we have to stop a ways back from the intersection is insane. I often have to sit through two lights just to make the right turn on Rt. 108 or go through the Ashton shopping center as a cut through.

If you would like to discuss this further please feel free to contact me. I'd appreciate a response one way or the other to this email.

Regards,

Barbara Nash
240-481-6619

From: [Patrick Smith](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: RE: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Monday, February 10, 2020 2:55:14 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image012.png](#)

Jamey,

I appreciate the quick response. My wife and I saw a notice about it in the Olney Paper which included the web address for the presentation. We live just north of the maps you've shown for the sector plan, only 2 plots separate us from Lethbridge Ct., and frequently walk down to the intersection of New Hampshire and 108 and down to Sandy Spring as well. Some of our hopes for Ashton area would be:

- More walkable space (sidewalks and crosswalks)
- A small grocery store
- A community open/green space
- Some additional retail and restaurants
- A face lift to the Ashton shopping center couldn't hurt but I assume that is the property owner's issue to handle. The strip is somewhat bland-looking and the pylon sign isn't great
- Keeping the same small, quiet community spirit
- We would prefer to not have any national chains that may ruin the "rural community" feel of the area
- We are concerned about increased traffic in the area as a result of this. The intersection already backs up different times of day

I believe all of our ideas/concerns are listed in the presentation.

A few more questions if I may: Is the SE corner of the intersection the only area that will be reviewed by the council this fall? If a plan is approved this fall, is there a rough timeline for things to happen? Are there any plans for the old Sole D'Italia building that is currently fenced?

We are curious to see how things progress.

Thanks,

Patrick Smith

President

Regal Paint Centers

Office: 301-587-9311

Fax: 240-247-0405

www.regalpaintcenters.com

www.facebook.com/regalpaintcenters

From: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>

Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 1:29 PM

To: Patrick Smith <patrick@regalpaintcenters.com>

Subject: RE: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Hi, Patrick.

Before I begin, I have a question for you: where did you come across the plan? We are always curious what channels lead people to our plans.

The County Council is the body that approves all master/sector plans in Montgomery County. This particular plan is beyond an academic exercise, but at the same time, it is fairly limited in scope. The plan boundary does not extend very far at all from the intersection of MD 108 with New Hampshire Avenue. We are aware that the "Ashton area" extends far beyond this intersection, but there were no compelling reasons to open up the master plan area to include more properties. That intersection, on the other hand, the "village center," could probably use some improvements.

Are there any changes you'd like to see in Ashton? Is there anything you would like to see NOT changed? We'd love to hear from you!

Thank you!



Jamey Pratt

Area 3 Senior Planner

Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910

[Jamey.Pratt@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org)

301-495-4588



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From: Patrick Smith <patrick@regalpaintcenters.com>

Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 11:22 AM

To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>

Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Hi Jamey,

I am a resident of Ashton and I came across the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan this weekend for the first time. I have only been in the Ashton area for 2 years now and am obviously curious about the plan options. As I see listed in the "Next Steps" section, this is proposed to be presented to the council in the fall of this year. I am not at all familiar with the process for something like this project from a government perspective. Is there definitely big change coming to Ashton? And if so when? Or does the county council still have to weigh in and this may be more of an academic exercise? Just curious.

Thanks,

Patrick Smith

President

Regal Paint Centers

Office: 301-587-9311

Fax: 240-247-0405

www.regalpaintcenters.com

www.facebook.com/regalpaintcenters

From: [Robin Ziek](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: ashton plan
Date: Thursday, February 13, 2020 8:26:12 PM

Thank you for a clear presentation. I just wonder why we would get rid of the gas station? The business is useful, and they are very good mechanics. A small village has more than residential and food establishments. Just a thought ... - Robin Ziek, 18000 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring MD 20860

From: [Robin Ziek](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Re: ashton plan
Date: Sunday, February 16, 2020 12:04:16 PM

thanks for the info. From the last plan, they have planted lush garden areas of iris along the sidewalk that are beautiful.. fyi. I just want us to avoid Disneyland for our village centers. We need our gas stations (until everyone has a Tesla), dry cleaners, useful shops. The problem with US today is that so many industries are "universal" or chains/franchises. Maybe you can figure out how to support the small independent shops through zoning.

- Robin

On Fri, Feb 14, 2020 at 10:27 AM Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Robin,

Thank you for the email. We aren't proposing to get rid of the gas station. We are simply trying to show what a village center could be if the gas station were to ever decide to close up. Small businesses like this, especially good ones, are very important. It's just if you had to start over and design a cute village center, you wouldn't want an auto-centric use in a prominent location on the corner. It's not the kind of business that pedestrians would enjoy walking past, and it doesn't even serve foot traffic by its very nature (although some have a corner store aspect that is useful).

Jamey

From: Robin Ziek <ziebra9@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2020 8:26 PM
To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: ashton plan

Thank you for a clear presentation. I just wonder why we would get rid of the gas station? The business is useful, and they are very good mechanics. A small village has more than residential and food establishments. Just a thought ... - Robin Ziek, 18000 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring MD 20860

From: [walt fennell](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village
Date: Sunday, February 16, 2020 2:42:16 PM

Mr. Pratt -

Thank you for coming to Ashton on January 29 to present some of the initial thoughts and concepts under consideration by the County for Ashton Village.

I am one of the residents who spoke in opposition to any significant increases in the housing stock within Ashton Village. As I noted during the information session, I recognize that change is inevitable. I also recognize that there is a real need to increase housing stock within Montgomery County.

Having said that, and as I stated on January 29, Ashton Village should not be asked to take on more than our fair share of the needed increase in housing stock. The character and history of Ashton is unique within Montgomery County and the concepts outlined by the County during the January 29 meeting would upend everything that is unique to Ashton. Most of the residents of Ashton (both old timers and new comers) settled in Ashton because it is different from Rockville, Gaithersburg, Silver Spring and Germantown. It has not (at least not yet) been over run with gigantic townhomes and cookie cutter apartment buildings. It is a small village nestled quietly between Olney, Silver Spring, and Clarksville. Our residents would like for it to stay that way. If we wanted to be over run with dramatic increases in house stock, would could move to any other part of the County.

Thank you for your time. Thank you for the efforts that you are putting forward to balance multiple priorities within the County. Please add my e-mail address to any "notification" groups regarding future meetings, as I would like to have a voice at the table on this topic.

Sincerely,

Walt Fennell
410-443-1672
17513 Hidden Garden Lane
Ashton, MD 20861

From: [shari boscolo](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 2:01:50 PM

Thanks you for keeping us in the loop. I don't understand why this is taking so long— and I dont understand why anyone would be against this plan. The corner looks horrible now, and that Sol D'Italia (which may not be part of this), has become a home for rats. We also dont need anymore churches or banks. I appreciate your work, and I hope that you get this done soon.

Shari Boscolo

From: [Suzanne Eckert-Burton](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Plan - comments from homeowner
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 10:41:30 AM

Dear Mr. Pratt,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Ashton Village Plan. I am a 30 year resident of the Spring Lawn Farm neighborhood and have a few items that are important to my family.

1) When we moved here, part of the allure was the rustic roadway and entryway into Ashton via New Hampshire Avenue driving north. In that time, many of the older large trees that provided a canopy over New Hampshire Avenue have been removed or significantly cut back. Please do not remove any more of this foliage! It is necessary to distinguish Ashton's rural character from the more urban Olney center. Similarly, while sometimes frustrating, please do not widen New Hampshire Avenue for similar rustic reasons.

2) Traffic has been increasingly busy during rush hour due to the increased development along and especially north on New Hampshire Avenue. Anything that can be done to minimize adding more volume to that traffic is important to us, whether that is reduced housing density or reduced large volume businesses in that area.

3) Keeping the height of the development to a minimum (no higher than the Alloway building) is imperative as well as providing adequate parking (something much better than the corner mall where the post office is located) and maintaining visual green space at the center of the intersection (as opposed to the current CVS lot which is way too much concrete!).

4) It would be nice to have a Trader Joe type grocery store in the area and small shops such as a bakery, UPS store, shoe repair store, small deli, and other locally owned businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Burton
106 Country View Court
Ashton, MD 20861
suzanneburton511@gmail.com

From: [Lorne Garrettson](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton
Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2020 3:12:28 PM

To Jamey Pratt

We appreciate your efforts to bring affordable housing to the Ashton center. We are aware that teachers and police and others must live elsewhere and drive here.

We are concerned about the size of the buildings. Three stories seems too tall to us.

Also, please move playgrounds and common spaces away from the two roadways.

We look forward to further plans.

Lorne and Beth Garrettson

18001 Bentley Rd

Sandy Spring (even thought its in the Ashton plan.)



February 25, 2020

Benjamin Berbert
Acting Master Plan Supervisor
Mo. Co. Planning Board

Dear Mr. Berbert:

This is in reference to recent discussions about the Ashton Village Master Plan.

I live one mile north of the 650/108 intersection. My folks bought the farm in 1953 and although I've traveled elsewhere, this is the only home I've had.

I've watched with horror as other charming rural communities like Aspen Hill, Olney, and Norbeck have been dominated by the needs of suburbia's spread and developers' greed to become unrecognizable from their past identities. In fairness, those three examples, like others, fall into locations that are in the path of major transportation arteries so their fate was inevitable, unlike Ashton/Sandy Spring.

Presently the Southeast Corner of Ashton is in need of transformation. Very few of my neighbors stand adamantly opposed to developing the corner. It is agreed that it should serve a greater use than its present underutilized state. The Community worked very hard to arrive at a plan which was called Ashton Meeting Place back before the crash of '08. It had retail, open space, and housing which served a mix of economies. It had design features that reflected the essence of the community. Unfortunately, the State Roads people gave it a thumb's down and the housing market crashed. Ashton Meeting Place lost oxygen and died.

Here we are again. On January 29th at the Sandy Spring Museum the Community presented a new plan (called a scheme) that satisfies our need for smart development that does not create traffic and safety woes and reflects the widespread desire to maintain the rural nature of our area.

The alternative plans you presented amount to a complete concession to the desires of developers to maximize density with perhaps the seduction of promising you a more robust tax payback for the future. Two recent local plans that dwarf the existing architecture and density are Thomas Village and the to-be-built Ashton Market. It is the local consensus that these 2 projects were approved because the community was asleep and then solidly ignored once their objections were voiced.

Regarding Ashton's Southeast Corner, will you once again take the side of the few who want to profit or the many who want to live in a community not plagued by bad planning.

From: [Richard Paugh, Chtd](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: RE: Ashton Village Center Plan Update
Date: Saturday, February 29, 2020 10:09:19 AM

Thank you just please continue to share updates if you would.very concerned with the density...will overwhelm the community for certain!!

rp

Richard D. Paugh

Attorney At Law
932 Hungerford Drive
Suite 26D
Rockville, MD 20850
Tel. 301-251-9120
Fax 301-251-9123

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From: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2020 4:11 PM
To: Richard Paugh, Chtd <rick.paugh@verizon.net>
Subject: RE: Ashton Village Center Plan Update

Hi, Richard.

I got this email from you the other day and the only thing in it is the email address for the Olney Chamber of Commerce (I'm guessing).

Is this an address you'd like us to add, or is this the address we'd like to use for you, or was there something else you wanted us to do with it? Or were you trying to forward it to that address?

Since there was no other content in the message, I wasn't sure what you were intending.

Thank you!
Jamey

From: Richard Paugh, Chtd <rick.paugh@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2020 9:41 AM
To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>

From: [LIZABETH MONTGOMERY](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan - Ashton residents comments
Date: Sunday, March 1, 2020 9:06:57 AM

Mr. Jamey Pratt:

March 1, 2020

Please accept these comments regarding development for the Ashton Village Sector Center Plan at the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue (Ashton, MD). Development at that site is understandable, but as residents of Ashton, we are concerned with the type and amount of development proposed. We hope that any development will keep the small town rural feel of the Ashton/Sandy Spring Area.

There is already a lot of traffic and congestion at the Rt. 108/New Hampshire Avenue intersection - that the intersection currently struggles to accommodate. This is particularly a problem during rush hour, in both the morning and evening. The proposed development will only add to the problem. Any development will require improvements to the intersection, such as left turn and right turn lanes and lights. Because New Hampshire Ave is a state highway please ensure any "planned" improvements are approved by the state.

In addition to traffic, we are concerned about pedestrian safety. There is a lack of sidewalks and crosswalks in the area. Development in the area must include plans and funding for sidewalks and crosswalks. And, don't forget about approval from the state.

Development means more stormwater runoff. We are concerned about the increased amount of impervious surface and the resulting stormwater runoff. Impacts to existing stormwater systems, particularly impacts to streams and existing stormwater management ponds in the surrounding neighborhoods must be considered. Spring Lawn Farm's existing stormwater pond at the intersection of Crystal Spring Drive and Country Hills Way is already at or above capacity. Recent development in the past two years (2 new houses were built off of Crystal Spring Drive) has resulted in the pond getting noticeably fuller and reaching the surrounding chain link fencing during storm events....when this never happened before. Increased runoff to this pond could potentially infringe on the nearby properties.

The use of bio-retention areas for stormwater management pose an issue regarding maintenance. These areas must be properly maintained by qualified personnel to ensure adequate storm water quality and quantity control. Plans and funding for proper maintenance of bioretention areas must be incorporated into any development.

Please do not overdevelop the site and take away the small town rural feel of the Ashton/Sandy Spring community.

Thank you,

David Knowles and Lizabeth Montgomery

129 Crystal Spring Drive, Ashton, MD 20861

From: [John Hartge](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Concern over Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date: Thursday, March 5, 2020 5:44:33 AM

Dear Chairman Anderson and County Planning Commissioners,

I have grave concerns regarding the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented by Planning Department Staff at the community meeting held 1/29/20. Although I agree with the Staff's stated vision to "maintain the existing small-town character of Ashton with appropriate design and density recommendations," their proposals undermine this vision. Selected specific concerns are listed below.

Sincerely,

John Hartge

140 Haviland Mill Rd

Brookeville, MD 20833

- The higher density designs proposed by the planning staff conflict with the objectives expressed at the Community Meeting in October 2019 – a rural village town center with open space and community gathering space that supports pedestrian and bicyclers.
- The Staff's proposals are crammed with large, out-of-character buildings across the entire southeast corner.
- It is extremely unlikely that any design language written into a master plan will be able to truly control the final outcome.
- Heights, massing, architectural elements, open space can all change (see the "open space" in Thomas Village that consists of paver stones with two benches).
- Storm-water management has not been addressed with this future loss of open space, which will be replaced by impervious surfaces and buildings. There has been increasingly unpredictable weather and unprecedented flooding (e.g., Ellicott City, parking garages in Maryland).
- The proposed additional 100+ units likely translates to an additional 200 cars as most families have 2+ cars and over burdens the roads and resources in the area. This project destroys the rural character of this section of the county.
- Our small area has done its part to ease the housing crisis in Montgomery County through Sandy Spring Meadows, Thomas Village, and the (approved but not yet built) Porter Road Projects.

From: [Michael Grace](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Cc: [Nancy Navarro](#); [Gabe Albornoz](#); [Evan Glass](#); [Will Jawando](#); [Hans Riemer](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date: Thursday, March 5, 2020 2:07:12 PM

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners,

We wish to express our concerns over the concepts for the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented by Planning Department Staff at the January 29 community meeting. We have lived in Brinklow (3 miles north of Ashton) for 41 years and have seen many changes to the Ashton-Olney area, not all of them positive.

Many of the proposals offered by the Planning Department Staff fail to recognize the reality of life here and seem to be developed in response to political pressure from the County Council to expand housing offerings in anticipation of the population growth projected over the next decade.

Our specific concerns are the following:

1) Several years ago, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDT) declared Rt. 108 a “failed highway,” as reported by the now-defunct Olney Gazette newspaper, meaning the amount of traffic has outstripped the capacity of the roadway to carry it. The MDT declared there was no ability to expand Rt. 108 due to existing property and right-of-way restrictions and Rt. 108 would forever be a “failed highway”.

