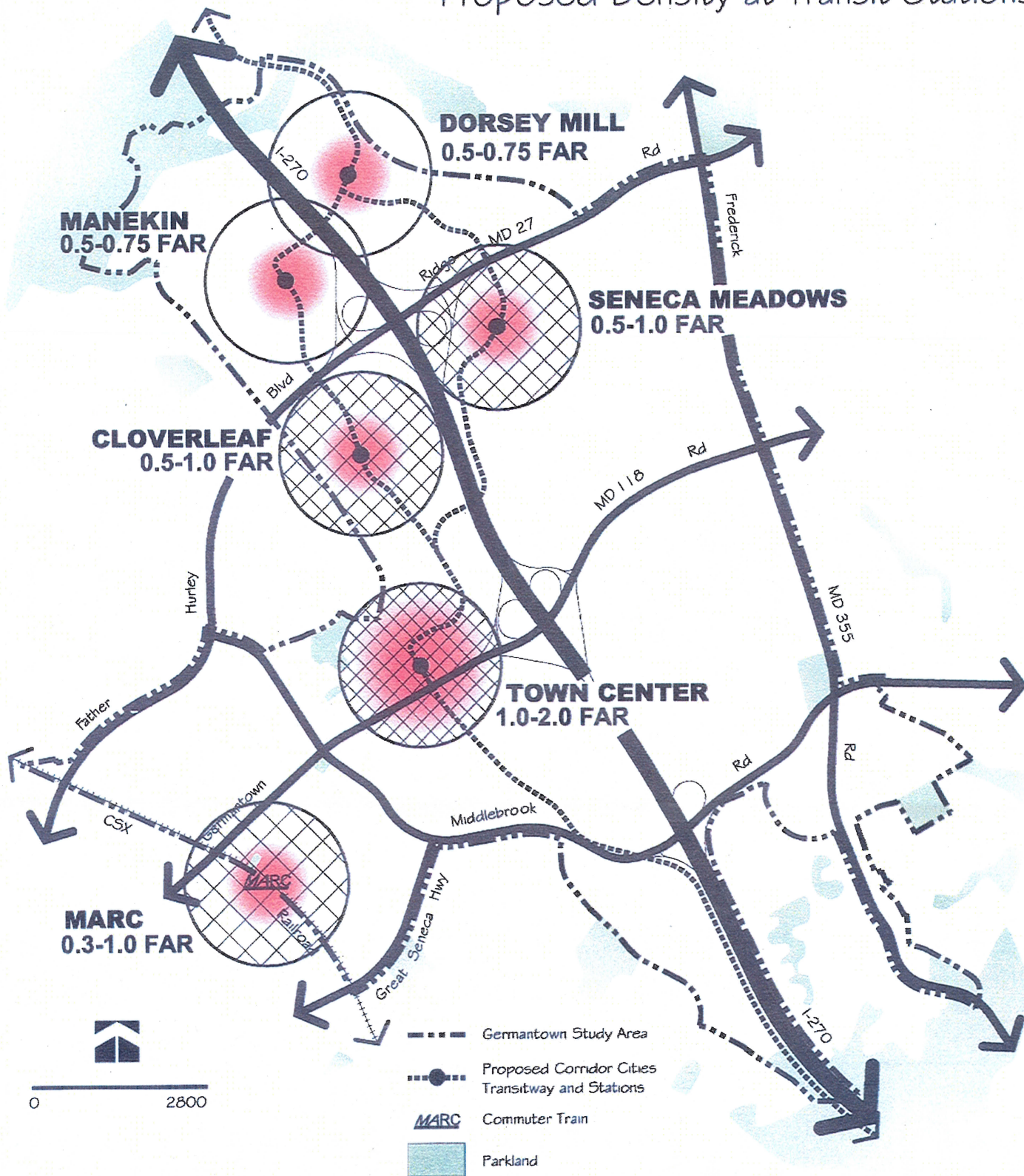
