



the maryland-national capital park and planning commission ■ MontgomeryPlanning.org

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 ■ montgomery county planning department

long branch sector plan

ABSTRACT

This Scope of Work outlines the goals, tasks, and schedule of undertaking a sector plan in the Long Branch community as well as the outreach that will be used in the planning process.

Source of copies

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

8787 Georgia Avenue

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Scope of Work

long branch sector plan

Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department
January 2010

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This report provides the scope of work for a sector plan for the Long Branch transit area in Silver Spring. It describes the area to be studied; issues to be addressed; the Plan’s purpose, goals, objectives; and how the community will be involved in the planning process.

Context

The Plan will be one in a series of land use plans for the Purple Line station areas. The Purple Line is a proposed 16-mile transitway between Bethesda and New Carrollton. In August 2009, the State of Maryland endorsed a locally preferred alternative for a surface light rail system. This east-west transitway will connect activity centers along its corridor and link to the Washington Metrorail system and other transit services. Two Purple Line stations are proposed in the Long Branch Sector Plan—one station at the corner of Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street and one in the median of University Boulevard at its intersection with Gilbert Street. Both stations are in the design stages.

The design and development of the Purple Line stations offers an opportunity to generate a new vision for Long Branch that enhances the quality of life for residents and workers, and maintains the affordable housing and ethnic diversity of the existing community. Transit-oriented mixed-use development at station locations will contribute to this vision.

Planning Framework

The Plan will amend the County’s 1964 General Plan, On Wedges and Corridors, and incorporate the goals and objectives of the 1993 General Plan Refinement. It will also amend portions of the East Silver Spring and City of Takoma Park master plans, both approved and adopted in 2000. The General Plan designates Long Branch as an urban ring community.



The goals of the 1993 General Plan Refinement relevant to urban ring communities include:

- preserving existing neighborhoods
- emphasizing compact development and housing in transit station areas
- addressing needs and desires of a diverse and changing population and economic community
- expanding transportation options while accommodating pedestrian needs
- balancing the need to protect land in urbanized areas for natural eco-systems with the human need for compact communities.

Both the East Silver Spring and City of Takoma Park master plans recommend reinvestment in commercial centers in the Long Branch community including Flower Village and Clifton Park Crossroads. A Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ) was recommended to foster economic vitality and community character. The East Silver Spring Master Plan also recommended a task force to examine the full range of quality of life issues in the community.

