



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

**MCPB**  
**Item # 4**  
**10/30/08**

October 24, 2008

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board  
**VIA:** Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief *GK*  
Vision Division  
**FROM:** Sue Edwards, Team Leader, North Central Transit Corridor (301-495-4518) *sue*  
Vision Division  
**SUBJECT:** Worksession #5 Germantown Draft Master Plan

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Review and revise as necessary the Plan recommendations for properties in the Town Center and on the west side of I-270

**SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE WORKSESSIONS**

Discussion of Plan recommendations for properties and districts will take place at the following worksessions:

Worksession #6	November 10, 2008	Properties on east side of I-270 and staging
Worksession #7 (if needed)	November 17, 2008	Remaining properties and topics

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The October 30 worksession continues the October 6 Planning Board discussion of properties west of I-270 in Germantown. The Planning Board asked for more information concerning:

- MPDUs existing and proposed
- Density allocations at transit stations
- Open space hierarchy
- Town Center mix of uses and identity
- Design excellence including recommendations on building height
- Maintenance of public spaces
- Expanding the Historic District boundaries
- Including the Historic District in the Plan boundaries

Worksession #5 will address these issues and also the remainder of properties included in the October 6, 2008 staff report beginning with the JBG/Martens property (property #22) in the West End.

## II. ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

**Issue #1:** *Commissioner Presley inquired about the status of affordable housing in this Plan. What is the status of affordable housing, particularly moderately priced dwelling units and workforce housing?*

	EXISTING			PROPOSED		
	Total Existing DUs	Total Mkt Units	Existing MPDUs <sup>4</sup>	Total New DUs w 12.5% MPDUs	Market Rate Units	MPDUs 12.5%
Town Center <sup>1,2</sup>	713	614	99	1728	1509	219
West End	610	575	35	583	509	74
Gateway	1966	1930	36	272	238	34
Cloverleaf	0	0	0	1757	1536	221
North End	1420	1190	230	1071	935	136
Seneca Meadows	656	611	45	660	576	84
Montgomery College	726	668	58	0	0	0
Fox Chapel	500	466	34	174	153	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6591</b>	<b>6054</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>6245</b>	<b>5456</b>	<b>789</b>

- 1 Town Sector properties included with calculations for MPDUs in the T-S zone
- 2 Workforce housing recommended by staff = 225 units included in total
- 3 Workforce housing proposed by owner (137 units) if 1,700 units density approved (not included in total)
- 4 HOC records indicate that approximately 323 of these MPDUs expired between 1987 and July 2008.

**Issue #2:** *What is the appropriate density allocation at each transit station and the MARC station area?*

The Proposed Density at Transit Station map (Attachment A) depicts the staff recommended density allocations. This allocation recognizes the highest density will occur at the future Town Center CCT station to create a focal point of building form, activity, and access at the CCT station. Other transportation modes will converge there as well: circulator buses, taxis, jitneys, bikeways and pedestrian paths.

- The highest density, mix of uses, and critical mass of activity will be at the **Germantown Town Center transit station**. The property bounded by MD 118, Crystal Rock Drive, Aircraft Drive, and Century Boulevard with T-S zoning will have the highest density of 2.0 FAR.
- Properties surrounding the T-S zoned transit station and **within ¼ mile walking distance of the Town Center transit station** will have a maximum density of 1.0 FAR. This level of density will contribute to the concentration of activity at, and the liveliness of, the Town Center without detracting from the Town Center as the focal point of activity.
- The **MARC station area and the Cloverleaf CCT station** are appropriate for increased intensity and a broader mix of uses, with maximum densities ranging between 0.5 FAR near the edges of the ¼ mile walking radius and 1.0 FAR nearest to the transit stations.

- Densities at the **Manekin CCT station** will be higher than currently allowed but held to a maximum of 0.75 FAR to ensure compatibility with existing lower density residential areas.

The Board asked for examples and illustrations of these densities as occurring in the Washington metropolitan region. Staff is preparing illustrations of density at: Metro stations such as Silver Spring, Bethesda, and Twinbrook; the Rockville Town Center; the Washingtonian development in Gaithersburg; Reston, VA, and Clarendon in Arlington County, VA. These examples will be shown graphically at worksession #5 on October 30, 2008.

Staff considered the impacts of applying 2.0 FAR to properties immediately adjoining the Town Center Transit Station and extending to the north end of the Town Center District. This density modification would affect the following properties:

Property Name	ID No.	Existing s.f.	Proposed Zone	Public Hearing FAR	Modified FAR	Additional s.f. from Draft Plan
Transit Station	1	61,370 s.f.	T-S	2.0	2.0	No change from Draft Plan
Police & Fire	2	60,000 s.f.	TMX	1.0	2.0	160,000 s.f. 225 dwelling units
Cinema	3	58,780 s.f.	TMX	1.0	2.0	378,000 s.f. 200 dwelling units
Century XXI/Savitar	4	181,000 s.f.	TMX	1.0	2.0	160,000 s.f. 200 dwelling units
Matan	8	0	TMX	1.0	2.0	526,000 s.f.
Bellmead	9	79,000 s.f.	T-S	1.0	2.0	335,000 s.f.
Faranoff	10	18,000 s.f.	TMX	1.0	2.0	95,000 s.f.