2) The proposed additional 100+ units likely translates to at least an additional 200 cars as most families have 2+ cars. We have driven through the intersection of Rt. 108 and NH Ave. for more than 40 years. Traffic has expanded significantly over the years and congestion, particularly at peak hours, has worsen. Traffic through Ashton to Olney already is bumper-to-bumper, made worse during morning and evening school hours. The effects lower the community’s quality of life, pose dangers to school children and contributes to environmental degradation.

3) The Planning staff admitted to a question at the community meeting that traffic concerns and increased congestion at the intersection were not part of their consideration in the development of their plan. According to staff, traffic studies are the responsibility of the MDT and not them. We urge you to take a hard look at this question.

4) Our issues are not “NIMBY” concerns. We support the need for more “attainable housing” in Montgomery County. Ashton has already contributed to this goal with the Sandy Spring Meadows, Thomas Village, and the (approved but not yet built) Porter Road projects. Additionally, Porter Road includes MPDUs in its design. The current congestion, however, doesn’t yet reflect the impact of the Porter Road project. So we expect more congestion on our “failed” highways.

5) The Planning Board’s report says Missing Middle housing should be located close to transit and jobs. Ashton does not meet this criteria. We live in a “bedroom” community for the most part. The only transit to the area consists of a few buses each day to the Silver Spring Metro. The nearest Metro station is Glenmont, a 20--30 min. drive. Most of the new inhabitants of the proposed development will be forced to commute to their jobs by car, shop by car and perform their daily chores by car. We have not seen additional mass transit provided to our area in the past 40+ years and we believe it highly unlikely that additional mass transit will be available in our area, now or in the future.

6) Staff’s proposal to decorate the buildings with rural village architectural elements, such as front porches and dormer windows, are only design “suggestions,” not guarantees. The promised “open space” in Thomas Village, for example, consists of paver stones with two benches.

In summary, we believe : 1) Staff's proposals respond to the political pressure for additional housing and not to the concerns of local residents; 2) Ashton has already contributed to expanded housing needs; 3) Ashton's "failed" infrastructure does not support the increased congestion recommended by staff; 4) local needs will be sacrificed to the profit demands of developers.

We recognize that Ashton long ago lost the "rural village" character that existed when we moved here. Growth is inevitable and housing needs are important. But growth can be managed to lessen the impact on residents and the quality of life in our community.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Respectfully,

Michael & Laura Grace

400 Brighton Knolls Dr. Brinklow, Md. 20862

From: [Charlie Glendinning](#)
To: [Duke, Roberto](#)
Subject: Don't Sacrifice Ashton's Unique History
Date: Friday, March 6, 2020 1:34:49 PM

Dear Mr. Duke,

I am writing to urge you to reduce the density of the development in Ashton more in keeping with its **RURAL** and—more important—**HISTORIC** character.

I'm from Annapolis. In the late 40s and early 50s my grandfather, Charles E. Emery, created 'Historic Annapolis' and served as its first president. His task, and the overarching task of the organization was to act as a "bit and bridle" for developers who were more than eager to tear down an early colonial home and put up more "modern and efficient" structures for personal gain.

But we see now what **Historic Preservation** can mean, and what a pearl to the state of Maryland, Annapolis is—for those who live there and those who visit.

The same *can* be true for Ashton, albeit on a much smaller scale. The **history** that Ashton embraces is **unique in the county**, and the teaching opportunities for all who visit are golden. Here are a few to consider ::

- **Clifton** - house built - 1740
- **Cherry Grove** - house built - 1773
- **Cloverly** - house built - 1849
- **Harewood** - house built - 1793
- **Quaker Meeting House and graveyard** - 1817
- **Woodlawn** - house built - 1832
- **The Underground Railroad**
- **Sandy Spring museum**
- **The Sandy Spring Slave Museum**

The "unbridled development" —specifically of the southeast corner of 108 and 650—would kill what amounts to a "metaphysical" sense of the history of this unique area of the county. Although no houses stand in jeopardy, it is that feeling of history that would be destroyed by a mass of retail,

townhouses and multi-story apartment buildings on that property. This should not happen.

What the **OVERWHELMING MAJORITY** of Ashton/Sandy Spring citizens would like to see is a well-designed and modest **RURAL VILLAGE** that is more in keeping the the wonderful **HISTORY** that is already established here. Dwelling units to amount to no more than 35.

The Thomas Village cluster in Sandy Spring and the new Porter Road cluster of townhouses in Ashton already will put as many as 100 cars on unimproved roads. If the design for Ashton Crossroads is left as proposed, in total we could see as many as 300 new cars out on our roads. This should not happen.

Please do not allow over-development to crush Ashton and Sandy Spring's sense of history. The preliminary proposals for Ashton are totally out of character.

Sincerely,

-Charles Glendinning

— —

CHARLES GLENDINNING
103 Country View Court
Ashton, MD 20861
H :: 301.774.3154
C :: 301.980.1087
chazglen@gmail.com

From: limechunk@aol.com
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Keep Ashton Rural!!
Date: Friday, March 6, 2020 9:54:25 AM

Dear Chairman Anderson, Planning Commissioners, Councilmember Navarro

I am writing to voice my deep concern over the concepts for the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented by Planning Department Staff at the January 29 community meeting. I agree with the Staff's stated vision to "maintain the existing small-town character of Ashton with appropriate design and density recommendations." My concern is that Staff's proposals do not achieve this vision—in fact they undermine it.

The higher density designs proposed by the planning staff do not reflect what was asked for at the Community Meeting in October 2019 – a walkable, bikeable rural village town center with open space and community gathering space.

- Ashton's rural character is created by a pattern of residences, businesses, trees and **open spaces** clustered around the crossroads of New Hampshire Avenue and MD Route 108.
- Essential services and amenities are 3 miles away, which is why most people chose Ashton to make their home - we don't want to be in the middle of a bustling commercial center!
- The beauty of the area should be evident in it's 'center'. **This intersection is already developed on 3 corners. It's enough!**
- **It is extremely unlikely that any design language written into a master plan will be able to truly control the final outcome. Heights, massing, architectural elements, open space can all change (see the "open space" in Thomas Village that consists of paver stones with two benches). The precedent is there - developers have not adhered to promises made in recent projects**
- The only transit to the area consists of a few buses each day to Silver Spring Metro, so many of the new inhabitants of the proposed development will be commuting by car. Additional mass transit is unlikely to our area, given tight budgets and the fact that residents really need cars to reach shopping, as well as jobs.
- Staff proposes this development to fill the Missing Middle with housing out of character with Ashton such as apartment buildings and massive townhouse blocks. The Planning Board's report says Missing Middle housing should be located close to transit and jobs, and **Ashton does not provide this context.**
- **Our small area has done its part to ease the housing crisis in Montgomery County through Sandy Spring Meadows, Thomas Village, and the (approved but not yet built) Porter Road Projects. Additionally, Porter Road includes MPDUs in its design.**

I was very vocal in the last meeting at the Sandy Spring firehouse. My observations included that Planning Staff did not understand the depth of opposition to any project at the southeast corner of 108 and New Hampshire - ANY development. The plan that is currently approved was hard fought on both sides. Any changes to that plan affecting/increasing density are simply a money grab by the developer.

It's time for the planning board to put the brakes on development in Ashton. The charming town that I moved to, and invested in 13 years ago is barely the same. It's enough!

Nina Stahl
Ashton Homeowner

From: [susan fifer canby](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Plan
Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2020 2:56:39 PM

March 6, 2020

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners,

I am writing to voice my deep concern over the concepts for the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented by Planning Department Staff at the January 29 community meeting. I agree with the Staff's stated vision to "maintain the existing small-town character of Ashton with appropriate design and density recommendations." My concern is that Staff's proposals do not achieve this vision—in fact they undermine it.

- The higher density designs proposed by the planning staff do not reflect what was asked for at the Community Meeting in October 2019 – a walkable, bikeable rural village town center with open space and community gathering space.
- Ashton's small-town character is created by a pattern of residences, businesses, and open spaces clustered around the crossroads of New Hampshire Avenue and MD Route 108.
- Developed land in the area consists almost entirely of single-family homes, affordable townhouses, single story retail.
- Currently the developed land in Ashton is interspersed with open space and trees.
- The Staff's proposals are crammed with large, out of context buildings across the entire southeast corner
- Proposal has insufficient transitions from taller buildings to the existing homes at the edges.
- Staff's open spaces are too small and in some scenarios are not visible enough from the roads.
- Staff's proposal to decorate the buildings with rural village architectural elements, such as front porches and dormer windows, cannot be guaranteed and would not disguise the extreme density
- It is extremely unlikely that any design language written into a master plan will be able to truly control the final outcome. Heights, massing, architectural elements, open space can all change (see the "open space" in Thomas Village that consists of paver stones with two benches).
- Stormwater management has not been addressed with this future loss of open space, which will be replaced by impervious surfaces and buildings. There has been increasingly unpredictable weather and unprecedented flooding (eg Ellicott City, parking garages in Maryland).

- The proposed additional 100+ units likely translates to at least an additional 200 cars as most families have 2+ cars
- The only transit to the area consists of a few buses each day to Silver Spring Metro, so many of the new inhabitants of the proposed development will be commuting by car. Additional mass transit is unlikely to our area, given tight budgets and the fact that residents really need cars to reach shopping, as well as jobs.
- Traffic currently backs up at the intersection and many in the area must plan their commutes to avoid this, if they have that luxury. Those with school-aged children likely can't avoid the traffic.
- The current traffic load doesn't yet reflect the impact of the Porter Road project.
- Staff proposes this development to fill the Missing Middle with housing out of character with Ashton such as apartment buildings and massive townhouse blocks
- The Planning Board's report says Missing Middle housing should be located close to transit and jobs, and Ashton does not provide this context.

Please consider reducing the density and scale of this project. Thank you for your attention.

All best, Susan Fifer Canby

Sent from my iPhone
6855 Haviland Mill Road
Clarksville, Md 21029
Susanfifercanby@gmail.com

From: [Amy Medd](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Cc: [Nancy Navarro](#); [Gabe Albornoz](#); [Evan Glass](#); [Will Jawando](#); [Hans Riemer](#)
Subject: Concerns regarding the Ashton Village Sector Plan Design Concepts
Date: Monday, March 9, 2020 9:32:52 AM

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners,

I would like to voice my opposition to the Ashton Village Sector Plan, Conceptual Schemes 1 and 2, laid out at the Jan Community Meeting.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Development-Scenarios-Handout-2020-01-29-1.pdf>

The Planning website states that the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan will (among other things):

- **Maintain Ashton's rural character.**
- **Enhance opportunities to provide walkable, neighborhood-serving development.**

I am concerned with Conceptual Designs 1 and 2 for the following reasons (not all inclusive):

1. The conceptual designs certainly **do not** maintain Ashton's rural character

- Conceptual Designs 1 and 2 look **NOTHING** like a rural village town center, which was what the community was trying to evoke in its own plan developed at the Oct workshop at the Sandy Spring Museum. Rather it appears to be a study in how to shoehorn the greatest number of residences into the smallest space possible.

- The designs are strangely out of character with the surroundings. Imagine driving down Rt 108, along farm fields, and coming upon a development of towering apartments, townhouses, stacked flats and duplexes. There is no design element that could be incorporated to downplay this jarring juxtaposition. Porches and gables, while lovely, will not compensate. Additionally, it is doubtful that these features will be incorporated into the final product as they cannot be written into zoning rules or enforced. It will, instead, feel as if someone has cut out a swath of the Rockville Town Center or downtown Bethesda and dropped in the middle of a farm field in Ashton. I don't think rectangles on aerial design plan can adequately capture how appalling it will **FEEL** in 3D until it is too late.

2. The conceptual designs **lack** a "walkable, neighborhood-serving development"

- The proposed plans do not enhance opportunities for a "walkable" development, as there is limited community space built into the plans - unless one counts walking around to the residences themselves as an enjoyable community experience.

- It appears the incorporated open space primarily comes from the stream buffer - which is not buildable to begin with. There is too little planned open space and with that, we run the risk of "open space" similar to what came out of the Thomas Village plans - which is a patio of paving stones with two benches. Not exactly inviting to the community as I have never seen anyone sitting there - including the residents of the townhouses. Or perhaps we'll see something like the benches-of-no-purpose next to the Ashton town sign in front of the CVS - another interesting design element afterthought.

3. Increased **traffic**

-Traffic on 108 is already nightmarish - particularly during school arrivals/departures and rush hour. I am "lucky" to have the flexibility to leave my neighborhood on Hidden Garden Lane (very close to the intersection of 108 and NH Ave) by 6:30AM. I do this not only for my own sanity but so that I am one less car on the road during the crush of rush hour. I cannot imagine what it must be like for those with children who must either wait to leave until a school bus comes, or, even worse, have to drop their child off at school.

- Adding the 101 residences proposed in Conceptual Scheme 2 will likely mean an additional 200 cars (let's all admit that we primarily live in 2 car households, if not more when children of driving age are present). These will be cars commuting to/from work, as the number of people taking the metro bus will likely be minimal. I often take the metro into the city, and have a metro bus stop in front of my neighborhood and even I drive to the metro station. The addition of these cars will exponentially increase the traffic problems on our small roads in Ashton/Sandy Spring.

I have other concerns as well, but in the interest of not completely losing your attention, I will stop there. I moved to Ashton 4 years ago from a town near Kennett Square, PA. It was a challenge to find an area in Maryland (Montgomery County or surrounding counties) that evoked the same open-space-yet-small-town feel. I was excited when I found it in the Ashton/Sandy Spring community - with its history of farming, the Underground Railroad, and Free African American and Quaker communities. Moving from a 2 acre homesite to 0.2 acres was hard, but the surrounding open space and sense of community made up for it. Our community is unique. While I am newer to the town, I feel an obligation to fight to maintain the rural village character of Ashton and prevent it from being a carbon copy of the numerous surrounding towns in Montgomery County that blend into each other with little distinction. It is nearly impossible to determine where one town stops and another starts when driving past strip malls and housing complexes. Once we lose the character of Ashton, we won't be able to recapture it. The decisions made now will have repercussions for future residents of our community.

Respectfully,
Amy Medd
Resident of Wyndcrest

From: [The Wheelers](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#);
[Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[Councilmember.Rierner@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date: Monday, March 9, 2020 4:42:36 PM

On January 29, I attended the community meeting where the Planning Department staff presented concepts for the Ashton Village Sector Plan. I appreciate the efforts that the Planning Staff have made to keep the community informed as the Plan is being developed. However, I am concerned by the number of units that could occur on the southeast corner of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue as a result of potential provisions of the plan that are inconsistent with the nature of a rural village.

Previously, I attended the initial meeting on the Plan in May, the Planning Commission meeting in which it approved the Planning staff's proposal for developing the Plan, the October bus tour, and the October community design workshops. In addition, I attended some of the office hours hosted by Fred Boyd prior to his retirement. Further, I have read the County's, "The Missing Middle Housing Study," published in September 2018. I was an active participant in the development of the 1998 Sandy Spring Ashton Master Plan.

My biggest concerns about the potential development is the potential for 100-150 units with the corresponding massing and building heights, along with the safety and other impacts due to a significant increase in traffic at the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. This additional development will add two more entrances onto Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue, bringing the total to ten, close enough to the intersection to preclude controlling traffic through additional traffic lights and causing further pedestrian safety issues.

While I support having a mix of housing types and the concept of providing housing units that are affordable as outlined in "The Missing Middle Housing Study," I seriously question that this site in Ashton is the proper place to implement this strategy. On page 24 of "The Missing Middle Housing Study," it suggests that, "[t]he most ideal locations for Missing Middle housing typologies are at the following locations:

"Along major transportation corridors, where Missing Middle housing can serve as a transition between busy thoroughfares and neighborhoods on internal streets.

"At the edges of single-family residential neighborhoods adjacent to other more dense uses and building typologies, so as to provide a transition between land uses.

"Within a certain distance of transit and transportation alternatives such as bus, bus rapid transit, Metro and Purple Line light rail.