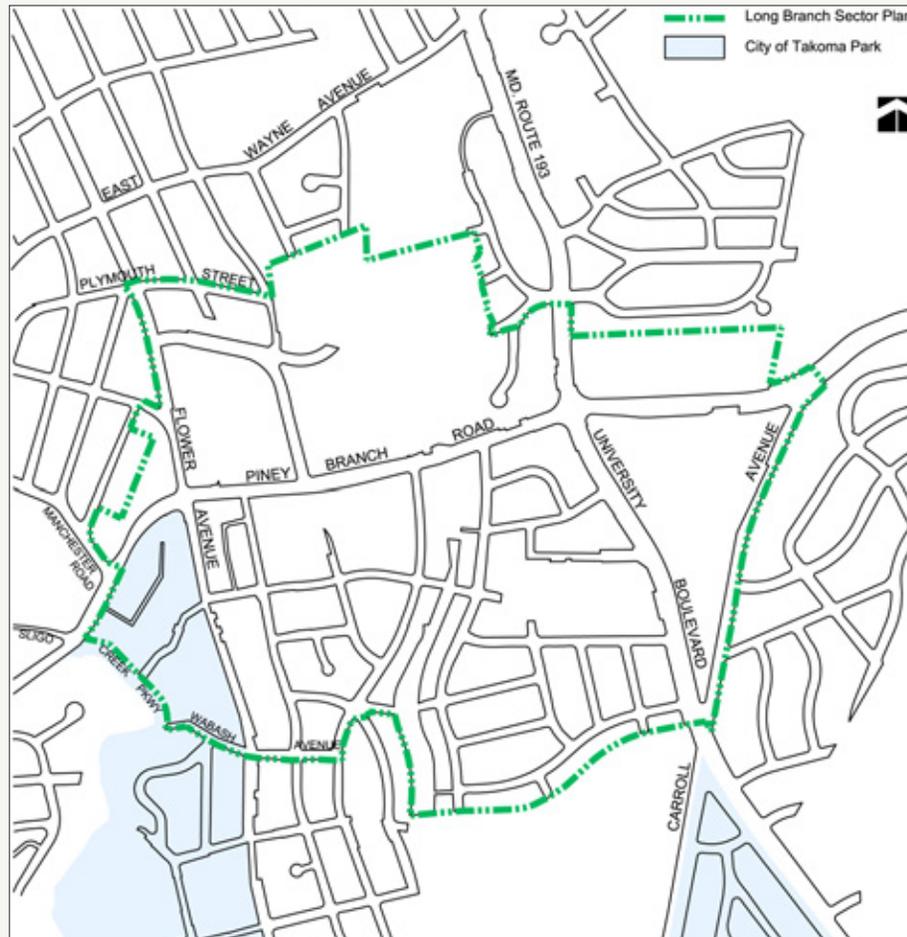
Since 2000, two separate groups, appointed by the County Executive, have examined the Long Branch area. The Long Branch Task Force was appointed by the County Executive in 2002 for a term of three years. The Task Force worked on commercial reinvestment, pedestrian and public safety issues, improved recreational opportunities, and designating Long Branch as a State Enterprise Zone.

After the Task Force's three-year term, the County Executive appointed the Long Branch Advisory Committee in 2006, for a two-year period. The Committee provided additional community input and direction for the Task Force's recommendations. The Committee installed the community center marquee sign, established environmental quality initiatives, and undertook volunteer activities. Overall, the Task Force and Advisory Committee identified areas of importance to community stakeholders and were able to develop and implement recommendations in these areas.

Location

The Long Branch Sector Plan area is located in eastern Silver Spring along Piney Branch Road between Flower Avenue and University Boulevard and encompasses portions of the City of Takoma Park. The proposed Sector Plan boundary is Plymouth Street to the north, Carroll Avenue to the east, Long Branch Creek and Wabash Avenue to the south, Sligo Creek Parkway and Manchester Road to the west. The following area in the City of Takoma Park is included in the Sector Plan: property bounded by Piney Branch Road on the north, Flower Avenue on the east, Wabash Avenue on the south and Sligo Creek Parkway on the west.

Sector Plan Boundary



Existing development in the Plan area is composed of older one-story neighborhood commercial areas, single-family and low-rise multifamily housing, and institutional uses. The neighborhood commercial areas are primarily locally owned commercial retailers serving the community's diverse population. Long Branch has been designated by the State of Maryland as an Enterprise Zone. This zone includes the areas along Piney Branch Road between Flower Avenue and University Boulevard and along both sides of University Boulevard south to Carroll Avenue. It was established to provide tax credit incentives and assistance for businesses to locate or expand in this corridor.

Demographics

Data for the Long Branch study area is drawn from the area larger than the transit station area to be addressed in the Plan. According to the 2008 Census Update Survey, approximately 20,330 people live in 8,490 households in the overall Long Branch study area. Over half of the housing stock is multi-family dwellings (4,700 households) and three-quarters of this housing is rental (3,500 apartments). Long Branch has reached minority majority status with more than two-thirds of the area's population Hispanic or of a race other than non-Hispanic, White. One third of the area's population is black or African American; and seven percent of the area's population is Asian. Forty percent is foreign-born. The estimated 2007 median household income in the Long Branch study area is \$58,990 compared to \$96,475 County wide.

