



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

MCPB
Item # 11
5/26/11

May 18, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John Carter, Chief *JAC*
Area 3

FROM: Kristin O'Connor, Lead Planner, Area 3 (301.495.2172) *KO*
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SUBJECT: **Briefing: *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan***
Status Report on the Plan for the commercial area located at the intersection of US 29 and MD 198 prior to the preparation of a Staff Draft Amendment to the Fairland Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION

This report provides a briefing and status report on the planning and design for the *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan*. In addition to this report, a staff presentation will be provided that will outline the neighborhood plan recommendations and the design guidelines.

PROJECT AUTHORIZATION

The County Council has authorized the preparation of a neighborhood plan in Burtonsville to identify and address problems in the commercial area along MD 198 (see FY12 Budget). Neighborhood plans are meant to address community issues that do not rise to the level of a complete master or sector plan effort because the issues are confined to a specific neighborhood, limited in scope, and the planning area does not require examination of the full range of topics covered in a master plan. Neighborhood plans are prepared by a small interdisciplinary team within the Planning Department with expertise to address specific problems. The teams work with other agencies, business owners, and residents to identify goals and alternatives, discuss preliminary ideas with the community, and recommend a strategy to resolve the issues.

PLANNING CHALLENGES

The properties in the Burtonsville commercial crossroads area located at the intersection of MD 198 and US 29 have seen redevelopment and circulation changes that currently have local merchants, property owners and residents concerned about the area's economic future. The existing land use and zoning often prevent redevelopment because of the limited range of land uses and the outdated development standards. In addition to zoning limitations, planned federal, state and local projects will impact the crossroads area. The challenges include:

- **SHA's MD 28/MD 198 Corridor Improvement Study** - The SHA is examining this roadway with the goal of relieving local congestion, improving safety and traffic operations for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians, and enhancing the road's character. The study has a number of alternative options, but recognizes the benefits of creating a "main street" character through Burtonsville.
- **BRAC** - The Federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) at Fort George G. Meade, located on MD 198 in Laurel will impact Burtonsville. Fort Meade is planning for an increase of approximately 5,400 military, DOD civilian, and contract employees with approximately 4,900 employees and family members living and working at Fort Meade. An estimated three to seven thousand employees will serve as contractors and service the needs of the base. The additional personnel will occupy facilities in and around the local communities. The additional jobs, services, and housing will impact the MD 198 and US 29 area.
- **ICC** - The Intercounty Connector will provide an east-west connection across Montgomery County. The ICC is an 18-mile highway that runs between Gaithersburg in Montgomery County and Laurel in Prince George's County. Just 1.5 miles south of Burtonsville, the ICC may provide some relief to the four-lane MD 198 through Burtonsville, but the federal expansion of Fort Meade is projected to increase traffic.
- **Access Road** - A master planned rear access/loop road, north of and parallel to MD 198, was proposed in the 1997 Plan as a secondary access road for businesses on the north side of MD 198. The plan is currently not in the County's CIP.
- **Burtonsville Crossing Shopping Center** - The anchor, Giant Foods, Inc. relocated across the street into a brand new space while leaving behind a 54,000 square foot vacant store with a contract that specifies a "non-grocery store tenant" in their old space. As a result, the shopping center has ten vacancies, all zoned C-1 with limited commercial uses. The office properties just to the south of the shopping center are having trouble leasing space and one building is in receivership.
- **BRT along US 29** – The study looked at a potential bus rapid transit route for the US 29/Columbia Pike/Colesville Road corridor, from the Burtonsville Park and- Ride Lot to the Silver Spring Transit Center (13.5 miles). The Park and Ride lot will be a huge component in the future County BRT route.

- **East County Science Center Plan** – Just a few miles south of Burtonsville, the East County Science Center Master Plan is underway looking at future housing and employment growth of the Cherry Hill area including the FDA, the proposed Washington Adventist Hospital, and the County’s Site 2 (former WSSC Site).

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan* will be the first in a series of neighborhood plans for smaller areas in Montgomery County. The Burtonsville Plan will address specific land use, street right-of-way and zoning issues with the purpose of helping to make this small area a more balanced and livable place.

The attached document presents the vision, goal, and plan highlights for the *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan*. Following our May 26, 2011 briefing and status report, the staff will prepare a draft Amendment to the Fairland Master Plan for review by the Planning Board.

Emphasis on Corridors and Focal Points

This plan will focus on the corridors and focal points in the commercial core by examining the Burtonsville Crossing site for improved connections, expanded public spaces, and a greater diversity of uses. The study also will evaluate the need for a planned loop road and recommend design improvements for the future state highway (MD 198) project. The broad goal is to evaluate the connectivity, design and environment of the commercial area so that the area is more balanced and livable. To achieve this goal, the *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan* will focus on the following:

- **Connectivity** - Improving connectivity within the commercial area, integrating the MD 198 realignment and access road improvements, and recommending other transportation infrastructure improvements
- **Design** - Advancing the goals of sustainability, and addressing the character of the streets, open space and buildings or quality of place
- **Environment** - Improving the natural environment through redevelopment

This *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan* envisions the commercial area as a charming mixed-use, rural village in upper East County filled with neighborhood retail, housing opportunities, and local and national employment. The crossroads will continue to offer community-friendly convenience retail in a connected and walkable village center. The zoning recommendations and the implementation of County’s street and streetscaping improvements will set the stage for long term investment in public infrastructure and private redevelopment.

