

germantownForward

Planning Board Draft February 2009



Sector Plan for the Germantown Employment Area: An Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan

ABSTRACT

This Plan for the commercial center of Germantown contains the text and supporting maps of amendment to the approved and adopted 1989 Germantown Master Plan. It also amends *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*, as amended.

The Plan also amends relevant functional master plans including the *Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County*, the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan*, and the *Countywide Park Trails Plan*.

The Plan makes recommendations for land use, design, environment, transportation, and community facilities as well as the zoning that is intended to guide development.

SOURCE OF COPIES

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting, and amending or extending On Wedges and Corridors, the general plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District.

The Commission operates in each county through Planning Boards appointed by the county government. The Boards are responsible for all local plans, zoning amendments, subdivision regulations, and administration of parks.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the involvement and participation of individuals with disabilities, and its facilities are accessible. For assistance with special needs (e.g., large print materials, listening devices, sign language interpretation, etc.), please contact the Community Outreach and Media Relations Division, 301-495-4600 or TDD 301-495-1331.

Planning Board Draft

**Sector Plan for the Germantown Employment Area:
An Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan**

Prepared by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

Approved by the Montgomery County Council
Date

Adopted by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Date

Certification of Approval and Adoption

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The Plan Process

A master plan provides comprehensive recommendations for the use of public and private land. Each plan reflects a vision of the future that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a countywide perspective.

Together with relevant policies, plans guide public officials and private individuals when making land use decisions.

The **PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT PLAN** is the first formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan or sector plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which it holds public worksessions to review the testimony and revise the Public Hearing Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board Draft Plan.

The **PLANNING BOARD DRAFT PLAN** is the Board's recommended Plan and reflects their revisions to the Public Hearing Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit a master plan or sector plan to the County Council with copies to the County Executive who must, within sixty days, prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward

to the County Council other comments and recommendations.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council holds a public hearing to receive public testimony. After the hearing record is closed, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee holds public worksessions to review the testimony and makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board Draft Plan, as revised.

After Council approval, the plan is forwarded to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the plan officially amends the master plans, functional plans, and sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

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Germantown Housing Report

Churchill Town Sector Analysis

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Top Germantown Retail Businesses

Water and Sewer Capacity

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Cultural and Historic Resources

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and Germantown historic sites

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Germantown's Future



Future Germantown in the vicinity of the Germantown Transit Station

This Plan establishes a vision that will transform Germantown's central employment corridor into vibrant town center and mixed-use uptown districts.

The Germantown of the future will be the center of business and community life in upper Montgomery County.

The Plan's Recommendations

- complete the economic core envisioned in the General Plan
- increase employment
- organize communities around transit
- enhance connections to Germantown's greenbelt and stream valley parks
- pursue design quality and sustainability in the public and private realms
- build on cultural, historic, and civic facilities

This Plan directs new uses, activity, and design attention to the Town Center—the heart of Germantown. Its mixed uses will be complementary with the offices on the parallel route, MD 118, and nearby Montgomery College. Century Boulevard will be the community's main street, anchored with transit, lined with shops and restaurants, its library, and arts center as focal points for civic life.

Building at higher densities, in strategic locations like Germantown, results in a greener approach to building than the traditional development pattern in Montgomery County. Low population densities spread over half-acre can't sustain the cost of replacing current infrastructure. More residents in a compact communities result in economies of scale, allowing a more efficient use of resources that ensures sustainability.

In addition, jobs can draw workers from down-County to employment sites in Germantown, which increases the efficiency of the road and transit network without additional capital costs.



Future park and boardwalk in the Germantown Town Center

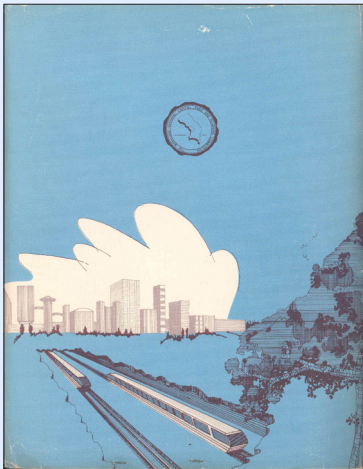
- Create Germantown as a Corridor City with a **Quality of Place** that makes it the up-County's commercial hub.
- Create Germantown as a **strategic location for employment** in the County. Highway access and the eventual connection to a transit network will make Germantown accessible and attractive for employers.
- Strengthen and expand the **Town Center** to encompass properties within a walkable distance of the transit station by providing the options and activity of a thriving downtown. Focusing activity along Century Boulevard and surrounding it with complementary residential and employment uses will create a vibrant center.
- Design and fund the **Corridor Cities Transitway** as an essential feature of Germantown's evolution. Transit, including the

MARC station and bus service, is essential to addressing traffic congestion and building a sustainable community. The CCT will connect Germantown to the Metro Red Line and the County's Life Sciences Center.