"A limited number of typologies within single-family neighborhoods, e.g. accessory dwelling units or duplexes."

The southeast corner does not meet any of these criteria. It is served by a single bus route that only operates on weekdays and the last run starts at 6:10 pm, which means that residents of housing on the site will be dependent on cars, at least in the evenings and on weekends. Only the option presented by the community at the design workshop envisioned single family homes that could accommodate accessory dwelling units.

Further, one of the recommendations of “The Missing Middle Housing Study” suggests:

“Consider a Missing Middle Housing Functional Master Plan for the County that would identify all the ideal locations for Missing Middle housing typologies and result in a sectional map amendment that would rezone appropriate areas.”

This seems like a more prudent way to implement the provisions of the study so that the sites identified for “missing middle” housing meet the criteria and that the units that are built actually are affordable. There is no clear definition for what is affordable in Montgomery County and no guarantee that what actually gets built will be affordable. What is guaranteed if implemented in Ashton is the much higher number of units and that residents will be dependent on cars, adding to the already serious traffic and safety concerns.

Along with the number of units, there is a concern that the potential development on the southeast corner will be inconsistent with the existing development on the other corners in scale and scope. The current FAR of .25 for residential development for the southeast corner is more appropriate for the village center and to retain Ashton’s unique character. If the developer is allowed to increase it to allow for a residential FAR of .5 or as has been suggested to .75, it would allow development that would result in Ashton losing its rural character and would resemble other more densely developed areas of Montgomery County. If the stated goal is to retain the rural character, then the FAR should not be changed.

Our Spring Lawn Homeowners Association held our annual meeting last week and the Ashton Village Plan was discussed. These concerns are shared by other residents.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. We moved from Olney to Ashton almost 27 years ago because of its special and unique character. We hope that the Ashton Village Sector Plan will preserve it.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Wheeler
17609 Country View Way
Ashton, MD. 20861

March 9, 2020

Dear Chairman Anderson, Planning Commissioners and Others,

I am writing to you regarding the development planned for the southeast corner of New Hampshire Ave. and Rt. 108 in Ashton, MD. My wife and I have been residents of Ashton since 1993. We live in the Spring Lawn Farm community, so the development of that parcel very much affects us.

I bought a lot in 1992, in large part due to the rural character of the area, including what was to me a "small-town feel". I moved from Gaithersburg due to the density. I could have moved to Olney, but well, that's not a small town.

My concern is that we will lose that small-town feel, and will essentially betray the reason that folks moved here in the first place. The master plan that I reviewed back in 1993 did not call for the type of development that has now been put forth by the developer (does he care??), and the staff (why???). Are you now jettisoning the vision of what Ashton is now and is supposed to be going into the future?

The staff seem to want to preserve the small-town character, at least that is what was said, but the plan does not. Why? I don't understand why the plan has such a high degree of density, and buildings that don't integrate. Putting a nice face on density and inappropriate buildings does not fix the issue. Density is density, and size is size, no matter what the facades might be.

I don't understand why? Why so much housing? Why here, when there is NO mass transit to speak of, and where other parcels are being development (to do our share, so to speak). How does the current plan create a better environment for those who lived here for years? Why do we have to bear the burden of this kind of density... to achieve some vision, or to achieve the aspirations of a developer? This is a financial move, not a quality-of-life move.

In this day and age where government seems so much off the rails as it relates to what Americans want, can we at least govern our local, small town in a manner that gives us some control of our day-to-day life, without having to give that up to a developer?

So I'm hoping that you will take these comments to heart and arrive at a sensible plan that can be one that the current residents of Ashton can live with. There have been numerous occasions where our views have been presented. Will they be heard?

Sincerely,

Robert Bulik
17508 Country View Way
Ashton, MD, 20861

From: [Charlie Glendinning](#)
To: [Duke, Roberto](#)
Subject: The Jurassic Principle at Ashton Crossroads
Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 5:26:40 AM

Dear Mr. Duke,

There is a line in the movie, "Jurassic Park" that perfectly communicates the entire premise of the movie itself :: "**Just because you *can* do something, doesn't mean you *should*.**" In our rural community of Ashton, a developer has access to the 8+ acres of land on the southeast corner of the intersection Routes 108 and 650. He has financial backers, political support, and clever legal representation. This is a difficult trifecta for a loose (but large) confederation of concerned citizens to come up against.

But we DO come up against it with this simple thought :: **Just because a developer has access to a piece of property**, and the county is interested in fulfilling a self-imposed mandate to make room for 200,000 more residents, and the developer has legal representation and political connections enough to make it all happen, **it doesn't mean that Ashton is the place to do it.**

Over-developing this property makes no sense. My first note said it was out of **character**. This note makes the point that it is out of **place**.

This property sits at the far Eastern border of the county as it crosses the Patuxent and disappears into the more rural parts of Howard County. It is all but devoid of public transportation, and we know what happens then :: people drive.

We don't need to understand the rationale behind making room for 200,000 new residents in Montgomery County. That's wonderful! Bring them on! But doesn't it make sense to put them where public transportation will logically expand to serve them? It should be obvious to a sensible planner that the optimum area for development would be the Georgia Ave. corridor since the Metro would logically begin to extend from Glenmont in that direction... **NOT** along New Hampshire Avenue.

Yes, we are a loose confederation of residents, but we are speaking to you

chazglen@gmail.com

From: [Saville, Leslie](#)
To: bclarke10@comcast.net; [Duke, Roberto](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Dave, Devang](#)
Cc: [MCP-InfoCounter](#)
Subject: RE: Re Ashton Village Plan & Tucker Lane
Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 2:10:09 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

Dear Mr. Clark,

Thanks for contacting us. I am the Planning Dept member of the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee, so I can update you on what I know about Tucker Lane. My colleagues Roberto Duke and Jamey Pratt are working on the Ashton plan you reference. And our MCDOT colleague, Devang Dave, can tell us if that office has any information for us.

For rustic roads, only part of Tucker Lane is designated as rustic—the segment from Ednor View Terrace to MD 108, Ashton Road. Based on the address you've given, your section is not rustic, so Devang may be able to have a discussion about whether the community would support traffic calming. On the rustic section to your north, we don't generally have traffic calming modifications such as speed humps, but I can think of at least two rustic roads that have had rumble strips added (they can be noisy, though). Do you have any questions or other information on the rustic section?

Devang, do you have any information or questions for Mr. Clark?

And Roberto and Jamey, do you have any info or questions for the Ashton Village Plan?

Thanks to all,

Leslie



Leslie Saville

Community Planner | Area 3 | [Rustic Roads](#)

Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910
Leslie.Saville@montgomeryplanning.org
o: 301.495.2194



From: Bruce Clarke <bclarke10@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 4:30 PM
To: MCP-InfoCounter <MCP-InfoCounter@mncppc-mc.org>
Subject: Re Ashton Village Plan & Tucker Lane

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thanks for the online information you are providing on plans for the Ashton Village area. I was on travel in October so missed the earlier meetings. I wanted to mention that, while I live a few blocks outside the Ashton Village plan area, I live in Ashton on Tucker Lane and as such am impacted directly by daily high-MPH commuter traffic flow from New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108: Tucker Lane, a so-called Rustic Road, has become a major cut-through for cars, commercial trucks, and industrial size trucks traveling either from NH Avenue to Rte 108, or from 108 to New Hampshire Avenue. *I mention this because Tucker Lane residents now have daily rush hour-type traffic speeding down our rustic road in order to AVOID the Rte 108-New Hampshire intersection, site of the Ashton Village area.*

I think it's crucial that in planning changes to the Ashton Village area, the county consider the impact of the saturated roads intersecting that area in any planning — and in consider ways to avoid the lengthy traffic backups that lead Howard County and other commuters to cut through Tucker Lane in order to avoid long waits at the intersection of NH and Rte 108.

Because Tucker Lane is a "rustic road," those of us who live along the 1.9 miles of Tucker have to put up with Monday through Saturday high-speed commuting on a road that has *no curbs, no sidewalks no Montgomery County Police presence or speed traps, and poor lighting*. We are also ineligible for speed bumps, under a MOCO regulation the county transportation staff has cited when we contacted them.

I have almost been hit by speeding cars when leaving my driveway, to enter Tucker Lane, three times in the past three or four years. I have contacted the county police and the county transportation department every six months or so about the overall situation and asked for relief. The police department replies at length, explaining exactly why they don't have the resources to patrol Tucker lane for speeders or place speed cameras on the road. We do have "enhanced" speed limit signs (orange strip at bottom of sign — zero discernible impact on speeders) and signs at either end of the Lane limiting truck weight to 7000 tons. (This is so fuel oil delivery trucks can use the road — there is no gas line from NH that serves Tucker Lane. It is also frequently ignored.)

I'll stop ranting for now, but would close by asking you to PLEASE factor into your planning for the Rte108-New Hampshire intersection a means for processing traffic through that intersection without lengthy delays, which make commuters from Howard County use "Tucker Highway," as we now refer to it, a time-saving cut-through — especially when one speeds. The 15 mph hairpin turn midway down the length of Tucker, where the road actually narrows, is most likely the place where the first tragic traffic accident on Tucker will occur.

I realize this is not an easy problem to fix. But Tucker Lane is no longer a Rustic Road, so perhaps it's

time to end its Rustic Road status and declare it an Avenue, so that speeding will be monitored, and sidewalks, curbs, and speed bumps can be used to provide safety to residents — including pedestrians, who can no longer walk along Tucker with any sense of safety.

Best regards,

Bruce Clarke
901 Tucker Lane
Ashton, MD 20861

From: [Leroy Haas](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#); [Nancy Navarro](#); [Gabe Albornoz](#); [Evan Glass](#); [Will Jawando](#); [Hans Riemer](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2020 10:06:38 AM

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners,

This letter is in response to the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented at the January 29 community meeting. We are strongly opposed to the obvious congestion that will be created at the intersection of Rte. 108 and New Hampshire Ave. by this Ashton Village Proposed plan. We moved out here from inside the Beltway some years ago to escape this very type of congestion.

The high density and tall buildings proposed should not be allowed at that location under any circumstances. Olney already has this kind of density just down the road for those desiring it, but we do not want it here. The rapidly disappearing rural character of Ashton cannot be brought back once destroyed. We respectfully ask you to redesign the Plan to greatly reduce the

height of any building to no more than 35 feet and a much lower density with more green space.

In addition, the additional traffic injected into an already congested intersection at 108 and New Hampshire simply does not make any rational sense. The additional traffic is just not logical

and should be seriously reevaluated.

We implore you, please do not allow the development to continue without a greatly reduced density and height and providing more open green space. Again, those desiring the congestion and reduced green space can find it just down the road where the beautiful rural character of Olney has been totally destroyed and black top and buildings are everywhere. We do not want this congestion in Ashton under any circumstance.

Thank you for your serious consideration in this matter.

With deep appreciation for your reconsideration and review of the Plan,

M. Leroy Haas and Janet. M Haas
P.O. Box 520
Ashton, MD 20861

301-774-9646

From: [Tim Sessing](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Wright, Gwen](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#); [Nancy Navarro](#); [Gabe Albornoz](#); [Evan Glass](#); [Will Jawando](#); [Hans Riemer](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2020 9:34:45 AM

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners:

The purpose of this correspondence is to voice my grave concern over the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented by Planning Department Staff at the January 29 community meeting. I agree with the Staff's stated vision to "maintain the existing small-town character of Ashton with appropriate design and density recommendations." What is clear is that Staff's proposals not only do not achieve this vision—they in fact decimate it. The voters that comprise this portion of Montgomery County are clearly opposed to the proposal for myriad reasons including, but not limited to:

- The higher density designs proposed by the planning staff do not reflect what was asked for at the Community Meeting in October 2019 – a walkable, bikeable rural village town center with open space and community gathering space.
- Ashton's small-town character is created by a pattern of residences, businesses, and open spaces clustered around the crossroads of New Hampshire Avenue and MD Route 108.
- Developed land in the area consists almost entirely of single-family homes, affordable townhouses, single story retail.
- Currently the developed land in Ashton is interspersed with open space and trees.
- The Staff's proposals are crammed with large, out of context buildings across the entire southeast corner
- The Proposal has insufficient transitions from taller buildings to the existing homes at the edges.
- The Staff's proposed open spaces are wholly insufficient.
- The Staff's proposal to decorate the buildings with rural village architectural elements, such as front porches and dormer windows, would do nothing to disguise the extreme building density.
- It is extremely unlikely that any design language written into a master plan will be able to truly control the final outcome. Heights, massing, architectural elements, open space can all change (see the "open space" in Thomas Village that consists of paver stones with two benches).
- Stormwater management has not been addressed with this future loss of open space, which will be replaced by impervious surfaces and buildings. There has been increasingly unpredictable weather and unprecedented flooding (eg Ellicott City, parking garages in Maryland).
- The proposed additional 100+ units likely translates to at least an additional 200 cars as most families have 2+ cars
- The only transit to the area consists of a few buses each day to Silver Spring Metro, so many of the new inhabitants of the proposed development will be commuting by car. Additional mass transit is unlikely to our area, given tight budgets and the fact that residents really need cars to reach shopping, as well as jobs.
- Traffic currently backs up at the intersection and many in the area must plan their commutes to avoid this, if they have that luxury. Those with school-aged children likely can't avoid the traffic.
- The current traffic load doesn't yet reflect the impact of the Porter Road project.
- Staff proposes this development to fill the Missing Middle with housing out of character with Ashton such as apartment buildings and massive townhouse blocks
- The Planning Board's report says Missing Middle housing should be located close to transit and jobs, and Ashton does not provide this context.
- Our small area has done its part to ease the housing crisis in Montgomery County through Sandy Spring Meadows, Thomas Village, and the (approved but not yet built) Porter Road Projects. Additionally, Porter Road includes MPDUs in its design.

For all these reasons, the voters of this district demand this latest in a series of slippery-slope proposed changes to

the project be rejected.
Thank you for your time,

TIMOTHY J. SESSING, ESQ.
ADAMS, MORRIS & SESSING
12850 MIDDLEBROOK ROAD, SUITE 308, GERMANTOWN, MD 20874
TEL.: 301.637.0143 x103 | FAX: 888.551.9301
TIM@AMSLAWGROUP.COM WWW.AMSLAWGROUP.COM

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From: [LIZABETH MONTGOMERY](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Cc: Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov; feedback@ssarpc.org
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan - resident comments
Date: Sunday, March 15, 2020 4:55:04 PM

March 15, 2020

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners,

We are writing to voice our deep concern over the concepts for the Ashton Village Sector Plan that were presented by Planning Department Staff at the January 29, 2020 Ashton/Sandy Spring community meeting. We agree with the Staff's stated vision to "maintain the existing small-town character of Ashton with appropriate design and density recommendations." Our concern is that the Staff's proposals do not achieve this vision—in fact they undermine it.

Items of special concern to us include:

- The higher density designs proposed by the Planning Staff do not exhibit a walk-able, bike-able, and rural village town center with adequate open spaces and community gathering spaces. The Staff's described open spaces are too small and, in some scenarios, are not visible enough from the roadways.
- The Staff's proposals indicated crowded, large, and out of context buildings encompassing the southeast corner of the New Hampshire Avenue-Route 108 intersection.
- Traffic currently backs up at this intersection and many in the area must plan their commutes to avoid this. Those with day jobs and those with school-aged children likely can't avoid the rush hour traffic.
- The current traffic load doesn't yet reflect the impact of the Porter Road project, presently being built on the former Sole D'Italia restaurant location.
- The proposed additional 100+ units for the Ashton Village Center likely translates to at least an additional 200+ cars for the immediate area; since many families will have 2+ vehicles.
- Also, for the residents of the Spring Lawn Farm community, stormwater management has not been addressed (and is a concern) with this future loss of open space, which will be replaced by impervious surfaces and buildings. There's been an increasing rise in the level of the neighborhood's stormwater management pond – which is located near Crystal Spring Drive and Country Hills Road.
- Our small town has done its part to ease the housing crisis in Montgomery County through Sandy Spring Meadows, Thomas Village, and the (currently underway) Porter Road projects. Additionally, Porter Road does already include Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) in its design.