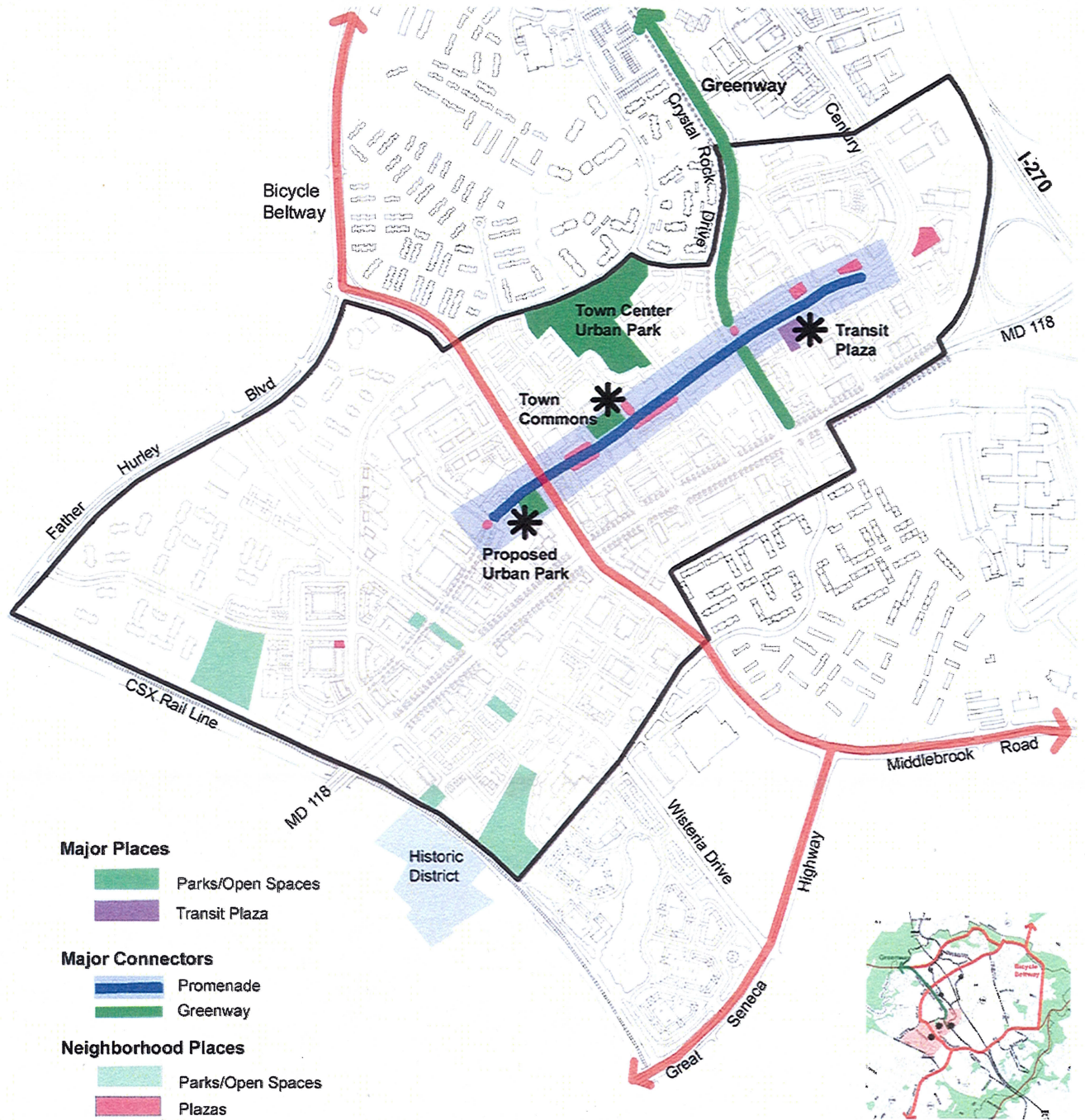