OUTREACH

Over the last six months, the project team has worked with residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the commercial core area of Burtonsville. During that time, staff conducted a charrette with the East County Citizens Advisory Board (ECCAB), a workshop with residents, meetings with many property owners, and an open house on plan highlights. The results from each outreach effort have played an important role in developing the Plan's preliminary recommendations. The planning team has delivered regular status reports to the ECCAB subcommittee on Economic Development and Infrastructure at their regular monthly meetings, and to the ECCAB meetings, whose executive board meets monthly. Our outreach efforts will continue until plan adoption.

SCHEDULE

The following tentative schedule provides a timeline for the Neighborhood Plan.

Planning Board Briefing	May 26, 2011
Completion of the Staff Draft	September 2011
Planning Board Public Hearing	October 2011
Transmit to County Executive and County Council	December 2011

SUMMARY

The Fairland Master Plan specifically notes the "access to the stores and businesses by car and on foot is hampered by traffic congestion and lack of sidewalks" (p. 67). The *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan*'s goal will be to build on the Master Plan goal to "improve circulation, define boundaries, and encourage redevelopment" and the recommendation to encourage "cohesive development and redevelopment in the Burtonsville commercial area including vehicular circulation, streetscaping, and sidewalks" (p.69). The Neighborhood Plan will outline the options for improving local circulation and encourage redevelopment along MD198 and US 29.

Attachments:

- FY 2012 Budget: Neighborhood Outreach and Planning
- Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan: Preliminary Staff Recommendations

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Neighborhood Outreach and Planning

Description

Neighborhood plans will address community issues that do not rise to the level of a complete master/sector plan effort because the issue is confined to a specific neighborhood (i.e., very limited geography) and/or the concern is limited in scope and does not require examination of the full range of topics normally covered in a master plan. A neighborhood planning project may lead to a limited master plan for approval by the Council or it may result in a design study or economic analysis not requiring Council approval.

Some of these neighborhood concerns are already known (e.g., Burtonsville); other neighborhood plans may be suggested by Council members or interested people in the community. Neighborhood plans are prepared by small interdisciplinary teams within the Planning Department with the expertise, depending upon the nature of the problem to be addressed. Coordination and consultation with other agencies and targeted community outreach will be integral to the success of neighborhood plans. A typical neighborhood planning effort will take approximately six to twelve months. It will involve community engagement up-front; identification of goals and alternatives; discussion of preliminary ideas with the community; refinement and consultation; and recommendation of a strategy to resolve the issue(s). The product resulting from such efforts will vary. Due to the limited scope and time frame associated with neighborhood plans, the Planning Department will undertake two to three such efforts annually in addition to the normal complement of master/sector/functional plans.

Lead Division: Geographic Area Team(s)

Goals

- Empower neighborhoods to solve problems by working in partnership with residents, businesses and government.
- Create a process for identifying and addressing discrete problems that can be addressed outside of the lengthy comprehensive planning process.

Performance Measures

Objective	Measure
Identify limited planning problems that can be solved	# of community issues identified
Produce neighborhood plans to address such issues	# of neighborhood plans produced

Specific Tasks/Products for FY12

- Assess options for improving local circulation and encouraging redevelopment along Route 198 in Burtonsville
- Identify and initiate a neighborhood plan to be undertaken in FY12
- Identify a process for selecting neighborhood plans to be addressed in future years
- Create an interdisciplinary planning team with the range of expertise needed to address neighborhood plans

Burtonsville Commercial Crossroads Neighborhood Planning Study

Program Milestones	FY10 Target Month/ Year	FY10 Actual (%)	FY11 Target Month/Year	FY11 Estimated As of 6/11 %	FY12 Target	Comments
Scope of Work			January 2011	100%		
Identify Issues and Alternative Strategies			May 2011	100%		
Review & Implementation					August 2011	

Burtonsville Commercial Crossroads Neighborhood Planning Study

Budgeted Resources:	FY11		FY12	
	WY	\$	WY	\$
Personnel	2.50	\$288,600	1.15	\$142,000
Professional Services		\$0		\$0
Publications		\$0		\$0
Other Operating Expenses		\$50,500		\$22,000
Chargebacks		\$0		\$0
Total		\$339,100		\$164,000

New Neighborhood Planning Study for FY12 (to be determined)