In closing, we are not opposed to development. But, we are in favor of development that will retain the character of our beautiful, rural town area - and the county Master Plan.

Sincerely,

David Knowles
and
Lizabeth Montgomery
129 Crystal Spring Drive, Ashton MD 20861
<montknowles@comcast.net>

From: [Weaver, Richard](#)
To: [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Fwd: Ashton Village Sector Plan "StatedVision"
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020 8:20:12 AM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Anderson, Casey" <Casey.Anderson@mncppc-mc.org>
Date: March 18, 2020 at 8:23:16 PM EDT
To: "Weaver, Richard" <richard.weaver@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: FW: Ashton Village Sector Plan "StatedVision"

-----Original Message-----

From: Kristine Gannon <krisgannon@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2020 10:20 AM
To: Anderson, Casey <Casey.Anderson@mncppc-mc.org>
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan "StatedVision"

Dear Mr. Anderson,

As long time residents of Spring Lawn Farm, in Ashton, we are seriously concerned regarding the proposed changes that could occur regarding a higher density to our community. We understood the "stated vision" from your January 29, 2019 meeting was respecting our neighborhoods requests. Currently, that is not true. It's not unreasonable that we want to maintain the existing "small town character" of Ashton. We are not opposed to reasonable and honest changes. Please respect your citizens concerns and stay true to the original "stated vision" proposed.

Thank you for your service to our community, Kevin & Kristine Gannon
17505 Country View Way
Ashton
Sent from my iPhone

From: [elizabeth thornton](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Cc: [Nancy Navarro <Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov>](#) [Gabe Albornoz <Councilmember.Albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov>](#) [Evan Glass <Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov>](#) [Will Jawando <Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov>](#) [Hans Riemer](#)
Subject: Thoughts about Ashton Village Sector plan
Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2020 7:14:22 PM

Dear Planners,

I am finally getting around to writing, and I think it is significant to note that I am an active member of The Sandy Spring Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium and the Sandy Spring Civic Association. I attended many of the community meetings about this and other development actions in our neighborhood, and can say with some certainty that my one fairly late-in-the-game email represents multiple other people who just won't get around to writing. And then there are the people who won't know anything about what is proposed and will be unhappy with building once it starts and it is too late to do anything. The sector plan that was presented on January 29th was so disheartening - it didn't represent anything like the community input I heard again and again in the process. Consistently, with really one voice, people asked for for improved safety - walkability and bikeability and maintaining the Master Plan designation of a rural town center. The idea of as many as 150 dwelling units on that 8 acres along with a bank and other commercial entities just doesn't match the label "rural" or "rural village center" or even "small town character". We already have (and are about to have more with the Ashton Marketplace project) townhomes in Ashton and Sandy Spring, and the latest entries (Thomas Village and Ashton Marketplace) already too dense and too tall, too devoid of any greenspace or design features that would encourage community building. Their cost is high as well - not serving the missing middle, for instance. Please take something to the planning board more in line with the designs citizens came up with in the design workshops, and be honest about what small town and rural means - not more traffic congestions and tall buildings. Please don't make us say sarcastically as we did after the hearings about Porter Road "Thanks for pretending to listen". We want a master plan that has some teeth in the limitations to control developers. Too often we have been presented with drawings that were quite attractive (trees and green space, for example) and have ended up with things not at all like what was proposed. And now I understand that permission is being sought retroactively at Thomas Village for the changes such as the loss of the little park that was to have been an asset but had to go to make room for the fire engines to turn around. That is the kind of thing we count on you to notice before hand.

Yours sincerely,
elizabeth thornton

From: [Paula Glendinning](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#); Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Gabe Albornoz](#); [Evan Glass](#); Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Hans Riemer](#)
Subject: Preserve the Rural Character of Ashton Village
Date: Friday, March 20, 2020 3:03:54 PM

Dear Planning Board members and staff, and County Council members,

Thank you for serving all of us in Montgomery County. I know that your schedule of meetings and your plans for the spring have all been changed, and I hope that you are all staying safely at home to honor our brave health care workers.

I would guess that the developers who have been planning projects in the county may also have their plans disrupted for some time because of the economic disaster that is occurring along with the health crisis. However, I am concerned that you may be meeting soon using teleconferencing to change the zoning for the Ashton area, and I hope you will consider carefully the ramifications of your decisions.

Some of us may not survive the virus, but some of us will certainly survive, and the world we leave for the next generation will need as much open space and natural beauty as we can possibly spare. Rural preservation is more important than ever. Many of us are able to enjoy walks in the woods and a view of trees and green spaces now to give us strength and encouragement for what we are about to experience as we've been warned by the people of China and Italy.

The desires of the Ashton community to save the rural village character of Ashton were expressed clearly, over and over, in every meeting that I attended with Planning Board staff over the past year, and in every session of office hours held by Fred Boyd in the Sandy Spring Museum. Your Web site, and your printed materials say that you heard that message. Please do everything you can to honor the details that will make that happen, especially on the currently open property next to the Sandy Spring Bank at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108. That green space can't be given back to future generations if you change the zoning to allow it to be filled up with townhouses, apartments, and pavement.

I beg you to keep that property on the southeast corner of the Ashton intersection at a F.A.R. of 0.25. If you change it to 0.50, it doesn't matter how many beautiful drawings of buildings your planners can show us, because someday, a developer will fill that space to the max that you allow. No developer should be allowed to do that just so that he/she can make more money. The current owner of some of that property, Fred Nichols, knew what the zoning was when he bought the land, and his desire to add density does not override what we all trusted when we read the Master Plan when we bought our property. The needs of the community have been honored in every version of the Master Plan. If you change the zoning now, you'll be serving the needs of the developer alone.

We all are evaluating our lives these days, and what we've spent our days and years doing. I hope you will each take seriously the important consequences of your decisions for the remaining pockets of open space left in Montgomery County. The environmental stresses of climate change will continue to go on after the virus has been defeated by our brilliant scientists. The smart thing to do for our environment 50 years from now is to focus on planning the important Missing Middle housing near the Metro and other mass transit lines.

Ashton is not the place to add housing in the density that you showed us at the community meeting in the potential plans using a higher F.A.R. than 0.25 for the residential areas of Ashton. You are on the front lines for holding the zoning at the lowest densities for areas where more housing means more cars. Environmentally-conscious planning could save our children from facing the next existential crisis. Please pay attention now.

Sincerely,
Paula Glendinning
Ashton, Maryland

From: [Andrew Bartley](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Sector Plan for Ashton Village Center
Date: Friday, March 27, 2020 8:50:44 PM

Dear Jamey and Benjamin

As a resident of Ashton / Brinklow / Brookeville (specifically Brinkwood Rd), I'd like to share my support of the development of the Ashton Village Center. Our neighbors are a warm community of Montgomery County that has to travel to Burtonsville, Olney, Clarksville (Howard County) or Columbia (Howard County) to "take care of personal business", supporting other towns and other Counties.

I come through Ashton at least 4 times a day and the benches in front of the 7-11 are the current best place to gather that I can think of. Is that a proper community space?

It has been nice to recently add a CVS and it will be nice to have future options for restaurants (as much as I love El Andariego) and places to shop / run errands. I worry the folks that are opposing any development would be blind to the various local benefits that would improve our fine area.

I would be more than willing to expand upon this if so desired, but will remain brief to state it simply. My cell phone is 301-252-4143

Sincerely,
Andy Bartley

A resident
A father
A business owner
A Sherwood class of '99
A taxpayer
An Ashton PO box owner
ALL in Ashton area, Montgomery County

From: [Mike Miller](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Cc: [Fred Nichols \(fnichols@nicholscontracting.com\)](mailto:fnichols@nicholscontracting.com)
Subject: Ashton Sector Plan
Date: Friday, March 27, 2020 2:11:52 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Messers Pratt and Berbert,

This correspondence is to voice my enthusiastic support for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan as it exists currently. It is my understanding that at this 11th hour, additional amendments have been proposed by some who still oppose this development. I have lived in Montgomery County for 40 years. My home is just 2 miles north of the project site. I understand traffic patterns will be disrupted during construction and will most likely be altered once Ashton Village is open for business. But these inconveniences are well worth the benefits our community stands to gain. I navigate through the New Hampshire Avenue – Route 108 intersection each day. With some careful planning and county cooperation, the additional traffic should be manageable. In my opinion, we live in the best part of Montgomery County but we are greatly underserved by retailers and restaurants. We live in a food desert. A mixed use, community meeting place like Ashton Village is sorely needed and will greatly add to the overall quality of life for all of us in the Ashton, Brookeville and Olney region.

Mike Miller
250 Brinkwood Road
Brookeville, MD 20833



Mike Miller
President
Washington Express
(301) 210-0899 ext. 201
mike.miller@washingtonexpress.com

From: [Victoria Copeland](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Friday, March 27, 2020 11:07:19 AM

Good morning Mr. Pratt and Mr. Berbert,

It is time to make Ashton a viable place to meet, greet, shop and eat!

My family and I have lived up New Hampshire Avenue in Brookeville for the last 17 years. We have been hoping for an Ashton Village for years!

The fact that Sherwood High school kids have to walk to the other and only shopping center at New Hampshire and 108 at their own peril is ridiculous! It is time for a place on the same side as the high school where kids can go and it is time for sidewalks!

We need a user friendly community in Ashton so let us build it!

We have so many people who live in walking distance to that area! Give them a place to walk too, gather and shop.

It is time to stop dragging this on and let's make it happen! Sidewalks, shopping, housing, common areas....a place for families to gather.

Thank you for your time,

stay healthy,
best,

Victoria Copeland and family
21323 Denit Estates Dr.
Brookeville, MD 20833
301-580-3417

From: trbartley21@gmail.com
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Sector Plan
Date: Saturday, March 28, 2020 11:33:55 AM

Good Day,

I am writing today to offer my support to Ashton Sector Plan as put forth by Fred Nichols. Mr. Nichols plan provides residential and commercial development fitting for a semi rural area such as Ashton. One only needs to look at the development of Christopher's Hardware and the the Nichols Building to get a sense of the care he takes in preserving the rural feel of Ashton. The Sector Plan he has developed will do the same. Of course, there will always be those that oppose any development, but Nichols' plan provides a common sense development plan was for Ashton.

Sincerely,

Thomas Bartley
3500 Toddsury Ln
Olney, MD 20833

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Clare O'Neill](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Cc: [Nancy Navarro](#); [Gabe Albornoz](#); [Evan Glass](#); [Will Jawando](#); [Hans Riemer](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan Concern
Date: Sunday, March 29, 2020 9:19:37 AM

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners,

I am writing to voice my deep concern over the concepts for the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented by Planning Department Staff at the January 29 community meeting. I agree with the Staff's stated vision to "maintain the existing small-town character of Ashton with appropriate design and density recommendations." My concern is that Staff's proposals do not achieve this vision—in fact they undermine it.

The higher density designs proposed by the planning staff do not reflect what was asked for at the Community Meeting in October 2019 – a walkable, bikeable rural village town center with open space and community gathering space.

- Ashton's small-town character is created by a pattern of residences, businesses, and open spaces clustered around the crossroads of New Hampshire Avenue and MD Route 108.
- Developed land in the area consists almost entirely of single-family homes, affordable townhouses, single story retail.
- Currently the developed land in Ashton is interspersed with open space and trees.
- The Staff's proposals are crammed with large, out of context buildings across the entire southeast corner
- Proposal has insufficient transitions from taller buildings to the existing homes at the edges.
- Staff's open spaces are too small and in some scenarios are not visible enough from the roads.
- Staff's proposal to decorate the buildings with rural village architectural elements, such as front porches and dormer windows, cannot be guaranteed and would not disguise the extreme density
- It is extremely unlikely that any design language written into a master plan will be able to truly control the final outcome. Heights, massing, architectural elements, open space can all change (see the "open space" in Thomas Village that consists of paver stones with two benches).
- Stormwater management has not been addressed with this future loss of open space, which will be replaced by impervious surfaces and buildings. There has been increasingly unpredictable weather and unprecedented flooding (eg Ellicott City, parking garages in Maryland).
- The proposed additional 100+ units likely translates to at least an additional 200 cars as most families have 2+ cars
- The only transit to the area consists of a few buses each day to Silver Spring Metro, so many of the new inhabitants of the proposed development will be commuting by car. Additional mass transit is unlikely to our area, given tight budgets and the fact that residents really need cars to reach shopping, as well as jobs.
- Traffic currently backs up at the intersection and many in the area must plan their commutes to avoid this, if they have that luxury. Those with school-aged children likely can't avoid the traffic.
- The current traffic load doesn't yet reflect the impact of the Porter Road project.
- Staff proposes this development to fill the Missing Middle with housing out of character

with Ashton such as apartment buildings and massive townhouse blocks

- The Planning Board's report says Missing Middle housing should be located close to transit and jobs, and Ashton does not provide this context.

-

Sincerely,

Clare O'Neill

From: [Florence Teh](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Cc: [Nancy Navarro](#); [Gabe Albornoz](#); [Evan Glass](#); [Will Jawando](#); [Hans Riemer](#)
Subject: Recommendations for the Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date: Sunday, March 29, 2020 1:02:27 PM

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners,

I am writing to voice my deep concern over the concepts for the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented by Planning Department Staff at the January 29 community meeting. I agree with the Staff's stated vision to "maintain the existing small-town character of Ashton with appropriate design and density recommendations." My concern is that Staff's proposals do not achieve this vision—in fact they undermine it.

The higher density designs proposed by the planning staff do not reflect what was asked for at the Community Meeting in October 2019 – a walkable, bikeable rural village town center with open space and community gathering space.

- Ashton's small-town character is created by a pattern of residences, businesses, and open spaces clustered around the crossroads of New Hampshire Avenue and MD Route 108.
- Developed land in the area consists almost entirely of single-family homes, affordable townhouses, single story retail.
- Currently the developed land in Ashton is interspersed with open space and trees.
- The Staff's proposals are crammed with large, out of context buildings across the entire southeast corner
- Proposal has insufficient transitions from taller buildings to the existing homes at the edges.
- Staff's open spaces are too small and in some scenarios are not visible enough from the roads.
- Staff's proposal to decorate the buildings with rural village architectural elements, such as front porches and dormer windows, cannot be guaranteed and would not disguise the extreme density
- It is extremely unlikely that any design language written into a master plan will be able to truly control the final outcome. Heights, massing, architectural elements, open space can all change (see the "open space" in Thomas Village that consists of paver stones with two benches).
- Stormwater management has not been addressed with this future loss of open space, which will be replaced by impervious surfaces and buildings. There has been increasingly unpredictable weather and unprecedented flooding (eg Ellicott City, parking garages in Maryland).
- The proposed additional 100+ units likely translates to at least an additional 200 cars as most families have 2+ cars
- The only transit to the area consists of a few buses each day to Silver Spring Metro, so many of the new inhabitants of the proposed development will be commuting by car. Additional mass transit is unlikely to our area, given tight budgets and the fact that residents really need cars to reach shopping, as well as jobs.
- Traffic currently backs up at the intersection and many in the area must plan their commutes to avoid this, if they have that luxury. Those with school-aged children likely can't avoid the traffic.
- The current traffic load doesn't yet reflect the impact of the Porter Road project.
- Staff proposes this development to fill the Missing Middle with housing out of character

with Ashton such as apartment buildings and massive townhouse blocks

- The Planning Board's report says Missing Middle housing should be located close to transit and jobs, and Ashton does not provide this context.
- Our small area has done its part to ease the housing crisis in Montgomery County through Sandy Spring Meadows, Thomas Village, and the (approved but not yet built) Porter Road Projects. Additionally, Porter Road includes MPDUs in its design.