ATTACHMENT A

Proposed Density at Transit Stations



Town Center Parks, Open Space and Connections



ATTACHMENT C



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

October 17, 2008

Memorandum

To: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief
Community-Based Planning Division

Sue Edwards, Team Leader
Community Based Planning

Via: John Carter, Chief
Urban Design and Preservation Division

From: Karen Kumm Morris *kkmm*
Urban Design and Historic Preservation Division

Subject: Germantown Town Center –Urban Design Recommendations, Worksession 5

Staff Recommendations:

1. Revise Draft Plan's building height recommendations to locate the tallest buildings at the Town Center transit station and a crescent of tall buildings along I-270.
2. Shift density and building heights towards MD 118 away from Century Boulevard.
3. Achieve compatible building height transitions to adjacent residential areas.
4. Revise the Draft Plan's Urban Form map to illustrate the arrangement of density, building heights and street definition.
5. Add the Places, Open Spaces and Connections map for the Town Center that establishes a hierarchy of places and identifies Century Boulevard as a Promenade.

Draft Plan Recommendations for the Town Center

The Draft Plan recommended the following urban form guidance, pages 27 - 28:

- Create a continuous building line along Century Boulevard with setbacks for plazas and gathering places with active uses such as restaurants and retail.
- Establish a series of parks, open spaces and other public gathering places along Century Boulevard, anchored by a green area at the bend of Century Boulevard and a new play area adjacent to the Upcounty Regional Services Center.
- Improve the function and public enjoyment of the public common at Black Rock Center for the Arts with additional seating, public art, and event programming. The space

should be managed by the proposed urban maintenance district. Decide on ownership of the public common.

- Create a new public park west of Middlebrook Road in the Town Center District. This location, adjacent to regional facilities and active retail and entertainment uses, make it suitable for family recreation.
- Transfer 1.2 acres of the M-NCCPPC's Germantown Square Urban Park at MD 118 and Middlebrook Road for approximately one acre of land currently occupied by M&B Bank at the Town Commons Shopping Center, if feasible. This exchange provides an urban open space at the west end of Century Boulevard. If the land exchange is unsuccessful, redevelopment of the Town Commons Shopping Center must provide a public urban open space that is visible and accessible from Century Boulevard.
- Reconstruct Crystal Rock Drive to create a linear open space with recreation opportunities extending from MD 118 to the trail access to Black Hill Regional Park.
- Allow up buildings up to 15 stories immediately adjacent to the transit station at Century Boulevard, and up to eight story buildings along MD 118. Reduce the sense of building bulk and mass along Century Boulevard by limiting building heights to three to four stories at street level and placing taller building elements behind.
- Building design should respond to vistas along Century Boulevard and at intersections with Crystal Rock Drive, Aircraft Drive to promote pedestrian use and safety. Implement streetscape improvements with all new, redeveloped, or public properties.
- Elaborate the Town Center urban design recommendations with detailed design guidance and streetscape plans as the first implementation measure.

Planning Board Comments, Worksession #3

- Permit higher building heights along I-270 and have more general building height guidance in the Plan. Step down building heights adjacent to residential communities.
- Provide a better sense of the hierarchy of open spaces.
- Public Testimony on building heights varied between property owners generally wanting taller buildings along I-270 and citizens opposing tall buildings in general.

Staff Response on Urban Form and Building Heights

Staff recommends the following guidance:

1. Allow up to 15 stories (190 feet) at the transit station creating a focus and establishing an upper end to the allowable building heights as required in the TMX Zone.
2. Create a crescent of tall buildings along I-270 allowing a range between 8 to 12 stories, up to 143 feet to express the urban nature of Germantown as a Corridor City.

3. Establish a range of 6 to 8 stories (100 feet) along MD 118 to cluster density away from the Promenade of Century Boulevard.
4. Establish 4 to 5 stories along the Promenade portion of Century Boulevard to maintain a pedestrian scale along the Promenade and avoid long shadows on the public spaces.
5. Add text that will require building heights adjacent to existing residential communities to match the maximum building heights allowed in the adjacent zone.
6. Replace the Draft Plan's urban form map with the revised Urban Form map, attachment X.
7. Add the Town Center's Parks, Open Spaces and Connections map to the Plan.

