



Ashton Village Center Sector Plan—Work Session Number 3

JP Jamey Pratt, Senior Planner, Upcounty Planning, Jamey.Pratt@montgomeryplanning.org
RD Roberto Duke, Planner Coordinator, Upcounty Planning, Roberto.Duke@montgomeryplanning.org
BB Benjamin Berbert, Acting Supervisor, Upcounty Planning, Benjamin.Berbert@montgomeryplanning.org
CS Carrie Sanders, Interim Chief, Upcounty Planning, Carrie.Sanders@montgomeryplanning.org

Completed: 11/25/2020

Staff Recommendation

To receive final guidance from the Planning Board on the community design, design guidelines, and zoning recommendations in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. At the conclusion of the work session, staff will request that the Planning Board approve the Planning Board Draft of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan for transmittal to the County Council and the County Executive.

Summary

The Planning Board held its Public Hearing for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan on September 17, 2020. The public record closed on September 24, 2020. A summary of the public testimony was attached to the memorandum for the first work session and additional testimony was included as an attachment to the second work session's report. This is the third work session to address the comments received on the Sector Plan draft and is a second visit for topics covered in the prior two work sessions. The work session topics are as follows:

- October 29—Work Session 1: Land use and zoning, open space, environmental and historic preservation.
- November 19—Work Session 2: Community design and design guidelines, transportation and circulation, and implementation.
- December 3—Work Session 3: Community design, design guidelines, and zoning recommendations.

This report contains a summary of a few issues requiring further discussion following the first two work sessions, and attached is a detailed redline of the changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the Plan. At the end of the December 3rd work session, Staff intends to present to the Planning Board a summary of the changes that were requested, as modified by the Board at the work sessions, and to request that the Planning Board approve the Planning Board Draft for transmittal to the County Council and the County Executive. Transmittal of the Planning Board Draft is anticipated in January 2021.

Also attached to this report is the additional feedback from the community received since the second work session.

Work Session 3 Topics

During the first two work sessions on the Plan, Planning Staff and the Planning Board discussed all the issues that were raised by those responding to the Plan's Public Hearing Draft. Many of the issues were uncontroversial and the Planning Board had no comments or only minor concerns or questions about Staff's recommendations, so these issues were resolved during the work sessions. The text changes that resulted from these exchanges are included in the attached report and are ready to be applied to the Plan's text to create the Planning Board Draft. This work session will work through issues that have been discussed with the Planning Board for which no final determination has been made regarding the requested changes. One very minor issue regarding open space ownership will also be discussed.

The primary unresolved issues to be discussed at the work session is the proposed zoning in the southeast quadrant of the Plan's Village Core neighborhood and the detail of the Design Guidelines within the plan document. Before getting to the specific question of zoning, however, this report will describe the relationship that the community design recommendations and Design Guidelines have with proposed zoning.

As a reminder, the Plan's community design recommendations in Chapter 3 apply broadly to the Plan area and describe the general concepts for the placement, massing, and design of buildings. The Plan's Design Guidelines in Chapter 5 provide specificity to the community design recommendations and add terminology, architectural context, and best practices.

Staff was very careful when crafting the Public Hearing Draft of the Plan to balance the zoning necessary to spur the development in the Village Core, including the southeastern quadrant, while not providing so much height or density that the rural character in the village center would be lost. The Plan's recommended zoning for the southeast quadrant—CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-40—is already a notable increase (more height and density) than what the members of the community wanted to see (low heights and density), or from the existing zoning (height and residential density). Recommendations such as allowing *some* buildings to reach the full height allowed in the zone, but not to allow *all* buildings to reach this height are needed to give the Core the organic feel of having been developed over time.

Great care went into creating the community design recommendations and the Design Guidelines so that they would work in tandem with the proposed zoning recommendation to realize the Plan's vision of a vibrant, low-rise, walkable, and bikeable village center where residents could informally meet while going about their business.

Ashton and other rural villages that were used as a basis for some of our design recommendations rarely have buildings over two and a half stories, with an occasional modestly sized three-story building. The proposed 40-foot height limit would already allow at least three and a half stories and in some cases four, which is higher than any existing building in Ashton and is higher than currently allowed by zoning. The community has explicitly expressed that providing too much density and height in the recommended zoning for the southeast quadrant would lead to oversized, suburban feeling development, which few want to see. The community argues the draft Plan already provides too much density. Staff defends its recommended density when taken in conjunction with the Design Guidelines but believes the requested density and height from the property owner does not support a rural village character which is the vision of this Sector Plan.

The vision of the Sector Plan is for Ashton to become a compact, low-rise, walkable, and bikeable rural village with a mix of land uses. There will be diverse housing options, new businesses, and new

gathering spaces for the community. Close to the main intersection—state routes 108 and 650—new buildings frame streetscapes, with parking and loading behind or to the sides of buildings and screened from the public realm. Buildings become smaller and more widely separated as they transition from the village center to the single-family detached homes and farms outside the Plan area. New or improved sidewalks, shared-use paths, and street crossings provide for safe and convenient ways to walk and bike through Ashton. Context-sensitive architectural elements and building massing and placement create a sense of community integration while respecting Ashton’s rich cultural history and the location at the headwaters of tributaries to the Patuxent and Anacostia Rivers.

Community Design Recommendations

The Ashton Village Center Sector Plan seeks to create a vibrant and viable rural village center through a combination of zoning recommendations, design recommendations, and implementation mechanisms. These three Plan elements work together to provide a framework upon which the village center can be developed, and any change to one may require changes to the other two elements to balance out that change and retain the Plan’s vision.

Many basic design elements, such as building placement, orientation, and height are already specified within the recommended CRN zone, but the community design recommendations define the uses, forms, and placement of structures with greater specificity than can be achieved through the zoning designation by itself. The design recommendations build upon the zoning requirements to provide visual interest, engage the public realm, and ensure that new developments enhance rather than detract from the village.

At a very broad level, the Plan envisions that at the village edges, buildings are typically spaced farther apart with varying setbacks from the street. As one gets closer to the village center, buildings are pulled closer to the street and each other to form a continuous street wall, creating a sense of place and defining the arrival at the center. At critical junctures, buildings are sometimes set back to signify an important community gathering or civic space. Some of these recommendations may seem detailed, but the detail is important when implementing recommendations for such small geography as the four corners of an intersection.

Building Height Transition

Description of Issue: Earlier discussions of the recommendation for building height transition got tied up with discussions about the height recommended in the proposed zone for the southeast quadrant of the Village Core neighborhood. The design recommendation described here, however, is a separate issue from the allowed height in the zone. Staff only received supportive comments from the community on this recommendation, but it is being raised here as an example of how closely the community design recommendations need to work with the zoning designation. Many residents were concerned that by applying a single zone across the entire quadrant that all buildings would be allowed to reach the maximum height and there would be no transition, which staff agrees could be a problem.

Plan Recommendation 3.3.2 #1: Building height, massing, and placement should create a transition between the single-family detached dwelling units outside the Village Core neighborhood, and potential commercial, mixed-use, or multifamily buildings clustered around the intersection of MD 108/650.

Staff Response: Retain the Plan's recommendation.

Varied Building Heights

Description of Issue: Closely related to the recommendation for a transition from the Plan boundary to the village center is a recommendation to vary building heights between adjacent buildings. Again, stripping out the discussion of what the exact maximum height should be in the zone, this Plan recommendation concerns varying the heights of adjacent buildings to prevent a monolithic look in the village center. Staff did not receive any objections to varying the building heights as described here, but being such an important element of the design recommendations, Staff wanted to ensure the Board did not object to the recommendation.

Plan Recommendation 3.3.2 #7: Building heights should vary between adjacent buildings, with lower heights closer to the edge of the Village Core neighborhood and higher heights closer to the MD 108/650 intersection.

Staff Response: Retain the Plan's recommendation.

Building Form Along State Roads

Description of Issue: The Plan recommends that entirely residential buildings along the state roads should resemble either a single-family detached house or a duplex when viewed from the road. If any such building has the need for a long edge that is larger than what would be typical for a detached house or duplex, then the building's long edge should be deeper rather than wider to accommodate the additional size. This design recommendation only applies to buildings that are residential only and not to mixed-use buildings where there are residential units above retail uses or in purely commercial buildings.

The owner of the properties in the southeast quadrant considers the Plan's requirements to be restrictive, stating that the recommendation undercuts the ability to create a community with a variety of building types, rooflines, and architectural details and would lead to buildings with their side façades facing the main roads rather than their front façades. He further states that the recommendation would significantly depress achievable density and would make it extremely difficult to locate a multi-family building along MD 108 or MD 650 or to create the desirable transition described in recommendation 3.3.2 #1 above.

This is one of the most important design recommendations in the Plan. This recommendation does not preclude a variety of building types or the Plan's recommended architectural embellishments. Mixed-use and general building types can be built without consideration of this Plan recommendation, as can residential structures interior to the site. If townhouses or stacked flats are built along the main roads, this recommendation only specifies that the side of the building along the state road is designed to appear as a single-family detached or duplex building. Buildings can orient their shorter side façades to face the road if they are made to resemble front façades per the recommendation. This Plan recommendation is important for retaining the rural character and for providing the desired transition described above because the predominant existing building form in the Village Core is smaller individual buildings, many of which are in structures that resemble single-family detached homes. The owner has

control of all the land along both New Hampshire Avenue and MD 108 in the southeast quadrant from the main intersection to the plan boundary, so this building form is also important in establishing a transition.

Plan Recommendation 3.3.2 #2: Entirely residential buildings with front or side elevations along MD 108 or MD 650 should be designed so that the building width, building massing, and façade treatment fronting to these roads suggests a single-family detached or duplex building form, regardless of actual housing type. The depth of these buildings should be flexible to accommodate various building types and building densities.

Staff Response: Retain the Plan’s recommendation.

Design Guidelines

Intended to strengthen the zoning recommendations and community design recommendations, the Design Guidelines take a deeper approach to community design, with specific language defining desired outcomes and providing context for why they are important.

Building Types and Building Massing and Composition (Sections 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.3)

Description of Issue: The Plan’s community design recommendations do not specifically discuss building widths other than to make general recommendations about building form. In the discussion of Building Types in 5.2.2.1, the Plan recommends keeping residential buildings along the State roads at 80 feet or less in width. Multi Use and General buildings may be slightly longer to accommodate mixed-use tenants. The Plan further states that any building frontage on non-State roads should not be wider than 120 feet.

The property owner of the land in the southeast quadrant requested a text change to allow 90 feet for residential buildings and 120 feet for multi-use and general buildings along the main roads. The landowner requested that the width allowed along non-State roads be increased to 150 feet. The property owner states that the current recommendations are too constraining, and an increase would permit viable mixed-use buildings that have an appropriate presence on the main travel routes. The owner also requested a mechanism to provide exceptions to the recommended maximum widths with Planning Board approval.

Staff Response: Staff looked at other buildings in the Plan area and did not find many that exceeded the Plan’s recommended 80-foot limit along the state roads, with the high school and the shopping center being notable exceptions. But these two buildings are not typical of rural village architecture so do not serve as good examples, and Planners would welcome redevelopment of the existing shopping center that follows the design recommendations in this Plan. Staff does not support the property owner’s request for longer residential buildings, longer buildings along non-state roads, or for allowing exceptions for the Planning Board to approve longer-than-recommended buildings.

Concerning non-residential buildings along state roads, the recently approved mixed-use building in Ashton Market (see Figure 1), is nearly 110 feet long and is designed in a way that fits in with the character we are trying to achieve in Ashton. Thus, at the second work session, Staff expressed support for a width of 120 feet for mixed-use and general buildings along State Roads that followed all the other

recommendations of the proposed Design Guidelines. The Ashton Market building provides many of the design elements sought in the Design Guidelines, with varying rooflines and roof styles, architectural embellishments such as porches, and great street activation with windows.



Figure 1. Sketch of Ashton Market mixed-use building (site plan 820180160) along the south side of MD 108

The Planning Board did not voice objections to this recommendation at the second work session, but it is important to keep building widths in mind when considering how the design recommendations, Design Guidelines, and zoning recommendations work together to regulate the overall massing of a building.

Details of the Design Guidelines

Description of Issue: The property owner in the southeast quadrant requested that the Design Guidelines be extracted from the Sector Plan to create a separate document to allow the Planning Board to review and approve the guidelines and any necessary changes without having to amend the Sector Plan itself. The specific request from the developer is as follows:

Extract the design guidelines from the Sector Plan and create a separate guidelines document to be approved by the Planning Board, rather than the County Council. This will avoid elevating extremely specific provisions from guidelines, which retain some flexibility in their implementation, to master plan recommendations, which requires a Planning Board finding of “substantial conformance” for every project, and allow no changes until the next sector plan amendment.

During both the first and second work sessions, the subject of Design Guidelines and where they should reside was discussed. The Planning Board ultimately agreed that because this Plan is such a small area plan, the Design Guidelines could remain in the Plan body, but need to be general enough to provide adequate flexibility that would avoid needing to amend the guidelines later.

Staff Response: The current Design Guidelines chapter, which is attached to this report, is relatively short at only 8 pages long, including pictures and illustrations. Much of the text is used for defining terminology or creating flexibility by explaining various ways design could respond to a recommendation. The guidelines chapter was deliberately written to be short and to the point while remaining flexible. The guidelines do include many specific sounding references to building length, form,

embellishments, and style, but the text includes frequent use of “should” and “consider” rather than stronger words like “must” or “shall.” Much of the detail of the guidelines is to provide clear examples of what good design would look like in Ashton and are basic elements that are necessary to achieve high quality design in the Village Core.

Description of Issue: At the second work session, members of the Planning Board voiced concerns that the Design Guidelines might not be flexible enough for a viable development to be built in the southeast quadrant. Staff notes that the owner of the properties in the southeast quadrant only requested a few changes to the guidelines themselves, many of which Staff agreed with.

- Wider buildings: Staff agreed to widen multi-use and general buildings to accommodate retail, assuming the rest of the Design Guidelines remained the same. Staff did not agree to the other two requests for wider buildings, finding them out of character with a Rural Village.
- Pitched versus flat roofs for non-residential buildings: Staff did not agree with removing the recommendation for pitched roofs in general and multi-use buildings. That change would weaken the Plan’s recommendation that new rooflines be similar to existing rooflines in the area. Staff notes flat roofs are allowed in the current text with the provision of a cornice element.
- Building elevations: Staff agreed to the requested revision clarifying that all sides “of each individual building” should use the same façade material.
- Private open spaces: Staff agreed with the property owner’s changes to allow private, fenced open spaces in addition to the public spaces.
- Use of alleys and parking: Staff agreed driveways off of alleys can be a place for parking but did not support allowing parking in the alleys themselves.

Staff Response: No other changes were requested to the Design Guidelines, and the recommendations Staff did not support do not seem so inflexible as to hamper potential development in Ashton. Staff does not recommend additional changes to the Design Guidelines be granted, assuming the height and density of the Village Core remain as proposed in the draft plan.

Village Core Zoning

Description of Issue: During the first work session, Planning Staff and the Planning Board discussed the Plan’s recommendations on land uses and zoning. The Planning Board asked Staff to provide additional information regarding the zoning recommendations in the Plan’s Village Core neighborhood, and this information was presented and discussed at the second work session.

The zoning proposed for the Village Core is intended to create a consistent zoning scheme throughout the Core that represents a balance of adequate development density and protection from overdevelopment. For much of the Core, the Plan recommends a reduction in allowed commercial density and an increase in allowed residential density. Other than the property owned by Baltimore Gas & Electric used for an electric substation, the Plan proposes the CRN zone for the entire Village Core with overall, commercial and residential components of the density all capped at 0.5 FAR. The only difference is that the Plan recommends a 40-foot height limit in the southeast quadrant and a 35-foot limit in the other three quadrants.

The proposed zoning for the Village Core is shown in Figure 2. The Planning Board did not have any concerns about Staff's recommendations for the northeast and northwest quadrants and was supportive of the proposed zoning in the southwest quadrant after a discussion during the second work session. However, the final zoning designation for the southeast quadrant remains to be determined.

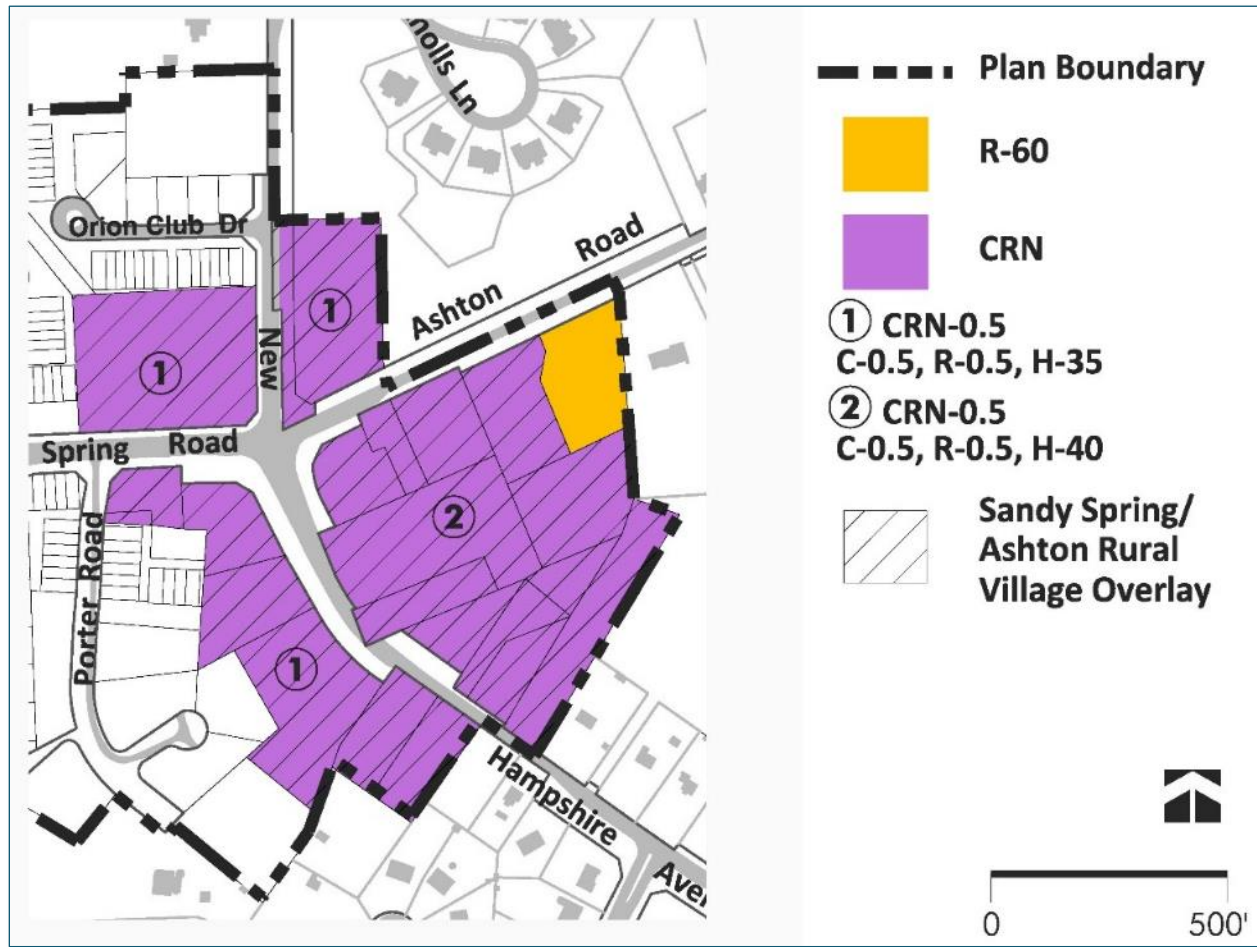


Figure 2. Proposed zoning for the Village Core neighborhood

The Plan identifies the southeast quadrant as the best opportunity to provide the true center of the village that Ashton currently lacks. The Plan's community design recommendations and Design Guidelines seek to guide the form of development in a more nuanced manner than can be achieved by the zoning designation alone.