Potential benefits of increasing density at this location:

- Definition as Corridor City
- Transit access for increased jobs, retail, and housing
- Variety of densities since some properties will not develop to full zoning potential
- Variety in building height
- Wider stream buffer possible with structured parking and taller buildings

Potential negative impacts of increasing density at this location:

- Transit station will not be the only property with 2.0 FAR
- Traffic generation by additional uses (not modeled for traffic impact)
- More intersections likely to fail
- Increased impervious surfaces if not regulated by structured parking, urban stormwater technology, green roofs

Staff believes, on balance, that increased density in this location can provide sufficient density to support transit and to create Germantown's identity as a Corridor City. Traffic impacts may be substantial and could create LATR and PAMR conflicts if mitigation is not required.

**Staff Recommendation: Extend 2.0 FAR to properties listed above.**

**Issue #3      *What is the hierarchy of open space within the Town Center District?***

The variety of outdoor spaces and connections serving the Town Center create a range of experiences meeting recreational and social needs. The Draft Master Plan developed two open space themes:

1. To locate major parks within walking distance of where people live and work, along the Town Center Promenade shown in Attachment B.
2. Link the Town Center Core to surrounding nature-oriented parks such as Black Hill Regional Park or the North Germantown Greenway.

Given these open space themes, staff recommends the following hierarchy of places and connections:

**1. Major Places**

- Town Commons at BlackRock Center for the Arts
- Town Center Urban Park (located behind Library)
- Proposed Urban Park (family-oriented park along Middlebrook Road)
- Transit station plaza (located on the transit station property)

**2. Major Connections**

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

**3. Neighborhood Places and Pathways**

- MARC station’s open space park
- Waters House alee of trees (part of historic setting on Walter Johnston Drive)
- Post Office stormwater facility
- Waters House plaza (along Wisteria Drive, an historic reference opportunity)
- Marten property stormwater facility
- Small public use plazas (privately developed)
- Transit Sidewalk Network

The following matrix and discussion in Attachment C: Urban Design memo supply details that 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
BlackRock Center Town Commons Existing	Central gathering space, adjacent to civic uses along Promenade	County <sup>1</sup>		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 Places	Function	Publicly Owned	Privately Owned	Maintenance District	Funding
<b>Major Connections</b>					
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
<b>Neighborhood Places and Pathways</b>					
MARC station park Existing	Gathering place for neighborhood and waiting for transit	County		Potential	Funded in County CIP, or Amenity Fund
Waters House alee 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 facility Existing	SWM function. Potential walking, nature observation, environmental interpretation	Federal Govt.		Potential	NA
Waters 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 facility	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

1 Ownership to be determined as discussed in issue #6

Staff recommendation: Approve the hierarchy of open space and include Town Center Parks, Open Spaces and Connections graphic in the Public Hearing Draft Master Plan.

**Issue #4:      *What land use and density is needed to ensure a thriving Germantown Town Center?***

The Germantown Town Center is the civic and commercial focal point for the broader Germantown community and surrounding places such as Boyds, Clarksburg, and Goshen. Constructing the CCT northward from Gaithersburg and Metropolitan Grove will make the Germantown Town Center a greater attraction as a Transit Town Center (Federal Transit Administration, *Station Area Planning: How to Make Great Transit-Oriented Places*, February 2008).

A thriving Germantown Town Center will be the significant center of economic and cultural activity with regional scale destinations of economic and community activity. It will:

- Function with multiple transit modes including commuter rail, local/regional transit, bus hub
- Include a mix of moderate to high density residential, commercial, employment and civic cultural uses
- Contain civic and cultural uses not offered elsewhere in the community
- Incorporate community-serving and destination retail
- Designate certain streets that contain ground-floor retail
- Create new housing development in the form of high rise and mid-rise apartment and condominiums
- Provide a diversity of housing types, rental and ownership opportunities, mixed ages and incomes with affordable housing units generated by the MPDU requirements and opportunities for workforce housing
- Add new residential development of 5,000-10,000 units
- Support employment in the station area of 5,000-20,000 jobs

Master Plan Recommendation

The Draft Master Plan says that:

“Germantown’s civic focus will be the 213 acre Town Center on Century Boulevard. The street will be lined with shops, restaurants, and civic facilities with a mix of office and housing choices close to shopping, transit, and jobs. Many properties are in single ownership and can accommodate a significant amount of new development or mixed use redevelopment.