Development Activity

There has been little commercial development activity within the Plan boundaries since approval of the East Silver Spring and City of Takoma Park master plans in 2000. A 57,900-square foot medical/dental office building was approved for the southeast quadrant of Flower Avenue and Arliss Street. The project was never built.

There has been no residential activity within the Plan boundaries. Outside the Plan boundaries, but within the study area boundaries, 11 townhouses were built in the RT-15 Zone and a new residence in the R-40 Zone.



Enterprise Zone



Plan and Study Area

The Long Branch Sector Plan will guide future land uses and recommend zoning to support a mixed-use, transit-oriented, and pedestrian-friendly multicultural community. The Plan will balance the opportunities for reinvestment with the need to maintain existing affordable housing and retain local businesses.

This planning vision will be achieved by:

- ensuring that Long Branch will benefit from future reinvestment opportunities created by the proposed Purple Line stations
- examining quality of life issues such as environment, design, open space, and the public realm that must be addressed to create a livable, sustainable community
- retaining existing affordable housing and encouraging new housing
- providing incentives to retain diverse local businesses.

Once the Plan is approved and adopted, urban design guidelines will clarify how design guidance in the Plan should be implemented by development applications.





From 2002 to 2008, the Long Branch Task Force and subsequent Long Branch Advisory Committee reviewed and addressed many concerns relevant to the community. The Plan will build on the energy, work, and recommendations of those two groups.

To that end, 30 stakeholders joined staff for a community listening and information gathering session at the Long Branch public library in October 2009. Favorable impressions of public transit connections, community facilities, parks, community diversity, and ambience were cited as positives of the Long Branch community.

The planning issues generated from this listening session were:

- How can the ethnic diversity and character of small businesses be maintained?
- What can be done to increase public safety in Long Branch?
- How can circulation patterns be expanded to accommodate all modes of transportation, interconnectivity, pedestrian safety and comfort?
- How can affordable housing be maintained?
- How much new development is appropriate to create a mix of uses (housing, retail, commercial, office) and reinvestment that supports community identity?
- What level of commercial reinvestment is appropriate for Long Branch given the pending development of two Purple line stations?



The planning process will focus on determining the combination of land uses and regulatory techniques to meet the Plan's goals while not compromising the character and attributes that make Long Branch a unique and dynamic community. The Plan's goals are connectivity, design, environment, and quality of life. The following objectives will address these goals.

Connectivity

- Develop pedestrian and bicycle links that connect residential and commercial areas, and provide access to transit stations, parkland, and other community facilities.
- Improve and increase pedestrian safety throughout the Plan area using design features and connections.
- Leverage public investment in the Purple Line to encourage private, mixed-use development near the stations.

Design

- Create mixed-use, transit-oriented, and pedestrian-friendly development in Long Branch.
- Encourage street-activating uses that create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Encourage reinvestment in existing commercial properties along Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue, University Boulevard, Arliss and Gilbert Streets through appropriate uses, densities, and design.
- Use regulatory tools to achieve land use patterns that produce transit-oriented development.
- Reconfirm or change existing land uses and zoning.
- Develop urban design guidelines for commercial areas and areas adjacent to proposed Purple Line stations.
- Identify a focal point that offers opportunities to build community identity.



Environment

- Promote sustainability through water conservation, reduced imperviousness, use of LEED standards in new construction, increased tree canopy, energy efficiency, reduced greenhouse gas emissions through transit ridership, and pedestrian and bicycle links.
- Evaluate and enhance the park system.
- Protect the Sligo Creek watershed.

Quality of Life

- Retain the existing affordable housing inventory.
- Create housing opportunities in mixed-use, transit- and pedestrian-oriented developments adjacent to proposed Purple Line stations.
- Retain the small and ethnic businesses in Long Branch.
- Preserve ethnic diversity and character of the Long Branch community.
- Develop community spaces and uses that encourage residents and workers to interact.