As discussed in the first two work sessions, most of the feedback we received on the Public Hearing Draft was about the Plan's recommendations and the property owner's requests regarding these properties. Numerous correspondents stated that 0.5 residential FAR is too dense and that the 40-foot height is too great and requested reductions to one or both elements of the proposed zone. The owner of the properties in the southeast corner, on the other hand, proposed that the density and height in the southeast quadrant be increased to provide an economically viable amount of residential development and allow for more commercial density over time. His proposal is for an overall density of 0.75 FAR and a height limit of 45 feet.

During the work sessions, Board members voiced some support for the developer's request for several reasons:

- There is a need for housing in this area and the property owner's request is not a dramatic increase above the Plan's recommendation.
- Because density in the C/R zones is designated in 0.25 FAR increments, to achieve a density even 0.05 more than 0.5 FAR, which may be appropriate, would require a zoning bump to 0.75 FAR.
- First-floor commercial space often needs higher ceilings, so allowing for a little more height might provide greater flexibility and that creative architecture can disguise height and size.
- The more housing units built in Ashton, the more likely it is that public transit options can be continued and expanded.

At the first work session, the Board agreed to table the discussion until it was clearer from the property owner how they intended to use the additional density and height. Staff agreed to provide the Board with additional information supporting the Plan's recommendations, including some hypothetical development scenarios and yield analyses done during the Plan's development. Staff presented the information at the second work session, along with a new development scenario, but the property owner's proposal had not been received by the Planning Board or Planning Staff. At the second work session, the Planning Board members agreed that they no longer needed to see the property owner's proposal, but proposed a third work session to come to a final agreement on the question of the best zoning recommendation for the southeast quadrant.

Plan Recommendation: Rezone the properties in the southeast quadrant, except for the BGE property, from CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35, R-60, and RC to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35.

Staff Response: Staff recommends retaining the Plan's recommendation. The southeast quadrant is the only quadrant where heights have been recommended for 40 feet instead of 35, to provide some flexibility for such a large site. A 40-foot height would create the tallest building(s) in Ashton and represents a 10- to 16-foot increase, at least 33% over the existing height limits found in the current Overlay Zone. At 40 feet, buildings with ground floor commercial can still comfortably be built three-stories tall, which is reasonable for a rural village setting. The recommended zoning reduces total density, but it increases the residential density to help generate additional residents to support the existing and future retail in Ashton. Increasing the density and height becomes incompatible with the vision of keeping Ashton a rural village. To achieve density above 0.5 FAR, longer and taller buildings are likely needed to utilize the density, and the property owner has said as much in making their requested amendments to the Design Guidelines.

The property owner's request for a 45-foot height limit represents a 50% increase over the current limit. This is a drastic increase considering how strongly past master plans in this area have limited height as a means of preserving the rural character of the area. A 45-foot height limit would enable a four-story tall building, which may not be out of place in many parts of the county with development potential, but the Ashton area is much more rural than any of those other places. Staff studied several other rural villages in the Mid-Atlantic region when formulating the Plan's recommendations. In places like New Market, Maryland, and St. Michaels, Maryland buildings are almost exclusively two or two and a half stories high.

When Staff developed the scenarios for the southeast quadrant that were presented at the second work session, we took care to ensure space was set aside for adequate parking, that the roads, alleys, and

open spaces met the dimensional requirements in the various county codes, that the environmental buffers were respected, that the required public open space was provided, and that reasonable areas for stormwater management were included. The zoning as presented in the current Plan draft strikes the best balance of maintaining rural character, redevelopment in the Village Core, and the provision of new housing.

In summary, Staff recommends retaining the proposed overall density of 0.5 FAR and maximum allowed building height of 40 feet for the following reasons:

- Increased density and height are out of character with a rural village.
- The Design Guidelines would need to be revisited in the context of the additional height and density.
- The proposed 40-foot limit is already a dramatic increase above what could be built today.
- Most comparable villages have only two or two and a half-story buildings.

Conclusion

Staff's redlined recommended changes to the Public Hearing Draft are attached to this report, including a few instances where new or replacement photographs have been recommended. Staff recommends the Board approve all changes to the Public Hearing Draft Plan and transmit the Planning Board Draft to the County Executive and County Council.

Attachments

- A. Design recommendations and Design Guidelines chapter from Sector Plan
- B. Redlined changes to the Public Hearing Draft Plan
- C. Correspondence received since the posting of the previous staff report

JULY 2020



Ashton Village Center

SECTOR PLAN



PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

 MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

3.3 Community Design

3.3.1 CONTEXT

An integral part of ensuring a vibrant and successful rural village is the design of the buildings and public spaces. In many of the older, traditional villages found in the Mid-Atlantic region, building placement and architecture are critical to achieving the village-like character and a sense of place. At village edges, buildings are typically spaced farther apart with varying setbacks from the street. As one gets closer to the Village Core neighborhood, buildings are pulled closer to the street and to each other to form a continuous street wall, helping to create a sense of place and defining the arrival at the village center. At critical junctures, buildings are sometimes set back to signify an important community gathering or civic space. (See Figure 2.)

Many basic design elements, such as building placement and orientation and limiting building heights are already prescribed within the recommended CRN zone. This Plan builds upon the zoning requirements with additional recommendations that will provide visual interest, engage the public realm and ensure that new developments enhance rather than detract from the village.

These recommendations include general ways to address building, placement, massing, and the use of landscaping to keep any new construction consistent with the rural village character this Plan seeks to

achieve. Additional design elements are provided for community open spaces and transportation systems within their respective sections of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. More detailed guidelines are provided in the Design Guidelines chapter which both define and provide best practice examples of these design elements.

While the existing pattern of building placement in the Rural Buffer and Residential Edge neighborhoods has an appropriate scale and placement, a significant portion of the buildings in the Village Core do not currently contribute to a meaningful street wall. This disconnect leaves the public realm ill-defined and uninviting. This Plan strives to create a truly vibrant place that serves as the core to Ashton. To do this and maintain the appropriate transition between the Village Core and the Residential Edge and Rural Buffer, new development within the Village Core should ensure that new buildings are context-sensitive and complement existing buildings in surrounding communities.

3.3.2 COMMUNITY DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Building height, massing and placement should create a transition between the single-family detached dwelling units outside the Village Core neighborhood, and potential commercial, mixed-use, or multifamily buildings clustered around the intersection of MD 108/650.
2. Entirely residential buildings with front or side elevations along MD 108 or MD 650

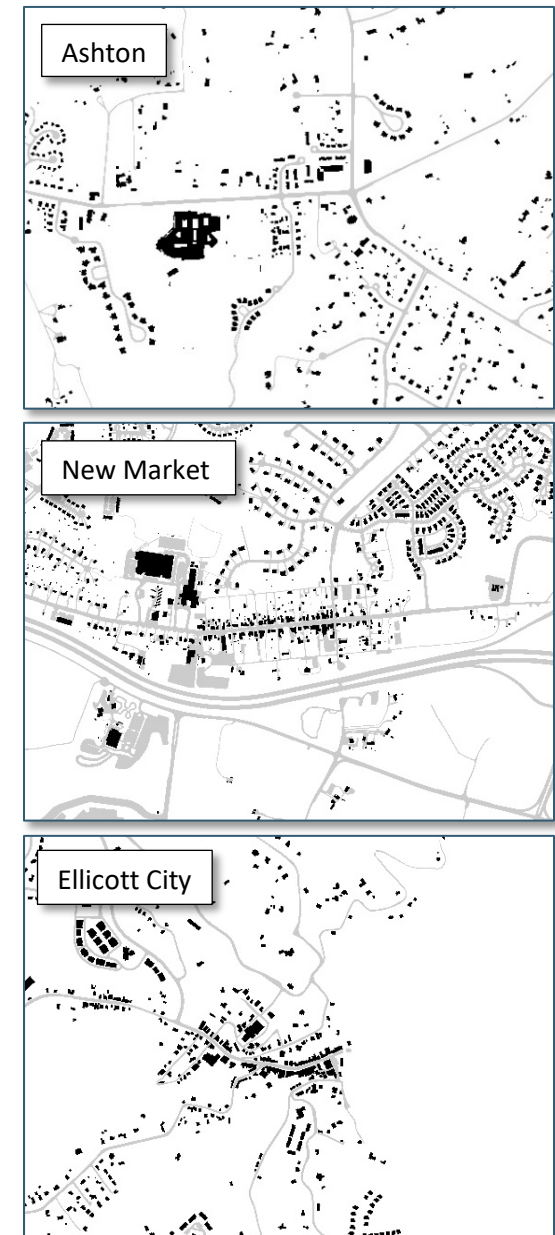


Figure 2. Figure grounds of Mid-Atlantic villages showing development patterns.

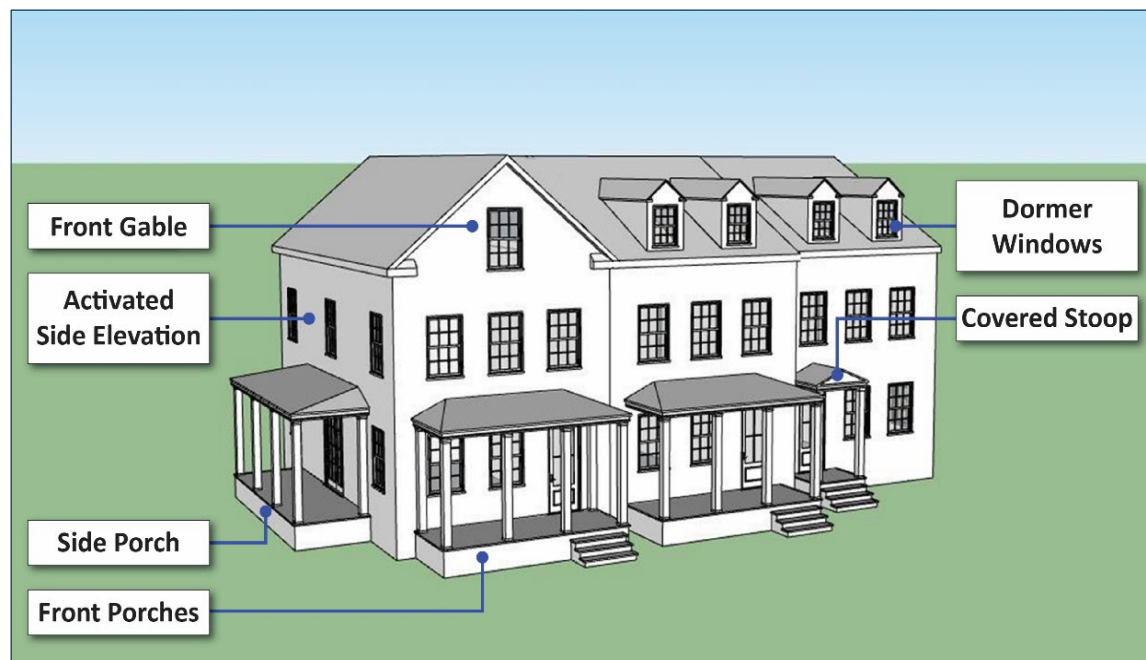


Figure 3. Architectural embellishments provide visual interest to building massing.

the side and rear of buildings for public or private access.

7. Building heights should vary between adjacent buildings, with lower heights closer to the edge of the Village Core neighborhood and higher heights closer to the MD 108/650 intersection.
8. Vary rooflines and setbacks in the front façade plane to break down the massing and to provide visual interest for new buildings.
9. A majority of buildings should contain pitched roofs. If flat roofs are used, the façade should introduce a cornice along the roof edge.
10. Provide pedestrian accessible pass-throughs between commercial or mixed-use buildings to break up the scale of structures on larger development sites and to provide access to the street from parking areas.
11. Incorporate architectural elements in the façades, such as front and side-turned gables, front and side porches, covered stoops, recess entries, bay windows, dormer windows and cupolas.
12. All sides of building should be designed and built with the same exterior architecture and building materials in mind.
13. Buildings should be clad in materials and patterns authentic to rural village character, such as brick, stone, wood shingles, and wood cladding.

should be designed so that the building width, building massing and façade treatment fronting to these roads suggests a single-family detached or duplex building form, regardless of actual housing type. The depth of these buildings should be flexible to accommodate various building types and building densities.

3. New commercial and mixed-use buildings containing neighborhood-serving retail should be located closer to the corner of MD 108 and MD 650 to establish a clear village center or should be placed adjacent to planned open spaces to establish community gathering spaces.

4. Use front and side building façades to establish street walls along MD 108 and MD 650 to frame the streets, creating a distinction from areas outside the Village Core.
5. Parking should be located behind or to the side of buildings to avoid visibility from the street. Parking potentially visible from the street shall be screened with walls and/or landscaping to maintain the street wall. Parking shall not be located at a street corner.
6. Orient primary building façades, including entrances, toward streets or publicly accessible open spaces. Additional entrances may be located to

CHAPTER 5: DESIGN GUIDELINES

This chapter provides a frame of reference for the design recommendations included in other chapters of this Plan. These design concepts are essential for realizing the overall plan for a vibrant village center in Ashton. Implementation of these guidelines is primarily through the review of site plans as required by the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay Zone.

5.1 Design Vision

Ashton is envisioned as a compact, low-rise, walkable and bikeable village with a mix of residential and commercial, retail and service land uses. It is a community with diverse housing types with options that are affordable and attainable for residents of all ages and income levels. New buildings, placed along rights-of-way, blend in with the existing development and frame the streets and open spaces. These buildings provide the necessary density to support increased bus transit. Vehicular parking and building services are located behind or on the sides of buildings with continuous sidepaths and sidewalks in front prioritizing pedestrians

over vehicles. Architectural elements, such as front and side porches, covered stoops and bay windows, provide visual interest and social interaction as residents walk and bike along village streets.

The Village Core is the focal point of community activity. Buildings frame MD 108 and MD 650. Commercial uses are focused at and define the immediate four corners of this intersection while still allowing for pockets of green that protect existing and future canopy trees. A small street grid provides connectivity and walkability in the redeveloped southeast quadrant, which includes a balanced mix of retail, various types of residential units and a community gathering space available to the public.

Residences on smaller lots in the Residential Edge serve as a transition from the commercial to the larger lot residential developments surrounding the village center.

The western portion of the Plan area, the Rural Buffer, separates and distinguishes the village centers of Ashton and Sandy Spring.

Sidepaths and sidewalks connect the two rural villages along MD 108.

The Ashton Village Center has many challenges in meeting this vision. This chapter takes a closer look at the existing buildings, open spaces and the connections between them and provides best practices guidelines for implementing the vision for Ashton.

5.2 Buildings

Buildings, when well-sited and of an appropriate scale, help define street edges, frame open spaces and provide the visual interest that is necessary to create a memorable place where people want to live, work and play. Also referred to as the public realm, people experience life outside their homes through streets and publicly accessible open spaces that people use on a day-to-day basis. Well designed and positioned buildings are integral to having a strong public realm, and in turn strengthens the sense of community, promotes social interaction and increases safety. A strong and

safe public realm also promotes greater walking, biking and social interaction, which are key to a successful village.

5.2.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

5.2.1.1 *Rural Buffer*

The existing buildings in the Rural Buffer and the Residential Edge neighborhoods and the spaces between them define the character of those areas as distinctly separate from the Village Core. On the north side of MD 108 within the Rural Buffer neighborhood, buildings are sited farther away from MD 108 and are spaced farther apart than those in the rest of the Plan area. The house sizes and ages vary, but the accompanying properties are larger and contribute to a pastoral landscape.

On the south side of MD 108, Sherwood High School also lies within the Rural Buffer, including the main school building plus copious amounts of active and passive open space for the school track and ball fields.

5.2.1.2 *Residential Edge*

Traveling east on MD 108 from the Rural Buffer, the building pattern changes upon entering the Residential Edge neighborhood. In this area, buildings are closer together and closer to the road, providing a different feel to the public realm and serving as a transition to the Village Core neighborhood.

5.2.1.3 *Village Core*

Building placement in the Village Core is varied, but currently does not define the

street edge and activate the public realm in a manner typical of a rural village located at a crossroads. In the two northern quadrants of the MD 108/650 intersection, the commercial buildings are placed away from the streets, with parking and open areas between the building and the streetscape. The southeast quadrant contains an existing bank with a drive-thru that loops the building near the intersection with the vast remaining portion of the site being unimproved. Here, too, the building has been pushed back from the two streets. Parking is to the side of the bank and between the bank and MD 108.

In the southwest quadrant, along MD 108, there is a cleared lot and a gas station. The cleared lot is approved for a small mixed-use building with apartments over retail with the building facing MD 108, pulled close to the street with parking tucked under and behind the building. The gas station at the corner has surface parking adjacent to the street, and four curb cuts along the two highways. The commercial properties and the Christ Community Church of Ashton, south of the gas station on the west side of MD 650 are also set back from the road, are spaced far apart and have small parking lots mostly beside the structures. Cricket Bookshop, the southernmost building in the Village Core at the southern boundary to the Plan area, has the parking lot between the building and the street.

5.2.2 BUILDING GUIDELINES

To ensure that the form and scale of new development is compatible with the surrounding context and to ensure all future stakeholders are clear on the expectations for buildings, building guidelines have been established. They support the recommendations in the plan and are separated into the following five categories:

- Building Types
- Building Placement
- Building Massing and Composition
- Architectural Embellishments
- Building Materials

The purpose of the building guidelines is to recommend best practices when designing new or expanded upon buildings within the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area.