Stretching from I-270 to the CSX tracks, the Town Center will include cinemas, restaurants, and hotels as well as civic facilities like the BlackRock Center for the Arts, the new Germantown Library, and the Upcounty Regional Services Center that contribute to Germantown’s identity as the up-County cultural center. Adding residential and commercial uses with an emphasis on cultural, entertainment, and street level retail uses will create synergy among diverse uses.”

## Public Hearing Comments

A number of comments stated that there was no “there” to the Germantown Town Center. Properties located at other transit stations will compete for residential, retail, commercial and employment uses.

Staff Recommendation: Develop staging language to provide incentives for development in the Germantown Town Center before substantial development occurs at other CCT transit stations. Staging for this Plan will be discussed at worksession #6 on November 10, 2008.

### ***Issue # 5: What elements of design excellence will appear in design guidelines to accompany the Germantown Master Plan?***

When the Germantown Master Plan Planning Board Draft Plan is published in early 2009, the Plan will provide design guidance at two levels: areawide for design elements that apply to all properties (e.g. building orientation to the street; parking behind buildings or within structures); and design elements within districts. An example of design guidance within districts occurs in the West End portion of the Town Center District where language is provided to assure compatibility with the nearby Germantown Historic District and with individual historic properties such as the Pumphrey-Matney House within the West End (see Attachment D: Historic Preservation).

Accompanying the Planning Board Draft Plan will be more extensive design guidelines for three Corridor Cities Transitway stations on the west side of I-270: Town Center, Cloverleaf, and Manekin stations. These design guidelines will be provided in draft form to the County Council at approximately the time when the Council receives the County Executive’s comments on the Planning Board Draft Plan.

The Planning Board has noted that design excellence is concerned with more than height. The transit station design guidelines will address:

#### Street Character

- Road design and variety
- Streetscape
- Boulevards and main streets

#### Open Space

- Parks
- Stream valleys
- Small urban places
- Optional method of development (funded on-site, off-site, or Amenity Fund)

#### Building Character

- Height
- Setbacks
- Stepbacks
- Fenestration
- Activating uses
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

## Placemaking

- Landmarks
- Views/vistas/skyline
- Public art

**Staff Recommendation:** Include in the Appendix of the Planning Board Draft Master Plan a Table of Contents for the Germantown Transit Station Design Guidelines at Town Center, Cloverleaf, and Manekin stations.

Germantown is defined in the 1964 General Plan as a “Corridor City.” Diagrammatically, a “corridor city” as originally envisioned in the General Plan was to have a single center of employment and shopping activities surrounded by residential development. The residential area decreased from high-density adjacent to the core, to low-density, at the edge of the corridor city (1989 Germantown Master Plan, page 7).

The height of specific buildings adjacent to transit stations and overall variety of heights and skyline as viewed from major roads are important design elements for Germantown. Buildings visible from I-270 should convey a transition from suburban form to “corridor city.” The highest buildings will be at the transit station with a maximum height of 200 feet (approximately 15 stories). Buildings of this height are typically found in Central Business Districts, the Rockville government core, and near the White Flint Metro Station.

A crescent of taller buildings along Century Boulevard from Aircraft Drive to the northern edge of the Town Center will be 100-143 feet (8-12 stories). Specific building heights will be determined at the time of project plan or preliminary plan review (see Attachment E).

Building heights along the Promenade of Century Boulevard should be limited to 60 feet (4-5 stories) at street level with taller building elements placed behind the street level to form a pedestrian scale. Lower building heights with step backs for upper floors are needed to avoid long shadows.

Density and building heights along MD 118 should be clustered along the roadway and away from nearby residential communities. Buildings 100 feet (eight stories) along MD 118 create a boulevard scale of development that is appropriate for the width and hierarchy of this roadway.

**Staff Recommendation:** Revise the height recommendations for the portion of Century Boulevard through the Town Center, along MD 118, in the crescent of properties from the Town Center transit station northward in the Planning Board Draft Plan. Include the Town Center Illustrative Urban Form map in Planning Board Draft Plan.



**Issue #6: *What structure of ownership and maintenance will assure high quality public outdoor places for Germantown? What is the likelihood of a service district fulfilling these responsibilities?***

Master Plan Recommendation

The Public Hearing Draft recommends:

- Create a continuous building line along Century Boulevard with setbacks for plazas and gathering spaces with activating uses such as restaurants and retail nearby.
- Establish a series of parks, open spaces, and other public gathering spaces along Century Boulevard anchored by a green area at the bend of Century Boulevard and a new play park adjacent to the Upcounty Regional Services Center.
- Improve the function and public enjoyment of the public commons at the BlackRock 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.