A very concerned resident,
Florence Teh
17514 Ashton Green Dr
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

From: [tom dunwoody](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Sunday, March 29, 2020 10:22:19 AM

Jamey

I am writing in support of the potential of a new Ashton Village Center. I have been a resident of

Ashton for over 20 years and frankly my family is tired of having to drive to other cities to socialize. The popularity of town centers is obvious as all communities across the area embrace the idea of staying local to shop and eat at restaurants. Ashton needs a place where we can all walk to or a short drive and then visit with friends. The center should include an outdoor area.

I have raised three kids in Ashton. We are a proud Sherwood family but frankly it drives me crazy when I needed to drive them to Rockville or Gaithersburg to go to a safe area where they could congregate with friends. We need that in Ashton!

The current Corona Virus emergency only adds to this desire. We will emerge from this crisis and the community will want a local resource to use as we reconnect. It needs to be local. Thank you for your consideration to my points.

Tom Dunwoody

From: [Jennifer Mazur](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Meeting Place Please
Date: Monday, March 30, 2020 8:48:45 AM

Dear Mr. Pratt and Mr. Berbert,

I am a long time resident of Ashton, MD. I have been a part of this community since 1999. I have also been very active, having served as PTA president for Farquahr middle school for 3 years as well as a volunteer for the Sandy Spring Garden Club and both Sherwood Elementary and High School. I also volunteered and provided input that eventually gave the proposal you have now.

The corner of Rte. 108 and New Hampshire Avenue has long been an eyesore and it does not reflect the climate of our community. Residents of Ashton are active, involved and very proud of the history that exists here. We walk the trails and neighborhoods, work-out in the parks and actively support our wonderful Sandy Spring Museum. This bustling supportive community is NOT reflected at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Rte 108.

Our homes are beautiful but the retail on our corner is not. Our kids do not have a sidewalk to go from the school to the 7-11 (the school is less than 1/2 mile from the corner). I have long been in favor of the Meeting Place because:

1. The village center needs more people and activity so it really feels like the center of the community.
2. We need more retail and restaurant options.
3. It would be great to have an outdoor space for community gatherings.

Please APPROVE the proposed plan for the Ashton Meeting Place. This community really needs it!

From: [Amy Tulacro](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 6:44:31 PM

Hi!

We have lived in Ashton for two years. We see value in adding to the retail/office space in the area as we think it is beneficial for property values and other conveniences. I am concerned with what bringing in so many housing units to the corner of NH and 108 will do to the already crowded congested intersection with no new additional turn lanes or provisions for what will be additional cars on the road during busy times.

With the proximity to Sherwood High School and the fact that 108 is a connector to route 32 in one direction and the ICC in the other this area has a lot of traffic issues in the morning and the evening. My boys attends Good Counsel High School and Farquhar Middle School so we make a left in the mornings from NH onto 108 and it can take 2 or 3 left turn signals to get through the light as it is.

This intersection is a free for all now with two lanes merging into one in front of the Exxon station where cars routinely speed up and cut other cars off.... cars turning right on red in front of the same Exxon station combining with those merging lanes. Cars turning left onto 108 from then left turn lane and because the light is so short cars have started using the middle lane to turn left as well because it is not designated as a straight only lane and then merge into the turning lane after turning left in front of the 7-11. Not to mention the cars entering from the 7-11 parking lot and merging in with ongoing traffic. I have a new driver in the house and it is impossible to anticipate all the things he needs to learn to navigate that intersection as it is now.....spend some time there during rush hour and you will see what I am talking about. It is unreal.

Adding 100-150 additional housing units using this corner intersection and it will be gridlock and I am concerned about what that means for those of us living here. What are the plans to address congestion and safety as it pertains to this intersection.

We also need to address pedestrian safety at this same intersection as Sherwood students routinely are running across the road to the 7-11 not at the light but before the light and it's just not safe for them. With the new retail establishments this will become more of a walking area between the various shopping areas and this needs to be addressed. You would only know these things if you experienced this intersection routinely during rush hours which is why I am bringing this to your attention.

I would appreciate a response as it pertains to traffic and pedestrian safety.

Thank you.

Amy Tulacro
301.654.5485

Creative spelling courtesy of my iPad

From: [Julia Miller](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 2:54:02 PM

Hello Mr. Pratt and Mr. Berbert,

I live in Brookeville area, very close to Ashton. I wanted to express my full support for *Ashton Meeting Place*, and I am excited to see its progress. I feel this development will offer a great place for people to gather to enjoy a cup of coffee, a nice meal, pick up food to take home, or simply enjoy time together in a nice outdoor space. The plans demonstrate that it will be an aesthetically pleasing, upscale development which the community can enjoy for years to come. The architectural design of *Christopher's Hardware* store and the *Nichols Building* provided substantially improved quality and design, while at the same time maintaining a quaint, small-town experience for the community. While this is a larger scale development with the potential for more impact on traffic, I believe the overall benefit will far exceed any disadvantages. While we live in a nice part of the county, our retail and restaurant options are very limited. Whenever there is talk of new restaurants and shopping, the community is abuzz with this news because we typically have to drive a minimum of 10 to 20 minutes to enjoy these amenities. The luxury homes planned will offer options for those that do not care for more typical single-family homes in the area and want to live in a walkable neighborhood that offers more amenities. We are fortunate that this developer lives in the community and deeply cares about providing a development that is attractive, provides the amenities the community wants and needs, and will serve as a community hub.

Thank you,
Julia Miller

jmillersw@gmail.com
240-994-7820

From: [tim begely](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 9:57:18 AM

I find the plan for the Ashton Meeting Place as part of the Ashton Village Center to have significant benefits to the local community. Not only will it bring a variety of housing options but will bring needed retail and restaurant options and a place for community gatherings. The Nichols Construction Company did a nice job with the Christopher's Hardware store and the townhouses in Sandy Spring and I think the Ashton Meeting place will turnout well.

Tim Begley
201 Haviland Mill Road
Brookeville, MD

From: [tim begely](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Re: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 8:56:54 PM

Hi Jamey,

It is incredible that the utility pole has not been dealt with. Before the CVS turning north from traveling west on 108 onto 650 for an 18 wheeler was impossible, road strip threshold close too intersection. The 18 wheeler traveling east on 108 to 650 north was some what OK because there was no physical curb to go north, more turning room, because of lots of road shoulder (not technically the official road plan). Now CVS comes in and the physical road for all turns became narrow because of curbs (to accommodate storm water). So now with the new CVS no 18 wheeler or any truck with a trailer traveling west on 108 turning to go north on 650 can make the turn. So the very mindless astute SHA folks decided to move the south bound stop signal threshold line back north on 650 **because of the pole**. In a typical morning, given there are many landscape business north of 108/650, all trucks with trailers, now one car and one of these truck-trailers in a line at the stop light causes the entrance to the 7Eleven/Dempsey to be blocked. Remember drivers do not care exactly where the stop threshold is just as long as they are close enough, can stop and they can get to their cell phone messages. The reverse happens in the evening. The entrance to 7Eleven/Dempsey parking lot is now constantly blocked causing the 650/108 intersection to be a problem because of the pole that the CVS construction never dealt with.

Yes a mindless SHA traffic engineer can add car/truck lengths, so can I, spend more that an hour at the intersection at rush hours observing really what is happening and what type of vehicles are at the intersection and you might actually prevent problems.

I travel though this intersection every day during rush hour by car . I also ride my bike through this intersection on the weekends.

I am sure you know there are **no pedestrian cross walks** at this intersection, as a planer you better.

The folks that developed the CVS hid the utility pole problem, everyone with half a brain who truly lives here knows it is the problem in the 650/108 intersection. How this got beyond county planners is dumbfounding.

Because this utility pole is still at the exact same coordinates after the CVS construction demonstrates the failure of the planning board review system.

But we are going to be quibbling about building height issues and the definition of a rural village when the CVS construction created true physical problem?

Hope this input is valuable.

Tim

On Tue, Mar 31, 2020 at 1:28 PM Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Tim,

I looked through the [documents related to the CVS Ashton project](#). Nothing I could find in there mentioned the utility pole. The staff report contains letters from both MC DOT and SHA and neither of them discuss this pole. I guess the applicant was able to meet their requirements within the existing pavement near that pole so did not have to do anything

about it.

My question to you: how does the pole by CVS end up affecting the traffic going in and out of the 7-Eleven parking lot? Just trying to understand how the two are related.

Also, for your email address, I understand that thbegley is the correct spelling. What I was asking about is the way your name is spelled on the From line of emails that come from you. This is something you never see when you are sending a message, but it is how the recipient sees your name. I was suggesting that perhaps your last name is misspelled within your account settings for gmail and thought you might want to correct it within your Google/gmail account. You can see what I'm talking about just below this sentence in the From line of your email to me.

Jamey

From: tim begely <thbegley@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 10:54 AM
To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: Re: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Jamey,

How did that CVS project go forward without the requirement to move that utility pole? Because that was left where it originally was it has created many traffic issues getting in and out of 7Eleven/Dempsy parking lot. Now that was very bad planning.

Tim

On Tue, Mar 31, 2020 at 10:47 AM tim begely <thbegley@gmail.com> wrote:

Jamey

My email is thbegley@gmail.com

Tim

On Tue, Mar 31, 2020 at 10:10 AM Pratt, Jamey
<jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Tim,

As we were adding your email address to our mailing list, I noticed that your email address has "Begley" and the name next to it on the From line has "begely". I'm assuming it is the "Begley" that is correct, but please let me know if I have assumed incorrectly. Is this something that is set in your gmail account settings?

Thanks!

Jamey

From: tim begely <thbegley@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 9:57 AM
To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>; Berbert, Benjamin
<benjamin.berbert@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

I find the plan for the Ashton Meeting Place as part of the Ashton Village Center to have significant benefits to the local community. Not only will it bring a variety of housing options but will bring needed retail and restaurant options and a place for community gatherings. The Nichols Construction Company did a nice job with the Christopher's Hardware store and the townhouses in Sandy Spring and I think the Ashton Meeting place will turnout well.

Tim Begley

201 Haviland Mill Road

Brookeville, MD

From: cw@carterbuildersmd.com
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Cc: [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Master Plan
Date: Thursday, April 2, 2020 9:22:57 AM

Jamey, Ben, I would like to express my support for the Ashton Village Plan as shown at the community meeting earlier this year. I think it is a well thought out plan. The community needs more diverse housing, commercial and retail space. This plan will add to the traffic but not to the extent that will cause to much congestion.

Please express my support for the plan.

Thanks, Carter

Carter Willson

President- Carter, Inc.

Office (301) 738-7717 | Cell (301) 343-7994 | Fax (301) 738-7714 www.CarterBuildersMD.com

1682 East Gude Drive | Suite 301 | Rockville, MD 20850

From: [Tedd Conner](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Meeting Place
Date: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 10:28:34 AM

Jamey/Benjamin:

I am a life long resident of Ashton, MD and our 50 acre family farm, which happens to be the only working farm left in Ashton, has been in the Conner family since the 1920s. I have seen many changes in Ashton over my 59 years, and have welcomed the growth. Many of the people who are opposed to this development are also lifelong residents of Ashton/Sandy Spring who at one time owned large farms, and sold them to housing developers for profit which has eliminated the rural character they are now disingenuously trying to retain.

My entire family is looking forward to having a true center of our community as the outdated 7-11 anchored "shopping center" does not suffice as the cornerstone of our town. More retail and restaurant options would most certainly be welcomed in this town, and we are afraid that if this proposed Meeting Place falls through, the developer will probably sell the property to a large big box firm, and we will end up with another pharmacy or worse.

I have reviewed the concept plan, and the renderings are tasteful, with a great mix of housing types and some great outdoor space where we can have town gatherings and meetings and our kids can meet with their friends.

I think the overall concept for this planned development is a huge win for our town and we cannot wait for work to begin!

Respectfully,

--

[Tedd Conner](#)
[301-399-5201](#)
teddconner@gmail.com

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Commissioners,

We would like to voice our opposition to the Ashton Village Sector Plan, Conceptual Schemes 1 and 2, laid out at the Jan Community Meeting.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Development-Scenarios-Handout-2020-01-29-1.pdf>

As active Ashton community members, we attended the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Kick-Off Meeting, the Design Workshops in October 2019, as well as the Community Meeting on preliminary recommendations in January 2020. We are members of the Sandy Spring Rural Preservation Consortium (SSARPC) that hired Anthony Catania, RA of Michael Watkins Architects, LLC to design the well-received plan presented at the follow-up community meeting. It has been a pleasure to work with Fred Boyd and wish him well in his retirement. We participated in the development of the 1998 Sandy Spring Ashton Master Plan and now look forward to working with Benjamin Berbert the acting supervisor and Jamey Pratt the new lead Planner for Ashton as well as Roberto Duke remains as the community designer for the plan.

We would like to repeat the unanimous opinion voiced at the final community meeting which expressed total dissatisfaction with any plan that:

1. Failed to comply with the primary goals of the Master Plan. Specifically, as it relates to requiring any development that does not support and maintain the rural character of the area as well as complimenting the current surrounding patterns of development.
2. Caused added traffic congestions and road safety concerns to already nightmare traffic delays.
3. Did not include safe walkable, bikeable and well-designed intergenerational open space and playground areas. (This is a perfect location for the community-gathering place or park that Ashton needs.)
4. Ignored that total lack of suitable public transportation.
5. Failed to recognize that the oversized Thomas Village and Porter Road developments were approved with little or no regard for the pleas from the community to limit the height and square footage of the structures.

Clearly the number of units that could occur on the southeast corner of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue as a result of potential provisions of the plan is completely inconsistent with the nature of a rural village. The potential for 100-150 units with the corresponding massing and building heights, along with the safety and other impacts will create a chaotic increase in auto and pedestrian traffic at the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. It is most alarming that the

proposed development would add two more entrances onto Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue, bringing the total to ten!

Our community respects and supports the county's efforts to meet the growing population's need for housing. After careful review of The Missing Middle Housing Study it is clear that the idea of having a mix of housing types and the concept of providing housing units that are affordable as outlined in "The Missing Middle Housing Study," is appealing, but this site is NOT the proper place to implement such a strategy.

This location does not offer many of the requirements specifically stated in the Study: It is not:

1. Along major transportation corridors, where Missing Middle housing can serve as a transition between busy thoroughfares and neighborhoods on internal streets.
2. At the edges of single-family residential neighborhoods adjacent to other more dense uses and building typologies, so as to provide a transition between land uses.
3. Within a certain distance of transit and transportation alternatives such as bus, bus rapid transit, Metro and Purple Line light rail.
4. Able to offer a limited number of typologies within single-family neighborhoods, e.g. accessory dwelling units or duplexes."

The southeast corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108 does not meet any of these criteria.

In closing, our primary concern is the size and number of units of any potential development on the southeast corner which we fear that it will be inconsistent with the existing development on the other corners in scale and scope. The current FAR of .25 for residential development for the southeast corner is more appropriate for a village crossroads that will reflect Ashton's unique character. If the Planning Board ignores the community's input and a developer is allowed to increase it to permit a residential FAR of .5 or as has been suggested to .75, they would consent to a massive housing development destroying Ashton's unique rural character.

Thank you for your time and kind attention.

Nadine and Greg Mort
320 Ashton Road
Ashton, Maryland 20861

April 3, 2020

Jamey Pratt
Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Lead

RE: Ashton Village Center – Master Plan

Dear Mr. Pratt:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed changes to the Ashton Village Master Center Sector Plan presented by the Planning Department Staff at a community meeting on January 29, 2020.

During the January 29 meeting, the Planning staff stressed the need to increase the housing stock within Montgomery County, the need to address the “Missing Middle” and the need to address Project Zero.

I recognize the importance of these goals, however the zoning proposal put forward by the Planning staff should be rejected as it would inextricably change the nature and character of the small Ashton village and in actuality is out-of-sync with the perspective of the Ashton residents and out-of-sync with the goals of the County.

Under specific consideration is the Ashton Village Center, which as presented by the Planning staff, is approximately a 1/3 mile radius from the center of the New Hampshire and Route 108 intersection. Using this radius, the Planning staff put forward a recommendation which would add nearly 100+ families to the Ashton Village Center. This would increase the density of the Ashton Village Center by over 100%. The proposed doubling of density would be in addition to the 20% density increase that Ashton Village Center has already absorbed through the Porter Road Project – which is adding over 20 housing units and retail space directly adjacent to the New Hampshire/Route 108 intersection.