Discussion

Create a Focus within Town Center – 2 FAR and 15 stories

The Town Center District is a large area, approximately 302 acres, over one mile in length, and roughly twice the size of the Washingtonian. There is a need to create a center to this area by placing the greatest density and tallest buildings at the Town Center's transit station. This provides jobs and housing convenience to transit and creates a visual orientation by highlighting the center.

The tallest height of the "tent" at the transit station should be 15 stories (190 feet) to vertically arrange the 2 FAR density in a manner that does not result in CBD scale buildings and unacceptably long shadows. A 15 story height limit will be seen up and down the I-270 corridor and is higher than the majority of buildings along the I-270 Corridor with the exception of NIST and the old Washingtonian Condominium with 25 stories. Fifteen story buildings are typically found further down County within the CBD's, near the White Flint Metro station and within Rockville's government center.

For a photo reference to various building heights, see the Balston, Arlington, Virginia photographs in this memo.

Create a Crescent of tall buildings along I-270 – 1 FAR and 8 to 12 stories

The Planning Board signaled their interest in allowing significant building heights along I-270 to strengthen the sense of Germantown as a corridor city. A range of heights between 8 to 12 stories (143 feet) will achieve this along the I-270 creating a crescent of tall buildings along I-270 and Century Boulevard. See Town Center's Illustrative Urban Form map for an illustration of this arrangement of building heights. Specific building heights will be determined at the time of project plan or preliminary plan review.

Cluster density and building heights along MD 118 – 1 FAR and 8 stories

Shift allowable density along MD 118 and away from nearby residential communities by allowing 8 story buildings to line MD 118. This will create a boulevard scale of development similar to Fairfax Drive in Balston, Arlington. See photographs.

Establish a pedestrian scale along Century Boulevard – 4 to 5 stories (60 Feet)

Century Boulevard between Crystal Rock and the Town Commons Shopping Center functions today as a promenade with many sidewalk cafes, restaurants and civic uses. The Draft Plan designates this segment as a Promenade recommending wide sidewalks and more activating uses to strengthen the liveliness of the street. Due to the orientation of the street, there is a concern that there will be continuous, long shadows if 6 to 8 story building are permitted along the street. Lower building heights with step backs for upper floors are needed to avoid long shadows. The narrow right of way of 70 feet also creates a sense of enclosure and taller buildings may result in a canyon effect. See Century Boulevard Cross Section.

Achieve compatible building heights adjacent to Residential Communities

The transect principle of a “tent” stepping down towards the surrounding residential community is needed to ensure compatibility for adjacent residents. Establishing building heights to match the maximum allowable building height allowed by the adjacent zone will achieve this. If a building height limit is not given in the zone, such as a Planned Development or Town Sector zone, then building heights should match existing, adjacent building heights found in the abutting residential community. Compatibility is a required finding for project plans and site plans.

Comparable Building Heights in Balston, Arlington, Virginia.



View of 8 story office buildings along Fairfax Drive, Balston, Arlington
Comparable to proposed building heights for MD 118



View of 9 and 13 story buildings along Fairfax Drive. Town Center Transit Station to have 15 story buildings.



View of 20 story apartment called The Meridian, a CBD scale building adjacent to the Metro station along Wilson Boulevard.



CBD scale buildings of 20 stories, The Meridian, cast long shadows on adjacent Stuart Park in Balston. Suggests need for lower buildings adjacent to public spaces in Germantown.