5.2.2.1 *Building Types*

The use of multiple building types within a village helps to create a visually interesting streetscape; whereas the streetscape becomes monotonous if only singular building types are used. Additionally, a variety of building types within a community provides diverse housing choices for residences of varying ages, sizes and income levels.

It is envisioned that any new housing within the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area will range from single-family detached to small apartments. Multiuse/general buildings near the intersections of MD 108 and MD 650 are also possible. Having appropriate

scale and dimensions are important to maintain the character of a village. Typical villages in the Mid-Atlantic region feature many small buildings that include single family homes, duplexes, small multiplexes and small commercial buildings. If new buildings are too wide or deep, the character of a traditional village may be lost. Smaller building widths along street edges are preferred, as is providing a variety in building widths.

With the exception of multi use or general building types, new buildings along the two state roadways should be 80 feet or less in width to maintain a building massing that replicates the building forms found along MD 108 and MD 650. Multi use and general buildings may be slightly longer in length to accommodate mixed-use tenants. On non-state road street frontages, buildings should be no wider than 120 feet to remain compatible with the vision for Ashton.

Buildings may be deeper than their road frontage if the depth is not highly visible. Buildings at the recommended maximum width, or that are deeper than wide should be carefully located to ensure that are dispersed throughout the Village Core and not clustered all in one area.

Here are the various building types anticipated in the future in Ashton.

1. **Single-Family Detached** – A single-family detached house is a single dwelling unit on its own lot. The lot and building dimensional requirements should comply with the standards of its zone. Ideally,

room for an accessory dwelling unit on these detached house sites should be considered.

2. **Duplex** – A duplex or a semi-detached dwelling, which is a building containing two single-family dwelling units attached side-by-side, may take on various orientations to the streets. Architectural embellishments are not counted in the width of a unit.



3. **Townhouses** – A townhouse is a building containing three or more single-family dwelling units where each dwelling is attached to its neighbor, separated

vertically by a party wall. The front façade of any individual townhouse unit may vary in width however most units should be 22 feet or narrower in width to avoid inappropriate massing.



4. **Stacked Flats** – Stacked flats are a type of building with multifamily dwelling units separated vertically by floor. A stacked flat building may be two or more stories and contain dwelling unit(s) on each floor. Stacked flats may be either one dwelling unit wide with multiple units stacked vertically, or may be attached similar to townhouses with multiple stacks composed as one building.



5. **Multiplex** – A multiplex is a small apartment building type with multifamily dwellings of between four and 12 dwelling units. Units can be either stacked and/or side-by-side and are connected by a common hallway and main entrance.
6. **Multi Use and General Buildings** – A multi use building contains retail/service uses on the ground floor with residential or nonresidential uses above. A general building contains nonresidential uses.

Multi use buildings with varying storefronts should be designed to let each storefront have unique architecture, ideally carrying that uniqueness up the façade, giving the impression of multiple attached buildings rather than one large building.



5.2.2.2 Building Placement

Proper building placement both horizontally and vertically along streets and open spaces promotes a walkable, bikeable and vibrant village. If buildings with certain uses are placed too far back from the sidewalk, or if

building entrances are too high above the sidewalk level, then the sense of the public realm or the human scale of a space may be lost.

1. **General** – All new buildings, whether residential, multi use or general, must have their main entrances on public streets, private streets or publicly accessible open spaces that have sidewalks. Buildings should not have their main entrances off parking lots or drive aisles. Buildings may have secondary entrances from parking lots.
2. **Build-to area** – The build-to area is the area from the lot line or right-of-way (minimum setback) to the maximum setback where a certain percentage of a front or side building façade must be located. The minimum and maximum setbacks may vary depending on the type of building use and the location of the Public Utility Easement (PUE). Multi use or general buildings may be placed closer to the rights-of-way than residential uses to provide for active storefronts that give vibrancy to village streetscapes. Residential uses may have an open space between the sidewalk or shared-use path and the building that serves as a semiprivate transition between the public and private realms.

With new development, a consistent line needs to be established within the build-to area along a street frontage where all

façades should be placed, regardless of use, in order to create a consistent street wall. With infill development, the front façade line should be consistent with the placement of the front façades of existing buildings. Ensure the build-to line considers any necessary PUEs so that building embellishments such as stoops and porches can be an integral part of new buildings.



Buildings frame the street to create a consistent street wall

3. **Consistent Spacing** – In order to create a pleasing streetscape, a regularized spacing (plus or minus a few feet) between the front façades along a street or open space should be maintained.
4. **Entrances** – The main entrance of residential dwelling units should be maintained as close as possible to the final exterior grade at the door location to allow for entry at the first floor and not the second floor along a street

frontage. Any attached dwelling units should step down to ensure that a relative consistent grade change is maintained between the first-floor entrance and the sidewalk in front of each dwelling unit. On stacked flats, a secondary stair may provide direct access to the upper units.

5. **Garages** – Residential dwelling units and multi use buildings may have garages. Access to garages must be from the rear or the side of a unit or building through an alley or driveway unless a demonstrated site constraint warrants alternative placement.

5.2.2.3 *Building Massing and Composition*

The overall shape and size of a building, which includes the exterior walls, architectural embellishments and roof components, shall be harmonious with the existing surrounding context. With new development, groups of buildings within a block along a streetscape should be viewed as a composition of elevations in order to ensure that streetscapes are vibrant and not monotonous or repetitious. Dwelling unit heights, setbacks, varied rooflines and architectural embellishments can help to break up the horizontal composition of the overall façade of a building.

1. **General** – Townhomes and Stacked Flats may be attached to form a composition within a larger building. Multiplex and

general buildings should stand alone and not be attached to other building types, may be designed to appear as a series of smaller buildings that are attached.

Additionally, no two buildings next to one another along a streetscape should have the same elevation. While the general geometry of the massing may be the same with each building, architectural embellishments, color and/or materials should provide a difference between structures.

2. **Volume** – Buildings should be articulated in a manner that breaks the massing of larger structures so that they relate better to the surrounding context. The portions of the façades of buildings facing the public realm should be manipulated to provide visual interest and avoid monotonous, bulky buildings along streetscapes. The façades of dwelling units and/or a building may have setbacks, projections and/or step-downs in addition to architectural embellishments.
 - a. Façade elevations consisting of two or more attached buildings or dwellings should be designed as a single elevation. Setbacks, projections and step-downs should be deliberately considered to ensure that overall façade composition remains cohesive. Providing staggered offsets between each

dwelling on townhouses or stacked flats should be avoided unless it creates a coherent front elevation.

- b. Multi use and general buildings should have a base, middle and top in their composition with the cornice or eave being the top. The façades of a building greater than 60 feet in width along the public realm should be designed to look like more than one building that has been attached. The façade should be designed so that the first floor appears taller than the floors above.

- 3. **Rooflines** – Buildings should have simple rooflines that reflect traditional architectural styles. Rooflines should be similar to the architecture in the surrounding area, which features primarily pitched roofs. Attached units, multi use buildings and general buildings should also have pitched roofs or provide a strong cornice element.

- a. New buildings with a pitched roof should be designed to be similar to the pitch of existing buildings, which is approximately a minimum 6:12 pitch, except for those emulating an architectural style that dictates a lower roof pitch (i.e. Craftsman). Gables should be symmetrical.
- b. Consider incorporating top floor living space of the dwelling unit into the attic roofline.

- c. Rooflines or cornice heights should be varied on wider general, or multi use buildings or sticks of townhomes with more than three units.



Buildings have varied and simple roof lines along streetscape

- 4. **Fenestration** – The window patterns on buildings go hand-in-hand with the building volume. Window and door openings bring variety to façades. Dwelling unit and building façades should be divided into sections to create a pattern and rhythm. The window pattern of a dwelling unit or building should also emphasize the verticality of a building.
 - a. Use fenestration to develop the pattern and rhythm of building façades.
 - b. Larger windows should be provided on the ground floor of multi use and general buildings to allow for higher transparency from public spaces. Larger windows may also be used to differentiate the more public and private levels of dwelling units.

- c. There should be no expanses of long blank walls without fenestration on any elevations.

5.2.2.4 *Architectural Embellishments*

Some form of architectural embellishment provides additional rhythm and visual interest to building façades. Architectural elements may encroach beyond the build-to line. This is especially important to any façade that is visible from or faces a street or open space.

- 1. **Porches** – All porches should be designed with enough depth to enable outdoor furniture placement while maintaining safe circulation, and should extend a minimum of two-thirds the length of the primary façade on a residential dwelling unit. Porches may also be located on or wrap around to the sides of residential dwelling units. Porches may be placed on multi use and general buildings. Porches may be one, two or three stories. The second or third floors of a porch may or may not be covered. The covering of a porch may have a flat or shed roof with straight or hipped ends.
- 2. **Stoops** – Stoops are usually at least five feet in depth and should extend a minimum of one foot on each side of the front door of the primary façade on a residential dwelling unit. If a stoop is covered, it may have a flat, shed or gabled roof.

3. **Recessed Entries** – A recessed entry should be deep enough to provide cover from the elements at the entryway and should extend a minimum of one foot on each side of the front door of the primary façade on a residential dwelling unit.
4. **Bay Windows** – Bay windows may be angular or rectangular and encroach up to three feet beyond the build-to line.
5. **Shutters** – If shutters are used, the shutter and window opening sizes should match to provide the appearance of operability.



Architectural elements, such as recessed entries and bay windows provide visual interest

5.2.2.5 Building Materials

Buildings within the greater Sandy Spring/Ashton area represent a wide range of architectural styles, including Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne and Victorian. When new buildings are designed in the Plan area, materials on new buildings should take their cues from and complement surrounding existing structures.

1. **Building Elevations** – Façades should be composed of durable materials that are indicative of a rural village such as brick, stone, wood or cement fiber, and should be clad in a way that clearly convey a particular architectural style. All facades should be composed of the same building materials.
2. **Water Table** – If the material used to create a water table at the base of an elevation of a building differs from the rest of the façade, the water table material should not extend above the window sill on the first floor of the elevation.

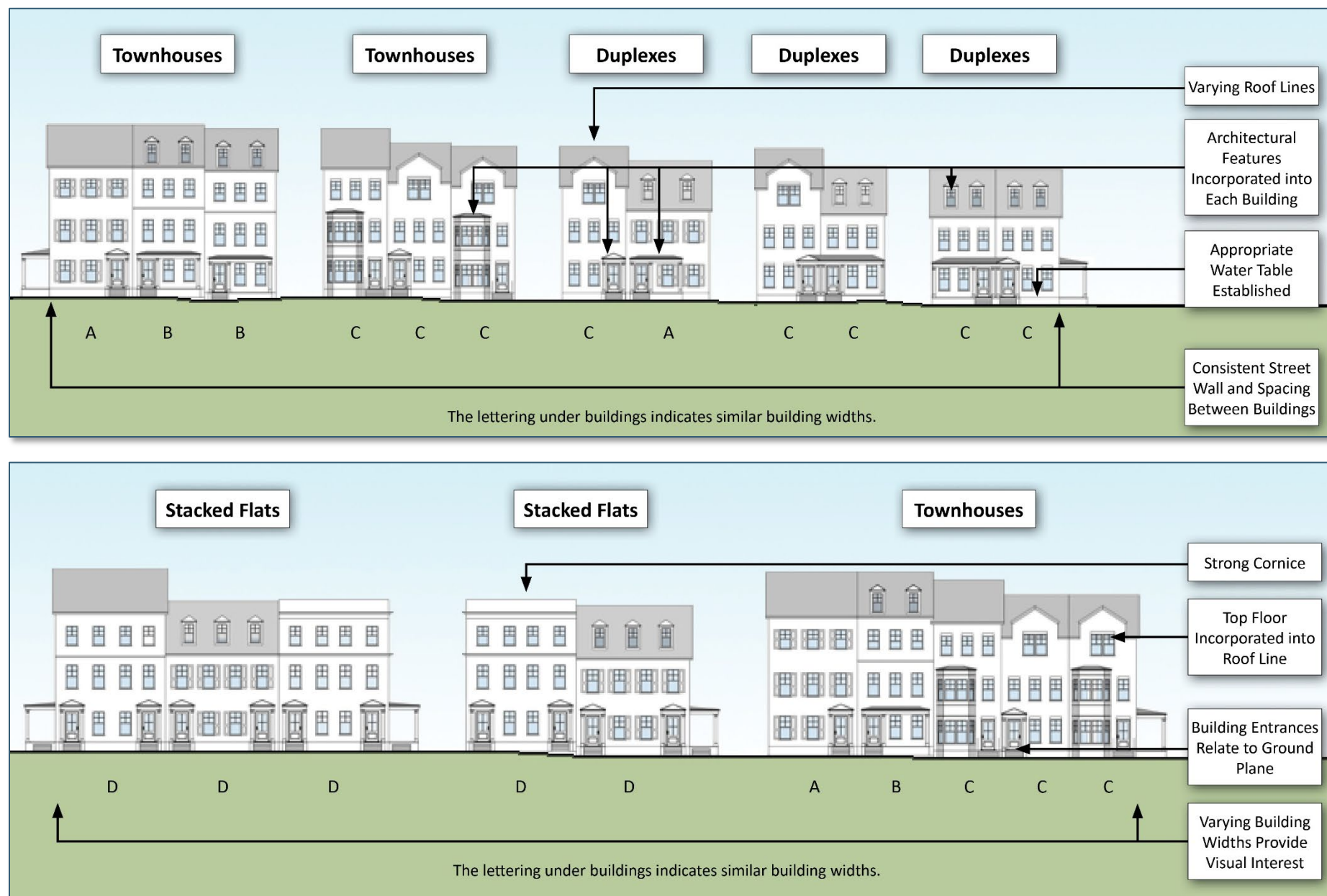


Figure 10. The illustrations above show the concepts in the Building Guidelines section. They are intended to convey the general character for possible development within the Plan area. They are not tied to a specific site or location and are not intended to limit ideas that are consistent with the principles of the Building Guidelines.

Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Proposed Public Hearing Draft Changes

Based on the Board's deliberations and other changes recommended by staff, below are page by page changes proposed for the Public Hearing Draft Plan. All proposed new language is shown in **Red** and deleted language is shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

Abstract

Inside front cover: Revise the text of the first sentence of the second paragraph in the second column as follows:

The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting and amending or extending ~~The the General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties~~ **General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.**

Inside front cover: Revise the email address for the Commissioners Office as follows:

mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Chapter 3: Areawide Recommendations

Page 18: Remove hyphen from "area-wide" in chapter title:

Chapter 3: ~~Area-Wide~~ **Areawide** Recommendations

3.2 Land Use and Zoning

3.2.3 Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay Zone

Page 21: Revise the text of the first full paragraph in the third column as follows:

~~Three~~ **Two** existing uses in the Plan area are not allowed under the CRN zone, however: the filling station and ~~its associated~~ auto repair shop in the southwest corner and the drive-thru associated with the bank in the southeast corner. ~~All three of these~~ **These** uses are Limited or Conditional uses in the CRT zone but ~~are~~ not allowed in the CRN zone. This Plan recommends adding language to the overlay zone to allow drive-thrus ~~not~~ associated with ~~restaurants banks,~~ **and** filling stations ~~and with~~ vehicle repair services to be considered conforming and be allowed to continue or be altered, repaired or replaced **on the same site or on a contiguous property.**

3.2.5 Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

Page 22: Revise the text of recommendation 1 as follows:

Rezone all properties in the northeast, northwest and southwest quadrants of the Village Core neighborhood to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35.

Page 22: Revise the text of recommendation 4 as follows:

Confirm the existing zoning for the properties in the Rural Buffer neighborhood and the remainder of the Residential Edge neighborhoods.

Page 22: Revise the text of recommendation 5.g as follows:

Allow a drive-thru as a Limited Use if associated with a bank. Do not allow the drive-thru lane to be ~~adjacent to~~ located between the building edge and MD 108 or MD 650 under any condition.

Page 22: Insert a new recommendation between current recommendations g and h:

Allow filling stations and their accessory uses to be considered conforming uses and to be continued, altered, repaired or replaced as a conditional use on the same site or a contiguous property.

3.3 Community Design

3.3.1 Context

Page 25: Revise the text of the first sentence in the last paragraph in column 1 as follows:

These recommendations include general ways to address building, placement, massing, and the use of landscaping to keep any new construction consistent with the rural village character this Plan seeks to achieve.

3.3.2 Community Design Recommendations

Page 25-26: Revise the text of recommendation 2 as follows, with the added language being copied from recommendation 5.2.2.1 #2:

Entirely residential buildings with front or side elevations along MD 108 or MD 650 should be designed so that the building width, building massing and façade treatment fronting to these roads suggests a single-family detached or duplex building form, regardless of actual housing type. Multi use buildings with varying storefronts should be designed to let each storefront have unique architecture, ideally carrying that uniqueness up the façade, giving the impression of multiple attached buildings rather than one large building. The depth of these buildings should be flexible to accommodate various building types and building densities.

Page 26: Revise the text of recommendation 11 as follows:

Incorporate architectural elements in the façades, such as front and side-turned gables, front and side porches, covered stoops, recessed entries, bay windows, dormer windows and cupolas.

Page 26: Revise the text of recommendation 12 as follows:

All sides of each individual building should be designed and built with the same exterior architecture and building materials in mind.

Page 26: Revise the text of recommendation 13 as follows:

Buildings should be clad~~ded~~ in materials and patterns authentic to rural village character, such as brick, stone, wood shingles, ~~and~~ wood cladding ~~and fiber cement siding imitating wood cladding~~.

3.4 Connectivity

3.4.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

Page 30: Replace the Proposed intersection improvements in Figure 4 (left) with the image on the right (moves stop bar on southbound MD 650 at intersection):



Page 31: Revise the text of the first full paragraph as follows:

A new crosswalk with walk signals should be added at the signalized intersection in front of the high school to provide safe crossings to this new sidepath. The existing bus stop located at the western entrance to the high school would be better relocated to the eastern signalized entrance once the pedestrian improvements are made. **Shelters should be provided for the bus stops on both sides of MD 108 in front of the high school.** Trail connections to the parkland south of the high school are described in the next chapter.

Page 31: Revise the text of the second sentence of the Figure 5 caption as follows:

A new crosswalk and walk signal ~~is~~ **are** recommended at the existing traffic signal at the high school's eastern entrance.

3.4.4 Connectivity Recommendations

Page 33: Revise the text of recommendation 14 as follows:

Provide a bus shelter at the bus stop ~~on~~ **in** the northwest quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection.

Page 33: Add a new recommendation 15 as follows:

15. Relocate the westbound bus stop in front of Sherwood High School to the new crosswalk at the signalized entrance. Provide bus shelters on both sides of MD 108 in front of Sherwood High School.

