Montgomery Planning

NORTH BETHESDA IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

SCOPE OF WORK

Description

Planning staff will brief the Planning Board on the scope of work for the North Bethesda Implementation Study.

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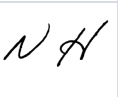
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SUMMARY

- The North Bethesda Implementation Study will evaluate the performance of the implementation tools and regulatory mechanisms established in the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan*, including the extent to which they have achieved the plan's long-term vision.
- The study will deliver data-driven analysis, policy-relevant research, and targeted stakeholder conversations to provide valuable insights for the future of the Plan area.

STUDY INFORMATION

Briefing
Scope of Work

Date
10-22-2026

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Planning Board Information
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PURPOSE

The North Bethesda Implementation Study will evaluate the implementation tools and regulatory mechanisms established in the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* and the extent to which they have achieved the plan's long-term vision. Specifically, the study will focus on the White Flint Special Taxing District, infrastructure and staging requirements, the 2011 *White Flint Sector Plan Implementation Guidelines*, and public benefits delivered from private development. The study's findings will provide insights for future planning efforts, including the update to the White Flint Sector Plan proposed in the Department's FY28 work program.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

North Bethesda lies just outside the Capital Beltway, along the MD 355/I-270 Corridor between Bethesda and the City of Rockville. This area is the focus of several plans and studies, emphasizing transit-oriented development centered around the WMATA Metrorail Red Line (Figure 1).

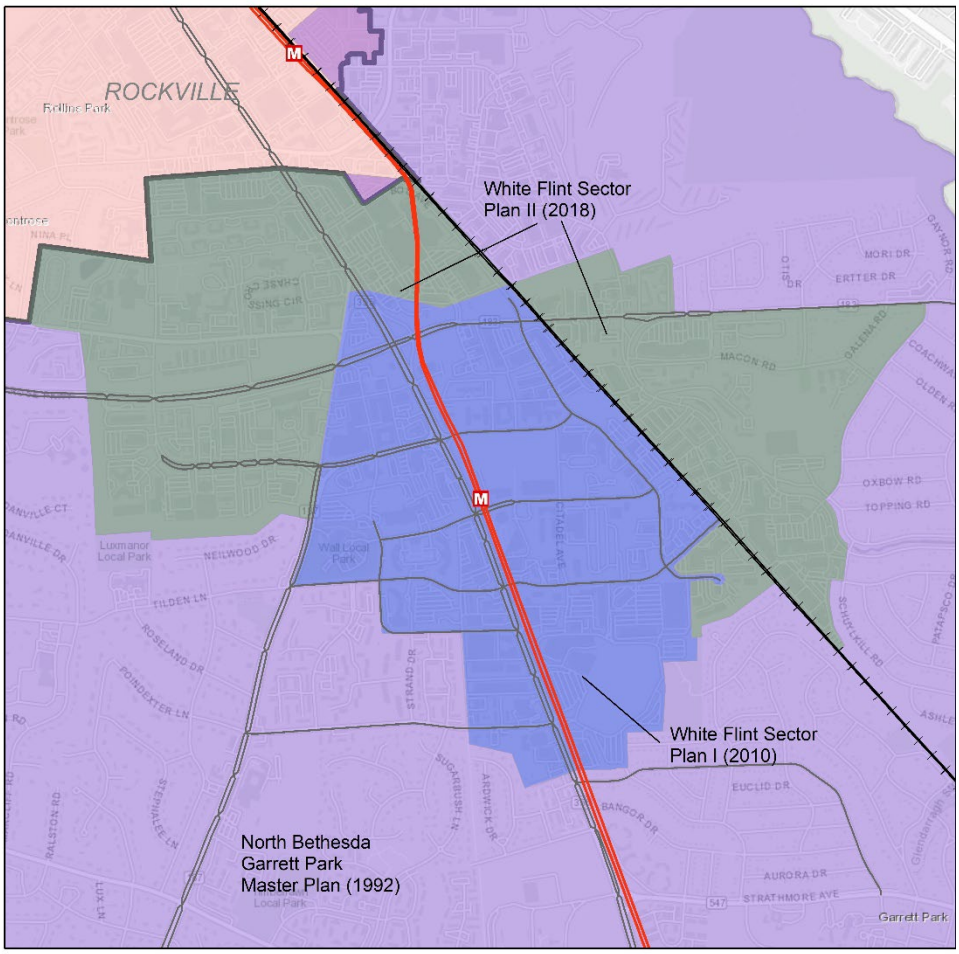

Figure 1: North Bethesda Master Planning Context Map

In 1992, the *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* recommended higher residential densities and mixed-use development surrounding the North Bethesda Metrorail Station with this area envisioned as a major urban center. The 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* established a framework for suburban-to-mixed-use transformation, leveraging the area's existing assets to create a vibrant, multimodal and transit-oriented district along Rockville Pike (MD-355). Key recommendations included the creation of a new walkable street grid, building a network of parks and public amenities, retrofitting Rockville Pike into an urban boulevard with street trees and Bus Rapid Transit, and adding over 9,000 residential units.