Planning Board Discussion

The issue of ownership and maintenance of public gathering spaces and parks was discussed at great length at worksession #3 on October 6, 2008 with participation by Mary Bradford, Parks Director; Jim McMahon, Northern Region Park Manager; and Brooke Farquhar, Acting Supervisor for Park and Trail Planning. A key property in this discussion is the Town Commons which is recognized as both the most visible and central public open space in the Town Center and also not currently maintained at an acceptable standard. Further, the Town Commons should undergo facility planning to design a new system of turf management, ornamental plantings, seating, lighting, and other fixtures appropriate for a town commons.

The Town Commons ownership was transferred from the M-NCPPC to Montgomery County in January 2005. Since that time, the County has used a contractor to maintain three public buildings and their grounds in the Germantown Town Center: the Germantown Regional Library and the future Town Center Urban Park behind the Library; the BlackRock Center for the Arts including the Town Commons; and the Upcounty Regional Services Center at a cost of approximately \$10,000 per year. See Attachment F for the memo from Brooke Farquhar detailing the options for ownership and maintenance.

Parks staff conclude that the Town Commons should remain in County ownership. The Department of Parks staff offer assistance in developing a standard of maintenance for the Town Commons for the County's Department of General Services to apply until a maintenance or urban service district is established. When the maintenance district is established, the Department of Parks should participate in establishing standards, practices, and jurisdictions of the district.

Planning staff respectfully disagrees with the Town Commons remaining in County ownership. This space functions as a park and gathering place for the larger Germantown community and this function will increase with the further attraction of the Town Center Urban Park when it is completed in 2012 (estimated). Maintenance levels, staffing and suitable equipment can be coordinated between public open spaces in the Town Center.

Staff Recommendation: The Parks Department should assume management of the Town Commons space when the Town Center Urban Park is completed and maintenance can be jointly scheduled. The Parks Department may contract for maintenance when an urban district is established.

**Issue #7:      *Should the boundaries of the Germantown Historic District be expanded? Should the Master Plan boundaries be modified to include the Germantown Historic District?***

Master Plan Recommendations

The Draft Master Plan contains a few references to the adjoining Germantown Historic District.

- Seek suitable adaptive uses for the Pumphrey-Matney House.
- Create two additional single-family detached lots on County-owned property east of the Pumphrey-Matney House fronting Walter Johnson Road to create a compatible setting for the historic property.
- Provide MARC station parking in a structured four-story garage in the southeastern part of the site, next to the stormwater management pond. The structure's siting and design should be compatible with the nearby Historic District.

At worksession #3, staff recommended modifying this last recommendation to prohibit the parking structure in this location and to use the parking area at Bowman Mill Drive and MD 118 for structured parking for MARC patrons.

Planning Board Comments

At worksession #3, the Planning Board asked whether the Plan boundaries should include the Germantown Historic District and whether the Historic District boundaries should be modified by the Draft Master Plan.

Staff Analysis

Historic Preservation staff wrote the following response (Attachment D):

Historic Preservation staff do not recommend expanding the boundary of the Historic District north of the CSX tracks. When the Board evaluated the Germantown district for historic designation in 1988, the Board recommended a larger district that spanned both sides of the railroad. The County Council ultimately designated a smaller district south of the railroad. The Council also designated two individual sites in the West End area

north of the railroad: the Pumphrey-Matney House, 19401 Walter Johnson Road (#19/13-5) and the Madeline V. Waters House Site (#19/13-1). The Planning Board recently evaluated the historic significance of another West End resource, the Germantown Presbyterian Church (#19/13-8) finding it ineligible for designation. The County Council is currently considering this resource as part of the Individual Resources Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Historic Preservation staff believes that several resources south of the railroad may be eligible for Master Plan designation but there is no public support for the designation of these resources. Staff notes that the historic district and the area south of it are outside the study area for this plan and may have other planning issues that would need to be considered in conjunction with potential historic district expansion. If the Board elects to pursue historic district expansion, more time would be needed to comprehensively evaluate planning issues.”

**Staff Recommendation:** Include historic preservation design guidelines in West End section of Planning Board Draft Plan. Do not expand boundaries of the Germantown Historic District and do not include boundaries of the Historic District in this Plan’s boundaries.

The discussion of property-specific issues west of I-270 that began on October 6, 2008 will continue with the West End portion of the Town Center District property #22 identified on Attachment G (Scorecard).

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| <b>Attachments:</b> |  |
| Attachment A        | Proposed Transit Station Densities                 |
| Attachment B        | Town Center Parks, Open Space, and Connections Map |
| Attachment C        | Urban Design Memorandum                            |
| Attachment D        | Historic Preservation Memorandum                   |
| Attachment E        | Town Center Illustrative Urban Form Map            |
| Attachment F        | Department of Parks Memorandum                     |
| Attachment G        | Worksession #3 Scorecard                           |
| Attachment H        | Correspondence                                     |