3.5 Community Facilities, Open Space and Trails

Page 34: Revise the text of the section 3.5 heading as follows:

Community Facilities, ~~and~~ Open Space ~~and~~ Trails

3.5.1.3 Open Space Opportunities

Page 36: Revise the text of the last paragraph in the middle column as follows:

A community playground is situated between the two cul-de-sacs (Ashton Club Way and Orion Club Drive), ~~but nearly two as well as approximately 3.2~~ acres of private open space in and around ~~the a~~ stormwater pond. ~~This space is have been~~ identified as a “common area” on the record plat ~~for the community. The declaration of covenants for the Ashton Village Homeowners Association (HOA) gives the HOA the right to dedicate or transfer any part of the common area to a public agency.~~ Options should be explored to make this space more accessible and usable to the public ~~instead of just for the members of the Ashton Village HOA.~~

Page 37: Revise the text of the end of the first partial paragraph in the first column as follows:

If feasible, a publicly accessible green should be located adjacent to the environmental features to provide visual access to the natural amenities and to make the usable portion of the space feel larger and more accessible to the public. ~~This green may be in private or public ownership, to be determined at the time of development.~~ Any green space in this area ~~that is intended to be open to the general public~~ should also directly access a public or private road to make the area welcoming to the greater Ashton community.

Page 37: Revise the second bullet at the end of the second column as follows:

Ensure that open spaces ~~that are intended to be open to the general public~~ remain publicly accessible by avoiding fencing unless it is for safety, such as a tot lot or dog park, in which case context-sensitive fencing should be provided.

Page 38: Amend the legend of the “Recommended Open Spaces” map as follows:

~~Potential~~ Green Linear Connection

3.5.1.4 Trail Connections

Page 39: Add a new fifth paragraph as follows:

This Plan also supports the recommendations of the 1998 Plan to accommodate equestrian trail users when appropriate, including through the high school property.

Page 40: Amend the “Proposed Trail Connections” map as follows:

- Shift the State Champion White Ash Tree to be centered along the southern property line.
- Extend the pointer for The Sandy Spring to the right of the trail.
- Fill in the white space behind the Sandy Spring to indicate that it is parkland.
- Increase the font size of the park label.

3.5.3 Community Facilities, Open Space and Trail Recommendations

Page 41: Revise the text of recommendation 4 as follows:

New development in the southeast quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection should provide a publicly accessible public green space large enough to act as a civic gathering space. This space is encouraged to be adjacent to the environmental features to help the space feel larger. Any **public** green space in this area should have direct frontage to a public or private road.

Page 41: Revise the text of recommendation 6 as follows:

Designate a small open space area adjacent to the southeast corner of the intersection of MD 650 and MD 108 to protect the existing large shade **trees**.

Page 41: Revise the text of recommendation 8 as follows:

Do not enclose open spaces with fencing unless **it the open space is intended only for private use, or the fence** is for safety, such as for a tot lot or dog park, in which case context-sensitive fencing should be provided. **Small private open spaces may not be fenced if doing so would prevent access to or make access to public open spaces more difficult.**

Page 41: Move recommendation 10 from page 53 “4.1.5 Southeast Quadrant” to be between current recommendations 8 and 9 and revise the text as follows:

Designate the proposed **public** open spaces within the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan.

3.6 Environment

3.6.1 Watersheds

Page 42: Revise the text of the final sentence of the second paragraph as follows:

These measures only apply to land under development in low density zones, and therefore only apply to the RC-~~Zoned~~**zoned** properties in the Rural Buffer neighborhood.

Page 42: Reposition the “Watersheds” map to display the entire legend:

Lower Patuxent **River**

3.6.2 Shade

Page 43: Remove the bulleted list of recommendations:

Recommendations:

- ~~Any new development or redevelopment should include large canopy tree species in its landscaping.~~
- ~~Consider awning, building orientation and other means of providing shade in any new development or redevelopment.~~
- ~~Maintain existing and plant new shade trees that overarch MD 108 and MD 650.~~

3.6.4 Environment Recommendations

Page 43: Revise the text of the section 3.6.4 heading as follows:

Environment~~al~~ Recommendations

Page 43: Revise the text of recommendation 3 as follows:

Maintain existing ~~shade trees to the extent feasible~~ and plant new shade trees in strategic locations that will eventually overarch MD 108 and MD 650, including at the entry points to the ~~v~~village.

3.7 Historic Preservation

Page 44: Revise the first paragraph in the Cloverly sidebar as follows:

Historically known as Sherwood, Cloverly was built by Benjamin Rush Roberts between 1849 and 1852. ~~Roberts' wife, Mary Needles Roberts, was a founding member of Sandy Spring's Mutual Improvement Association, considered one of the nation's oldest women's clubs. She hosted the group's first meeting at Cloverly in 1857. During the Civil War, the Roberts family utilized Cloverly as a retreat for Union Army nurses in need of recuperation.~~

The two-and-a-half story Greek Revival-style brick house sits at the end of a long drive that stretches north from the Olney-Sandy Spring Road. The property includes the main historic dwelling~~7~~ with several additions, a historic carriage house/stable, and a contemporary barn.

3.7.1 Background

Page 44: Revise the text of the final paragraph as follows:

Future development should explore opportunities to integrate ~~interpretative~~ ~~interpretive~~ signage, markers or public art that commemorate Ashton's origins as a rural commercial crossroads and home to free black settlers.

Page 46: Replace the photographs of the second, third, and fourth houses (left) with the pictures on the right:



3.7.2 Historic Preservation Recommendations

Page 46: Revise the text in recommendation 3 as follows:

During future development or major redevelopment, consider opportunities to integrate ~~interpretative~~ **interpretive** signage, markers or public art that commemorate Ashton's origins as a rural commercial crossroads and home to free black settlers.

Chapter 4: Neighborhoods

4.1 Village Core Neighborhood

Page 47: Add the BG&E substation to the “Village Core Framework” illustration.

Page 47: Add the following text to the end of the caption of the “Village Core Framework” illustration:

All features shown are illustrative only.

4.1.2 Southwest Quadrant

Page 49: Revise the text of the last sentence of the second paragraph as follows:

Other than the two apartments above the Cricket Book Shop, the southwest Quadrant also has no residential development, although there are residential uses immediately to the south and west of the properties.

4.1.3 Northwest Quadrant

Page 50: Revise the text of recommendation 6 as follows:

If the Ashton Village Shopping Center redevelops, encourage a mix of uses with ground floor commercial activity activating the street and with parking behind.

4.1.4 Northeast Quadrant

Page 52: Revise the text of recommendation 2 as follows:

Relocate the utility pole at the corner to and modify the curve to enable easier vehicle turning without negatively impacting pedestrian safety.

Page 52: Revise the text of recommendation 4 as follows:

If the property on the northeast quadrant redevelops, move the building to be adjacent to the street and improve the open space with shading and buffering.

Page 52: Revise the text of recommendation 5 as follows:

Interconnected vehicle access to both MD 108 and MD 650 should be provided through streets built to a public standard, including sidewalks, street trees and street parking where feasible. The circulation shall be designed with traffic calming measures to discourage high-speed cut-through traffic.

4.1.5 Southeast Quadrant

Page 53: Revise the text of the first sentence of the first full paragraph in the first column as follows:

In the southeast corner quadrant, the proposed zoning should be consistent with the other three corner quadrants at CRN-0.5 total FAR, but the maximum allowable height is 40 feet instead of 35 feet.

Page 53: Revise the text of the first sentence of the last full paragraph in the first column as follows:

Because the community and the landowner have a strong desire to continue a bank use on the southeast corner, the SSA Overlay zone, which is being retained in an altered form, should contain language allowing ~~this the associated drive-thru~~ use to be continued with any redevelopment.

Page 53: Revise the text of recommendation 2 as follows:

Rezone all other properties in the southeast quadrant ~~from CRT-0.75-C-0.75-R-0.25-H-35~~ to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-40.

Page 53: Move recommendation 10 to “3.5.3 Community Facilities, Open Space and Trail Recommendations” on page 41 between current recommendations 8 and 9 as part of the “open space recommendations” and revise the text as follows:

Designate the proposed ~~public~~ open spaces within the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan.

4.2 Residential Edge Neighborhood

Page 54: Add the following photograph between the above photograph and its caption:



Page 55: Correct the figure number from 10 to 9:

Figure ~~10~~ 9. Aerial view (2019) of Residential Edge neighborhood.

Page 56: Revise the text of recommendation 1 as follows:

Retain the R-90 and TF-10 ~~Z~~ zones for all properties south of MD 108 currently in those zones.

Page 56: Revise the text of recommendation 3 as follows:

Rezone the residential and open space portions of the Ashton Village development from PD-5 ~~and R-200~~ to TLD.

4.3 Rural Buffer Neighborhood

Page 57: Correct section heading to 4.3 instead of 4.4:

4.4 4.3 Rural Buffer Neighborhood

Page 58: Correct the figure number from 9 to 10:

Figure **9 10**. Aerial View (2019) of Rural Buffer neighborhood.

Page 58: Add a new recommendation before recommendation 1 as follows:

- 1. Retain the existing RC and RNC zoning.**

Chapter 5: Design Guidelines

5.1 Design Vision

Page 59: Revise the text of the first sentence as follows:

Ashton is envisioned as a compact, low-rise, walkable and bikeable village with a mix of residential and commercial, ~~retail and service~~ land uses.

5.2 Buildings

5.2.2.1 Building Types

Page 60: Revise the text of the second sentence of the second paragraph as follows:

~~Multiuse/~~ **Multi use and** general buildings near the intersections of MD 108 and MD 650 are also possible.

Page 61: Revise the text of the second and third paragraphs as follows:

With the exception of multi use or general building types, new buildings along the two state roadways should be 80 feet or less in width to maintain a building massing that replicates the building forms found along MD 108 and MD 650. Multi use and general buildings may be ~~slightly longer in length up to 120 feet wide along the state roads~~ to accommodate mixed-use tenants. On non-state road street frontages, buildings should be no wider than 120 feet to remain compatible with the vision for Ashton.

Buildings may be deeper than their road frontage if the depth is not highly visible. Buildings at the recommended maximum width, or that are deeper than wide should be carefully located to ensure that **they** are dispersed throughout the Village Core and not clustered ~~all~~ in one area.

Page 61: Revise the text in recommendation 3 as follows:

Townhouses – A townhouse is a building containing three or more single-family dwelling units where each dwelling is attached to its neighbor, separated vertically by a party wall. The front façade of any individual townhouse unit may vary in width; however, most units should be 22 feet or narrower in width to avoid inappropriate massing.

Page 61: Revise the text of recommendation 4 as follows:

Stacked Flats – Stacked flats are a type of **apartment** building with multifamily dwelling units separated vertically by floor. A stacked flat building may be two or more stories and contain dwelling unit(s) on each floor. Stacked flats may be either one dwelling unit wide with multiple units stacked vertically, or may be attached similar to townhouses with multiple stacks composed as one building.

5.2.2.3 Buildings Massing and Composition

Page 63: Revise the text of recommendation 1 as follows:

General – Townhomes and Stacked Flats may be attached to form a composition within a larger building. Multiplex and general buildings should stand alone and not be attached to other building types; **these buildings** may be designed to appear as a series of smaller buildings that are attached.

Page 64: Insert the following photograph and caption between recommendation 2.b and 3 in the first column:



Multi use buildings are designed to appear as a series of attached smaller buildings with varying rooflines and strong cornice elements. The first floor appears taller than the floors above and each storefront has unique architecture that carries up the façade.

Page 64: Revise the text of recommendation 3.c as follows:

Rooflines or cornice heights should be varied on wider general⁷ or multi use buildings or sticks of townhomes with more than three units.

5.2.2.5 Building Materials

Page 65: Revise the text of the last sentence of recommendation 1 as follows:

All ~~facades~~ **façades of each individual building** should be composed of the same building materials.

Page 66: Correct the figure number from 10 to 11:

Figure ~~10~~ **11**. The illustrations above show the concepts in the Building Guidelines section...

5.3 Open Space

Page 67: Revise the text of the fourth sentence of the first paragraph and add an additional sentence as follows:

New open spaces shall be well-designed, appropriately scaled and, **where practical**, publicly accessible to all. **Small private open spaces are allowed but may not be fenced if doing so would prevent access to or make access to public open spaces more difficult.**

5.3.1 Open Space Guidelines

Page 67: Revise the Plan text as follows:

The locations of public spaces, their dimensions and the activities adjacent to those open spaces help to determine if an open space is part of the public or private realm. **Publicly accessible** ~~Open~~ spaces need to have an appropriate location and adequate size so that they are perceived as public, inviting and visually accessible to the immediate residents and the surrounding community. Publicly accessible open space should be adjacent to rights-of-way and not hidden within a community or behind barriers.

5.4 Connections

5.4.1.1 Connection Elements

Page 68: Revise the text of the last sentence of recommendation 2 as follows:

Any parking not in garages, **driveways** or parking pads off alleys should be accommodated on-street, unless excess space in the alley allows for a small separate parking area with shade trees.

Page 68: Revise the last sentence of recommendation 2.a as follows:

~~The width of a~~ Alleys should **only** be ~~narrow~~ **wide** enough to be safe for service vehicles. Additional residential parking should occur on streets in the form of parallel parking.

Page 69: Revise the text of recommendation 3.b. as follows:

Parking located on the sides of buildings shall be concealed from public space by a combination **of** landscaping and/or low screen walls.

Chapter 6: Implementation

6.4 Further Studies

Page 71: Add the following paragraph to the end of the section:

The Sector Plan area is split between the areas of the Mid-County and Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center (RSC). The process for updating the RSC boundaries should be studied so that all of Ashton can be included within a single region.

6.5 Implementation Advisory Committee

Page 71: Revise the text as follows:

This Plan supports the creation of an advisory group to address its implementation. The formation of any new advisory group should be staffed by the Planning Department in close coordination with the Ashton ~~Area Community Association~~ Alliance (~~AACAA~~).

This advisory group would work in coordination with the ~~AACAA~~ Ashton Alliance (or successor group) and the ~~Mid-County~~ Regional Services Center that covers the area of a project by providing specific community and redevelopment expertise. It would also serve as an interface between developers and County agencies in implementing recommendations of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. This new group should be structured to include representatives from the various constituencies interested in successful implementation of the Plan.

6.7 Capital Improvements Program

Page 72: Revise the Connectivity recommendation regarding the relocated bus stop in front of Sherwood High School as follows:

Relocate the bus stop in front of Sherwood High School to the new crosswalk at the signalized entrance. Provide bus shelters on both sides of MD 108.

From: [Kathleen Wheeler](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#); county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Randy Nittoli](#); [Walt Fennell](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 11:44:49 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Ashton Alliance (formerly “Ashton Area Homeowners and Civic Association Alliance”).

Ashton sits on a crossroads in an area with a rich history that is still reflected in the working farms and historic structures that surround the village center. The implementation of this Plan will determine how the rural character of the village is retained. Of paramount importance to maintaining this rural character is how the southeast corner of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Maryland Route 108 is developed. This corner is the main undeveloped piece of property within the Plan area and represents the entryway into the village center from both the south and the east. Without enforceable design guidelines and development that is consistent in size and scale with a rural village, Ashton will forever lose its unique character. We have seen similar issues with the construction of Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. The lack of specific guidelines led to the development of townhomes that follow the vague guidelines, but do not fit in with the surrounding area.

As residents of the Ashton area, we strongly urge the Planning Board to retain the following provisions in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan that is transmitted to the County Council:

- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Specific mandatory design guidelines that are included in the Plan rather than as a separate document;
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Implementation of an advisory committee with the authority to engage meaningfully in the implementation of the Plan;
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Intersection improvements that will enhance traffic flow and pedestrian safety;
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Retention of a maximum building height of 40 feet and a FAR of no more than 0.5C and 0.5R on the southeast corner of the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue;

- Completion of sidewalks and side paths where they are missing; and
- Provision of adequate onsite parking and green space on the southeast corner to minimize impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.

Our concerns include:

- Significant increases in the number of allowable units on the southeast corner where there is inadequate public transportation and will result in loss of rural character;
- No conceptual plans that provide the community with a clear understanding and expectation of what will actually be built.

Many community members, both private residents and business partners, have participated in the development of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, attending design workshops, community meetings, the public hearing, and the virtual Planning Board meetings. However, we still do not feel we have a clear understanding of the intentions of the developer as to what will actually be built on the southeast corner. The staff has indicated that the 150 units identified in the appendix to the Plan would be the maximum number of units that could be built on the site and that the actual number would be far less. However, there is no clear indication of what that number would be. At a community meeting in January 2020, the Planning staff presented conceptual drawings, including one that yielded 101 units. The overwhelming reaction from the community, as expressed in the meeting and in letters to the Planning Board, was that this was significantly more than what is appropriate for a rural community.

We urge the Board to hold another work session where a clear understanding of what can actually be built on the southeast corner will be provided to the community prior to the Ashton Village Sector Plan being transmitted to the County Council. While virtual meetings make continuing the process along during the pandemic more feasible, rushing the Plan through the process does not allow appropriate amount of time for the Community to review the plethora of documents that are produced.

As recent as the first work session, members of the Planning Board had not physically seen the Thomas Village Subdivision and the impact it has had on Sandy Spring. Instead a virtual tour was provided. Although helpful, no virtual tour can take the place of a physical one, which would have allowed for a more informed

discussion of the concerns and merits of the Plan. We are hopeful that Planning Board members have been able to tour prior to the second work session.

We urge the Planning Board to include an Advisory Board as recommended in the draft Plan, and that that Advisory Board in conjunction with the County and future developers ensure compliance with the plan guidelines. Because the future of Ashton is critical to retaining one of the few remaining small historic areas in the County, the implementation advisory committee is of utmost importance. It would provide an opportunity to monitor and ensure implementation of all the provisions of the Plan. Many of the provisions require coordination and funding from outside the Planning Commission and would benefit from community input and engagement. It is a much needed communication and oversight tool. The advisory committee could provide focus and community support for the necessary funding and coordination needed from the County and State.

Ashton is a special place and we hope that the Board will ensure that the provisions of the Plan will ensure it remains so. Many residents of the Community are excited for the modernization of Ashton, and look forward to being able to finally walk along the road without the fear of oncoming traffic or the lack of walkways. That being said, ensuring all the proper information is received and discussed is of the utmost importance moving forward.

Kathleen Wheeler
Ashton Alliance

From: [Andy Cohen](#)
To: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Plan Work Sessions
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 10:43:09 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Good morning,

I have lived in Ashton for 14 years and I moved here for the rural setting. I am highly opposed to the permitting development beyond what the planning staff has already recommended. Due to the recent building up in the area we already have more traffic, I believe putting in these structures would create gridlock of traffic in the area.