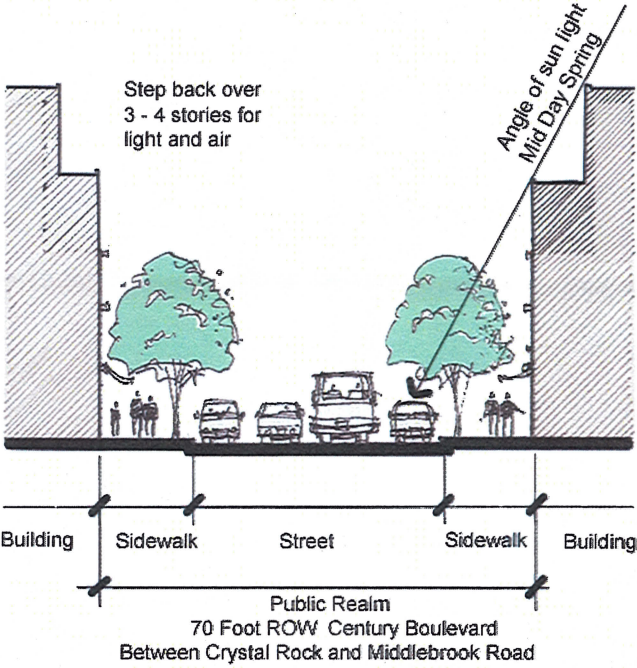
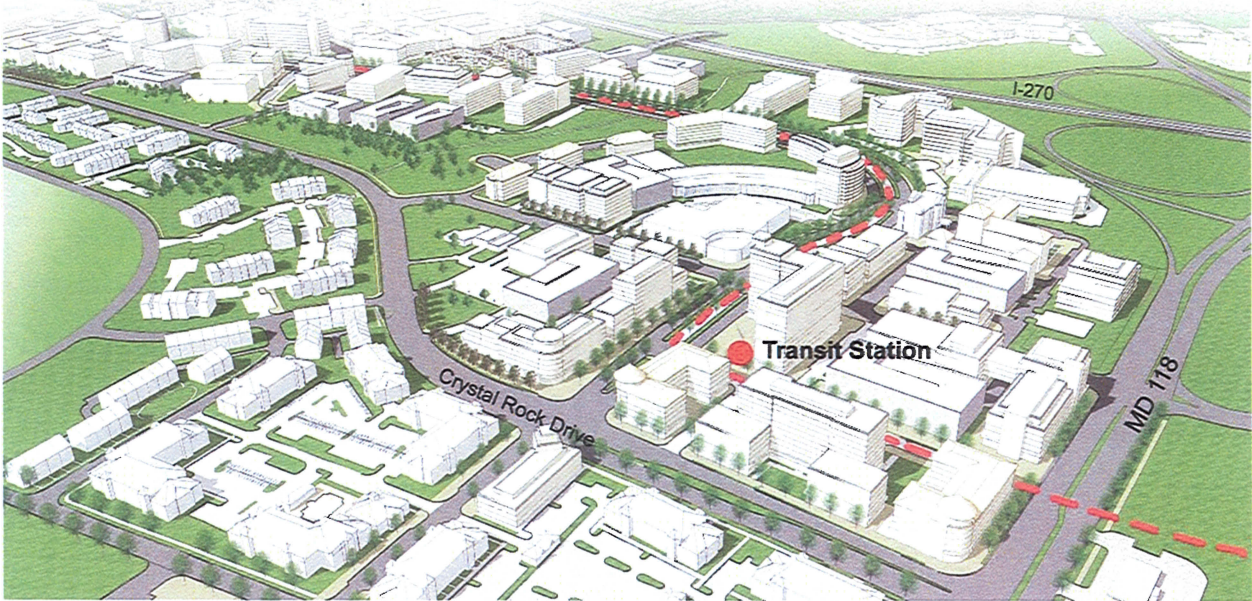


View of 20 story apartments and 12 story office along narrow right of way. Suggests that 20 story, CBD type buildings appropriate for Metro station areas are too high for Germantown.