- Create transit-served, mixed use **neighborhoods** that include public facilities, enhance existing communities and shape new ones, using references to Germantown's history and natural features. Infilling with connections, public facilities, and mixed uses will build distinct communities.
- Establish Germantown as the **up-County cultural center**. The Black Rock Center for the Arts, the new library, and the public green they frame will be the basis for active civic life in the Town Center and for all of Germantown.
- Enhance Germantown's **natural environment**. Germantown's greenbelt

and stream valley parks are extraordinary environmental resources that will be enhanced by park connections and a network of urban open spaces, further supported by green design and building techniques that conserve energy and resources.

- Encourage **high quality design** that enhances character and identity. Distinct neighborhoods, green streets, and attractive urban spaces with historic and cultural references will give Germantown a strong sense of place. High quality design is expected for public and private development.
- **Balance** the amount and timing of development with infrastructure capacity. Density brings opportunity and options, but must be shaped through zoning and other tools that create a community of lasting quality.

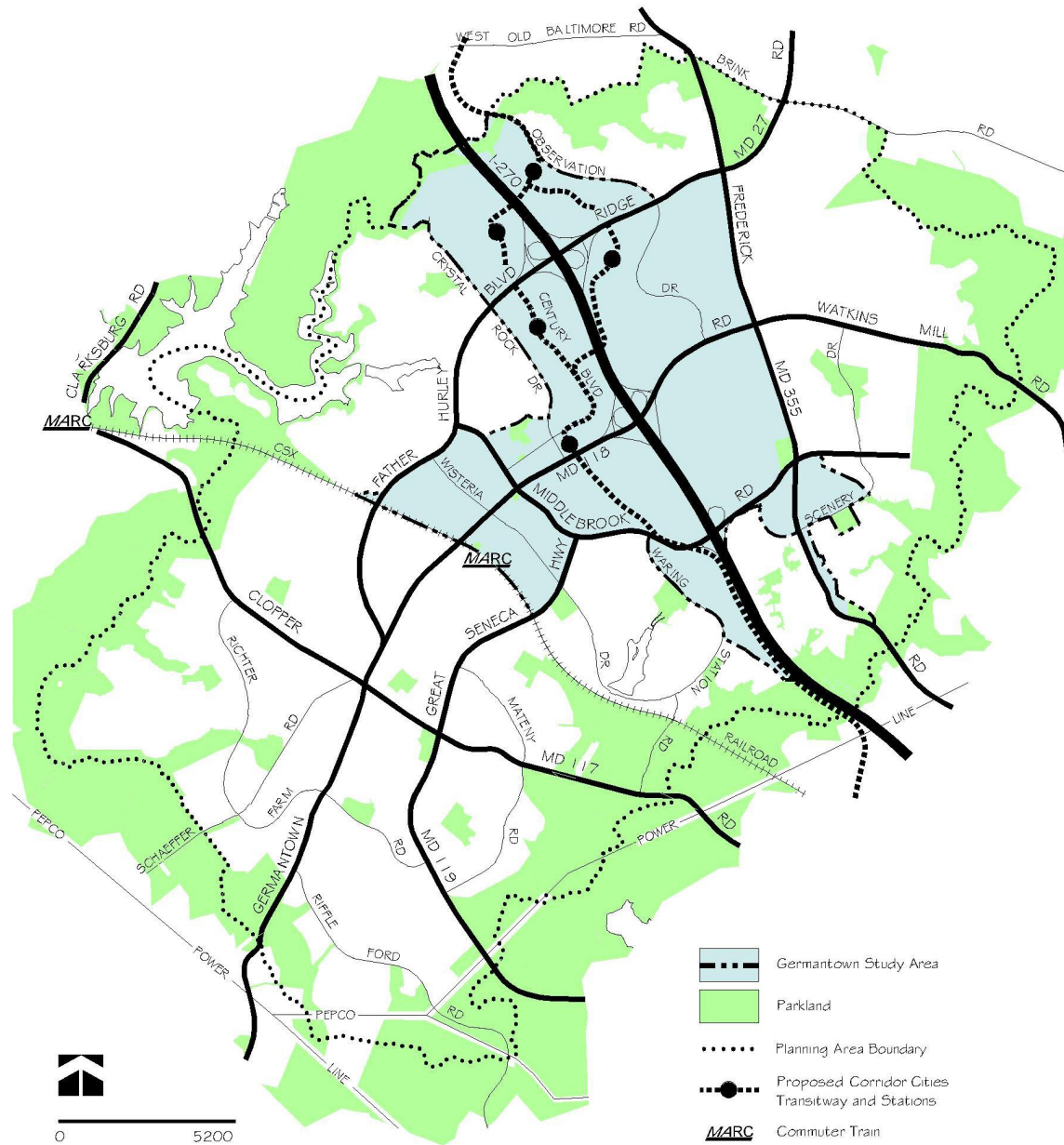


Creating the Corridor City

As early as the 1964 General Plan Germantown was defined as a corridor city, intended to “support a full variety of commercial, cultural, and social services...”.

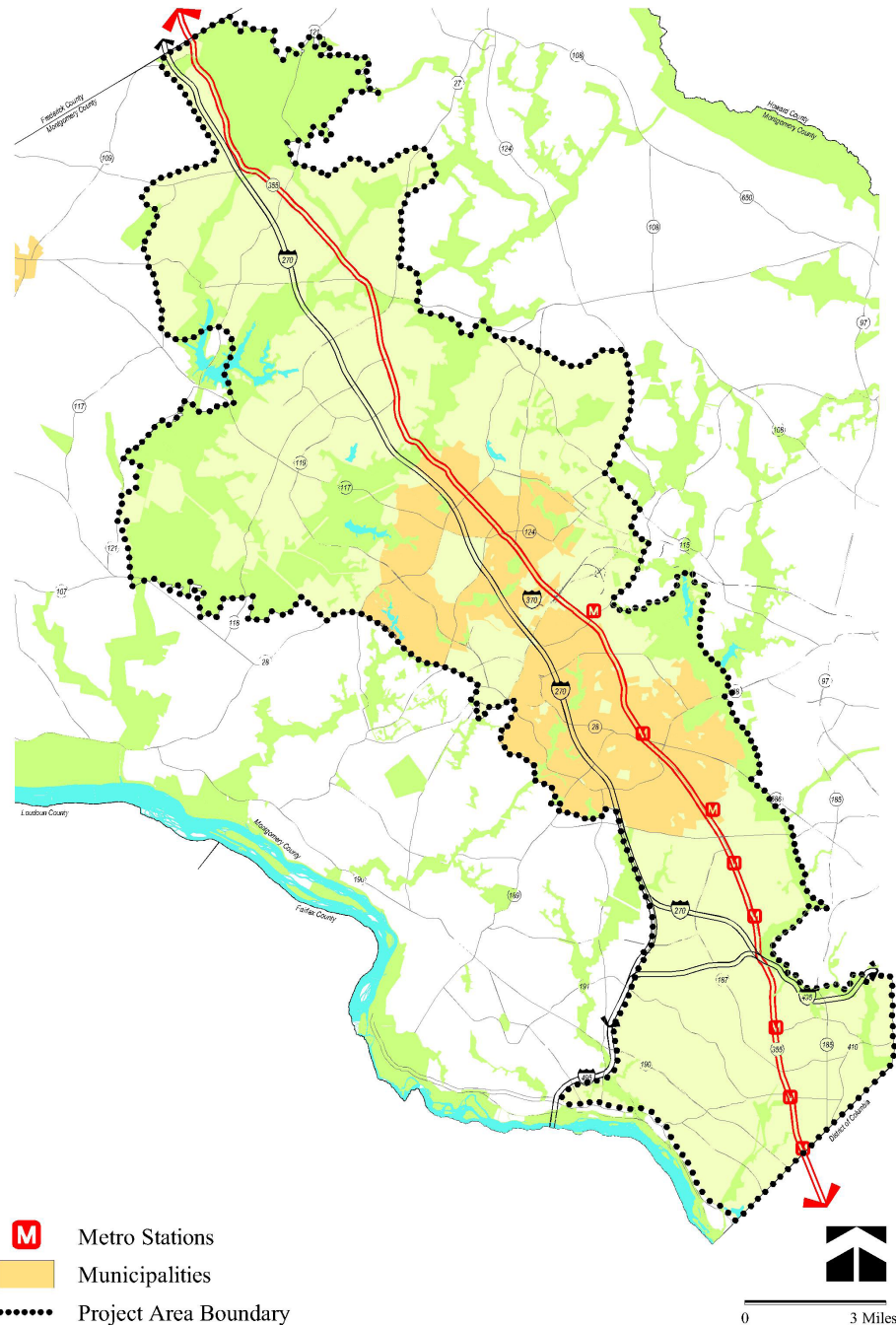
- The 1966 Plan
“Tall buildings will be the symbol of a core area” ... “allows a great number of people, who come together to make a downtown work efficiently”
- The 1974 Plan
A “new community” of six villages each with its own schools and commercial centers that would include a new campus of Montgomery College, all accessible via I-270 and rapid rail transit.
- The 1989 Plan
A continued pattern of mixed housing development and a Town Center of employment uses.