We want Ashton to remain a rural village.

Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).

The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).

The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Thank you,
Andrew Cohen

From: [Charlene Kimble](#)
To: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Please keep Ashton rural!!
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 2:10:10 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

1. We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
2. Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height. (The developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline, with most of the roof above that level.)
3. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5. (That is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. The developer has requested a F.A.R. of 0.75).
4. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. (The developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Charlene Kimble

--

Charlene Gay Kimble, Licensed Referral Agent
RE/MAX Realty Centre
3300 Olney Sandy Spring Road
Olney, MD 20832
301-774-5900

From: [Charlie Glendinning](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Plan
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 1:26:14 PM
Attachments: [ROCK_SPRING.png](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board and Staff...

I know you've been inundated with reams of long emails urging you **NOT to allow the excessive over-development** of the Southeast corner of 108 and New Hampshire Ave... so I will try to be brief. The developer's wishes for this small 9 acre piece of land is WAY out of scale for our small town.

Density = too great

Buildings = too tall

Design = too stark and industrial. (Ashton is not the Bauhaus.)

During the bus trip Mr. Nichols showed us designs that were all of the above. Here is a sample ::



Please do not let this happen. This design would be a better fit for downtown Washington, DC. **Most everyone here is excited to see reasonable development in Ashton. This is NOT reasonable development.** We welcome housing for low and middle income families.

Jamey Pratt and Roberto Duke—and others who worked long hours with

them on this project—have visited our community several times to meet with us, to walk the property, to get a true feel for the neighborhood. Their extensive thoughts and ideas are a reflection of that. As I watched the Zoom presentation I wondered how many of the Board members have stood on the property and tried to envision the above photo... repeated... row upon row. And I also wondered how many were just tired and wanted to give the developer what he wanted... and move on.

We didn't always agree with Jamey and Roberto. The FAR of .5 will still allow the developer to shoehorn way too many units into the property, but in NO WAY should it be allowed to be .75 across the entire property. (I wonder if one "signature building" near the intersection could be .75 and the rest of the property hold to .5)

Regardless, We urge you to follow the Planning Staff proposal.

It is my hunch that the Board may be focusing too heavily on "Thrive 2050," but a general "one-size-fits-all" approach to it doesn't take into account that some areas are FAR removed from main arteries and public transportation. Ashton, being at the Easternmost part of the county doesn't stand a chance having it anytime soon. We are the crossroads of two rural, two-lane roads. The traffic that this project would certainly generate would be more than Ashton can bear.

What the developer is asking for is too much development for an area that can't support it.

Thank you,
Charles Glendinning

—

CHARLES GLENDINNING
Ashton, Maryland USA
Mobile :: 301.980.1087
chazglen@gmail.com

From: [Chris Bocus](#)
To: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Comments from Residents for Working Session
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 8:22:04 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident of Spring Lawn community in Ashton, which is next to the Ashton Village Center planned southwest quadrant. My family and I urges the Montgomery County Planning Board to consider the following:

1. It is very important to keeping Ashton a rural village.
2. The building heights should be no more than 40 ft in height and to keep the density of building in the Southeast corner to no more than FAR of .5.

We don't have the infrastructure to support the proposed population increase. We already suffer serious traffic on the intersection of 108 and 650 (New Hampshire). Most of us who have children have to drive past that corner everyday to pick up our children from Sherwood elementary and Farquar Middle School. To add that type of density without making major road changes will cause a lot of harm to us in terms of traffic and ability to get around our village.

Please consider the residents and the people that would be adversely affected by these development plans! We love our current village and want development but within reason!

Thank you,

Chris and Dana Bocus
17704 Crystal Spring Terrace

From: [Douglas B. Farquhar](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 7:02:25 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board,

As a nearby resident of Sandy Spring, I am writing to ask that you not cave into the developer's unreasonable demands to expand the size of buildings beyond the restrictions recommended by Planning Staff for the Southeast Corner of the Ashton crossroads. Our community values the rural character of Ashton, and permitting buildings up to 45' at the midpoint of the roofline, up to 150' in length along the major roads, and with a FAR exceeding .5 are completely incompatible with any notion of a rural village. Loosening the already generous restrictions recommended by the Planning Staff and permitting buildings as represented by the developer in photographs from downtown Rockville and the City of Alexandria (urban areas, not even remotely rural ones) would be directly contrary to the Plan's stated goal of preserving a rural village atmosphere. The developer's stated rationale – the need to create a so-called “vibrant” village center – are preposterous, in light of the fact that many developers, in many areas of the county where building sites are much more expensive – have managed to create much lower-scale residential buildings and make them commercially feasible (I would point to the townhouse areas of King Farm as examples).

Our community met repeatedly with county Planners during design workshops and other community meetings, and the sentiment of the community was loud and clear: while we are not opposed to development consistent with the area's history and character, and while we favor growth in housing for the “missing middle,” we are certain that it is possible to achieve those goals while maintaining a lower scale of buildings, visible green spaces, and lower density. The developer has not proven otherwise.

Therefore, please, at your meeting on December 3, do not allow buildings on the Southeast Corner to be taller than 40', to be longer than 80' for residential buildings along the main roads or longer than 100' for commercial, buildings, do not permit FAR of more than .5 percent (please note that a FAR of .5 permits density far higher than is permitted by current zoning, which was already a community compromise, since current zoning is either R-60 or RC for half of the site).

Please do not betray the trust that the community has placed in the planning process and in you to make balanced decisions that will have long-term effects on our county.

Douglas B. Farquhar
1601 Olney Sandy Spring Road
Sandy Spring, Maryland 20860
Phone 301 774 0084

Disclaimer

The information contained in this communication from the sender is confidential. It is intended solely for use by the recipient and others authorized to receive it. If you are not the recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution or taking action in relation of the contents of this information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful.

This email has been scanned for viruses and malware, and may have been automatically archived by **Mimecast Ltd**, an innovator in Software as a Service (SaaS) for business. Providing a **safer** and **more useful** place for your human generated data. Specializing in; Security, archiving and compliance. To find out more, visit our site.

From: [Ellen Coleman](#)
To: MCP-Chair@mnsppc.org
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Development
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 2:32:05 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I am writing to voice my concern about the over development of the Ashton area as proposed for the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Route 108. I am a long time resident of Ashton, having moved from Silver Spring 24 years ago to enjoy the rural character of the area. We read the Master Plan and actively participated in the meetings held for revision to the plan. There was significant revision to the Master Plan in the late 90s with the "promise" that further large scale development would not occur. Yet increased density is already under construction for the opposite corner of this proposed site.

The project proposed is totally out of character with the Ashton Village Rural area. Not even Olney, with greater density, has an apartment project similar to this and they have the transportation system and amenities able to support a greater density.

Ashton should be kept a rural village with a building height of less than 40 feet.

The floor area ratios should be 0.5 or less which is still higher than the density of other development in the area.

The length of buildings should be limited to 80' for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Ave.

Why do we have a Master Plan? My neighbor spent thousands of dollars trying to build on a 1.90 acre lot (2 acre zoning) and was denied. Yet, one developer has the power to change the character of the entire town. Something is very wrong. Please listen to the current residents who chose this area and deny this over development.

Ellen Coleman
141 Crystal Spring Drive
Ashton, MD 20861

--



Ellen Coleman, Realtor

3300 Olney Sandy Spring Rd. #200, Olney, MD 20832

Office: 301-774-5900 Cell: 301-538-4049

[Review me on Facebook](#)

From: [ellen mcdonnell](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: development
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 10:32:27 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I am writing to insist that the you do not permit development beyond what the planning staff has recommended. We want Ashton to remain a rural village. To do so building should not be larger than 40 feet in height. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential. The density of buildings should be no more than a FAR of .5
You should deny the builder's request of .75

Thank you

Ellen McDonnell Stevens
17004 Woodale Dr
Ashton

From: [Greg Mort](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 12:32:37 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

November 23, 2020

Good Morning Chairperson and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board.

Ashton is a welcoming diverse and community-focused village. Most families are involved and devoted to our schools, local businesses, and community organizations in Ashton, Sandy Spring and Olney. This civic dedication is encouraged, mentored, and supported by warmly welcoming new neighbors as friends. As I write this I want to emphasize that my goal, which I share with all my neighbors is to make crystal clear that sharing the unique character and rural beauty that is Ashton is an honor and a duty.

Please recognize that I am not or any of the area residents that I know against housing and commercial building that is in keeping with the guidelines to preserve the historic rural character as stated in the Ashton/Sandy Spring Master Plan.

I have participated in all the workshops, community meetings both live and zoom, reviewed all the documents, and listened to the staff reviews/meetings for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. Your Planning staff has done a remarkable job reaching out to and involving area residents. They openly recognized that the participants were not against development but rather for rural design elements and appropriate size structures. The developer's representative Ms. Francoise Carrier, a former chair of the Planning Board has presented unreasonable demands to expand the size of buildings beyond the restrictions recommended by Planning Staff for the Southeast Corner of the Ashton crossroads. She used the term "Vibrant" over and over, which is clearly code for "if you don't allow overbuilding" our site will not

prosper. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The community support of our area businesses is reflected in their success and their longevity and we look forward to welcoming and supporting new enterprises.

Listening to the November 19th planning board meeting I was pleased that the member who made a visit to our area sensed the unique qualities that make Ashton special. I hope that her “feet on the ground” experience will translate into the realization that the rural character of Ashton will be destroyed if buildings up to 45’ at the midpoint of the roofline, up to 150’ in length along the major roads, and with a FAR exceeding .5 are all completely incompatible with any notion of a rural village is permitted.

Please note that the images the developer has presented to the Planning Staff are from downtown Rockville and the city of Alexandria and are totally out of character for a rural village and would be directly contrary to the Plan’s stated goal of preserving a rural village atmosphere. Again, I am not against development that reflects the rural character of the area but disagree with the developer’s contention that in order to create a “vibrant” village center he must over-build, over-crowd the site with towering structures that clearly belong in an urban setting. I trust you are familiar with successful area developments in Montgomery county where land is much more limited and expensive that have produced many lower-scale residential buildings and made them commercially feasible such as King Farm.

Again, I hope you recognize what was expressed over and over again at the community meetings: Ashton is not opposed to development consistent with the area’s history and character. But in order to do so please do not permit any buildings on the Southeast Corner to be taller than 40’, longer than 80’ for residential buildings along the main roads or longer than 100’ for commercial buildings. Most importantly do not permit FAR of more than .5 percent. A FAR of .5 permits density far higher than is permitted by current zoning, which was already a

community compromise, since current zoning is either R-60 or RC for half of the site.

If this developer is unable to achieve the goals of offering “missing middle” housing with lower scale rural design buildings and generous green spaces, perhaps he is the wrong person for this job. His failure to honor the rural character of the area with his overbuilt monolithic structures at his Thomas Village development is proof that he might not be up for the challenge.

I am pleased you all have “discovered” Ashton, an already “vibrant” involved community ready to welcome new neighbors and businesses. I will look forward to your December 3 meeting and hope that you take on the challenge to make the new Ashton Village Center a “model rural village center” that can be replicated in similar rural crossroads in Montgomery County.

Sincerely,

Greg Mort

Greg Mort
320 Ashton Road
Ashton, Maryland 20861
301-774-0157

Please note that this email may contain private proprietary and copy written information and images. Use of this information and or images contained within this communication without permission of the artist Greg Mort is forbidden.

From: [Jane Keller](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: We want Ashton to remain a rural village!
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 8:08:56 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

County Representatives,

We are alarmed with what is being planned for Ashton. We insist that you listen to our community and not permit the development to go beyond what the planning staff has recommended.

- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Allow our belief that our representatives still are concerned for their residents and not just for developers to continue.

Please do not change the beauty of our rural community.

Jane Keller

16808 Lehigh Drive

Sandy Spring, MD 20860

From: [John Binford](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton corner planning meeting re the undeveloped Southeast Corner behind Sandy Spring Bank,
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 5:22:34 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I believe the proposed apartment buildings would not be in keeping with the rural character of Ashton.

1. Ashton should remain a rural village.
2. Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height. (The developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline, with most of the roof above that level.)
3. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5. (That is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. The developer has requested a F.A.R. of 0.75).
4. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. (The developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

NOTE: I understand that if emails are received by the end of the day Tuesday, November 24, they will be placed in the Board meeting packet. Thank you.

From my iMac:

John Binford
16628 Alexander Manor Drive
Sandy Spring, MD 20905

From: [John Hines](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Villiage
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 12:17:17 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Concerning the proposed development in Ashton, I believe the prior recommendation of the planning staff is for a development in size and density that pushes the boundaries of reasonableness and may prove to be destructive to the greater community. I am not opposed to development and would have supported something approximately 30% smaller than the planning staff's recommendation. So the current proposal by the developer to exceed the planning staff's recommendation is simply unacceptable. It's just too big, too tall, and too dense.

Please do not approve anything more than the staff's published recommendation.

Thank you.

John Hines
18001 Marden Lane
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

301-370-2742



Sender notified by
[Mailtrack](#)

From: melouise4@gmail.com;

Received: Mon Nov 23 2020 15:45:48 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)

To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org; MCP-Chair #; ;

Subject: Ashton development

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please keep Ashton rural by limiting building height to 40 feet, length to 80 feet, density to FAR .5. Thanks

PLEASE keep Ashton rural as much as possible. Please vote to respond to the community's wishes, instead of corporate greed.

Thank you.

cc

jamey pratt@montgomeryplanning.org

From: [Michael Grace](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Plan
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 8:18:49 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

As 42-year residents of Brinkow whose “downtown” is Ashton, we are horrified to learn that the potential developer of the Ashton SE quadrant has requested rezoning to build large apartment buildings on the site. We urgently request the planning board to adopt the staff’s recommendations. Please do not allow over-development to ruin this area.

Specifically, we request:

- We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

We understand the need for housing in Montgomery County. All we ask is not to be “Wheatonized” in the process. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Michael & Laura Grace
400 Brighton Knolls Dr, Brinklow, MD 20862
301.924.5419

--

Michael Grace

“We live without sensing the country beneath us.” Osip Mandelstam, “Stalin’s Epigram,” 1933.

From: [Rachel Hickson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton development plans
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 9:55:53 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

The developer of the undeveloped corner of Ashton wants to build very large and tall apartment buildings there. The examples presented by the building are apartments and commercial spaces in Rockville, MD and Alexandria, VA, not comparable spaces in a rural community.

I am writing to insist that development not be permitted beyond what the planning staff has recommended.

- Ashton must remain a rural village.
- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height.
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5.
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue.

Sincerely,

Rachel A. Hickson
1600 Gamewell Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905

From: [Robin Ziek](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton planning and development
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 1:04:55 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

How on earth does a group of apartment buildings speak about a rural village? The wider community around Ashton is delighted that this off-the-main- transportation-linkages community maintains its rural character, density, and opportunities. If we wanted to live in the lovely communities of Silver Spring, Gaithersburg, Olney, Clarksville - all lovely high density communities in Montgomery County - we could! Please don't turn this county into a place of sameness, where every community looks and feels the same.

I respectfully urge the Planning Board to reject heights about 40' for buildings (as was approved for the most recent construction in the SW quadrant of Ashton), and reduce densities in the SE quadrant. I respectfully request that the land that is not buildable due to environmental reasons NOT be counted as open space, and that all open space requirements should be provided in the developable land area to provide rural relief in any approved new construction. I urge Planning Board approval of a review board that includes local residents, because we do love it here and we would like to be assured that all new architecture complies with rural village characteristics like welcoming front doors under porch roofs, for example (something that is lacking in new townhouse construction in Sandy Spring). Please don't think that a Potemkin Village is the same as a rural village.

This is not NIMBY-ism, but appreciation of the environmental qualities still available to Montgomery County residents and a belief that more is not better. We will be very sorry if our rural areas are paved over, as the earth warms and climates change.

Thank you,

Robin Ziek
18000 Bentley Road
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

From: [Steph Clement Pogonowski](#)
To: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton MD Development
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 9:20:47 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To Whom it may Concern:

I am writing as a Sandy Spring resident with concern of over development in the Ashton area. News of the new zoning requests for the Southeast corner of Ashton has reached our neighborhood. Being directly affected negatively by the Thomas Village development in Sandy Spring, I am writing to encourage the Montgomery County Planning Board to limit the development of Ashton to allow this area to remain a rural haven for those of us wishing to escape urban living.

Development of the area with no regard for greenspace, maintaining the integrity of the area, and bringing too many people into this small, rural community will negatively impact the appeal of living here. As a community in Sandy Spring, we are asking to at least consider the following in approving zoning for this project:

- * We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
- * Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height
- * The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5
- * The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Steph Clement Pogonowski
Sandy Spring Village Resident

From: [Susan Fifer Canby](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 7:07:49 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Jamey,

Please do not change the character of our little community. Specifically:

- We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route [108 and New Hampshire Avenue](#) (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

This really matters to us. We hope we can count on you. Best,
Susan Fifer Canby and Thomas Canby

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

From: [terryatcedars](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 9:19:07 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To the Planning Board members,

I have attended staff meetings held with the community on several visits. I urge you to NOT permit development beyond what the planning staff has recommended. To do so would truly nullify a lot of hard work and commitment on behalf of our community and your own staff.

Ashton wants to remain a rural village with housing that reflects that desire.

Terry Franklin
1601 Olney Sandy Spring Rd
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

Sent from my iPhone

From: evans.toni57@gmail.com;
Received: Mon Nov 23 2020 10:58:49 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)
To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org; MCP-Chair #; ;
Cc: jameypratt@montgomeryplanning.org;
Subject: Ashton center

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board,
I'm writing as a resident of Brookeville who often does business in Ashton and Sandy Spring. I have grown concerned in recent years about the Bethesda-ification of my beloved community. We moved here for a semi-rural community and live in a historic home and value the history and the neighborhood feel of the community we have chosen. Recognizing that we can't freeze time and change will occur, I nevertheless wish that the board would do so in concert with the Master plan and with respect for the wishes of community members. Specifically I make the following requests.

- We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Thank you for your consideration,

Toni Evans

November 24, 2020

Dear Planning Board Members and Staff,

The Sandy Spring-Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium is not anti-development, but we actively support maintaining the rural village character of both Ashton and Sandy Spring. This was an essential theme that was confirmed over and over at the community workshops held in October 2019.

In listening to the Planning Board commissioners' discussion on November 19, 2020, we are particularly concerned about the following:

1. Density and Height

Any Increase in density and or height above that recommended by Planning Staff would not be representative of a rural village center and in fact would produce more towering and incompatible development than the recently built and approved townhouse projects in the area.