The project team will work with residents, business owners, community and civic organizations, non-profit groups, City of Takoma Park, and other stakeholders interested in developing a plan for Long Branch. The work will also be coordinated with State and County agencies. The project team's October listening session solicited input from the community and to date, other outreach efforts have included participation at community meetings organized by CASA de Maryland and the Maryland Transit Administration.

The outreach program will be tailored to the needs of the community.

- County agencies will be enlisted to address existing problems raised by the community and other stakeholders during the planning process.
- Staff will hold monthly public meetings with stakeholders. One meeting will be a charette to develop and refine the Plan's vision.
- Staff will have regularly scheduled office hours in the community to allow stakeholders opportunities to discuss Plan topics.
- Staff will attend meetings of community groups.
- The community will be contacted via e-mail.
- Staff will post plan progress and status on the Long Branch Sector Plan website.
- The Spanish speaking media outlets will be used to publicize the Plan.
- Foreign language translation services will be provided at the Sector Plan community meetings as needed and key documents will be translated into Spanish.
- Meeting notices and summary documents will be provided in Spanish.

Phase 1: Scope Project (August 2009-January 2010)

Prepare Draft Scope of Work

Determine plan area boundaries, identify project team.

Product: Boundary map, schedule, budget program element, draft work scope

Background Research (August 2009-January 2010)

Complete existing conditions inventory, analysis, and mapping that includes data on land use, zoning, demographics, transportation, environment, community facilities, and parks and recreation facilities. Kick-off community outreach with first community listening session. Determine existing baseline for traffic modeling scenarios. Initiate economic analyses of office, retail, and housing. Obtain Planning Board approval in January 2010 for proposed Scope of Work.

Product: Final Scope of Work, existing conditions maps, community contact and distribution list

Phase 2: Analysis and Develop Draft Plan (February-September 2010)**Analysis** (February-April 2010)

Hold community meetings to initiate the Plan and to develop a vision for Long Branch's future. The project team will evaluate the impact of varying mixes and intensities of development on the natural environment and the transportation network. The team will also analyze methods for preserving neighborhood character and consider levels of public infrastructure needed to meet Plan objectives.

Product: Preliminary comments and recommendations from project team including analysis of development scenarios

Develop Draft Recommendations (April-June 2010)

Discuss preliminary recommendations, urban design concepts, and development scenario results with the community.

Product: Draft recommendations, zoning, and preliminary design concepts

Finalize Draft Recommendations (July-September 2010)

After obtaining community input in June, staff will finalize preliminary recommendations for discussion with the Planning Board.

Product: Preliminary Sector Plan recommendations

Phase 3: Public Hearing Draft (September-December 2010)

Prepare draft for discussion with Planning Board (September-October 2010)

Product: Draft Sector Plan

Set Public Hearing Date, Advertise, and Distribute Plan (October-December 2010)

The Planning Board will approve a Public Hearing Draft and set a public hearing date.

Product: Schedule and advertise a public hearing date and distribute Public Hearing Draft

Phase 4: Planning Board Review (January-April 2011)

Conduct Planning Board Public Hearing (January 2011)

Product: Public hearing digest

Planning Board Worksessions (January-April 2011)

Staff will identify and analyze issues for the Planning Board worksessions.

Product: Staff reports for worksessions

Prepare Planning Board Draft (March-May 2011)

Following the worksessions, staff will prepare the Planning Board Draft for approval to transmit to the County Council and Executive.

Product: Planning Board Draft Plan and preliminary design guidelines

Phase 5: County Executive Review (June-July 2011)

The Executive will review the Plan's recommendations, conduct a fiscal analysis, and transmit comments to the County Council.

Product: Executive's comments and fiscal analysis of the Planning Board Draft

Phase 6: County Council Review (September 2011-January 2012)

County Council Hearing and PHED Committee Worksessions

The County Council will tour the plan area and hold a public hearing on the Planning Board Draft. The Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee will conduct worksessions. The PHED Committee will make recommendations to the full Council on the Planning Board Draft Plan.