Sector Plan Area within Planning Area



Plan Boundary

The Germantown Sector Plan area crosses I-270 and focuses on a roughly 2,400-acre area in the employment and Town Center areas of Germantown. Roadways and road rights-of-way encompass approximately 600 acres of the Sector Plan area, almost 25 percent of the total acreage.



I-270/MD 355 Corridor

The corridor created by I-270, MD 355, the Metro Red Line, and the MARC line forms the transportation spine of the up-County today. The addition of the CCT will complete the transit infrastructure. The Corridor employs almost half of Montgomery County's workforce but more than one-third of the Corridor's employed residents commute to jobs outside of the County.

A significant portion of the County's future employment growth will take place on vacant or under-used sites in Germantown on the both sides of I-270 and in the area of Montgomery College. This plan replaces the single-purpose zoning designations of the 1989 Plan with flexible, mixed-use designations that retain employment potential and provide for retail, hotel, commercial, housing, and entertainment uses near jobs.

Germantown Districts



I-270/MD 355 Corridor

The **Town Center** has the most concentrated and varied development with a mix of residential, retail, office, and cultural uses in a compact and walkable form. New housing, restaurant and retail uses, and the Black Rock Center and the library attract patrons to Germantown's downtown.

The **West End Neighborhood** of the Town Center District is a mix of retail and industrial uses with surface parking that extends along MD 118 from Middlebrook Road west to the CSX tracks. West of MD 118 are industrial uses and vacant property currently zoned for a mix of commercial uses without housing. This district is adjacent to the Germantown Historic District and contains historic properties such as the Pumphrey-Matney House and the Madeline V. Waters site.

The **Gateway District** stretches between the MARC station and I-270. The area also includes a mix of uses, including Seneca Valley High School and residential uses. In the north end of the district, adjacent to I-270/ Middlebrook interchange are industrial uses and auto dealerships. The federal Department of Energy is the Plan area's largest employer and is expected to remain stable unless additional federal programs are relocated.

The **Cloverleaf District** is north of MD 118 and west of I-270. It is currently all commercial uses including flex buildings and the former Orbital Fairchild site, which will be the location of a future CCT station. This property is likely to redevelop with office, retail, hotel, and other services as well as multifamily housing.

The **North End District**, north of Father Hurley Boulevard, is a mix of residential development office, hotel, and industrial uses along I-270 at the Milestone Business Park. West of I-270, the district is vacant land with a small residential community north of Father Hurley Boulevard. A future CCT station will serve this district before crossing over I-270. On the east side of I-270 at Ridge Road are multi-story buildings and the area will be served by a CCT station.

Germantown's largest retail center, more than 100 acres and 850,000 square feet, is located in the **Seneca Meadows/Milestone District** at the corner of MD 355 MD 27. A mix of housing adjoins the retail area, along with an important environmental feature, the Germantown "Bog." The district also includes the Seneca Meadows Corporate Center, on the east side of I-270, a business park of one and two-story industrial and flex buildings with surface parking.

Montgomery College is recognized as one of the nation's leading two-year educational institutions. The Germantown campus

continues to increase its enrollment and the scope of its technology education and workforce training programs. The College also intends to create a business park with a private partner.

The **Fox Chapel** area is anchored by a neighborhood shopping center on MD 355 that

serves surrounding residential communities.

Other commercial uses along MD 355 include banks, specialty grocers, restaurants, and gas stations. The Plumgar Recreation Center on Scenery Drive is a County-owned recreation center with an adjoining ballfield.



The protected habitat of the Germantown Bog provides a source of clean water to the Little Seneca stream system.