The development that staff showed on November 19 (Rock Spring Park, below) is alarming because it demonstrates that projects that are only slightly over 0.5 F.A.R. are clearly out of step with the vision of this plan. Pictured below is the Google street view of the project, as constructed:



It is hard to imagine that this type of building could be appropriate for a rural village, the stated objective of the Planning Staff when the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan was announced, and of the near-unanimous community input on the plan.

Even the recently built and approved townhouse projects in the Sandy Spring area, at an F.A.R. lower than 0.5, are not in keeping with the plan's vision. The three photos below show Thomas Village, constructed next to the much less dense and shorter townhouses of Sandy Spring Village and the historic Sandy Spring Bank original branch building.





2. The Implementation Advisory Committee

Many Ashton community members have expressed a high level of concern about the proposal of Commissioners to not require developers to present plans to an Implementation Advisory Committee until the last minute before submittal of a regulatory review plan. How does the Committee work in the other areas where such committees exist? Bethesda's design committee has a lot on its plate so they meet on a monthly basis. Perhaps Ashton would have a standing monthly or bi-monthly meeting, which could be canceled if there was no business. The problem with waiting until the last minute, of course, is that the developer would already have a lot invested in a particular plan with all of its details ready to create a complete submission to start the regulatory review clock. It would be of huge benefit to both the interested community stakeholders and the developer for a meeting with the committee to occur as the developer is forming a conceptual plan. With early input from the community, a less contentious site plan might move forward and the rest of the process might be less fraught with delays. We realize the chairman is making the point that you don't want to add another step in the regulatory process. But it seems that there should be time for the committee to react to and comment on any plan, and give a developer time to revise a plan well before it is accepted into the review system at the Planning Department.

3. Design Guidelines

We are very concerned that making the design guidelines more vague (simply because they would be part of the plan document that the County Council approves) would undermine the guidelines' ability to achieve context-sensitive rural village development. We ask that you please **NOT** allow buildings on the Southeast Corner to be taller than 40', or to be longer than 80' for residential buildings along the main roads nor longer than 100' for commercial buildings. We also ask that you do not permit F.A.R. of more than 0.5. (Please note that a F.A.R. of 0.5 permits density far higher than is permitted by current zoning,

which was already a community compromise, since current zoning is either R-60 or RC for half of the site.)

After reading the Draft Plan for Thrive Montgomery 2050, and listening to some of the Thrive hearing, we are concerned that rural areas are not differentiated in any significant way from the rest of the county. We can't help but wonder whether the Planning Board is trying to make the entire county one homogeneous suburban/urban place. We do not object to providing more housing in our town, but we do object to losing its unique character. We believe the combination of Planning Staff's recommendations on density, height, Design Guidelines, and the Implementation Advisory Committee will help result in development that will honor the vision of the plan. Conversely, weakening or removing any one of these factors could easily prevent that result.

We ask that you carefully consider the effect of your decisions on the community of Ashton and not be persuaded to allow developers to change the character of this unique rural village.

Sincerely,

Amy Medd
President, Sandy Spring Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium

From: [BRANT WEST](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Keep Ashton Rural!
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 6:31:39 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

It has come to my attention that there are plans to allow the development of an apartment complex in the the Southeast Corner of Ashton, behind the Sandy Spring Bank branch.

I also understand the Montgomery County Planning Board is scheduled to have a meeting on Thursday, December 3, to consider the developer's request to alter zoning so that the developer can build apartment buildings and commercial spaces beyond the current planning staff recommendation.

As a resident of the Ashton community I insist the Board not permit development beyond what the planning staff has recommended.

Additionally:

1. We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
2. Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height. (The developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline, with most of the roof above that level.)
3. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5. (That is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. The developer has requested a F.A.R. of 0.75).
4. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. (The developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Best Regards,
Brant West

From: [Dan McGroarty](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: REJECT THE SKYSCRAPER OF ASHTON & DEVELOPMENT ON STEROIDS: PLEASE REJECT REQUEST TO ALTER THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR "ASHTON CORNER RTE 108"
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 2:52:54 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

FROM:

Ashton Residents

Daniel & Jacqueline McGroarty

RE: DEVELOPMENT OF "ASHTON CORNER" (ROUTE 108)

PLEASE REJECT REQUEST TO ALTER THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR "ASHTON CORNER RTE 108"

KEEP ASHTON RURAL

The requested expansion should be rejected in full.

This expansive plan would never have been approved by Ashton residents.

Reject the Skyscraper of Ashton

Ashton rules limit building height to 40 feet. The Developer wants a change to increase building height above the Ashton norm. There is no reason that a commercial/hybrid development should be the "skyscraper of Ashton."

Reject Development on Steroids

The Developer has asked for a change of F.A.R. from 0.5 to 0.75 – **that is a 50% increase.**

The Developer has asked for change in commercial building length from 80 to 120 feet – **another 50% increase.**

A 50% increase is not a change at the margin – it is a wholly different development: The initial plan on steroids.

As none of the changes are in keeping with the **rural mandate for Ashton** -- **All of these requested changes should be rejected by the Board.**

A Bad Precedent

But there is an even more important reason to reject the changes: the precedent that would be set by approval – and the signal that would send for all future development.

Developers would learn how to game the system:

initial plans should be scaled modestly – once community input is sought and the plan is approved, expand the plan and seek new Board approval.

County residents would never be able to trust proposed Developer plans. Once approved, they could be scaled out of all proportion.

That is a precedent that undercuts residents' rights to have meaningful input into County decisions.

Thank you for your consideration, and for including this Resident statement in the Board deliberations.

From: [LIZABETH MONTGOMERY](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Opposition to Ashton overdevelopment
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 8:25:46 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board (and Chairman),
Please accept these comments as part of Work Session #3 for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan to be held on December 3, 2020.

The Ashton/Sandy Spring area is a lovely part of Montgomery County - and we truly enjoy its small town character.

We are very concerned with the zoning modifications being considered for the planned Ashton Center development at the intersection of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. Development at that site is understandable, but as 20-year residents of Ashton, we are opposed to the type and amount of development now being proposed.

Relaxing design guidelines, allowing higher density, and approving taller building heights - than those recommended by the County Planning Staff - will irreparably damage the charm of living in this area.

We respectfully insist that:

- Buildings not be over 40 feet tall in the southeast quadrant behind the existing Sandy Spring Bank.
- Density in that quadrant not be over the recommended FAR of .5 (specifically, not .75 as the developer requests).
- Building lengths not be increased beyond those already recommended. Retain the limits of 80 feet in length for buildings (commercial and residential) along Route 108.

No specific plans have been provided by the developer on what the buildings would actually look like and what would be built here. Providing extra allowances for the developer (to take advantage of) introduces a lot of long term risk regarding the ramifications for the area's beauty, integrity, and practicality for the surrounding community having to coexist with the site.

If you lived here, wouldn't you also have these same types of concerns?

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

Respectfully,

David Knowles

Beth Montgomery

129 Crystal Spring Drive

Ashton, MD 20861

montknowles@comcast.net

From: [Donna Selden](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Comments - Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 11:32:27 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Mr. Anderson:

I am very concerned about the future of our rural historic community. Specifically, I'm writing about the Ashton Village Center Plan, and the board's consideration of zoning and guidelines that would allow for oversized development and destroy the charm of the Ashton-Sandy Spring area.

Regarding Density

I'm looking forward to having a nice rural village center to complete the intersection, but have a major concern about density. If several businesses and more than 150 homes and apartments were jammed on to southeast property, with 0.75 FAR, it would feel more like a city block set down in the middle of Ashton. If there were two cars per residence, there would be 300 cars, commercial traffic, and delivery vehicles to accommodate on the roads and the center itself. Development should be planned for less than 0.5 FAR and include a variety of housing options at the village center, including affordable housing.

Regarding Building Heights

Although a height limit of 40 feet is not in keeping with rural development characteristics, it is far preferable to the unacceptable height limit of 45 feet requested by the property owner of the southeast corner of Rt 108 and New Hampshire. Varied building heights will create more visual interest and village feel, but must be in keeping with the other corners of the intersection with an average lower height.

Regarding Open Space

Although I understand there may be some private open space, there should still be a significant amount of public open space planned that creates a welcoming place to meet and informally gather. These spaces should not be after thoughts, but a focal point or centerpiece of the center.

Regarding Lighting and Signage

Light pollution is of growing concern as development in this part of the county continues. I would like to see enforceable guidelines that minimize light pollution and uphold the feeling of a rural village. This would include the types of signage that could be erected, and how it would be lighted.

Regarding the Implementation Advisory Committee

I agree that the IAC should be formed as planned in order to give the community more understanding of developers plans while they are being made, not just when they are being presented at pre-submission community meetings, where they are almost fully baked and more difficult to change after community comment.

In summary, I am a proud local resident and welcome development tin Ashton that is in keeping with the rural and historic village character of the Ashton-Sandy Spring area.

Sincerely,

Donna Selden

From: [John and Elaine Gillen](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 5:54:05 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chairman:

We would like to reiterate our desire to keep Ashton rural which is why we moved to this area of Montgomery County. The proposed plan allows for growth while keeping the buildings smaller (no taller than 40 feet) allows with a FAR of .5. The building length should remain limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Ave. The plan also proposes an advisory committee which would include residents to review building plans to ensure they follow the guidelines and adhere to the rural atmosphere our community desires. We strongly support these recommendations proposed by the planning staff. What we oppose is allowing the developer wants put before the community needs/wants. We don't agree with his request of increasing the building heights or the FAR to .75 or the length of the buildings. Please don't let Ashton be overdeveloped!!

We are asking to support/respect our community requests when finalizing the Ashton Village plan.

Sincerely
Elaine and John Gillen

From: [Nehrbass, Elizabeth A](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Altering the Zoning in Southeast Corner in Ashton
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 2:43:17 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Good afternoon,

This letter is in response to the developers request to alter the zoning plans for the southeast corner in Ashton, Maryland. Please DO NOT permit development beyond what the planning staff has recommended. One hundred fifty two (152) lots on 8 acres is incredibly dense. By increasing the floor area ratio, you impact traffic and public facilities as well. Do we have a traffic and facilities impact study with these new requests?

The area has always been considered a rural village. **Please keep the building height no larger than 40 feet in height and 80 feet in length.**

Again, keep this area rural and do not permit changes to the recommendations that were made by the planning staff.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Nehrbass

Sandy Spring resident

From: [Betz](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Plan
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 12:22:44 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To the Montgomery Planning Board

I am writing to submit my opposition to the overdevelopment that continues to happen in the Ashton and Sandy Spring area. Ashton should remain as a rural village and with each new development the density continues to push beyond what the zoning should allow.

There is community opposition to the overdevelopment of Ashton.

The Montgomery County Planning Staff recommended zoning that would keep the buildings smaller, keep the height no more than 40' and the density at a FAR of .5.

Please do not permit development beyond what the planning staff has recommended.

Thank you

Elizabeth S. Hartge
[140 Haviland Mill Road](#)
[Brookeville, MD 20833](#)

- We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route [108 and New Hampshire Avenue](#) (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

From: [Ellen Hartge](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton plan
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 11:42:50 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To the Montgomery Planning Board

I am writing to submit my opposition to the overdevelopment that continues to happen in the Ashton and Sandy Spring area. Ashton should remain as a rural village and with each new development the density continues to push beyond what the zoning should allow.

There is community opposition to the overdevelopment of Ashton. The Montgomery County Planning Staff recommended zoning that would keep the buildings smaller, keep the height no more than 40' and the density at a FAR of .5.

Please do not permit development beyond what the planning staff has recommended.

Thank you

Ellen Hartge
140 Haviland Mill Road
Brookeville, MD 20833

- We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route [108 and New Hampshire Avenue](#) (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

From: [Erik Scheirer](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Preventing over-development of Ashton MD
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 1:11:26 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello everyone -

I am writing to you today to request that you more fully consider all the ramifications of allowing so many units (152!) to be developed under the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan.

Ashton and Sandy Spring have a history that spans centuries, and should be protected from over-development which would permanently ruin the historic sites and rural village culture. With the developments in Fulton, for example, vast tracts of farmland are being developed and it has already completely wiped out the charm and historic value it had as a center for agriculture and old farms, as well as many horse farms.

I am all for moving into the future, improving things, and the valid desire for commercial enterprise; in the case of Ashton/Sandy Spring it should be tempered with a sensitivity and respect for its 300 year history; to simply view it as a mere housing development opportunity without regard for history, that would be a tragic shame.

And, it seems we go through this every few years, asserting the same values each time, as I am sure you're hearing from my neighbors:

- Ashton/Sandy Spring should remain a rural village.
- New development should defer to keeping the rural village intact, including to protect its 300 year history.
- This includes building height, length and housing density, must be kept in line with the Master Plan.
- To keep the rural village intact, I recommend a density of no more than FAR 0.5

Thanks in advance for your favorable consideration - it would be a crying shame to lose the rural village architecture and nature of Ashton/Sandy Spring. With its 300 year history as its main asset, which should be protected, encouraged, and respected.

--

peace,

e

November 24, 2020

Casey Anderson, Chair, and Members, Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902
By email to: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Re: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

Dear Chair Anderson and Planning Board Members:

This law firm represents Nichols Development Company, LLC (“Nichols”) in connection with the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan (the “Sector Plan”). I am pleased to provide with this letter conceptual elevations of each of the building types Nichols proposes to build as part of a vibrant, mixed-use development in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Olney Sandy Spring Road (the “SE Quadrant Property”):

- Duplexes
- Townhouses
- Flats
- Mixed-use buildings with ground-floor retail and apartments on the upper floors

An architectural rendering of a potential multi-use building design is also attached.

Nichols’s site design will closely track the Village Core Framework proposed on page 47 of the draft Sector Plan, including a small open space at the corner to allow for preservation of existing shade trees; mixed-use buildings near the intersection of MD 650 and MD 108 with shared parking; a linear green along one side of the main entrance road from MD 650, leading to a large public green abutting the environmental buffer; duplex units at the eastern and southern ends of the main roads; and a mix of townhouses, flats, and private open spaces of varying sizes.

We respect the Board’s preference not to have live participation during your work sessions on this plan, as expressed at the work session last week. Accordingly, we are not requesting to make a presentation at your next work session on December 3. We will be available, however, to join the virtual meeting on a moment’s notice if the Board has questions and finds it appropriate to include us. If other members of the community ask to participate in the work session and such requests are granted, Nichols asks to be notified so that we have the option of making a similar request.

This letter summarizes Nichols’s comments concerning the contents of the Sector Plan, both for the SE Quadrant Property and for Nichols’s property at the intersection of Olney Sandy Spring Road and Porter Road (the “Ashton Market Property”).

SE Quadrant Property

Nichols was pleased to hear support for a height limit of 45 feet from all five members of the Planning Board during the November 19 work session. Nichols was also pleased to learn during the November 19 work session that staff now recommends a maximum length of 120 feet for mixed-use buildings along the main roads. After careful consideration, Nichols has determined that with these two important changes, Nichols can support the 0.5 FAR recommended by planning staff. Nichols's additional requests for changes in the Design Guidelines are designed to promote a variety in building type and architectural features that will make it look like the project developed organically, over time. This goal will be difficult and costly to achieve, so it is crucial that the Design Guidelines reflect real-world building constraints, rather than creating restrictions that will end up being counterproductive. Nichols's requests are summarized below.

1. **Zoning: CR 0.5, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-45, with language indicating that the maximum height of 45 feet should be limited to certain buildings and not applied consistently across the site.**
 - See attached mixed-use building illustration.
 - Modest additional height allows more space between buildings, more varied building heights and rooflines, and more eclectic architectural details.
2. **Give Planning Board discretion to approve alternative design.**
 - Including design guidelines in sector plan highlights importance of flexibility.
 - Allow Board to approve alternative design that better meets sector plan goals and public interest, based on site-specific considerations.
3. **Remove recommendation that entirely residential buildings on MD 108 or MD 650 should "suggest" single-family detached or duplex building in width, massing and façade treatment.**
 - Allowing only two building types makes transitions abrupt. Nichols proposes a true transition: duplexes at the edges, then missing middle, then mixed use.
 - Requiring flats or townhouses to masquerade as something else limits design creativity and results in inefficient buildings.
4. **Increase max length for residential buildings on main roads from 80 feet to 90 feet.**
 - 80-ft limit reduces variety in building types, unit types, and building design, such as side porches. Also reduces ability to respond to market forces.
5. **Allow mixed-use buildings off of main roads up to 150 feet wide.**
 - Additional space allows for potential larger user in future, such as a grocery store.
6. **Delete directive for primarily pitched roofs on mixed-use buildings.**
 - Most existing commercial buildings in Ashton Village Center have flat roofs or mansard roofs, not pitched.
 - Nichols would like to mix several roof types on main roads – cannot achieve that with this requirement.
7. **Specify that neighborhood green may be publicly or privately owned.**
 - Avoid implication that publicly accessible open space should be owned by Parks Department.
8. **Provide parameters for role of Implementation Advisory Committee.**
 - Do not single out one community group for special role.
 - Direct planning staff to work with Committee so that comments are timely submitted.
 - Suggested language attached.

Ashton Market Property

1. Zoning for mixed-use building: **CRN 0.5, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-35**
 - Upon further consideration, Nichols supports staff's recommendation for an FAR of 0.5 on this property.
2. Townhouse design
 - Nichols is working with the townhouse builder and planning staff to address staff's current concerns about townhouse design by adding more interesting materials and architectural details.
 - Seeking site plan amendment because front steps shown on site plan for units on Rte. 108 require redesign to meet building code.

Nichols looks forward to a Sector Plan that will promote the development of a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use project that emphasizes missing middle housing. Thank you for your consideration of Nichols's concerns.