Asking a small village like Ashton to increase housing stock to address the needs of Montgomery County is reasonable. Asking a small village like Ashton to help address the Missing Middle is also reasonable. But asking any community – Ashton, Silver Spring, Rockville, Olney, Germantown, Gaithersburg or any other community in Montgomery County to increase housing stock by 100% is simply ***not reasonable***. You cannot double the density of a community without altering the very nature of the community. Nor should you reasonably ask a community to accept, on a percentage basis, density increases which outstrip and would overwhelm the resources of the community.

A reasonable solution to this issue, would be to leave the zoning for the Ashton Village Center as it currently stands, which would allow for an appropriate increase in the housing stock in Ashton, in a manner which is consistent with historic nature of the Ashton Village and in a manner which is consistent with the existing master plan for Ashton.

Another issue associated with the Planning staff's recommendation is the inevitable increase in traffic that would accompany significant density increases. The Planning staff was, at best circumspect, regarding any potential road improvements or other infrastructure improvements needed to accommodate an additional 100+ families. As proposed, the 100+ families would be closely packed into a small corner parcel which borders a heavily used intersection. Wait times at the New Hampshire/Route 108 intersection are currently measured not in seconds or minutes but rather in the number of light cycles that you are required to endure. In addition, the intersection already has a large number of “blind spots” which must be carefully navigated to avoid collisions. The addition of 100+ families, and 200+, cars in Ashton Village Center would negatively, not positively, impact Project Zero.

The type of housing stock proposed by the Planning staff is inconsistent with the housing stock envisioned by the current Ashton Master Plan. The current plan envisions homes/buildings which are height restricted at 30 feet and are consistent with the historic and rural nature of Ashton. The multi-level apartment buildings, duplexes, and large three and four-story townhomes contemplated by the Planning staff are simply out of character and would unnaturally dominate the Ashton Village Center. Furthermore, the current plan does not ensure/guarantee that the housing stock that a developer would build, would in fact address the issues associated with the Missing Middle housing stock. All recent townhomes built in the Ashton/Sandy Spring area have been \$700,000+ townhomes. If the issue of affordable housing is a real concern for Montgomery County, I would offer up that the smaller, historically accurate cottage style homes, associated with Ashton would be better suited to address the Missing Middle problem.

The issue regarding affordable housing for the Missing Middle is important. But as contemplated by the County, efforts to address the Missing Middle are to be focused in areas which have adequate/appropriate public transit and adjacency to commercial/business centers to support employment opportunities. Ashton Village Center is a very small village with a single bus line, and no significant employment opportunities. We have a few small businesses, but we do not have the employment base needed to absorb 100+ families contemplated by the Planning staff. Significant increases in Ashton's density, which doesn't have access to adequate public transportation, will only exacerbate a traffic problem which is tenuous at best as the 100+ new families would be required to commute out of Ashton for employment opportunities. This single issue, in and of itself, should be justification enough to stop the planned rezoning/development of Ashton Village Center.

There are a host of other issues with the rezoning concepts which I could expand upon:

- Insufficient transitions between overly large buildings to smaller buildings.
- Insufficient open space.
- Overly broad language, lack of specificity, which would not provide adequate protection of the rural and historic nature of Ashton.
- Increases in impervious surfaces, which will have detrimental effects on the fragile watershed which runs through Ashton.

I am fully cognizant of the need for change and progress. I recognize that every part of Montgomery County needs to do its part to support sustainable growth. But the current proposal is placing too much of the burden on Ashton. The plan is not fair, as it would impose a material change upon the members of the community who deliberately moved to Ashton because it is inherently different from the rest of the County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Walt Fennell
17513 Hidden Garden Lane
Ashton, MD 20861
Waltster65@yahoo.com

From: [Douglas B. Farquhar](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, Item 9, Planning Board Meeting date April 16, 2020
Date: Monday, April 6, 2020 3:34:59 PM

Dear Planning Board members and staff,

I am writing this as the Planning Department staff is preparing for a talk session with the Montgomery County Planning Board on April 16, presumably to solicit further direction from the Board as planning staff presents its preliminary findings and tries to finalize its proposal for a new Sector Plan for the Ashton area. Residents in the area have made sincere and continuous efforts to participate in the planning process. Dozens of us attended presentations by the Planning Staff and three days of design workshops. The overwhelming consensus of those meetings and of the community at large has been to express a strong desire that zoning for the area preserve Ashton's rural character, which was one of the main goals articulated, from the very beginning, as the Sector Plan process was announced.

At a meeting with the community on January 29, 2020, Planning Staff made a presentation of alternative scenarios that they are considering for the critical southeast corner of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue, which forms the centerpiece of the community, and is the eastern gateway to the Sandy Spring/Ashton area. Planning staff rejected a plan – paid for and proposed by a group of neighboring residents – with lower building heights, more green space, and a rural village feel. Planning staff instead offered two preliminary proposals for that corner, one of which proposes 101 dwelling units (68 of which are apartments massed in large buildings) for the less than 8 buildable acres of the property (about 1.5 acres of the site is an environmental buffer, at the southeast corner of the property). The other proposes 67 units for the same space. The community proposal, and the planners' preliminary proposals, are available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Development-Scenarios-Handout-2020-01-29-1.pdf>.

Planning staff has justified its proposal as a measure addressing the County's creditable effort to provide housing for the "missing middle." As a nearby resident, I back this effort, but believe that the effort should concentrate on building homes in areas that are close to employment centers and mass transit centers. In our area, traffic chokes the roads with school traffic (there are at least for high schools in the immediate area) every school-day morning and afternoon. No one can go shopping, or to school, or to work except in an automobile, and the prospects for sufficient mass transit to service even the existing residents of the area are nonexistent, realistically. The area is far from any employment centers. To sacrifice the rural feel of our area in order to build numerous apartment buildings in our rustic area – on a tract that has never been anything but open space – would be a travesty.

Community residents offered an alternative that would be tasteful, would increase the sense of community, and would provide attractive, lower-cost bungalow-style homes clustered around a village green that would be affordable and maintain a small-town feel. We understand that we cannot dictate to property owners the type and style of buildings that they are permitted to erect.

We are willing to work with the developer to come up with a mutually acceptable plan that avoids the kind of building and population density that is represented by the Planning Staff preliminary proposals. To date, the developer has not agreed to share with us any proposal, or his desires for the property.

Please, in your discussions with the Planning Staff on April 16, 2020, I beg you to ask questions and provide direction to Planning Staff designed to elicit development standards that limit the density of the development on that corner and that will not result in creating a population center that will be out-of-character with the area, and a colossal increased strain on traffic and infrastructure. The plan approved for the property in 2008 call for a FAR of .28, nearly all of it commercial property. That plan represented a compromise for the community. The current plan we propose, now that commercial development is no longer as marketable, has a FAR of about .25, with most of the square footage being residential (consistent with existing zoning on the property at .25 for residential, for most of the property). The goals we seek, and which the Planning Board should re-enforce, are to create a walkable, bikable primarily residential community with ample green spaces visible from public thoroughfares, with buildings of a style and scale that is consistent with a small town.

Sincerely,

Doug Farquhar
1601 Olney Sandy Spring Road
Sandy Spring, Maryland
Cell: 202 263 9951

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From: [Bolen, Steve](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Monday, April 6, 2020 10:31:44 AM

Benjamin/Jamey –

As 40+ year residents of eastern Montgomery County and 20-year residents of Ashton, we are writing to strongly support the proposed changes to the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. It is our view that these changes are long overdue and will facilitate more connectivity and activity in our beloved town. The prospect of new retail stores and additional housing at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Sandy Spring Road is very exciting for the community. Our town needs more places for community engagement, work opportunities for young people and housing opportunities for families that want to call Ashton home. We believe that the proposed Sector Plan changes promote these worthwhile goals. Please approve the approved changes.

Thanks,
Steven & Meryl Bolen
17508 Skyline Drive
Ashton, MD 20861

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From: [Hope Lynch](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Planning
Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 11:33:40 AM

I live in Ashton and have serious concerns about the density that is recommended by the developer. I purchased my home to have that edge of country feel and the massive changes to the development feel very different than what I bought into. I feel the developer is getting away with a lot of exceptions over here that do not seem in the spirit of the neighborhood. Also knowing there are no state road improvements happening this is just insane. Traffic is a mess already, it's hard to get out of my driveway.

I own 127 Onley Sandy Spring Road. I would like to know what changes to my property are being considered with the new zoning. My property is just under 3 acres total. I pay full tax rate but I am not allowed to even bush hog the back parcel. Is there any consideration that can be made for my property while Mont CO is redesigning the entire area?

Also if a sidewalk is going onto my property doesn't someone need to contact me about purchasing the amount of property needed for said sidewalk? I have not heard anything.

HOPE LYNCH
cell: 301 367-2706

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April 7, 2020

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Board members:

I am writing to express my thoughts on how the Ashton Village Sector Plan should be implemented to best serve our community.

As a Sandy Spring resident, and a longtime homeowner along Route 108, Ashton is my stomping grounds. I use the bank, the dry cleaner, the post office, and frequent the pharmacy and restaurants. The intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue is a hub of community activity.

It would be nice if we could inherit development in this neighborhood that reflects the area's cherished legacy of rural character--- for that is why we all live here. In a world just busting to overdevelop, let's find a compromise in which developers marginally win their higher residential FAR and the community finally wins the right to contribute to what that density looks like. I believe we could find common ground if allowed to participate in the planning process for what will most certainly be a profoundly different landscape for our community.

For many of us, what happened to Sandy Spring Village is a heartbreaker. I am not proud that our community did not do enough to stop the gross overdevelopment of Thomas Village. (That would be more than 3,000 sq. ft massive townhomes that overshadow and diminish abutting homes and historic buildings.) Clearly, it does not make sense to write letters of vehement opposition, as my family did, to no avail.

This time my request is simple: let's work together to make Ashton Village something we can all be proud of.

Please do not push on our community what you think we should become. We need a plan that reflects the best hopes of both parties.

Let's get a plan that shows that the Planning Department has heard at least some of what the community has been asking for at the many meetings and workshops we have all attended in the past nine months.

Thank you for your consideration

Terry Franklin

1601 Olney Sandy Spring Road

Sandy Spring, MD 20860



April 4, 2020

Casey Anderson and the Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3716

Mr. Anderson:

My name is Peter Austin. I live on a farm one mile north on New Hampshire Avenue from the Ashton intersection. My parents bought the property in 1953 and although I've traveled elsewhere it's been the only home I've ever known. I can't call myself a native because I have many friends in the community with family roots that go back for generations. The Sandy Spring/Ashton area is a unique, historically rich and interesting region. We have been fortunate to have been spared elimination at the hands of developers.

There are other, possibly countless, communities that have been subsumed beneath the inexorable advance of housing developments that have addressed the needs of a growing population. Clarksville, Olney, Cloverly, Norbeck, Colesville, and others come to mind when I think of classic rural crossroads that have lost their identity and the qualities that distinguished them from just another American suburb.

You are now contemplating further development of the Ashton area. What you decide will inevitably affect surrounding real estate as well. Two recent projects, Thomas Village and Ashton Market, were approved and either have been build or are in progress. Both these projects can be safely described as "shoe-horned" endeavors that successfully squeezed into a small location the maximum number of units possible. When residents, neighbors, and concerned members of the community learned of the details, it was too late. I went to a Planning Board meeting to protest and my observation was that you did a commendable job of pretending to care.

We want to see the rural nature of the Ashton/Sandy Spring area respected and protected from developers who want to maximize profits with no concern for those who live here already. We also seek protection from bureaucrats who want a fatter neighborhood to tax and will give the developers free reign. It is the perception that your sympathies lie with the profiteers and not with maintaining a rural character and diverse economic population. I challenge you to consider those who live here now. We will live with your decisions.

We are not against development but we want it to serve the existing neighborhood and not make things (like traffic) worse.

From: [Hope Lynch](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: RE: Ashton Village Planning
Date: Monday, April 13, 2020 10:52:47 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Thanks Jamey,

I have spoken to Michael and he is going to come out and take a look at the property.

I wanted to go on record that I oppose the density proposed for the Ashton project on the Southeast corner of 108 and New Hampshire. The builder has gotten away with so much development and many, many amendments allowing far greater and taller projects on the land he is developing in Ashton and Sandy Spring.

The former Sole D'Italia property is about the same size as my lot and to think of what is proposed on that space is just insane. Nice to see the eyesore gone now but giving this developer seemingly everything he is asking for just doesn't take the character of the neighborhood or the concerns of the neighbors into account.

Another concerned neighbor in Ashton. Thank you for any consideration you and the Planning Commission may give to the current residents of Ashton.

HOPE LYNCH

Senior Benefits Consultant

dba C.T. Hellmuth & Associates

cell: 301 367-2706

office: 301 986-6506

8401 Connecticut Ave., Suite 501, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

hklynch@onedigital.com | onedigital.com



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From: Pratt, Jamey [mailto:jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org]

Sent: Wednesday, April 08, 2020 10:28 AM

To: Hope Lynch <hlynch@cthellmuth.com>

Cc: Sharp, Michael <Michael.Sharp@montgomeryplanning.org>

Subject: [External] RE: Ashton Village Planning

Hope,

As far as the forest conservation inspectors and I are concerned, the only part of your yard that you can't cut down anything in is the very back 0.97 acres. I didn't notice before, but the Forest Conservation Plan we have on file for the property was signed, so it still stands, even though the developer never recorded the required forest conservation easement. There is a stream valley buffer that needs to remain protected because it is part of the Patuxent Primary Management Area.

You can get an idea of where the edge of the easement is from our online easement finder:
<https://mcatlas.org/FCE/>

The FCP is available here:
<http://eplans.montgomeryplanning.org/daiclinks/pdoxlinks.aspx?apno=SC2004016>

The forest conservation inspector for your area is Michael Sharp, and he'd be glad to answer any questions you might have about what you can and can't do back there.

I have copied Michael on this message.

Hopefully this helps!
Jamey

From: Hope Lynch <hlynch@cthellmuth.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 1:03 PM
To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: RE: Ashton Village Planning

I think the people looking at our community keep getting me confused with the 5 acre parcel back over sort of behind my property. I am looking to determine what is on file and what I can do. The weed creep into my landscaped yard I would love to be able to get rid of some of it. I love having the trees and have no intention of changing things I just want to know what I can do.

Can you look at your files and/or advise where I can go to determine this?

Thanks,
Hope

From: Pratt, Jamey [<mailto:jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2020 12:55 PM
To: Hope Lynch <hlynch@cthellmuth.com>
Subject: [External] RE: Ashton Village Planning

I was just going to send you a message asking why it is that you can't bush hog the entire back part

of your property. Is this something you were told when you bought the house, or built it, or was there another source of information.

Thanks!
Jamey

From: Hope Lynch <hlynch@cthellmuth.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 12:53 PM
To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: RE: Ashton Village Planning

Can you advise if my understanding of the use of my property is correct? What acreage on my lot is zoned buffer or sorry whatever the term is ☺ I am getting conflicting information about the size of buffer and figured I would ask the expert.

Thanks,
Hope

From: Pratt, Jamey [<mailto:jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2020 12:48 PM
To: Hope Lynch <hlynch@cthellmuth.com>
Subject: [External] RE: Ashton Village Planning

Hope,

Thank you for your comments. I wanted to let you know we received them.

We do not have any plans to change anything about the zoning of your property at all. There is a shared-use path recommended along the north side of MD 108 that would go through your property. It is my understanding that the state or county purchases land required for sidewalks and paths along their rights-of-way, but I don't know if anyone has priced out this part of whatever budget item would include this project. I haven't seen anything.

