



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item # *α*
10/20/08

October 10, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief *gk*
Vision Division

FROM: Sue Edwards, North Central Transit Corridor Team Leader (301.495.4518) *guel*
Vision Division

SUBJECT: Town of Washington Grove Draft Master Plan

The Town of Washington Grove requested a session with the Montgomery County Planning Board to discuss the municipal growth element. This discussion will be held on Monday, October 20, 2008 and does not require action by the Planning Board. A copy of the Town's Draft Master Plan is included (Attachment A).

This memo incorporates the comments of the Vision Division (Community-Based Planning) with input from the Move Division (Attachment B: Transportation) and Design (Attachment C: Historic Preservation). The memorandum from Clare Kelly, Design Division identifies the Humpback Bridge as a critical historic feature to the Town. The County Department of Transportation is studying options for replacing this bridge with a multi-lane bridge.

The State Clearinghouse Office has provided comments (Attachment D) related to the Town's Municipal Expansion Limits (MEL) and the required Water Resources Element which requests the M-NCPPC to provide technical assistance to the Town concerning the pollution forecast of wastewater and stormwater impacts.

The Town is a unique in many ways including its designation on the National Register for Historic Places and its governance as a municipality with limited planning and zoning authority. The introduction to the Town Master Plan states:

Washington Grove is an incomparable town—unique in its roots, in its initial land use plan, in the design of its dwellings, in its determination to retain more land in a natural state as forests and parks than developed property, and in the character of its history. (Page 5)

The Town's Draft Master Plan describes the historic growth patterns beginning in 1873 with the formation of the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association and the purchase of 267.5 acres of land along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Metropolitan Line.

The earliest camp meetings lasted 10 days to 2 weeks and involved more than two hundred fifty campers and 10,000 visitors. Over the decades, religious programs were replaced with secular activities and community facilities evolved to meet the changing demands. Eventually tent sites became cottages for year round residents, trees continued to be given priority, and a permanent Town government was established in 1937. (Page 12)

The Town speaks of the effects of ever increasing development pressure on the setting and character of Washington Grove. The Interjurisdictional Issues section of the Draft Plan notes several areas of concern:

- Implementation of the 2006 Shady Grove Sector Plan
- Subdivision activity adjacent to the Town (Piedmont Crossing)
- The Intercounty Connector (ICC)
- Recreational amenities for Town residents and residents of the surrounding area

Municipal Expansion Limits identified in the City of Gaithersburg Draft Municipal Growth Element (September 2008) also will affect Washington Grove as shown in Attachment E.

Implementing the 2006 Shady Grove Sector Plan

Residents of the Town of Washington Grove participated in the development and adoption of the 2006 Shady Grove Sector Plan (SGSP) and have a “spot” on the SGSP Implementation Committee which has operated since late 2006.

A key element of the Sector Plan implementation is relocation of the County’s industrial County Service Park to enable a transit-oriented mixed use community at the Red Line Metro Station. County Executive Isiah Leggett proposes to relocate a portion of the County Service Park to properties immediately adjacent to the Town of Washington Grove (Casey 7). The current property owner, EYA, is concurrently pursuing site plan approval for 340 units on the Casey 7 property. The State Highway Administration will acquire the Casey 6 property for the ICC Western Maintenance Facility (Attachment F).

Commission staff continue to monitor the evolving decision-making on the County Service Park relocation including the development program for future uses occupying the County-owned land.

The SGSP also proposes to connect Crabbs Branch Way with Amity Drive which adjoins the Town. The Sector Plan recommends an arterial classification with a traffic circle for traffic calming to respond to traffic concerns expressed by the Town.

Piedmont Crossing Subdivision

The Piedmont Crossing subdivision plan has been in active planning since 2001. This timeframe encompasses deliberations on the Legacy Open Space property, the ICC, the SGSP, housing and ownership cycles and many other topics. The site consists of 65.59 acres in the R-90 zone which was granted preliminary plan approval in 2005.

The Board approved an extension request on October 2, 2008 for the following phasing:

Phase I	65 units including 9 MPDUs	by February 1, 2010
Phase II	89 units including 11 MPDUs	by August 11, 2011
Phase III	30 units including 3 MPDUs	by August 11, 2011

The Board has also approved advanced land acquisition for a large portion of property identified in Phase II for parkland under the Advanced Land Acquisition Fund. This request must be approved by the County Council.