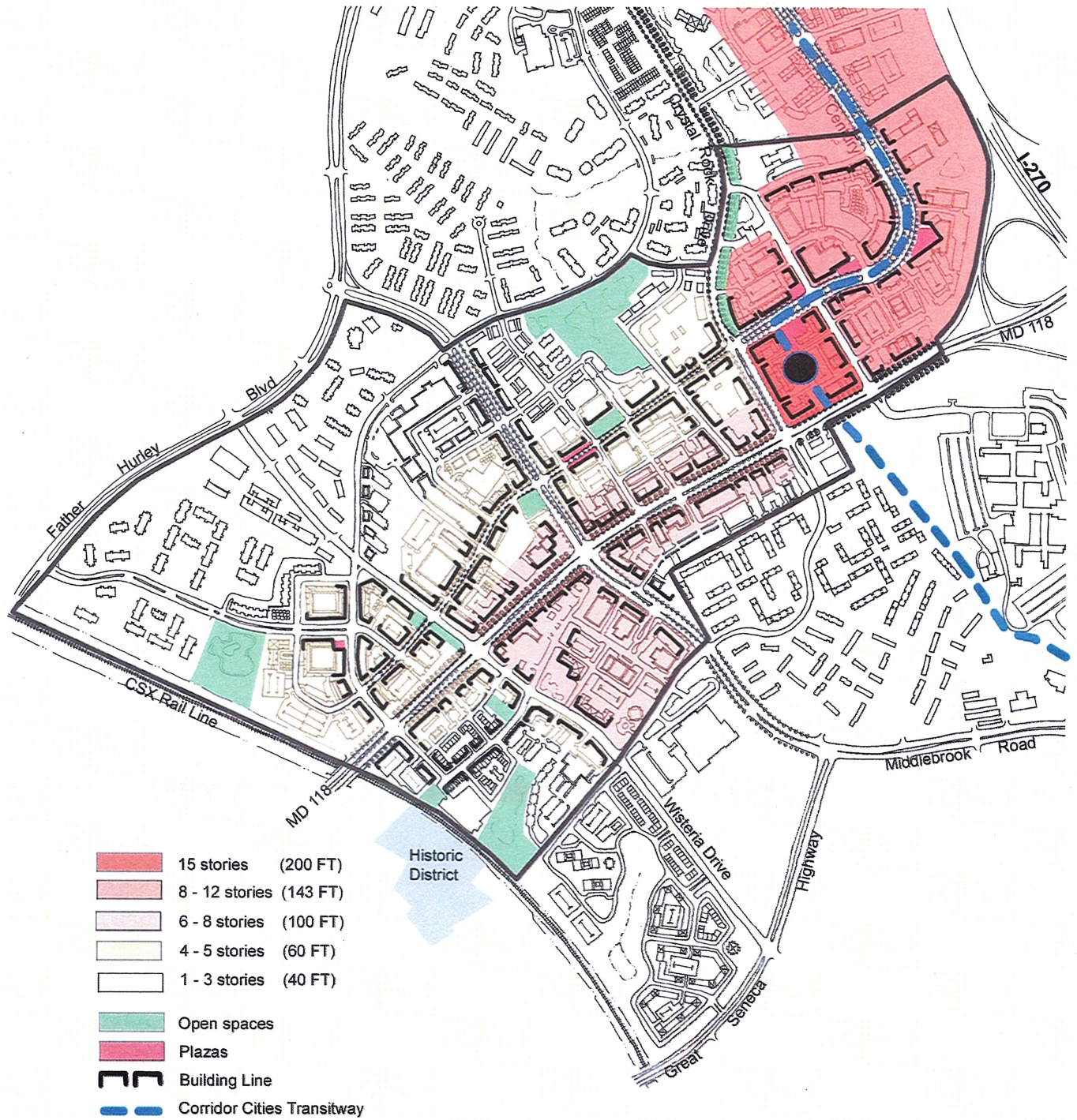
View of same 20 story apartments with 12 story office building along narrow right of way adjacent to Westin Hotel. Up close, a 20 story, CBD scale building appears too tall for the upcounty area of Germantown. Such buildings heights are appropriate for Metro station areas.

View of Town Center with Tallest Buildings at Transit and along I-270



Need for building step backs along Century Boulevard to ensure light and air along Promenade.