Jamey

From: Hope Lynch <hlynch@cthellmuth.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 11:33 AM
To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: Ashton Village Planning

I live in Ashton and have serious concerns about the density that is recommended by the developer. I purchased my home to have that edge of country feel and the massive changes to the

development feel very different than what I bought into. I feel the developer is getting away with a lot of exceptions over here that do not seem in the spirit of the neighborhood. Also knowing there are no state road improvements happening this is just insane. Traffic is a mess already, it's hard to get out of my driveway.

I own 127 Onley Sandy Spring Road. I would like to know what changes to my property are being considered with the new zoning. My property is just under 3 acres total. I pay full tax rate but I am not allowed to even bush hog the back parcel. Is there any consideration that can be made for my property while Mont CO is redesigning the entire area?

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HOPE LYNCH
cell: 301 367-2706

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From: [James Meehan](#)
To: keepashtonrural@gmail.com
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Oversight for Ashton Market/future projects...
Date: Monday, April 13, 2020 12:38:27 PM

What with County/Planning Board regulations, limits, height requirements not followed at the Thomas Village townhouse development, what assurances are in place that Planning Board recommendations will be adhered to on developing the Ashton Market project? If there is no county-wide/Planning Board oversight at the Porter Road site, and with the history of the same developer due to develop the Ashton Village site, how can the community know that it's background work with the Planning Board will be adhered to? A "get forgiveness...then permission" attitude from said/same developer cannot continue as the Ashton area roads are not equipped to handle more traffic! If what is in place re county regulations (zoning, density height requirements, safety issues, State mandated traffic improvements, etc...) are not followed, why does the county permit not in compliance developers to continue to operate?

Believe it is the responsibility of the County via it's Planning Board to see that whatever is agreed to prior to construction is adhered to. Regardless of what agency might be appointed to carry out said oversight, it vital it happens with consequences for when stated boundaries/limits not followed!

State of Maryland as far back as 2008-09 on record that no development can take place on 108/New Hampshire intersection without major improvements to that corner. Amount of congestion coming with Ashton Market/Porter Rd site will only add to issues related to Ashton Village site! If developer can be held accountable with respect to current project by way of vigorous oversight (provided by the County) it will bode well for the safety of Ashton residents...

-----Original Message-----

From: SSARPC <keepashtonrural@gmail.com>
Sent: Sun, Apr 5, 2020 1:43 pm
Subject: Planning Board Agenda for April 16th meeting

All,
Hope everyone is healthy, well and staying sane while sheltering at home. We wanted to send a few updates/reminders.

See the link below for the Planning Board agenda where the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan will be discussed (next to last agenda item) on April 16th. <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda-item/april-16-2020/>

Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Briefing

Staff briefing to the Planning Board on the progress of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan including preliminary recommendations for land uses, zoning, design, and transportation.

Staff Recommendation: Staff briefing and Board guidance on preliminary recommendations.

J. Pratt

The website says you should be able to live stream the meeting (though I personally have never tried to do this). You likely can also watch it after the fact:

<https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/meetings/watch-online/>

A core group of the SSARPC is discussing whether we can have someone (potentially Doug Farquhar) speak (virtually) on our group's behalf. Be sure to email Jamey Pratt your thoughts on the plans that were presented at the Jan 29th community meeting if you haven't already done so!

Doug also reached out to Fred Nicols, the developer, to see whether he was planning on presenting anything at the Planning Board meeting or if the SSARPC could see what his plan might look like. His response is below in italics.

Thank You for reaching out. We do plan to offer some comments at the meeting on April 16, but we do not plan to present a concept plan currently. We think it is more important for the Planning Board to hear from their staff at this point.

Reach out with any questions & stay safe all!

Amy Medd

From: [Sharon Vandegriff](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Cc: Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Change of Intersection
Date: Monday, April 13, 2020 4:31:06 PM

Dear Chairman Anderson, Director Wright, Supervisor Berbert, Plan Lead Pratt, and Designer Duke,

I was surprised to learn that the January 2020 Ashton Village Sector Plan for the intersection of Routes 650 & 108 is non-rural-centric when it was promised to be otherwise. My source is the link below

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-3/ashton-village-center-sector-plan/>

The hyperlink "design scenarios handout" on page one, the bottom left drawing, shows more what people in the community want for the southeast corner of the intersection. Could we use the "Community Presented Scenario" or a compromise that leans heavily toward it? The other scenarios would overwhelm the scope of that intersection -- this is not Georgia Avenue + Randolph Road! We were attracted to this area because of the rural feel and sense of space.

On a lesser note, one of the weaknesses brought up about the area was "no community center/gathering place." <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SWOT-Analysis.pdf> What about renting/ using Sherwood High School as a gathering place which is only 3/10 of a mile from the aforementioned intersection? Or sharing a commercial building or house of worship as the community meeting place? This is what small towns and villages do.

Thank you for listening to my opinions. I apologize for not contacting you sooner with ideas for this Thursday's meeting and am hoping that there was a "grace period" due to the COVID 19 interruption as we attempt to keep ourselves and others safe.

Sincerely,
Sharon Vandegriff
1617 Gamewell Road
Ashton, MD 20905
301-879-8567

From: [David H](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Feedback on Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 9:58:26 AM

Dear Mr. Pratt,

I am sharing these comments on the Ashton Village Sector Plan as a private citizen, but I also speak with some perspective as the current President of the Board of Trustees for the Sandy Spring Museum, which is immediately adjacent to the Ashton Village Sector.

I understand the County's need to carve up the region into planning sectors. However, the arbitrary boundary of the Ashton Village Sector fails to account for the way that residents of the area experience the area, where the stretch of road along Route 108, from Ashton, through Sandy Spring, to Olney, is much more of a continuous and diverse community than the County's planning process seems to recognize. This is also reflected on the patterns of where families in the area send their children to local public and independent schools. Transportation planning, access to facilities, and the County's sense of the community should more effectively account for this. Specifically, traffic improvements, including multi-use paths along and adjacent to Route 108 should be planned and executed with this larger transportation vision in mind.

The Plan claims that the ICC has reduced traffic along Route 108. This does not match the perceptions of most every Ashton area resident, so I challenge the staff to justify their statement with data about traffic volumes on 108 over the past 10-15 years. Much of the traffic that passes east-west through Ashton is the result of continued residential development in Howard County. What steps is Montgomery County taking to work with Howard County to mitigate traffic on the 108 corridor and encourage commuters to utilize the ICC instead of 108? I appreciate the Plan's intention to keep 108 and New Hampshire Avenue as two-lane roads through Ashton, but unless there are larger efforts to deflect the traffic to larger-capacity east-west routes (ICC), there will only be worsening traffic, and concomitant degradation of quality of life for residents of the Ashton Sector Plan.

The Sandy Spring Museum, the very next property adjacent to the western boundary of the Ashton Village Sector, is an essential component of the larger community I described above, and in fact seems to be identified on the Open Space Plan drawing as an immediately adjacent open space. In the desire to meet community interest in additional public (I want to emphasize "public") open space, I feel the county is overlooking a great opportunity to build on the existing presence and proximity of the Museum, combined with the historic Cloverly property, to create a public/private resource for this entire larger community from Olney to Ashton and their adjacent areas such as Brookville (known as the historic Sandy Spring area). The current owner of the Cloverly property has indicated a willingness to sell this property, and there is an opportunity here to preserve one of the last remaining historic sites in the Ashton area, provide opportunities to create public open space, and create this adjacent to another vital community resource, the Museum. What a wonderful potential symbiosis. I encourage the staff and County to consider a bigger vision, embracing an approach to the Sector Plan that honors the rich history of this region and looks farther into the future of this community than the current plan, thoughtful as it is, seems to reflect.

Thank you for considering these comments.

David Hickson
david.hickson100@gmail.com
240-401-8964

From: [Michael Tharkur](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center proposal
Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 10:24:36 AM

Dear Mr Pratt,

I am a resident in the area that is being considered for development. Not sure if many of the others that have commented live in the actual area. I do want to express my strong support for the proposed plan. I believe that the proposal will be a significant improvement to the intersection in terms of new commercial space, a meeting place, better traffic flow, and importantly, housing for middle income workers.

I believe that where opposing comments are motivated by concerns about risks of weakening property values from more (diverse) middle income population in denser housing, these should be taken for what they are, or be exposed. I do also believe that a more structured development is better than none and the cost to property values of decaying buildings and poor infrastructure, may outweigh the risks associated with the proposed developments. I also think that the concerns raised regarding greater traffic from the development near the intersection, are misplaced since that is an issue for the county to address, not the developer. Folks who actually live in the area and sit on the benches at the 7-11, would welcome more space for meeting and interacting. The area would welcome the developments. I think folks should learn to live and let live.

I have lived in the community since 2005 and can't wait for the early start of the new Ashton village center.

Sincerely yours,
Michael Tharkur
17503 Hidden Garden Lane
Ashton.

Sent from my iPad

From Walt Fennell

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; Leo Juezan; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc --

Subject April 16, 2020 Meeting, Agenda Item No. 9, Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Date Received 4/14/2020 11:59 PM

Dear Sir.

I will be unable to attend the April 16, 2020 hearing.

I previously submitted this information to your office, but I would ask that the following be entered as testimony in regards to the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, which is Item No. 9 on the April 16, 2020 agenda.

TESTIMONY:

I am in opposition to the proposed changes to the Ashton Village Master Center Sector Plan presented by the Planning Department Staff.

The Planning staff stressed the need to increase the housing stock within Montgomery County, the need to address the "Missing Middle" and the need to address Project Zero.

I recognize the importance of these goals, however the zoning proposal put forward by the Planning staff should be rejected as it would inextricably change the nature and character of the small Ashton village and in actuality is out-of-sync with the perspective of the majority of Ashton residents and out-of-sync with the goals of the County.

Under specific consideration is the Ashton Village Center, which as presented by the Planning staff, is approximately a 1/3 mile radius from the center of the New Hampshire and Route 108 intersection. Using this radius, the Planning staff has put forward a recommendation which would add 100+ dwelling units to the Ashton Village Center. This would increase the density of the Ashton Village Center by well over 100%. The proposed doubling of density would be in addition to the 20% density increase that Ashton Village Center has already absorbed through the Porter Road Project – which is adding over 20 housing units and retail space directly adjacent to the New Hampshire/Route 108 intersection.

Asking a small village like Ashton to increase housing stock to address the needs of Montgomery County is reasonable. Asking a small village like Ashton to help address the Missing Middle is also reasonable. But asking any community – Ashton, Silver Spring, Rockville, Olney, Germantown, Gaithersburg or any other community in Montgomery County to increase housing stock by 100% is simply ***not reasonable***. You

cannot double the density of a community without altering the very nature of the community. Nor should you reasonably ask a community to accept, on a percentage basis, density increases which outstrip and would overwhelm the resources of the community.

A reasonable solution to this issue, would be to leave the zoning for the Ashton Village Center as it currently stands, which currently allows for an appropriate increase in the housing stock in Ashton, in a manner which is consistent with historic nature of the Ashton Village and in a manner which is consistent with the existing master plan for Ashton.

Another issue associated with the Planning staff's recommendation is the inevitable increase in traffic that would accompany significant density increases. The Planning staff was, at best circumspect, regarding any potential road improvements or other infrastructure improvements needed to accommodate an additional 100 dwelling units. As proposed, the 100 families associated with these dwelling units would be closely packed into a small corner parcel which borders a heavily used intersection. Wait times at the New Hampshire/Route 108 intersection are currently measured not in seconds or minutes but rather in the number of light cycles that you are required to endure. In addition, the intersection already has a large number of "blind spots" which must be carefully navigated to avoid collisions. The addition of 100+ families, and 200+, cars in Ashton Village Center would negatively, not positively, impact Project Zero.

The type of housing stock proposed by the Planning staff is inconsistent with the housing stock envisioned by the current Ashton Master Plan. The long-standing master plan envisions homes/buildings which are height restricted at 30 feet and are consistent the historic and rural nature of Ashton. The multi-level apartment buildings, duplexes, and large three and four-story townhomes contemplated by the Planning staff are simply out of character and would unnaturally dominate the Ashton Village Center. Furthermore, the current plan does not ensure/guarantee that the housing stock that a developer would build, would in fact address the issues associated with the Missing Middle housing stock. All recent townhomes built in the Ashton/Sandy Spring area have been \$700,000+ townhomes. If the issue of affordable housing is a real concern for Montgomery County, I would offer up that the smaller, height restricted, historically accurate cottage style homes, associated with Ashton would be better suited to address the Missing Middle problem.

The issue regarding affordable housing for the Missing Middle is important. But as contemplated by the County, efforts to address the Missing Middle are to be focused in areas which have adequate/appropriate public transit and adjacency to commercial/business centers to support employment opportunities. Ashton Village Center is a very small village with a single bus line, and no significant employment opportunities. It is a bedroom community. We have a few small businesses, but we do not have the employment base needed to absorb 100+ families contemplated by the Planning staff. Significant increases in Ashton's density, which doesn't have access to adequate public transportation, will only exacerbate a traffic problem which is tenuous at

best as ***the 100+ new families would be required to commute out of Ashton*** for employment opportunities. This single issue, in and of itself, should be justification enough to stop the planned rezoning/development of Ashton Village Center.

There are a host of other issues with the rezoning concepts which I could expand upon:

- Insufficient transitions between overly large buildings to smaller buildings.
- Insufficient open space.
- Overly broad language, lack of specificity, which would not provide adequate protection of the rural and historic nature of Aston.
- Increases in impervious surfaces, which will would have a decremental impact on the fragile watershed which runs through Ashton.

I am fully cognizant of the need for change and progress. I recognize that every part of Montgomery County needs to do its part to support sustainable growth. But the current proposal is placing too much of the burden on Ashton. The plan is not a fair, as it would impose a material change upon the members of the community who deliberately moved to Ashton because is it inherently different from the rest of the County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Walt Fennell
17513 Hidden Garden Lane
Ashton, MD 20861

April 15, 2020

Casey Anderson, Chair, and Members, Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Md 20910
By email to: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Re: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Briefing April 16, 2020

Dear Chair Anderson and Planning Board Members:

This law firm represents the owners of a combined 9.3 acres of land in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Olney Sandy Spring Road (the “Subject Property”) in connection with the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan (the “Sector Plan”).

The Subject Property is currently zoned primarily CRT-.75, C-.75, R-.25, H-35T, with a portion in the R-60 zone and a very small portion in the RC zone. The master developer for this potential project, Nichols Development Company, LLC (“Nichols”), envisions a predominantly residential mixed-use project for this site, with a variety of missing-middle housing types, and retail uses including a bank building to be relocated within the site. Due to its size and location, this site holds the key to establishing a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly village center for Ashton that can contribute meaningfully to the County’s housing stock while remaining compatible with the semi-rural Ashton neighborhoods near the village center.

Nichols hopes to build a community that has the feel of a place that developed organically over time, with a variety of building types and sizes intermingled with one another, rather than being segregated into different quadrants of the site. This might be thought of as buildings with a variety of rooflines and heights, arranged in a site layout designed to take advantage of topography, where possible, and to create a dynamic, community-supportive village center. Nichols considers it vital that the Sector Plan provide adequate density and flexibility to support these goals. If the Sector Plan lacks the density and flexibility necessary for a viable redevelopment project on this site, Ashton risks missing out on the chance for a true village center for another master plan cycle.

In preliminary discussions with Planning Department staff, Nichols requested rezoning of the Subject Property to CRT-0.75, C-0.75, R-0.5, H-45, with text in the Sector Plan specifying that no more than 40% of the site should reach the 45-foot height limit. This zoning would accommodate the very preliminary concept plan Nichols has been working on, which has a variety of building types and an overall density slightly above 0.5 FAR. It would also build in the flexibility to increase the non-residential component over time if market conditions permit.

