



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

November 24, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

FROM: John Carter, Chief *JAC*
Urban Design and Preservation Division

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Urban Design and Preservation Division

SUBJECT: Public Hearing: Design Guidelines for the Germantown Employment Area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Receive public testimony and review Draft Design Guidelines to implement the recommendations in the Sector Plan for the Germantown Employment Area.

BACKGROUND

The Planning Board requested staff to produce Design Guidelines for all current and future master plans and sector plans as a new tool to guide regulatory review and help implement the vision of the master plans. The Germantown Design Guidelines are the first set of guidelines that will accompany the Sector Plan.

This public hearing provides the Planning Board the opportunity to hear comments on the proposed Germantown Design Guidelines and consider the comments in their subsequent worksession on the Design Guidelines. The planning process for the Design Guidelines is as follows:

- Develop Draft Design Guidelines in conjunction with the sector plan
- Revise the draft to be in conformance with County Council approved sector plan
- Meet with property owners, citizen groups, government agencies and other interest groups to incorporate their input throughout the development of the draft
- Publish the Planning Board Draft Design Guidelines and schedule a public hearing
- Hold a public hearing to receive public comments that will be considered in the worksession
- Schedule and hold worksessions to review and approve the Design Guidelines with a Planning Board resolution
- Prepare final format for publication

DESIGN GUIDELINE GOALS

- Provide guidance for streets, open space and buildings that implement the sector plan, and establish the character and vision of the master plan
- Ensure flexibility and promote creativity in the design of communities
- Establish streetscape treatments to complement the County's Road Code standards to achieve high quality of street design.
- Use the guidelines for private sector development regulatory review and public sector capital improvement projects

OUTREACH

The Draft Urban Design Guidelines incorporate ideas of agencies, property owners, developers and citizens as well as the County Council's approved sector plan recommendations.

Since the publication of the Planning Board Draft of the Design Guidelines, staff has continued to meet with divisions within the Park and Planning Commission, property owners and citizen groups. The comments from the Environmental Division, Transportation Planning Division, Development Review Division and the Park Planning Division will be discussed during the worksessions. A summary of their comments follows:

Environment:	Add more environmental guidelines similar to those in the Gaithersburg West Design Guidelines. Revise forest preservation areas in several districts. Clarify LEED requirements in accordance with the County Code.
Transportation:	Clarify the relationship between the Sector Plan's Roadway Functional Classification and the range of street character typologies. Develop additional guidance to reflect differences within each street character to provide context sensitive guidance.
Development Review:	Clarify what is required by the Sector Plan versus design guidelines. Clarify how the guidelines are to be viewed in the regulatory process. Revise the I-270 landscape concept to reflect the existing office park character.
Historic Preservation:	Add additional guidelines in areas adjacent to the Historic District and historic resources that ensure compatibility with these resources.
Park Planning:	Clarify ownership (public versus private) and update the planning process for Town Center Urban Park.

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Board should hear public comment on the Draft Design Guidelines and schedule a worksession for January 14, 2009. Staff will prepare a table of public comments for the worksession with the Planning Board to be used in their review of the guidelines. The Draft Design Guidelines will be reformatted into a final publication prior to the Planning Board's final approval.