Town Center Illustrative Urban Form



Staff Response to the Hierarchy of Open Space

The major open space themes of the Plan are to:

- Locate major parks within walking distances of where people live and work, along the Promenade within Town Center.
- Link the Core Neighborhood to surrounding nature oriented parks such as Black Hills Regional Park.

Given the open space themes, the following hierarchy of places and connections is suggested:

1. Major places

- Town Commons at Black Rock Center for the Arts,
- Town Center Urban Park, (located behind Library)
- Proposed Urban Park (family-oriented park along Middlebrook)
- Transit station plaza (located on the Bellmead property)

2. Major Connections

- Promenade (approximately a ½ mile of Century Boulevard)
 - Greenway (1 mile connecting to the Core to Black Hill Regional Park)

3. Neighborhood places and pathways

- MARC station's open space park
- Water's House alee of trees (part of historic setting on Walter Johnston Drive)
- Post Office Stormwater Park
- Water's House plaza (along Wisteria Drive, an historic reference opportunity)
- Marten Property's Stormwater Park
- Small Public Use Plazas (privately developed)
- Transit Sidewalk Network

Discussion

The variety of outdoor places and connections serving the Town Center will create a range of experiences meeting recreational and social needs. The major places and connections are considered significant due to their area-wide function, size and central location within the Town Center. The neighborhood places and pathways primarily serve sub areas within the Town Center. Not all proposed places and connections require funding. For example the existing Town Center Urban Park already has funding in the Park's CIP budget. See attached Town Center - Places, Open Spaces and Connections map to be added to the Draft Plan.

The following matrix is provided to better convey the nature and variety of existing and proposed places, open spaces and connections that will serve the Town Center.

Parks, Open Space and Connections

Major Places	Function	Publicly Owned	Privately Owned	Maintenance District	Funding
Town Commons Existing	Central gathering space, adjacent to civic uses along Promenade	County*		Potential	Funded in County CIP, or Amenity Fund
Town Center Urban Park Existing	Central passive open space, behind civic uses, part of stream valley network	M-NCCPC		Potential	Funded in Park's CIP, or Amenity Fund
Urban Park Proposed	Family-oriented play park along Promenade	To be M-NCPPC		Potential	Potential land swap, dedication, or Amenity Fund
Transit Plaza Existing	Transit station riders waiting area along Promenade		Land Owner's public use space	Potential	NA
Major Connections					
Century Boulevard's Promenade	Social gathering and strolling along the liveliest street lined with restaurants, entertainment and civic uses	County		Potential	Funding in County CIP for only street maintenance, or Amenity Fund
Crystal Rock Greenway	Recreational uses such as biking, walking and exercise. Access to Black Hill Regional Park.	County		Potential	Funded in County CIP for only street maintenance, or Amenity Fund
Neighborhood Places and Pathways					
MARC station park Existing	Gathering place for neighborhood and waiting for transit	County		Potential	Funded in County CIP, or Amenity Fund
Water's House allee of trees Existing	Designated Historic Setting for Water's House. Passive green open space		Land Owner's public use space	Potential	NA
Post Office Stormwater Park Existing	SWM function. Potential walking, nature observation, environmental interpretation	Federal Govt.		Potential	NA
Water's House plaza	Part of Water's House original property. Small gathering place adjacent to retail. Potential for historic reference		Land Owner's public use space	Potential	NA

Marten Property's Stormwater Park	SWM function. Potential for walking, viewing nature, environmental interpretation		Land Owner's public use space	Potential	NA
Small plazas, sidewalk cafes and seating areas	Provides a setting for the social life. Variety of small gathering places adjacent to retail, restaurants, and businesses.		Land Owner's public use space	Potential	NA
Transit Sidewalk Network	A connected network of sidewalks that link the Core and residential areas to transit stations.	County		Potential	Part of DOT's CIP, or Amenity Fund

*Ownership to be Determined

Conclusion

The proposed revisions to the Urban Form guidance on building heights and the additional explanation of the hierarchy of open spaces will help give more clarity and understanding to the Draft Plan's recommendations.

Town Center Parks, Open Space and Connections