To realize this vision, the 2010 Plan created an ambitious and innovative implementation framework to balance public and private investment in the public realm. Central to the implementation framework is a three-phase staging plan that ties maximum commercial and residential building capacity limits to key infrastructure and implementation milestones. In 2018, the *White Flint 2 Sector Plan*, which included properties between the 2010 plan boundary and the City of Rockville, added three additional sites to the staging framework. The 2010 Plan also established the biennial monitoring framework that requires regular accounting of development activity and public infrastructure delivery for the staging plan.

In 2020, the Advancing the Pike District Initiative provided a ten-year check-up of the Plan's progress and a market analysis for the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* area. The study identified a series of short-term actions to further the plan's vision, including placemaking and Vision Zero initiatives.

Over the past 16 years, public and private investments have advanced many elements of the 2010 Plan vision, including mixed-use redevelopment projects like Pike and Rose, the completion of the Western Workaround, multimodal improvements around the Metrorail station, and progress towards new public facilities, such as the North Bethesda Fire Station. However, development activity has progressed more slowly than initially anticipated, and several large opportunity sites have yet to redevelop. At the same time, countywide policies, market conditions, transportation priorities, housing needs, and development practices have evolved considerably since 2010. Building upon the market research and analytical foundation of the 2020 Advancing the Pike District Initiative, the North Bethesda Implementation Study will evaluate 2010 Plan's implementation mechanisms relative to the Plan area today.

STUDY APPROACH

STUDY AREA

The study will focus on the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* area and the White Flint Special Taxing District (478.3 acres). The White Flint Special Taxing District was created to facilitate the Sector Plan's staging and infrastructure framework, so its boundary is the most appropriate to evaluate these tools.

The County Council enacted the White Flint Special Taxing District in 2011 following the approval and adoption of the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* as the primary funding mechanism for the proposed infrastructure in the staging plan. Commercial properties within the taxing district pay an additional *ad valorem* property tax that goes towards the Sector Plan's recommended mobility infrastructure. The initial taxing district boundary was coterminous with the 2010 Plan area. In 2018, the Council expanded this boundary to include three contiguous sites with mixed-use development potential from the White Flint 2 Sector Plan. These include:

- Rose Village (6001, 6003, and 6011 Executive Boulevard)
- A portion of the NorthPark at Montrose (Wilgus) property Parcels N208, N279, N174 and N231
- 6000 Executive Boulevard