Phase 7: Implementation (February-June 2012)

Planning Board and Full Commission Adoption of the Approved Plan (February-March 2012)

Product: Approved and Adopted Sector Plan

Sectional Map Amendment (January-April 2012)

Prepare the Sectional Map Amendment to implement zoning recommendations and obtain Planning Board approval.

Product: Prepare zoning maps for Council approval

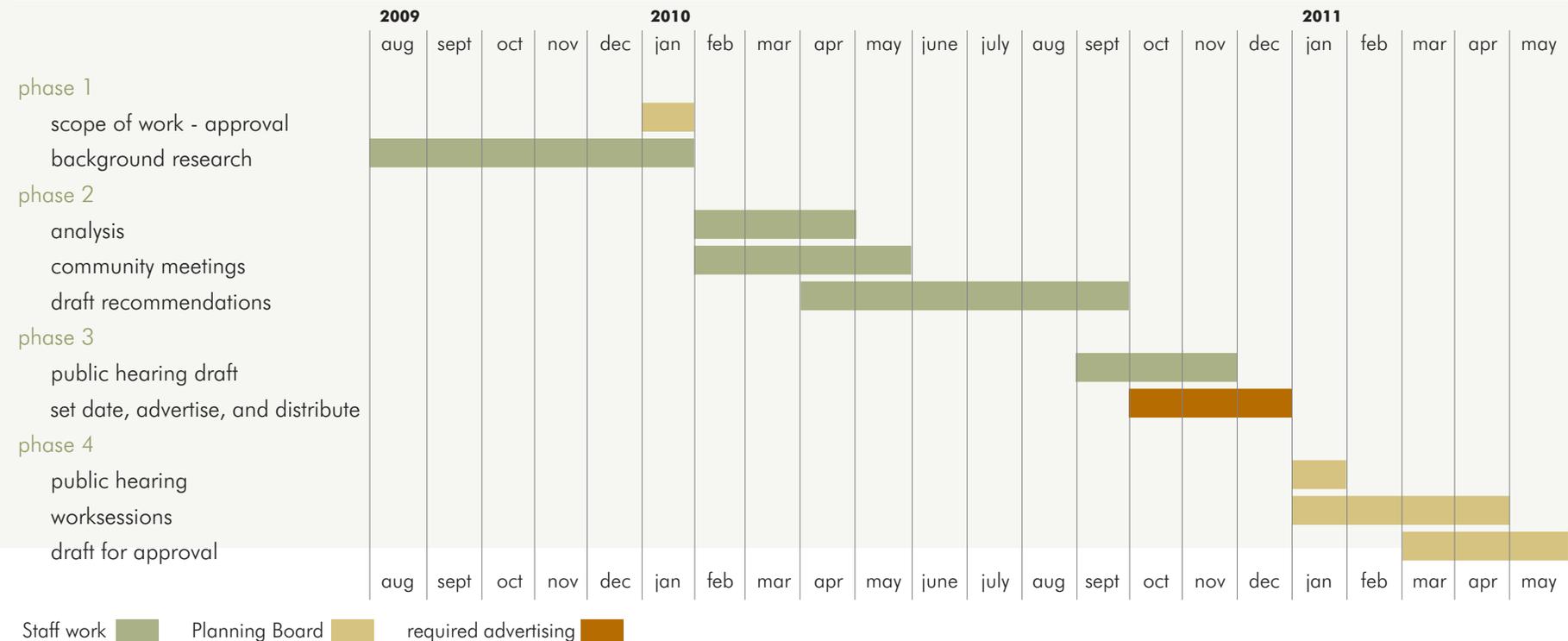
Finalize Draft Guidelines

(March-June 2012)

Design guidelines prepared by staff and approved by the Planning Board.

Product: Final Design Guidelines

LONG BRANCH PROPOSED SCHEDULE



The Planning Department will commit four work years in FY10 and 3.8 years in FY11; \$3,000 has been requested for potential professional services in addition to the funding for translation services.

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