**MCPB**
Item No.
Date: 11-20-14

## Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment – Worksession No. 3

Andrea Gilles, Senior Planner, Area 2 Division, Andrea.Gilles@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4541

Nancy Sturgeon, Master Planner Supervisor, Master Plan Team, Area 2 Division, Nancy.Sturgeon@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.1308

Glenn Kreger, Chief, Area 2 Division, Glenn.Kreger@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4653

**Completed: 11/13/14**

### Staff Recommendation:

Discuss and provide guidance to staff.

Planning Board members should bring their copies of the Public Hearing Draft.

### Summary

At the second worksession on October 30, the Planning Board requested additional information to clarify the implications of the alternative Neighborhood Retail (NR) Zoning proposed by representatives of the Lee Development Group for the Vitro/BAE property. Included with this worksession packet and staff report, are two zoning map options and proposed design criteria text for consideration under the NR Zoning alternative (see Attachment 6).

In addition to the NR Zoning alternative materials, Attachments 4 and 5 include a mark-up of the Public Hearing Draft and Transportation Analysis Appendix to reflect the decisions made by the Planning Board during the first two worksessions. (The edits in the Public Hearing Draft correspond to: proposed omission = red text strikethrough; proposed addition = blue text.) The draft has also been retitled "Planning Board Draft" since this draft will be transmitted to the County Council and County Executive as the Board's recommendation after final modifications have been made.

At the third worksession on November 20, the Planning Board will review and discuss the alternative NR Zoning proposal and any concerns about the edits that have been made thus far to the Draft Plan. The Planning Board will direct staff on final modifications to the Draft Plan which will complete the transition to the Planning Board Draft Plan. An additional Planning Board worksession has been scheduled for December 4 for final review and approval of the Planning Board Draft Plan for transmittal to the County Executive and County Council.

The current approved schedule for the Minor Master Plan Amendment calls for a County Council Public Hearing to be scheduled in January 2015 to consider the Planning Board Draft Plan. Approval of the Draft Plan will allow staff enough time to prepare the Planning Board Draft Plan for publication and transmittal prior to the Council's final meeting in December.

The Planning Board worksessions have been scheduled as follows:

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| October 9, 2014 | Worksession 1 |
| October 30, 2014 | Worksession 2 |
| November 20, 2014 | Worksession 3 |
| December 4, 2014 | Worksession 4 |

Attachments

1. Public Hearing Issues Worksheet
2. Table 1: Comparison of Uses by Zone
3. Table 2: Comparison of Development Standards by Zone
4. Public Hearing Draft Plan, incorporating edits from Public Hearing testimony and subsequent Planning Board direction
5. Appendix C: Transportation Analysis
6. Alternative NR Zoning map and text options

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| **Process** | | | | | |
| 1. | Minor Amendment Process | n/a | 1. The minor amendment should be paused and wrapped into the larger Master Plan update to address the subject properties. (J&S Cohen; M. Salay; M. Blaeuer; J. Libertelli; S. Robinson; L. Necastro-Pastel; J. Beerweiler; B. Cullison; J. Warman; S. Nasios)<br>2. The Minor Amendment process was not addressed comprehensively. (J. Beerweiler)<br>3. The minor master plan undermines the General Plan and the 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan. (C. Lamari; J. Beerweiler; M. Bell)<br>4. No rezoning / keep the Vitro /BAE property zoned as is for office or business park use. (C. Lamari; J.A. Sommer; E. Siegel; R. Menendez)<br>5. The MMPA should move forward; the vacant property needs to be addressed so it can be a benefit to the community[i]. (see endnotes on page 13 for a list of commenters) | 1. Changes to the Department's work program are made by the County Council.<br>2. The Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA) addressed the area within its boundary comprehensively and extensively, including a review of land uses and zoning; mobility issues; park and school needs; design criteria; and the environment. Based on its consideration of the common needs of the area, Staff has made recommendations for the zoning and use of all land subject to the MMPA.<br>3. The Minor Amendment is an established process to address pressing changes that have occurred within a larger master plan area. The MMPA process allows the Department to respond to a narrower scope of issues within a shorter timeframe than what is required for a large area master plan update. The County Council added the Aspen Hill MMPA to the Department's work program in spring 2013. The MMPA will amend both the 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan and the General Plan.<br>4. The Vitro/BAE property has been vacant since 2010, without a viable office tenant. Staff's market analysis outlined the challenges to finding a tenant(s) for an office building of that size and scale, in a location without Metro access and a cluster of compatible uses. The deterioration of a vacant property is not beneficial to the community, and Staff believes that its recommended zoning will permit the most appropriate and widest range of uses within the MMPA area to serve the community.<br>5. Staff assumes the MMPA is moving forward. | Issues 1-5: No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |
| 2. | Maintenance/ development agreement between property owners and civic association | n/a | A similar agreement to the one between the AH Civic Assoc. and Home Depot should be established for the Vitro/BAE property, that addresses, for example, maintaining landscaping, fencing, controlled lighting between the residential backyards and the commercial property. (C. Petzold; M. Bell) | Such an agreement could be discussed between the property owner and the civic association when a development application is submitted to the Planning Department for review. | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |

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| **Mobility Issues (Transit, Street Network, Pedestrians and Cyclists, and Parking)** | | | | | |
| 3. | Traffic Analysis,<br><br>Pedestrian Safety<br><br>TPAR<br><br>Recommendations | Pgs. 23-24<br><br>Pg. 25<br><br>Pg. 25<br><br>Pgs. 25-26 | 1. Traffic analysis data is outdated. (S. Dean)<br>2. Traffic analysis didn't take into account the 30,000 SF Home Depot expansion. (J. Salzano; J. Fink)<br>3. Trip projections for the residential build-out scenario underestimate traffic. (C. Lamari)<br>4. High density housing will make traffic worse (J. Benedetto)<br>5. Number of traffic accidents does not match the SHA Pedestrian Road Safety Audit (PRSA). (S. Dean)<br>6. Why were more intersections not analyzed? LATR Guidelines say that at least two intersections in each direction should be studied. (S. Dean; M. Bell)<br>7. The impact of the future extension of the Montrose Parkway was not taken into consideration (J. Beerweiler) | 1. Traffic data was collected in April 2014; analysis was conducted the following month in May 2014. The most recent time period of available accident data provided by SHA was for 2005 – 2012.<br>2. The traffic analysis did include the traffic generated by the Home Depot Expansion in the 'No Build' and all Office/ Residential/ Retail build-out scenarios; however, this was not explicitly stated in the traffic analysis section of the Public Hearing Draft. There were three 'pipeline' developments analyzed as background traffic: Home Depot Expansion; Homecrest 2; and Layhill Overlook. An asterisk could be added to Table 4 (CLV Comparison) of the MMPA draft clarifying which 'pipeline' projects were taken into account.<br>3. Table 2 (Trip Generation) of the MMPA draft shows that 349 apartment units would generate 145 AM trips and 165 PM trips. These trips are shown for the peak one-hour period only and do not capture every resident leaving for work in the morning or arriving in the evening since many of these trips will occur in the hour right before or right after the peak hour.<br>4. Table 2 on pg. 23 of the Plan shows that a multi-family use generates the least amount of peak hour traffic as compared to retail and office uses.<br>5. Staff reviewed the SHA PRSA and cited the number of collisions with pedestrians for the intersection of Aspen Hill Rd & Connecticut Ave (2 collisions between '05 and '09). Staff also obtained newer data from SHA which showed there were 0 collisions with pedestrians between '09 and '12. Additionally, the scope of the PRSA went beyond the study area of this MMPA including the roadway segment south of the study area along Connecticut Ave from Independence Street to Aspen Hill Rd. The PRSA stated that uncontrolled mid-block crossings and numerous commercial driveways along Connecticut Ave are primary reasons for collisions with pedestrians and other vehicles. The MMPA draft already incorporates the PRSA conclusions and solutions into its recommendations.<br>6. The LATR Guidelines only apply to regulatory cases (not master plans). Staff chose the three intersections to study (Aspen Hill & | 1. No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014)<br><br>2. Add details to the Tables in the traffic analysis section and move that section to the Appendix. (10/9/2014)<br><br>3. No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014)<br><br>4. No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014)<br><br>5. Add language to clarify which pedestrian accident data sets are referenced in the draft plan. (10/9/2014)<br><br>6. No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014)<br><br>7. No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |

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| | | | | Connecticut, Connecticut & Georgia, Georgia & Aspen Hill) due to their immediate proximity to the Vitro/BAE site. Staff analysis shows that under every development scenario, Connecticut & Georgia and Georgia & Aspen Hill will operate at a congestion level better than the policy area threshold of 1475. The amount of traffic traveling through each intersection beyond those will reduce over distance and thus the impacts to the intersections will diminish. Therefore, staff did not believe it to be necessary to look at more intersections. Additionally, these three intersections will likely be studied in greater detail as part of an APF review when/if a development proposal is submitted in the area. The traffic analysis scope will be based on the sizes and land uses in the development proposal.<br>7. The future expansion of the Montrose Parkway is outside the parameters of the MMPA study area. The expansion will be addressed during the large area Master Plan update. | |
| 4. | Connecticut Ave, Georgia Ave, and Aspen Hill Rd Congestion | Pg. 23 | 1. A big-box retailer is going to significantly increase traffic on an already burdened roadway system[ii].<br>2. Aspen Hill is a narrow residential road--- will it be widened to handle the traffic from a big box retailer. Who would pay for that? (M. Segal; M. Pepson)<br>Who pays for improvements if area is rezoned CRT? (J.Salzano) | 1. Regardless of which type of development occurs on the Vitro/BAE property, there will be traffic added to the roadway network (including the existing building being re-occupied). Because of the flexibility of the proposed CRT zone, staff looked at the amount of traffic generated by the highest possible square footages of each potential use (max SFs are highly unlikely to be achieved due to site and parking constraints). Additionally, staff took this conservative approach to the next level with regard to the 'big-box' retail use (Table 3). Trip rates were compared from three different sources: M-NCPPC LATR standard retail rates, ITE trip gen big-box store rates (industry standard), and Walmart-specific trip rates created from data collected at 32 sites. In the analysis, staff chose the highest rates which were M-NCPPC's LATR general retail rates. (The Walmart specific rates were the lowest.) The traffic analysis showed that office would add the most amount of traffic in the morning peak hour while big-box retail would add the most to the roadway network in the evening. Development of multi-family apartments on site would add the fewest vehicles to the adjacent roadway network. The analysis also showed that the intersections of Georgia & Connecticut and Georgia & Aspen Hill would operate better than the policy area CLV threshold of 1475 under every development scenario. The intersection of | Issues 1-2: No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |

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| | | | | Connecticut Ave and Aspen Hill Rd would operate acceptably in every development scenario except 'max build-out of office' and 'max build-out of big-box retail'. As staff has stated previously, those 'worst case' square footages most likely would not be achieved on site given numerous constraints. SHA agreed with Staff on this point in their 9/9/14 comment letter: "SHA notes that it is unlikely a developer could pursue maximum build-out of sites within the amendment area due to site constraints and that, therefore, it is unlikely the MMPA area's intersections' critical lane volume threshold would be exceeded."<br>2. Aspen Hill Rd is a designated arterial, which is defined as a road meant primarily for the through movement of vehicles at moderate speed. The Plan does not propose widening Aspen Hill Rd. Should improvements to any of the roadways be required in the future due to a specific development proposal, the property owner(s) will be required to comply with the LATR and TPAR guidelines and any other applicable regulations in effect at the time of a development application. | |
| 5. | Recommended traffic light at the shared Home Depot delivery entrance | Pg. 24, Table 4 | 1. Clarify whether the shared driveway to Connecticut Ave is assumed to be signalized and full-movement. (MCDOT)<br>2. Adding a traffic light/formal entrance at the Home Depot delivery entrance would add problems to an already challenged area (J.Warman; J&S Cohen; J. Salzano; M. Segal; J. Beerweiler) | 1. Staff suggests that the second footnote of Table 4 of the MMPA draft be clarified that the primary access driveway to Connecticut Ave is assumed to be signalized and full-movement.<br>2. According to conversations with SHA, if a signal were to be installed at this location, the timings would be coordinated with the signals at Georgia Ave and Aspen Hill Rd to provide for smooth traffic flow through this corridor. Additionally, a traffic signal would allow for safe and efficient ingress/egress of Home Depot and Vitro/BAE site traffic. | 1. Add a footnote to Table 4, pg. 24 for clarification. (10/9/2014)<br><br>2. No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |
| 6. | Recommended right-in/right-out on Aspen Hill Rd | Pg. 25 | 1. How will this impact users of the Vitro site? (J&S Cohen)<br>2. Such an entrance promotes U-turns for users who want to go eastbound, or they will have to use the neighborhood streets to the west which will decrease safety for residents. (J. Beerweiler)<br>3. Restricting access to Aspen Hill Rd from the Vitro/BAE site to right-in/right-out at this stage of planning may limit the ability to effectively | 1. Vehicles seeking to travel west on Aspen Hill Rd or vehicles seeking to enter the site from the east would be able to use this driveway. All other vehicles would be required to use the recommended full-movement signalized entrance located on Connecticut Ave.<br>2. Staff does not anticipate a u-turn problem as it will be evident to vehicles exiting the Vitro/BAE site that the maneuver cannot be easily accomplished given the vehicle back-ups from the Aspen Hill Rd/Connecticut Ave signal and short transition area from four lanes to two. | Issues 1-2: No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014)<br><br>3. Remove existing references to "subject to MCDOT (or SHA) approval" due to redundancy. Standard reviews of any applicable |