Sincerely yours,

BREGMAN, BERBERT, SCHWARTZ & GILDAY, LLC

By:


Françoise M. Carrier

cc: Fred Nichols
Tyler Nichols
Gwen Wright
Carrie Sanders
Benjamin Berbert

Nichols Development Company

Recommended Text for Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee

Additions shown in **red**, deletions in ~~strikethrough~~

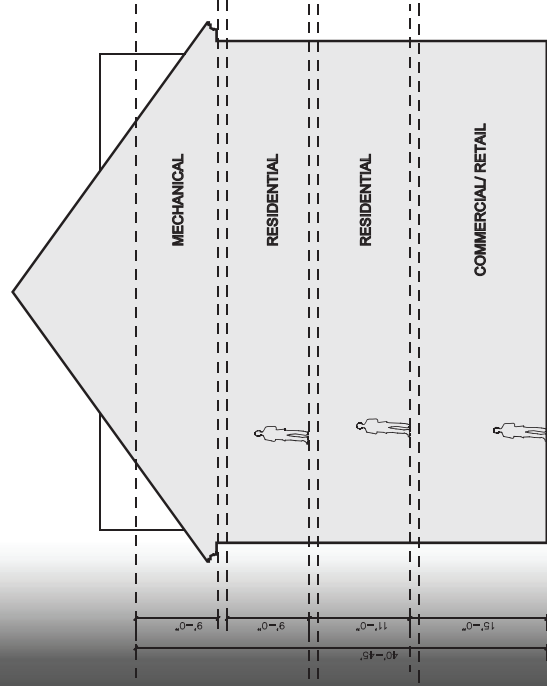
November 24, 2020

6.5 Implementation Advisory Committee

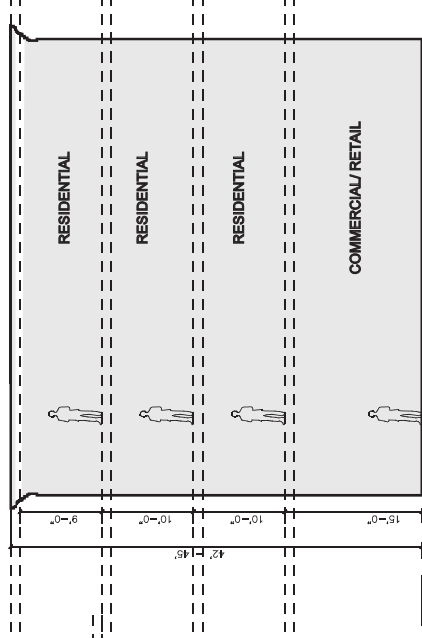
This Plan supports the creation of an advisory group to address its implementation. The formation of any new advisory group should be ~~staffed~~ **administered** by the Planning Department in close coordination with the **local community groups such as the** Ashton Area Community Association Alliance (AACAA), **the Sandy Spring Civic Association, and Sandy Spring Green Space.**

This advisory group would work in coordination with **local community groups** ~~the AACAA (or successor group)~~ and the Mid-County Regional Services Center by providing specific community and redevelopment expertise. It would also serve as an interface between ~~developers~~ **community members** and County agencies, **and between community members and developers**, in implementing recommendations of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. This new group should be structured to include representatives from the various constituencies interested in successful implementation of the Plan.

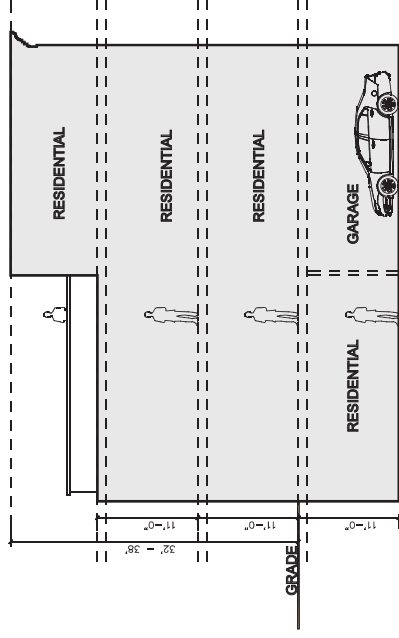
Development applicants should be encouraged to coordinate the timing of the statutorily required pre-filing community meeting with the implementation committee, to avoid the need for a separate briefing for committee members. Planning staff should work with the advisory committee to ensure that its comments on a development application are made in a timely manner, so that staff and the applicant can give such comments full consideration without delaying Planning Board review of the application.



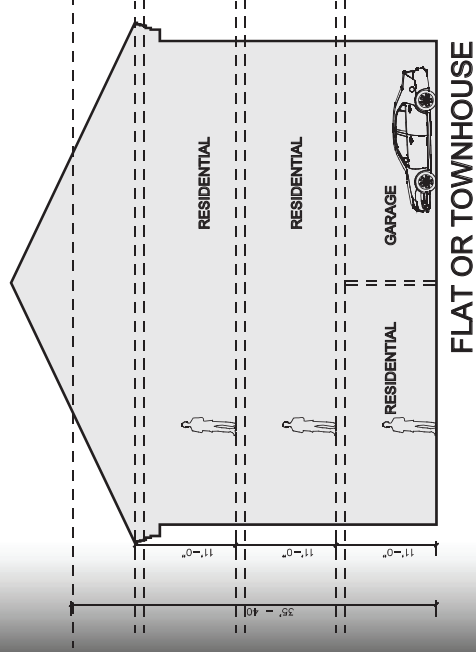
MIXED-USE GABLE



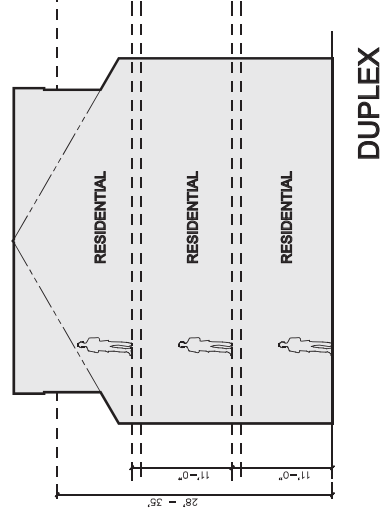
MIXED USE FLAT W/ CORNICE



TOWNHOUSE



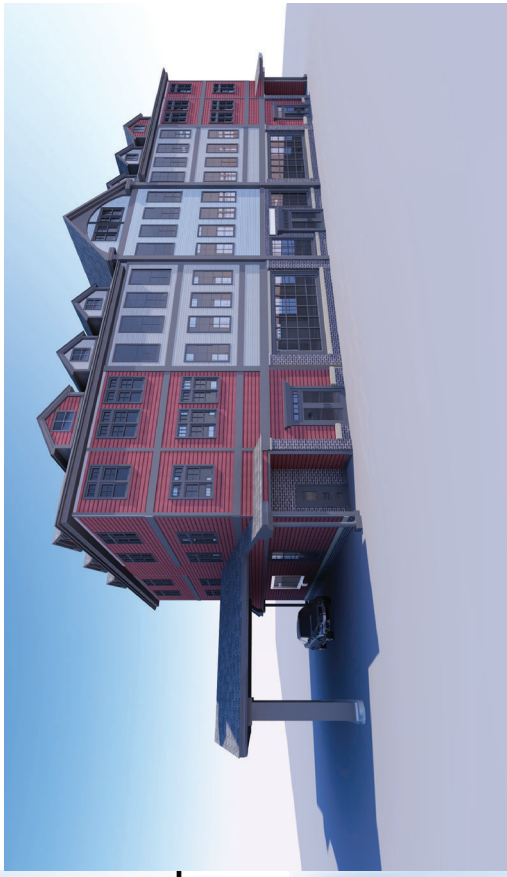
FLAT OR TOWNHOUSE



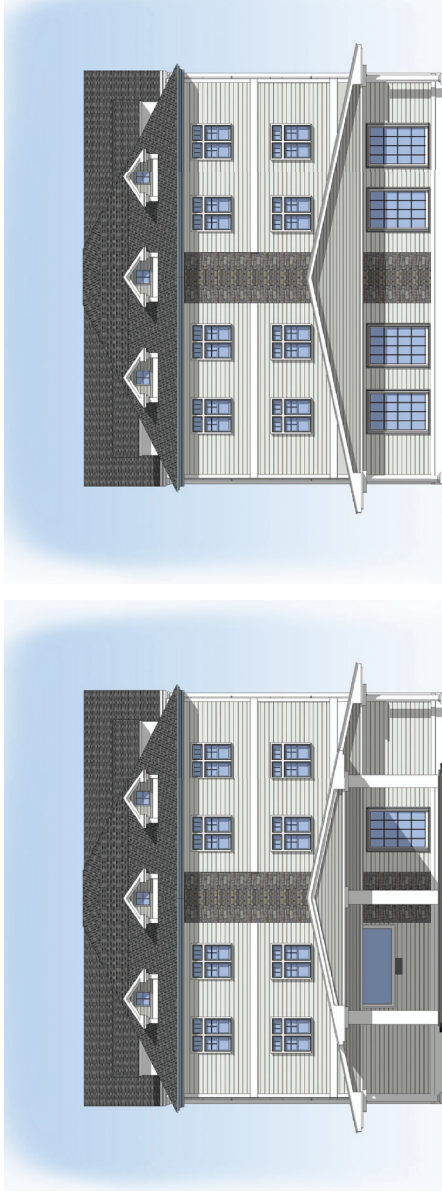
DUPLEX



Front & Rear Elevation



Perspective View



Side Elevation

From: [James Meehan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair; Pratt, Jamey](#)
Cc: keepashtonrural@gmail.com; ellencoleman141@gmail.com
Subject: Ashton/SE corner development issue(s)...
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 4:38:16 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

In keeping Ashton rural, I strongly urge you all to keep the height level at 45 feet, the density at FAR 0.5, and the limit of 80 feet for commercial & residential buildings along RT 108 and New Hampshire Ave! Stay with your recommendations and let the developer use his "flexibility" on paint colors, landscaping design, number of residential vs commercial space, parking, etc...

Your/our main issue is the safety concerns and traffic congestion that anymore development will do to that 108/NH Ave intersection! Rt 108 is already one of the most dangerous roads in Maryland! As far back as 2008, both the State and County spoke about no new development at the SE corner without significant major road improvements! Why has this issue not been addressed yet; is it because the developer has agreed to pay for intersection improvements? Taking away 2/3 into/out driveways at the gas station, yet adding 3/4 more driveways along 108/NH Ave (not counting the new Ashton Market entrance) will not help traffic flow nor provide safer pedestrian situations. Speaking of foot traffic...as a 38 yr educator I can assure you that the HS kids will cross when/where they need to depending on their class/lunch/pm activity schedule. Still another issue is the Porter Rd/108 entrance into the 7-11 lot...will they eventually match up? With too many left turns on 108 without turn signals, how many more turns can that intersection handle, not to mention the quickly disappearing right hand merge lane going south on NH Ave.

I suggest the Board take a driving "field trip" (doesn't even have to be at rush hour) both in the am & pm going N/S on NH and E/W on 108 to experience what traffic would be like at the intersection with more congestion. As a 22+yr resident of Ashton, I am not exaggerating that back ups on 108 & NH will extend to Sherwood Elem/Ednor Rd/Mink Hollow Rd/Brinklow if the Board does not act prudently and with foresight.

Finally, again I strongly suggest a moratorium on the SE/Sandy Spring Bk site until effects of the Ashton Market/Porter Rd development can be properly evaluated with respect to traffic, road, and pedestrian safety...not to mention the developers' adherence to all county codes and guidelines...

...Please have a safe & happy THANKSGIVING!!!

From: [Jean Galleher](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 3:38:38 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Good afternoon. I understand that you have a request on your agenda next week from the Ashton Village Center developer to increase the height, density, and length for the residential and commercial buildings in this plan.

PLEASE DENY THIS REQUEST AND APPROVE THE PLANNING DEPT.

RECOMMENDATION.

The current plan allows for 152 units with a maximum height of 40 feet and a FAR of .5 density. The Ashton Sandy Spring community worked really hard with the MC Planning Dept to come to this recommendation. It angers me as a citizen that the developer wants to bypass all of the community's recommendations and increase the size and density of this project.

I drive up to Ashton just about every day to shop, go to the bank, or get gas. Having an additional 152 units at this corner will definitely be challenging. Please uphold your planning department's current recommendation.

Thank you.

Jean Galleher

17330 Quaker Lane #203

Sandy Spring, MD 20860

240-413-2881

dcjean45@gmail.com

From: [Jeff Lin](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Maintaining the rural character of Ashton, MD
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 8:19:00 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I am a lifelong resident of Montgomery County. My wife and I have lived in the Ashton/Sandy Spring area for 16 years, sending our three children through schools in the Sherwood High School cluster. We live within walking distance of Ashton, a walk we take frequently. We selected this area for its rural character and the master plan that was developed and approved by Montgomery County. We firmly believe that any development of Ashton should adhere to the master plan and to the recommendations of the Montgomery County Planning Board. At your upcoming meeting with the developer of the southeast corner of Ashton, (and afterward as well), please do not alter the zoning of Ashton at the developer's request. Specifically,

1. We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
2. Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height. (The developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline, with most of the roof above that level.)
3. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5. (That is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. The developer has requested a F.A.R. of 0.75).
4. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. (The developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Thank you for considering our concerns,

Jeff and Susan Lin

309 Myers Manor Court

Sandy Spring, MD 20905

From: [Jon Vandegriff](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: community input on Ashton development
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 2:00:45 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To the Planning Board members,

Thank you for taking community input on the proposed zoning changes in Ashton. I live in this area (my address is 1617 Gamewell Rd), and so I have a natural interest in its development.

Part of the draw of this community is in fact the current zoning, which allows for growth, but also allows the community to maintain a more rural feel. These kinds of rural places are disappearing one by one in this county, and we need to keep the vision of a variegated region and allow places like Ashton to persist in a village-like setting. While there are short-term gains for allowing large-scale development, I think there is a longer term effect to be considered too. What if we never held the line on keeping a small-town feel in some parts of the county? We don't want our legacy to be that we maximally developed every space that we could, just because it was easy. Let's preserve the unique community-centric character of Ashton.

There are immediate negative effects too, of course, with a surge in development. Allowing large buildings for dwellings and businesses in Ashton would be quite disruptive to its current setting, as it is not quite set up for additional traffic. Also, the appearance of large dwellings and businesses would be incongruent with current buildings.

I ask that you not permit any development beyond what the planning staff has already recommended. Keep the overall height limit of 40 feet. Keep the length limit for buildings along New Hampshire Ave and Route 108 at 80 feet. (The proposed new limit of 120 feet would be a very dramatic increase!) Maintain the maximum density of buildings to a FAR of 0.5, instead of allowing it to be raised to 0.75.

Thank you for considering local input on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Jon Vandegriff

From: [Julia Roberts](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan - resident feedback
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 9:39:26 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hi Casey,

I am resident of Ashton at 17706 Hidden Garden Lane. I'm writing to you to provide input regarding the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan based on a review of the available presentations and reports from the Montgomery County Planning website. Below are my comments:

1. I am in support of limiting building height to 40 ft in the southeast quadrant to retain the rural village feel.
2. I am in support of limiting the F.A.R. to 0.5 the southeast quadrant to retain the rural village feel.
3. I am in support of limiting buildings to 80 ft for both residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue to retain the rural village feel.
4. I am in support of the pedestrian and traffic improvements at the corner of Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue to increase safety of residents and those passing through.
5. I am opposed to the consideration of small, private green spaces as open to the public. Most Ashton residents not living immediately adjacent to such private green spaces would not feel welcome to use these as gathering or recreational spaces. I would support the development of a larger, public green space in the southeast quadrant to serve the residents of Ashton.
6. I am concerned about future parking in the southeast quadrant, particularly if denser development is encouraged. The lack of robust public transportation in the area will likely result in an average of 2+ cars per household. Even if the units include garages, the majority of households in this area use garages for storage rather than car parking. While it is important to consider the design intent (cars parked in garages), it is perhaps more important to consider what the end user is likely to do (cars parked on the street).

Regards,
Julia Roberts

From: [Kathleen Wheeler](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 3:04:42 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

There is an old saying that “the devil is in the details.” As the Planning Board prepares to hold the third work session on the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, the decisions facing the Board involve details that will determine whether Ashton retains its rural character or instead looks like the more urban areas of the County.

There are three main issues with which the Board will be making decisions as they prepare to transmit the final plan to the County Council:

- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Whether the proposed zoning on the southeast corner remain at CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-40 should be allowed to increase to CRN-0.5 C-0.75 R-0.75 H-45 as requested by the developer.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->The level of flexibility allowed within the design guidelines.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->The timing and scope of the implementation advisory committee.

Taken together, these three decisions will have a very large impact on the future of Ashton and whether it retains its rural character. Increasing the allowable density and height of the buildings without detailed design guidelines will allow building heights and associated massing of buildings that are more appropriate for urban areas of the County.

In their testimony at the public hearing on the Plan, the developer provided images of the types of buildings that they would propose for

Ashton. These images reflect buildings that were part of the bus tour that the developer, members of the community, and Planning staff took in October. I was on the tour. While there are elements of design that may or may not be applicable in Ashton, the size and type of buildings were appropriate in their more urban settings in Rockville and Alexandria, but are not of the appropriate scale for rural Ashton.

Based on the experience with Thomas Village in Sandy Spring and Ashton Market in Ashton, there are many details that make up the final site plans once zoning is determined that have a large impact not only on the site, but also to the surrounding community. These include such things as location and amount of green space, configuration of the buildings on the site, parking, and recreation facilities.

In the case of both Ashton Market and Thomas Village where there is a FAR of 0.5 or less, there is inadequate onsite parking. In the case of Ashton Market, other members of the community and I testified that there was inadequate parking allowed when the Plan was presented at the zoning hearing. The developer's representatives refuted our claims. However, it turned out there was inadequate parking and the final site plan had to be adjusted to accommodate additional parking as well as utilizing offsite parking.

Parking is one of the details that is critical on the southeast corner. Unlike Thomas Village and Ashton Market, there is no adjacent parking that can be utilized without crossing New Hampshire Avenue or Route 108 where there is either private parking or limited commercial parking. How parking is accommodated can impact overall design. It can result in parking structures that are incompatible with the goal of maintaining a rural village. It is unclear how the required parking will be accommodated at the FAR of 0.5, much less at a higher level of 0.75.

It has been argued that because FAR is allowed only in increments of 0.25 that to go to 0.55 would require a FAR of 0.75. However, there is no requirement or guarantee that the developer will limit development to 0.55 if granted the 0.75 level.

Keeping robust design guidelines in the Plan is also critical to retaining the rural character of Ashton. Design elements such as porches, varying roof heights, and building fronts and lengths can make a difference in the look and feel of the development and its compatibility with its surroundings.

Other than the buildings images that were shown at the public hearing, the community has yet to see any current plans for the southeast corner. It is not clear what the developer is planning. It is also not clear at what point the community will have a sense of what is being planned. Having an implantation advisory committee with the opportunity to view the plans at a point earlier in the process than their submittal to the Planning Board would provide the committee to be able to advise.

Had there been an advisory committee for the Thomas Village and Ashton Market developments, some of the issues that the community has with them may have been able to have been resolved. More eyes on some of the details would be helpful. The developer has argued that the advisory committee would add additional time and cost. It is unfortunate that the process is such that there is a lack of opportunity to collaborate more and benefit from good ideas that come from both the developer and the community. An implementation advisory committee that includes all stakeholders could achieve that if it has an opportunity to advise before the plans are final and ready for submission to the Planning Board.