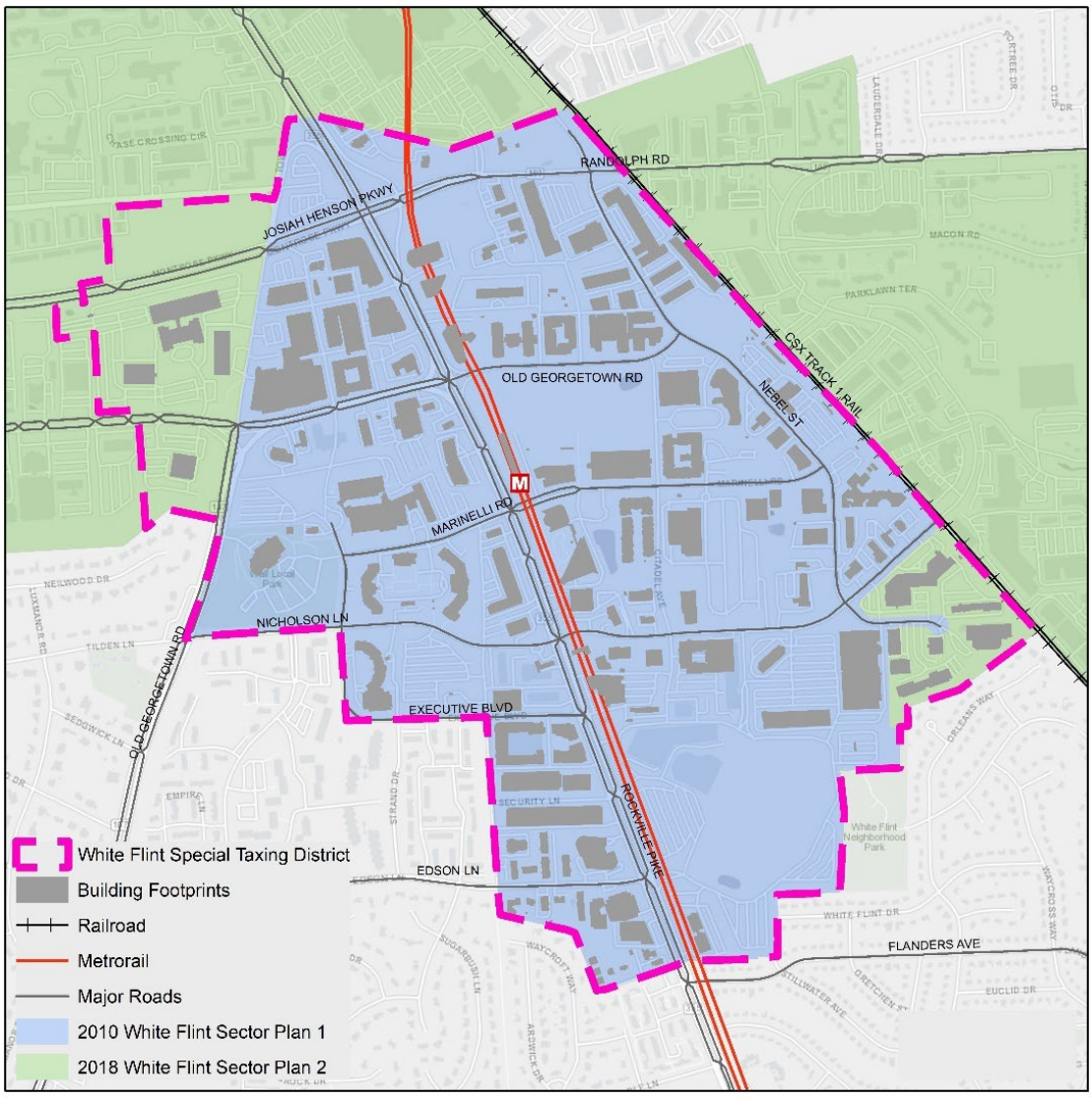

Figure 2: White Flint Special Taxing District Boundary

STUDY ELEMENTS

The study will include the following elements:

1. **Existing Conditions Snapshot**

   Develop an updated profile of the Plan Area and establish a baseline for evaluating implementation outcomes. Pulling from the 2025 North Bethesda Biennial Monitoring Report and existing county and national data sources (e.g., Census, BLS, SDAT, MCDOT Commuter Survey), staff will provide a high-level assessment of existing conditions.

2. **Development Capacity Analysis**

   Evaluate development activity and redevelopment potential since 2010, relative to the staging requirements, using Site Plan information and Development Tracker data.

3. **Planning Policy Review**
   Analyze shifts in regional mobility and planning priorities since 2010 to evaluate whether implementation strategies in the 2010 Plan reflect current policies and practices, such as Thrive Montgomery 2050, the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, the Growth and Infrastructure Policy, the 2023 Pedestrian Master Plan, the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan, the Climate Action Plan, the 2025 Incentive Zoning Update and evolving housing and Transportation Demand Management policies.

4. **Stakeholder Interviews**
   Consistent with the technical nature of the study, conduct targeted stakeholder interviews with property owners, developers, county agencies, and other partners to support study analyses.

5. **Implementation Tools Assessment**
   Building from above study elements, assess the performance of the sector plan's regulatory and financing tools in supporting sector plan implementation.

The study will culminate in a report that summarizes and graphically highlights the findings of the data analysis and policy review, providing a deeper understanding of the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* and the White Flint Special Taxing District. Furthermore, the findings of the study can be used as a roadmap for interventions to support North Bethesda in the future.

SCHEDULE

Staff anticipate that the study will be completed and presented to the Planning Board by the end of June 2027.

Pre-scope of work analysis	Summer 2026
Scope of Work presented to the Planning Board	Fall 2026
Data collection, stakeholder interviews, and analysis	Fall 2026 to Spring 2027
Prepare study report and present findings to the Planning Board	Spring to Summer 2027