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| | | | balance transportation access when a development proposal is considered. (MDOT/SHA) | 3. Staff recommends adding to the end of the first sentence of the first bullet under Transportation Recommendations on pg. 25: "subject to MCDOT approval." | agency are required prior to the implementation of plan recommendations. Staff recommended adding language to the Abstract section of the Plan to clarify this point. (10/9/2014) After the 1st worksession, Staff conferred with Legal, who determined that the statement about additional agency approvals is superfluous and request permission to leave it out of the plan. |
| 7. | Mass Transit | Pg. 22 | Redevelopment should consider high speed connections to the Glenmont Metro to reduce traffic. (P. Drymalski) | One of the factors taken into consideration when developing recommendations for the plan is the proposed Georgia Ave North Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route; proposed stations include Georgia Ave/Connecticut Ave in the MMPA area and at the Glenmont Metro Station. | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |
| 8. | Pedestrian Safety | Pgs. 25-26 | Connecticut Ave crossings are not safe for pedestrians. (J.Salzano; P. Heisserman; M. Dame; L. Wilson; W. Morrison; J. Adcock) | Staff is recommending the implementation of the recommendations from the SHA Pedestrian Safety Audit to improve pedestrian safety along Connecticut Ave. These recommendations include improved crosswalks, shorter blocks, consolidated driveways, and reduced corner turn radii. A new signal would also facilitate safer pedestrian crossings. | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |
| 9. | Transportation Recommendations | Pg. 25, bullet 3 | Access management should be implemented on Aspen Hill Rd too, not just Connecticut Ave. (MCDOT) | Staff recommends revising Transportation Recommendation Bullet 3 to include Aspen Hill Rd along the frontage within the MMPA area as a section that should have improved access management and improved pedestrian safety. | Include Aspen Hill Road in the language as recommended. (10/9/2014) |
| 10. | TPAR/LATR | Pg. 25, para. 4 | Add clarity to the TPAR section for APF and LATR compliance. (MCDOT, Area 2 Transportation Staff) | Staff recommends renaming section from "Transportation Policy Area Review (TPAR)" to "Local Area Transportation Review and Transportation Policy Review (LATR & TPAR)", as well as adding sentences to the paragraph below it clarifying that when/if a development is proposed within the MMPA area, an applicant will need to meet the APF test and submit a detailed traffic study for review (if generating more than 30 peak hour trips). | Rather than revise and add language regarding LATR, remove the existing TPAR section (pg. 25) entirely from the document. (10/9/2014) |