Intercounty Connector

The Town disputes the conclusion reached by the ICC Final Environmental Impact Statement that there would be “no impact” on Washington Grove. Federal and state agencies concurred with the no impact conclusion such that no mitigation was included in the Memorandum of Understanding required for impacts on historic resources. The Town has vigorously challenged this determination. Further, the Town has requested that “the western loop between I-370 and Midcounty Highway should be dropped as it will be unnecessary and would have unacceptable impacts on the Town as well as the Town’s neighbors” (Page 31). This roadway is retained in the County’s Master Plan of Highways and Shady Grove Sector Plan as F-9.

Recreation and Community Facilities

The Town’s Draft Master Plan compares how municipal recreation facilities in the City of Rockville (King Farm) and City of Gaithersburg (nearby neighborhoods) are managed and regulated relative to County recreation sites that are required as part of the development process. The Town emphasizes that “needs [for all community facilities including schools, libraries, parks, and public safety facilities] in this part of the County, however, outstrip local amenities...The demands for major recreational areas for adults as well as children should be resolved” (Page 61).

The SGSP recommends a full complement of public facilities that can serve both new and existing residents. The Plan recommends locating a number of public facilities in the area currently occupied by County service uses and is, therefore, dependent on vacating the County Service Park.

Growth Boundary

Washington Grove identifies a limited number of properties that are “in the Town’s best interests of lessening of bordering impacts with the continuing goal of preservation of this historic Town” (page 15). These sites include:

1. Legacy Open Space Field along Ridge Road
2. Residences on the western side of Washington Grove Lane
3. Industrial parcels west of Humpback Bridge
4. Roberts Oxygen and adjacent storage

The Legacy Open Space field was dedicated to the M-NCPPC as parkland in accordance with Preliminary Plan No. 12002022A. The Town's attempt to annex this property is the subject of litigation between the Town and M-NCPPC.

The SGSP identifies the Robert's Oxygen site consisting of 12.9 acres for rezoning to R & D/I-3 using the standard method. The Sector Plan also recommends site access via Crabbs Branch Way Extended to alleviate industrial traffic crossing the railroad tracks at grade at Railroad Street or traveling through the Town of Washington Grove.

The City of Gaithersburg recently distributed a Draft Municipal Growth Element (September 2008) for comment. Proposed MEL boundaries also include areas and properties proposed for annexation by Washington Grove as shown in Attachment E. Annexation is initiated by petition from the property owner.

Members of the Shady Grove Community Advisory Committee, including former Mayor John Compton of Washington Grove, have served for two years. The Planning Board Chairman has invited the members to continue their service on this committee as the SGSP implementation activities move forward.

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Attachments:

- A. 2008 Draft Master Plan of the Town of Washington Grove
- B. Transportation Memo
- C. Historic Preservation Memo
- D. State Clearinghouse Memo
- E. Proposed Municipal Boundaries Map
- F. Upper Mill Creek Area of the 2006 Shady Grove Sector Plan

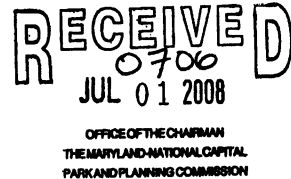
ATTACHMENT A



Post Office Box 216
Washington Grove, Maryland 20880-0216

June 30, 2008

The Honorable Royce Hanson
Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3716



Dear Chairman Hanson:

In accordance with Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, this is to provide notice that the Washington Grove Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Recommended Master Plan on Wednesday, September 3, 2008, in McCathran Hall, 300 Grove Avenue, Washington Grove. The hearing will begin at 7:30 p.m. Comments may be sent ahead to the Town's Planning Commission at the above address.

A copy of the Recommended Master Plan is enclosed and also available on the Town's website: <http://www.washingtongrovermd.org/government/agenda/index.php>

We appreciate past consultations with Park and Planning staff regarding properties in our previously designated maximum expansion limits. With regard to the new municipal growth element included in the Recommended Master Plan, we invite comments on behalf of the Montgomery County Planning Board. We also request a session with the Board or staff to meet and confer regarding this municipal growth element as specified by Article 66B, Section 3.05. Please contact me (telephone 301-926-4498) or the Town Office (telephone 301-926-2256) to schedule the meet and confer.

We look forward to receiving comments on this update to the Master Plan for the Town of Washington Grove.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Challstrom
Councilor

Enclosure