Budgeted Resources:	FY11		FY12	
	WY	\$	WY	\$
Personnel	0.00	\$0	1.40	\$172,900
Professional Services		\$0		\$6,000
Publications		\$0		\$0
Other Operating Expenses		\$0		\$26,800
Chargebacks		\$0		\$0
Total		\$0		\$205,700

Major Changes

- New Neighborhood Plan to be initiated in FY12
- Battery Lane program has been deferred in FY12

Professional Services

- Consulting services in support of traffic study

burtonsville crossroads neighborhood plan

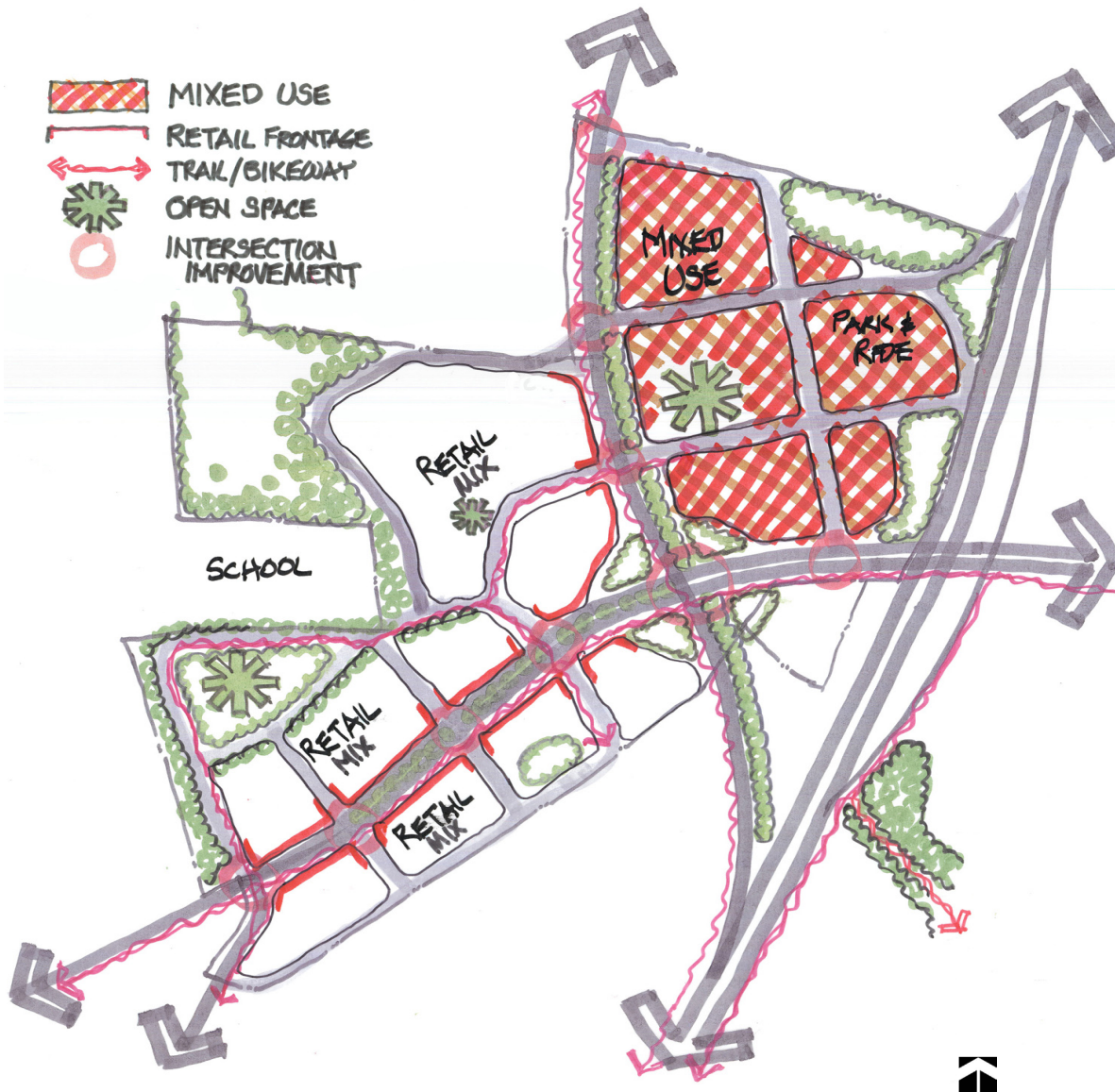
preliminary staff recommendations

vision

This Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan envisions the commercial area as a mixed-use, rural village in upper East County filled with neighborhood retail and employment. The crossroads will continue to offer community-friendly convenience retail in a connected and walkable village center.

The Plan's zoning recommendations and the implementation of County's street and streetscaping improvements will set the stage for long term investment in public infrastructure and private redevelopment. Recreating the corridors and focal points of the Burtonsville Crossroads requires improving connectivity, attention to design, and protecting the environment.

burtonsville crossroads neighborhood plan highlights



comments?

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