In its staff report for your April 16 briefing, staff recommends rezoning the Subject Property to CRN 0.5, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-40, with text limiting the 40-foot height to certain portions of the site. This proposed zoning represents a significant downzoning for the majority of the site, which is currently zoned CRT-0.75. In addition, it presents several difficulties:


- The CRN zone prohibits drive-thru facilities, which would make the existing bank a non-conforming use, and would make it impossible to relocate the bank on the site as an integral part of a new development project. Given the footprint that the bank currently occupies, it is not an exaggeration to say that any redevelopment of the Subject Property is extremely unlikely unless the existing bank can be relocated. We would suggest that the simplest way to accommodate this would be to retain the existing CRT zoning for a portion of the site's frontage on Route 108.
- A density limit of 0.5 FAR, rather than the 0.75 FAR Nichols requests, would preclude the addition of commercial space in the future, should the Ashton market expand in a way that supports additional non-residential uses.
- A 40-foot height limit would reduce certain opportunities related to floor-to-floor heights and building design when combining residential and retail. Moreover, the requested 45-foot height limit on a portion of the buildings would allow more creativity in developing the kind of "Eclectic Rural Vernacular" desired, as well as allowing the project to realize the density needed for viability.

Nichols has observed a certain disconnect between the low level of density certain community members advocate and their desire for amenities that typically require a slightly higher density to be feasible. We believe that with appropriate Sector Plan and Design Guidelines language emphasizing the importance of design elements such as porches, dormer windows, building finishes with a traditional appearance, and appropriate building scale and massing, the requested zoning will allow the density needed to create a successful village center while still fostering a semi-rural feel appropriate for Ashton.

We look forward to the discussion tomorrow.

Sincerely yours,

BREGMAN, BERBERT, SCHWARTZ & GILDAY, LLC

By: 
Françoise M. Carrier

From mail4thewheelers@verizon.net

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; Leo Juezan; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc --

Subject April 16 Agenda - Ashton Village Sector Plan

Date Received 4/15/2020 12:35 PM

Thank you for providing a copy of the staff recommendations for the Ashton Village Sector Plan.

We appreciate the Board's efforts to continue working during this unprecedented pandemic and appreciate the technology that allows this. However, we also feel that it is important for any community meetings to consider the staff final draft recommendations to the Planning Board be held in person. To do otherwise will limit the opportunity for community input. As evidenced by the correspondence the Board has received, this Plan is of great interest to the community.

We support many of the staff recommendations, but especially:

- Safe sidewalks and sidepaths where they are missing.
- Crosswalks across all parts of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire at the village center and other traffic flow improvements

Our concerns are primarily with the zoning recommendations for the southeast and southwest corners of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. We believe that the recommended zoning will allow a greater number of units and housing types that are not consistent with a rural village and have the potential to be inconsistent with surrounding existing development.

We recognize the right of property owners to develop their property, While we support having a mix of housing types and affordable housing units as outlined in "The Missing Middle Housing Study," only limited aspects of missing middle housing should be implemented in Ashton. The Missing Middle Study suggests that the most ideal locations for missing middle housing is along major transportation corridors and close to transit and transportation alternatives such as bus, bus rapid transit, Metro and Purple Line light rail.

Based on these criteria, the southeast corner is suited for a very limited range of missing middle housing. Ashton is served by a single bus route that only operates during the morning rush hour and again in the afternoon and evenings on weekdays, requiring residents to be primarily car dependent, with most families having at least two. In addition to residential parking, there is a need for visitor parking. Creation of adequate onsite parking is critical, as only limited offsite overflow parking is available across New Hampshire Avenue or Route 108.

As noted in the Staff recommendations, most of the letters the Board received are in opposition to a significant increase in housing units beyond the level allowed by current zoning. Many feel it is inconsistent with Ashton's character to allow over 100-150 units resulting in very dense development on the southeast corner without a transition to adjacent single-family housing south on New Hampshire Avenue and large lots east on Route 108. There needs to be strong design guidelines to ensure that appropriate transition occurs.

While much of the focus has been on the southeast corner, we have similar concerns for Porter Road. We also have concerns for Porter Road and Porter Court. We support maintaining the current pattern of development on Porter Road and Porter Court as a way to transition from the denser townhouse development at Ashton Market and the large lot development at the end of Country Hills. Also, there is a significant amount of tree loss that would occur with any significant redevelopment. As was discussed at the community design workshop, we believe that any redevelopment of the properties on Porter Road and Porter Court should be consistent with existing single family housing, including single family homes or housing whose design resembles single family homes, such as duplexes.

While having had some productive meetings with the developer, the community has yet to see a plan of any substance to know exactly what the intentions are for the southeast corner. In addition, we are aware of discussions between the developer and residents on Porter Road and Porter Court to purchase their homes for redevelopment.

Initially, several provisions in the existing 1998 Sandy Spring Ashton Master Plan met with strong community opposition. At the Planning Board hearing an alternative proposal by the community addressing the contentious issues was presented and led to the formation of a group that brought together residents and the developer. The group developed provisions that were adopted in the final plan.

Following adoption of the 1998 Plan, the Greater Sandy Spring Green Space land trust was created, and I was a founding board member. Prior to finalizing their plans, developers met with us and together we crafted better plans that were supported by the community.

Based on this experience and because there are many important aspects of development that cannot be dictated by the Plan, we strongly urge the Board to create an advisory group consisting of property owners and community representatives. This group would work together to help shape the final provisions of the Ashton Village Plan and develop specific site design criteria for this and any other tracts within the scope of the Plan. We believe that the establishment of an advisory group would be an effective way to ensure all stakeholders achieve a common vision.

There are precedents for formation of such an advisory group, such as the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee, and the Shady Grove Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee,

I believe that Ashton, because of its unique heritage and character and its location near both farms and suburban centers, is threatened. There are members of the community whose families have lived here for over a hundred years, others who grew up here when their families moved here, and others who have moved here as adults—many from elsewhere in the County because we were drawn to a place unique in its proximity to suburban centers, yet with a rich culture and history evidenced by its historic homes and active farming. Ashton is literally at a crossroads of the past and its future. We are looking to this Plan to ensure that the future of Ashton remains unique.

Again, we support the stated objective of maintaining and enhancing the existing rural village character through appropriate density and design recommendations.

Kathleen Wheeler

Founder, Ashton Area Homeowners and Community Association Alliance

President, Spring Lawn Farm HOA

From Nancy Fennell

To <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; Leo Juezan; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc --

Subject April 16,2020--Agenda Item #9

Date Received 4/15/2020 12:23 AM

Dear Sir,

I am unable to attend the hearing on April 16th. I respectfully request that you add the following as testimony to agenda item #9. (Ashton Village Center Plan)

Subject: Ashton Village Center Plan

I am a resident of Ashton, and am writing in opposition of the Preliminary Staff Recommendations for the Ashton Village Center Plan. As currently, presented, the zoning changes proposed by the Planning Board Staff could result in an additional 147 dwelling units being added to the Ashton Village Center. This would result in essentially a doubling of dwelling units currently zoned within the Ashton Village Center, which would inescapably change the nature of our rural village forever.

I attended the January 29, 2020 presentation that the Planning Board Staff provided for interested residents in the Ashton/Sandy Spring communities. Although I did not count how many people were present during the meeting, the room was rather full and I remember that additional chairs had to be pulled out. I would therefore estimate that there were between 65- 90 people present during the presentation. I do not recall those present voicing support for the concepts put forward by the Planning Board Staff. In fact, there was a near unanimous "shock" regarding the concepts that envisioned a doubling of the density for the Ashton Village Center that included buildings that would overwhelm the rural village character of the Ashton community.

I have read through the letters of support and opposition included within Attachment A of the Preliminary Staff Recommendation Report. In noting the support letters, most did not address or comment on the doubling of housing recommended by staff, but rather indicated a desire for more green space and retail shopping. Ashton Village Center is currently zoned for a mix of retail and residential and green space, and does not need to be changed. I am opposition of the dramatic increase in housing proposed by the Planning Staff, as it is unwarranted. The *doubling of housing density* will **not** make Ashton more conducive to public gathering or improve the use of green space, rather it will have the opposite effect. I question that these Montgomery County residents would want to leave their homes and neighborhoods and gather in a location or green space surrounded by up to 280 dwelling units that are densely packed

together, and County Road 108 (a two lane road) which will be bursting with a dramatic increase in traffic.

At a Porter Road hearing in 2017 there were residents present and testifying who were in support of the Porter Road rezone. Their message was the same - Ashton needs “green space and retail”. The Porter Road rezone project was approved, so additional “green space” is already in the works, as well as the addition of revitalized retail and *more homes* which will compute to more congestion and traffic in our rural village on Route 108.

I recognize that there is a growing housing stock shortage within Montgomery County, and that each portion of the County should address the house shortage. But why should our small rural village be asked to double the density to accommodate a countywide problem? The Ashton/Sandy Spring area has already absorbed significant increases in housing stock – see Thomas Village in Sandy Spring and the planned housing stock increases at Porter Road. As currently zoned, and as noted in Attachment C of the Preliminary Recommendations Report, as zoned, Ashton Village could already provide an additional 133 dwelling units. But the recommended changes would increase capacity to 280 dwelling units. This is an unreasonable and unfair burden to place on the residents of Ashton.

During the January 29 meeting, the Planning Staff expressed a need to address the “Missing Middle” within Montgomery County. I agree with this need. However, Ashton does not provide the employment base or the public transportation as envisioned by the County. Increasing the housing density beyond that which is already contemplated though the existing zoning would only result in families who would have to leave Ashton each morning – in their personal cars – to find employment in other parts of the County. Using Ashton to address the Missing Middle is incongruent with the goals of fixing the issue of affordable housing, near employment centers within the County.

Thank you for your time.

Nancy Fennell
Ashton, Maryland 20861

From: [Deborah Boggs](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Re: Ashton Village Plan
Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 10:24:14 AM

I just listened to this and thank you again for making this available.

A couple of questions cropped up.

1. Whatever the end design of traffic flow, which will require entrances from both Rts 108 and 650, please be sure that it does not end up as a cut through for traffic trying to avoid the congestion at the intersection.
2. What zoning requirements will keep Nichols Contracting from just building more expensive townhouses like they did in Thomas Village? The new zoning may allow for townhouses and stacked flats etc etc for the "missing middle," but what keeps a developer from doing whatever they want within that scope? I think they will just build uniform expensive townhouses again if they can. They are interested in maximizing their profit.
3. If a crosswalk is created at the traffic light by Sherwood High School I doubt that it would be used without a sidewalk on the other side and no funding exists for that. What about a crosswalk further east extending from the existing sidewalk to the Ashton shopping center.? That is where all of the kids go except for the very few that walk to the bus stop directly across from the school.
4. I remain concerned about the intersection in Ashton. If no turn lanes are added, you will not prevent additional traffic from entering the intersection, you will just not adapt to the current and expanded needs of the development around the intersection. A couple of turn lanes would simply accommodate the current and anticipated traffic from the Porter Rd and SE corner of the intersection.
5. Mention was made of the small park NW of the current shopping center. There is a sign in that small playground stating that it is for residents of those townhouses only. It is not a public use area.

Thank you for all of your work.

Deborah Boggs
237 Ashton Road, Ashton, MD. 20861

On Sat, Apr 18, 2020 at 3:01 PM Deborah Boggs <boggstrue@gmail.com> wrote:

Awesome, thanks!

On Sat, Apr 18, 2020 at 11:36 AM Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Deborah,

The finally fixed the video link last night.

They re-edited it so that the item isn't cut off in the middle, but this means it starts over with the parts you already saw. Anyway, easy enough to jump forward about 25 minutes.

From: [Deborah Boggs](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Re: Ashton Village Plan
Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 9:57:17 AM

Back to the crosswalk by Sherwood High School,,,,,,,,,
Given the current dire financial situation I doubt that funds would be available for years for a sidewalk along Rt 108 from the high school to downtown Ashton so nothing would get done until then for the safety of the students. I know that this is not your decision but you have input to perhaps mention the suggestion of putting a crosswalk with a control to stop cars east of the school using the current sidewalk. Again, this is where the students primarily walk.

Again, thank you

Deborah Boggs

On Tue, Apr 21, 2020 at 10:45 AM Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Deborah,

You ask some good questions. Please see below.

Thanks!

Jamey

From: Deborah Boggs <boggstrue@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 10:24 AM
To: Pratt, Jamey <jamey.pratt@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: Re: Ashton Village Plan

I just listened to this and thank you again for making this available.

A couple of questions cropped up.

1. Whatever the end design of traffic flow, which will require entrances from both Rts 108 and 650, please be sure that it does not end up as a cut through for traffic trying to avoid the congestion at the intersection.

From: [Daniel Dragos](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Plan
Date: Monday, May 4, 2020 9:03:09 AM
Attachments: [image745000.png](#)
[image873001.png](#)
[image550002.png](#)
[image869003.png](#)
[image821004.png](#)

Good Morning Jamey-

I am writing you to discuss concepts for the Ashton Village Sector Plan presented by the Planning Department staff at the community meeting on January 29th. I'm sure you've already received politically backed emails referencing various factual interpretations of the 1998 master plan ultimately opposing development. I don't want to dive too deep into this, but rather reach out as a resident with a sense of humility.

My wife and I moved into the Charley Forrest development a little over a year ago, we purchased the farm house where the plat was established in 1703. The rural landscape of Ashton-Sandy Spring is what drew us to the area. It's such a unique historic piece of Montgomery County, not to mention the natural beauty preserved by controlled development. I firmly believe, that the venture up New Hampshire from Colesville to Damascus is one of the most beautiful drives in the state. My wife Tiffany and I are in our early 30s, so naturally many of our friends are in the middle of searching for a home to start a family. We both advise them to take this drive, branch out from there and you'll surely find something special. This area is truly special, and certainly differs from Rockville, Olney and Gaithersburg or other places where development has deteriorated the historic nature of the area.

I understand development is unavoidable, it's economically driven and quite frankly pays my bills being in the construction industry. I am not opposed to development, but I am opposed to over-developing in a residential sense and cramming 150 townhomes into a corner of a busy intersection. That just doesn't make any sense whatsoever. The more populated the area gets, the more amenities the town will feel pressured to provide. You put 150 townhomes in, next thing you know you have grocery stores, gas stations, restaurants flooding the area and encroaching on the ranches and farms that are still in operation. If we're going to develop the "bank" corner, please approach it with a sense of humility. A grocery store and other locally owned business would be great for the community, mixing in single family housing with MDPU's and middle housing is OK, just not 150 units. Mix in some green space, a dog park, maintain the historic look aesthetically while doing so would help the complex fit in. Take down the cookie cutter hideous "Ashton" sign at CVS and install a new historic "Ashton" sign would do wonders. Make it look like the Quakers built it, not like a modern 25 year old architect built it.

Jamey, I appreciate what you do. If I wasn't in construction, I'd love to get into zoning and planning as I have a keen interest in it. Please take this note from a logically sensible resident and feel free to reach out anytime – 240-372-0460.

Thanks,



Daniel Dragos LEED AP BD+C
Assistant Superintendent
Coakley & Williams Construction

m: 301.963.5000

c: 240.372.0460

w: coakleywilliams.com



🌲 Please consider the environment before printing this email

From: [Pat Welch](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Supportive email for Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 11:03:08 PM

Dear Mr. Pratt and Mr. Berbert,

It our understanding you are still accepting letters in regard to the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. My wife and I both grew up in the Silver Spring area and we resided and raised our family at our Fort William Drive address for 30+ years. So, we have been Montgomery County residents our entire lives and we've traveled throughout the County and State (and surrounding States) and have witnessed some well-planned and not so well-planned properties. The Olney and Ashton areas continue to grow and it only makes sense that this well planned Center, with a variety of housing and supportive retail space, be included in Ashton to meet the need of its residence and surrounding community. The focus in construction these days is "planned type communities" that provide local residence appealing and attractive alternatives within their communities. This must Include places to meet and gather with family, friends and neighbors and I believe the Ashton Village Center meets and exceeds those needs. I have seen and make use of some of the stunning construction projects Nichols Construction has developed over the years right here in the Ashton area and this project will fit right in. The intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Sandy Spring Road has been in need of a face lift for some time and yet it's a face lift that will greatly enhance the community, just as Christopher's Hardware did right down the road.

We believe in and support the proposed Ashton Village Center Sector Plan changes.

Sincerely,

Patrick and Maja Welch
2302 Fort William Drive
Olney, MD 20832