In the County's Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan, it states that the County

should “use design to shape Montgomery County as a collection of world-class towns, cities and rural villages, with neighborhoods that celebrate their history, geography, and culture.” Further, it states that the County should “use form-based codes, design guidelines, and other innovative regulatory tools to ensure future developments across the county respond to their context through massing, architecture, public spaces, landscape, and street design.” These are laudable goals which we support.

However, it is unclear how increasing the allowable density and building heights or reducing the detailed design guidelines achieves these goals. Nor is it clear how limiting community engagement will result in a plan that will be benefited from collaboration.

The “devil is in the details.”

Please keep the FAR at the level proposed by the planning staff, include the level of detail for the design guidelines as proposed, and provide an advisory committee with the tools it needs to truly provide advice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kathleen Wheeler

From: [Kristine Gannon](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Keeping Ashton MD a rural village
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 6:43:39 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please express these concerns at the next Montgomery County Board Planning meeting regarding my neighborhood of Springlawn Farm.

We do not want the buildings along Route 108 being built any higher than 40 feet and the length of the buildings should be limited to no more than 80 feet. The SE corner should have a FAR density of 0.5, no more.

Please do not permit developers (Nichols) desired changes but honor the recommendations of the planning staff, and the neighborhood residents of Ashton.

Thank you,

Kris Gannon

17605 Country View Way

Ashton, MD 20861

Sent from my iPhone

From: lesliecro@verizon.net
To: [MCP-Chair; Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Plan
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 3:04:16 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

November 24, 2020

To the Members of the Planning Board:

I am deeply distressed that the Planning Board, after months of meetings between Ashton area residents and Planning Staff, will be considering yet another request by the developer Fred Nichols to increase density and mass on the Ashton Village Plan. This should be a no-go! Local residents deserve to have their hard fought and already compromised vision come to life; *a rural village* with height limits of 40 feet; length limits for residential and commercial buildings along Rt. 108 and New Hampshire Ave restricted to 80 feet; and a FAR of .5, about the same density as that of Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. After a lot of hard work, the community and planning staffers arrived at a mutually agreeable solution; please endorse your own planners' recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration

Leslie D. Cronin
16320 Batchellors Forest Rd
Olney, MD 20832

From: [Lia Zegeye](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: SSARPC
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 12:18:20 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

As a resident of the area, we want Ashton to remain a rural village. While we are in favor of the development, this is just too much, too tall and dense and don't fit into the rural village concept at all!

- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Thank you,

Lia

Windrush Lane

From: lissa.cunningham
To: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Sandy Spring Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 2:43:03 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I am not in favor of the development on the corner by Sandy Spring Bank.

Lissa Cunningham

From: [Mary Bauer](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Corner development Proposal
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 9:19:15 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

As a long time resident of Ashton Maryland I am horrified by the proposal the developer is pushing for the corner behind Sandy Spring bank. This is a long standing rural community that already faces crowded roadways due to all the development in Howard County. The residents here are not interested in buildings in Ashton that are larger than 40 feet in height. We know the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline, with most of the roof above that level. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5. That is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. The developer has requested a F.A.R. of 0.75. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. The developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%. These requests only serve to enrich the developer who will pack up and leave once they have sucked all the beauty and quality of life out of Ashton. It is only in their best interest and not in the interest of the residents to allow this over development. We already suffer from the effects of the Howard County development boom, with crowded roadways backing up traffic all the way down route 108 past Mink Hollow Road at rush hour. We need your support to keep this monstrosity out of our community. Thank you in advance. Mary Bauer 24 year resident of Ashton Maryland.

From: [Melanie Krizmanich](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Community opposition to the overdevelopment of Ashton
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 1:53:44 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Mr. Anderson,

I write you today to express my opposition to the overdevelopment of Ashton, Maryland. It is my understanding that a developer is eyeing the undeveloped corner of Ashton (the Southeast Corner, behind the Sandy Spring Bank branch) to build apartment buildings and are making requests beyond what the planning staff has recommended. I am requesting that you NOT allow any such exceptions and deny the requests.

I **strongly** support the Montgomery County Planning Staff's recommended zoning that would keep the buildings small. Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue.

I encourage you to keep Ashton a rural village; it is what makes Ashton so attractive.

Melanie Krizmanich
145 Crystal Spring Drive
Ashton, MD 20861

From: [Mia Liccini](#)
To: [Pratt, Jamey](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Upcoming meeting to discuss Ashton development
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 8:19:07 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello and thank you for taking the time to read this email. I was made aware of the upcoming decisions being made about potential apartment buildings in Ashton. I have to implore that you reconsider. Although I am not a resident, I went to school at Sandy Spring Friends School and my family belongs to the Sandy Spring Quaker Meeting and I love the Ashton village area so I encourage you to consider the below:

1. We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
2. Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height. (The developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline, with most of the roof above that level.)
3. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5. (That is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. The developer has requested a F.A.R. of 0.75).
4. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. (The developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Thank you again,
Mia Liccini Ramos

From: [Erin Schwam](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Plan - Opposition
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 6:24:03 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Casey,

I am highly alarmed at the revisions being made to this plan for the further development of Ashton. This is a rural town. I am unclear on why the planning board would even contemplate allowing such an obtrusive and large development in such a small area where the road is already incapable of supporting the current traffic burden. Regardless of the proposed plan being an eyesore on the rustic setting, the current homes, properties, and residents of Ashton will be negatively impacted by a plan to increase the density to such a scale.

Why would this developer be permitted to build apartment buildings on land that isn't zoned for it and that currently provides green space and trees to the betterment of the community? At the last meeting I attended regarding this property, there was zero mention of the potential for this many units at this density.

This developer seems to be able to do whatever he wants with the properties in Ashton, regardless of their original zoning or intention and the individuals approving his plan are complicit. The current project he's working on for Porter Road is going to cram in more town houses than is suitable for the amount of space. It is far more than what he originally was permitted to build and significantly more than the single family structure the property was originally zoned for. It seems that he simply asks for a revision to his permit or a rezoning and he is granted one without any resistance and also without anyone asking the obvious question of why he can't just build within the confines of the original plan. Now he's apparently going to be permitted to further decimate the quality of life for the people who call Ashton home.

Why are you allowing a developer to come in and change everything that attracts people to Ashton in the first place? If he wants to build apartments then he should develop in a location already zoned for those types of structures. If you allow this, where does it stop? What happens if you approve this change and then he tells you he needs to add just a few more levels? Where does it end? Will you permit him to revise until there is a high-rise building in Ashton? But what if he asked to re-zone for one? At what point is enough enough? Does the county take the community's objections to this plan seriously? The gentleman to which should keep to the current exceptions already granted. I don't have much faith in that at this point.

This is a property owner/ developer who knowingly allowed the Porter Road site to be an offensive eyesore for years and then had the gall to cite its unattractiveness as part of his argument for allowing his townhome development plan. He created the nuisance in order to get what he wanted all along while the residents had to drive or walk by it for almost a decade. And rather than ordering him to fix it or sell it you allowed him to build giant townhomes against the Ashton plan's clear directives.

The residents of Ashton have repeatedly voiced their concern in opposition to large scale buildings in this community. I fail to see why there are even regulations and rules if he is regularly given exceptions, exemptions, and revisions in his favor with no concern for the people who live here and are most affected.

Where are all these new residents going to park their cars? In order to accommodate all of them, a large chunk of currently green space is going to need to be paved. How are the people who already live off of 108 going to be able to safely access the main road with the increased density added by this development? The road is already overcrowded. The intersection is already overrun. It is dangerous to cross this road. Are you adding more traffic lights? Where are the sidewalks and crosswalks that will support all these new people? Who has to pay for all of that? Not the developer it seems. There are a number of children in the area who are already instructed to not cross the street at any time; and now you are going to make it worse and more dangerous.

Allowing the Porter Road development to proceed beyond the request stage was a tremendous failure of judgment on your part. Please do not repeat that failure by allowing this plan to get beyond the request stage. Deny it. Please deny the plan to build apartments, which would add significantly to the issues he is actively making worse with his Porter Road development and put a stop to developers forcing their business and financial plans on our lovely and rural hometown.

Thank you.

Michael and Erin Schwam
17813 Hidden Garden Lane
Ashton, MD 20861

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Michael Smith](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Objection to Ashton, MD development (Rt 108 & Rt 650)
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 6:20:57 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I would like to submit my objection to the development under consideration in Ashton, MD (i.e., the Southeast Corner of the intersection of Routes 108 and 650). Specifically, I, my family, and my neighbors would like to insure that Ashton remains a rural village. This end we would like to keep development guidelines to:

1. Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height.
2. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5.
3. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Smith
301-802-2049
311 Myers Manor Court
Sandy Spring, MD 20905

From: dickandeva@verizon.net
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Nichols Ashton Development
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 9:50:11 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chairman,

In reviewing the proposed additions to the Nichols development, it seems to us that he is asking for something way beyond what the area can support. He is seeking both high density and high rise. This is something even Olney would not tolerate, and they are already high density. Please do not support this additional disturbance; we want Ashton to remain a rural village not a Rockville.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Coffman
17800 Pond Road
Ashton, MD 20861

From: [Nadine](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Cc: county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Sector Center Plan
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 6:38:03 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Civic Leaders,

"Welcome to beautiful Ashton"! That's what I want to say to all new neighbors. It is a friendly and special space with historic value and charm and it is marvelous to share it with new members of the community.

Regarding the Ashton Village Sector Center Plan I recognize that it is indeed a challenge to balance the need for lower and middle income housing and at the same time attract smart environmentally aware builders. Coming from a family of developers myself, It is a job that only a creative forward thinking construction organization can achieve.

Looking over the current builder's design proposals and expansion requests for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan's southeast corner it is clear that very little attention was given to the concerns expressed by community members at the workshops and hearings. This oversized proposal is clearly behind the times as far as Montgomery County's environmental and safety goals are concerned. The images the builder provided do not meet the guidelines expressed in the Sandy Spring Ashton Master Plan. They are similar to his recent towering structures in the Thomas Village development that barely has a square foot of green space. I would say it belongs in a city setting but even the new townhouse developments in DC host more green space than these 600,000.-700,000. homes.

New home/commercial design concepts focus on offering an all around "better quality of life" with an emphasis on conservation in size and materials, use of natural light, indoor/outdoor shared space and community areas. Respectfully I think there is very little interest in or demand for...ten foot foyers..or nine foot living spaces as stated by one member of the board at the November 19th meeting. I am sorry to inform you but those design concepts are soooooo YESTERDAY in the world of forward looking home and village center construction.

There are only three keys to a successful real estate sale....1. Location, 2. Location and yes, 3. Location. Ashton is a great location because it is an authentic rural village of caring and welcoming citizens who would love to share their crossroads with new neighbors. However, crowding too many towering homes and too much oversized commercial space that does not in any way honor a rural village design theme should be rejected for what it is....quick money for a developer.

Please reject the builders requests for FAR expansion and inappropriate home/commercial design for all the above reasons as well as they would destroy the rural and historic character of Ashton and overburden the already severe traffic congestion.

Thank you.

Nadine R Masone Mort
320 Ashton Road
Ashton, MD 20861

From: [Nick Keller](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Ashton Planning
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 4:02:09 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I have been living in Sandy Spring for 37 years. I am deeply disappointed to see the potential change that is being considered for Ashton. I love the rural atmosphere of our joint community - I urge you not to change this community with additional housing and changes in the distance between roads and buildings.

If I can provide any additional details please do not hesitate to contact me. I reside at:
16808 Lehigh Drive
Sandy Spring, MD

Thank you for your anticipated consideration of the people living in this community.

Sincerely,
Nick Keller

From: [Paula Glendinning](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Anderson, Casey](#); [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#); [Wright, Gwen](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center is an important part of our community
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 2:18:03 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board and staff,

Please do not allow density greater than 0.5 F.A.R. in Ashton, or building heights taller than 40 feet. Those numbers already are way beyond what was promised by the last Master Plans for Ashton. Any increases beyond those recommendations are only in the interest of increasing wealth for the developer.

During the first two work sessions for the Ashton Village Center plan, a few opinions were expressed about the recent developments in Sandy Spring that I think have been influenced by the developer's talking points. In discussing the "successfulness" of the Thomas Village townhouses, the statements were made that this development brought in diversity and moderately priced housing to the area. I think the descendants of the people who created the first free black village in Maryland might rightly feel insulted. But we don't have to go back that far in history to see that Thomas Village did anything but increase diversity and options for moderately priced housing. The Sandy Spring Village townhouses, built in the 1980s, near the intersection of Norwood Road and Route 108 are now in the shadow of the new Thomas Village. Sandy Spring Village homes have been selling in the upper \$200,000s to mid-\$300,000s range, with the highest recently sold at \$385,000. The new Thomas Village homes are in the \$600,000- \$700,000 range. This may or may not have increased diversity, but I don't see how anyone could know that at this point. I'm guessing it did not. It certainly did not add moderately priced housing.

I also heard the statement made that taller height limits for new developments won't harm Ashton. I hope that Planning Board members might visit Sandy Spring Village to see how the back of Thomas Village has affected them. Even Thomas Village was limited to 35 feet, and the staff proposal for Ashton is high enough at 40 feet!

Sandy Spring Village (built in the 1980s)



The people who have been living in Sandy Spring Village for decades with a view of a wooded area are now looking out their back windows into the decks towering over them from Thomas Village. If the horizontal roof line here is at 35 feet, imagine this building with another story on top if the height limit were allowed to be 45 feet! Surely, that is not in the best interest of the neighborhoods in Ashton and Sandy Spring.



The planning for Thomas Village in Sandy Spring allowed so much density that the builder forgot to allow room for fire trucks to turn around. The solution for the necessary fire safety was then created by paving over the main area that was supposed to be public green space. Children are now apparently to play in an area where trucks of all kinds can back up and turn around. We need to do better than this for Ashton and other future developments.



This is now the "green space" that is left between buildings in Thomas Village. Surely, we can

do better than this in future planning for Montgomery County.



Please reconsider what the Planning Board staff is recommending for Ashton. They have been meeting for over a year and a half with the community, and are trying to make zoning changes that will benefit future developers as well as future residents of Ashton. Giving the developer everything he's asking for is not the solution. Look again at the photo above.

Sincerely,
Paula Glendinning
Ashton resident since 1991

From: [Mary Dominique](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Comments for Dec 3 planning board meeting on developer proposal for Ashton
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 3:58:10 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

We oppose the developer's proposal for Ashton. It would destroy the rural character of the area and goes far beyond what was envisioned in the Master Plan.

- We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
- Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height (the developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline).
- The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a FAR of .5 (that is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring; the developer has requested a FAR of .75).
- The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue (the developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Russell & Mary Dominique
410 Ednor Road
Ashton, MD 20861

From: [William Mason](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#)
Cc: [Pratt, Jamey](#)
Subject: Desires for Ashton to remain a rural community and opposition to development plans
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 7:38:20 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I am a resident of Ashton Preserve who moved here from Olney in 2018 to escape over development that began to encroach on my previous neighborhood. I wanted to be in a more rural area walking distance from Sherwood High School.

With the exception of the improvement of existing properties such as the old Sol de Italia lot, I am opposed to most development plans. I was hoping Ashton would remain a rural community and am concerned about the development plans currently underway. Traffic and the noise it generates from the ICC, Route 28, Norwood and Ednor Roads, Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue are already excessive, and I'm afraid only going to get worse. Potentially driving me to move again after I thought I had landed in my dream home and community.

I know development is inevitable but hope you will consider constructive limits to preserve the character this wonderful community and to be sensitive to the increased traffic and congestion new development will bring.

I support the following guidance provided to me by my HOA, but personally hope the county will be even more aggressive in its efforts to preserve the rural nature of Ashton.

1. We want Ashton to remain a rural village.
2. Buildings in Ashton should be no larger than 40 feet in height. (The developer wants 45 feet to be the limit, and these heights are measured to the midpoint of the roofline, with most of the roof above that level.)
3. The density of buildings on the Southeast corner should be no more than a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5. (That is about the same density as Thomas Village in Sandy Spring. The developer has requested a F.A.R. of 0.75).
4. The length of buildings should be limited to 80 feet for residential and commercial buildings along Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue. (The developer has asked for 90 feet for residential and 120 feet for commercial, an increase of 50%).

Thank you for your consideration and wishing you and all you families a safe and healthy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

William P. (Bill) Mason IV
302 Macs Farm Court
Silver Spring, MD 20905
(301)802-3157

From: [Jennifer Fajman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Berbert, Benjamin](#)
Cc: county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Pratt, Jamey](#); [Duke, Roberto](#); [Roger Fajman](#)
Subject: Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Date: Wednesday, November 25, 2020 1:04:44 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Almost 35 years ago we decided to make our home in Ashton. We had two main reasons for choosing Ashton: a rural community and a reasonable commute to our places of employment.

We moved to Ashton from Gaithersburg and had previously lived in Rockville. It was so wonderful to find a rural community like Ashton. We found that we had neighbors interested in some of the same aspects of the rural area: many trees, fields, gardens, and birds; the lack of extensive outside lighting; places to walk; and nice, small shopping centers with excellent places to dine.

Ashton is surrounded by important history. Two major things that the area is known for are being an early settlement of Quakers (today there still is a very strong Quaker community) and being an early area to free slaves and a stop on the Underground Railroad. There are many historical homes in the area and families who have lived in the area for several generations. Also, the area is integrated and has people from differing economic levels. Everyone, regardless of their economic background, coexists and enjoys the same, excellent educational environment.

Two of the benefits of a rural environment are the lack of a large amount of fast traffic and being able to move around the area by walking and riding bikes. The safety of the area is healthy for raising children and animals, as well as for the elderly.

Traffic patterns are extremely important. Today, people drive down Route 108 to move from congested areas such as Olney and get to New Hampshire Avenue or go to places in Howard County. Off Route 108 is Tucker Lane – an old, winding lane, that is classified as a rural road by the County. By building a huge complex in downtown Ashton, the traffic pattern will change. Many people will think that it is a good idea to use Tucker Lane to move between Route 108 and New Hampshire Avenue in order to avoid the traffic jam that will exist in Ashton as a result of the proposed new development. There will be problems with encouraging this detour. Tucker Lane is very windy, requires driving at a slow pace, which will tend to lead to significant speeding past the residences there and result in more accidents on this rural road. Also, the people who currently live in the communities off Tucker Lane (which are all rural communities) will not be able to move safely at a reasonable pace

Downtown Ashton has a very nice small shopping area. Would the proposed new huge development encourage the person who owns the shopping area to significantly increase its size? We certainly hope not, but it seems likely.

We think that the proposed changes to Ashton will destroy one of the nicest rural areas in Montgomery County and make it more like a dense suburb such as Gaithersburg, Rockville and Silver Spring. This would not be a benefit for people who live in this rural community and also would reduce the variety of communities in Montgomery County.

Jennifer and Roger Fajman