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| 11. | Traffic Analysis Section and Appendix | Pgs. 23-24 | Move the traffic analysis section to the appendix and include the more detailed Tables 2 and 4 from previous staff reports. (Area 2 Transportation Staff) | Staff had originally included the traffic analysis in the main text of the MMPA draft to provide transparency to the public. This section is quite technical and will not be directly needed by regulatory reviewers in the future. Additionally, to reduce the amount of technical jargon in the MMPA draft, staff had removed a number of asterisks and points of clarification regarding how the square footages were derived, which background developments were analyzed, and which trip reductions were taken.<br><br>Staff recommends moving the traffic analysis section (Pages 23, 24, and top of 25) of the MMPA draft to the appendix and include the more detailed versions of Table 2 (trip generation) and Table 4 (CLV comparison) that had been publicly available in previous staff reports and presentations to the Planning Board. | Add details to the applicable Tables and move the traffic analysis section to the Appendix. (10/9/2014) |
| **General Land Use** | | | | | |
| 12. | Permitted Uses | n/a | 1. The subject area is not appropriate for a big box store and does not need another big box retailer[iii].<br>2. The area needs more competition, more retail, and a lower cost option on groceries and other merchandise. (A. Gerstel; C. Mathis; R. Pellis; U. Costa)<br>The area needs a large retailer to draw more people to the area to help support existing businesses. (B. Lander; MJ. Ember; J.Rosenbaum)<br>3. Isn't the County opposed to big box stores? Has the County changed their position? (J.Edwards)<br>4. Rather than a big box retailer, alternative uses are suitable:<br>– Medical facility, continuing care community facility, insurance, educational or hospital satellite campus. (S.Dean; J.Salzano; A. Von Saunder; E. Skinner)<br>– Open areas where families could play, medical centers for kids, or community center would all benefit the community. (S. | 1. The Plan does not recommend a specific use or user for any of the properties within the MMPA area. It recommends zones that allow for a variety of different uses. On the Vitro/BAE property under the recommended CRT zoning, those uses include, but are not limited to: residential; offices; clinics; small and large retail; cultural institutions; restaurants. (see Attachment 2 for a more detailed comparison of uses in six potential zones[iv])<br>2. See response to number 1 above.<br>3. The County has not disallowed big box stores. The County defines *a department or retail store that exceeds 85,000 SF and that includes a pharmacy and full line of groceries*[v] as a combination retail use, requiring conditional use approval by the County Hearing Examiner.<br>4. Each of these potential uses can be accommodated on the Vitro/BAE property under the CRT Zone. For a satellite campus, the specific use would have to be considered--- research and development is permitted; however, Life Sciences[vi] uses would require a different zone. (see Attachment 2 and/or Section 3.1.6 Use Table, Chapter 59, Montgomery County Zoning Code)<br>5. Developing the Vitro/BAE property as a park would require funding for new parkland acquisition. Several nearby parks already serve this area of the Aspen Hill community, including | Issues 1-5: No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |

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| | | | Montoya); Indoor rec center. (W. Morrison)<br>– Upscale shops/restaurants. (J. Armitage)<br>– Grocery store (D&L Becker)<br>– Medical office, mixed with retail; apartments; and senior housing / continuing care retirement community. (Prof. J. Cowley, submitted by Law Office of G. Macy Nelson)<br>5. The Vitro/BAE site could be developed as a park (J. Benedetto) | English Manor Neighborhood Park, Parkland Local Park, Aquarius Local Park, Northgate Local Park, Strathmore Local Park and Harmony Hills Neighborhood Park. As properties redevelop within the boundaries of this MMPA, the new development will be required to provide public amenity space as well as meet the recreation guidelines to help offset the needs of any new residents. The 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan does not identify needs for additional parkland in this area of the county; it only specifies 2 additional tennis courts. | |
| 13. | Community Character / Development Pattern | Pgs. 6; 12-20 | 1. The subject area should not develop as a regional shopping draw[vii].<br>– The tranquility and suburban nature of the community should be protected. (M.Codori; J&S Cohen; C. Lamari; R. Semmig; H. Shah; S. Levy; J. Salzano; M. Dame; J. Adcock; B. Cullison; Sen. R. Manno; S. Nasios; M. Pepson)<br>2. The subject area should develop with a mix of small shops/ businesses, restaurants, offices, townhomes, local /community serving uses[viii].<br>3. A big box development will depress property values (E. Skinner; L. Saekissian; R. Dworkin; M. Callahan; B. Callahan; K. Felix; M. Johnson; M. Martin; J. Fink; S. Eisendrath; D. Jeang; M&E Getz; F. Wharton; M. Segal; S. Dean) | 1. The Plan does not specifically recommend that the area develop further as a regional draw. The Plan envisions the area as having the *potential to yield a greater mix of uses over time, for the benefit of surrounding communities*. (pg. 6) The Plan states that *the overall goal is to facilitate the enhancement of Aspen Hill as a suburb where people can live, shop, work, and walk to community amenities*. (pg. 12)<br>2. The Plan promotes a mix of uses within the area. Plan goals, design criteria, and recommended zones were coordinated to promote a development environment flexible enough to accommodate a range of uses, while promoting compatibility and improved connectivity between uses.<br>3. The Plan does not recommend a specific use or user on any of the properties within the MMPA area. The Plan promotes a flexible mix of uses, densities, and building heights that are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods. The design criteria in the Plan add an additional layer of protection, gearing more intense redevelopment toward the street, and reinforcing transition areas adjacent to the single-family neighborhoods. Furthermore, it has been widely documented that many factors can negatively impact surrounding property values, including longstanding vacant properties and buildings. | 1. Include language in the plan that describes the market/trade area from which users of the area would be drawn. (10/9/2014)<br><br>Issues 2-3: No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |
| 14. | Schools | n/a | The Plan does not speak to schools that may be needed due to additional development. (C. Lamari; M&E Getz; U. Onosakponome) | Staff communicated with Montgomery County Public Schools about the Plan and school capacity within the area. The elementary and middle schools in the cluster are projected to be within capacity for the next six years. Some of the high schools in the service area are projected to exceed capacity in the coming years. As part of the large area Master Plan update, school capacity and the potential for any future capital programs will be | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |

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| | | | | discussed in further detail. If school capacity is inadequate when a residential project is considered for approval, the APF procedures will be followed, and a school facility payment may be required. | |
| 15. | Public Safety | n/a | A big box store would increase crime in the area. (F. Wharton; J. Fink; M. Segal) | Crime is generally a concern with vacant buildings. The prolonged vacancy and deterioration of a site as large the Vitro/BAE property would diminish the vitality of an area and has the potential to attract a variety of nuisances to the area. | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |
| **Property Specific Issues (Use, Zoning, Site Design)** | | | | | |
| 16. | Zoning for north side of Aspen Hill Rd | Pgs. 12-15 | 1. CRT is not feasible in the short term. The Vitro/BAE site should be rezoned to GR in the short term with the option of a CRTF (floating zone) in the long term. (B. Lee; M. Tull; W. Kominers; C. Bar; D. Wrenn)<br>– Recommend GR 0.5 for the short term; CRTF with max 75-90' height for the long term. (W. Kominers)<br>– Imposing CRT now will hinder development; there is a severe grade change on the Vitro site; 100' no-build zone not justified--- should be the CRT/GR setback of 37.5'. (D. Wrenn)<br>2. CRN is a more appropriate zone to allow for a mix of uses of smaller retail and community oriented uses. (J&S Cohen; J. Salzano; S. Levy; S. Nasios; S. Eisendrath; M. Ryan; M. Dame; U. Onosakponome; S. Convery; E. Skinner; D. Lynch; Aspen Hill Homeowners Group via the Law Office of G. Macy Nelson)<br>3. Objections to GR Zoning: less restrictive retail; allows greater building height; more intense uses; not an appropriate transition to single family houses; contrary to plan goals; more traffic; more light & noise pollution; only 37' setback to houses. (J. Salzano; S. Levy; D. Jeang; M. Ryan; D. Jeang; U. Onosakponome; R. Hirschfield; S. Naas; L. Wilson; J. Adcock; J. Fink; S. Convery; K. Vaitkus; Aspen Hill | 1. The CRT Zone allows the flexibility of use now, but also incorporates form standards that promote the option of a greater mix of uses and development types in the future. The CRT Zone is consistent with the MMPA recommendations to begin establishing pedestrian and bicycle friendly frontages in the Plan area, utilizing distinctive architecture and form, connecting uses, and minimizing the impact of surface parking lots. The GR Zone lacks certain form standards that promote a more community-oriented, non-auto dominated environment.<br>Staff analyzed several viable redevelopment scenarios under the CRT requirements and the design guidelines. Staff acknowledges that some of the form requirements are a departure from how some suburban commercial areas have developed in the past; however, Staff is confident that CRT will provide the necessary flexibility to adjust with market changes while facilitating the incremental enhancement of the Connecticut Ave corridor. (see Attachment 3, Development Standard Comparison by Zone[ix])<br>The no-build zone on the west side of the property is a carry-over from the 1994 Plan to ensure compatibility with the adjacent single-family neighborhood. The no-build zone only applies to commercial structures. Parking and residential uses can be development in the no-build zone. Staff recommends clarifying this in the Draft Plan by replacing "non-residential uses" with "non-residential structures" in the 3rd paragraph, last sentence on page 15.<br>2. The CRN Zone is typically applied to neighborhood scaled properties that are smaller than the 10-acre Vitro/BAE site, or the 12-plus acres that includes all properties in the MMPA area | Issues No. 1-4: Vitro/BAE property owner representatives submitted an amended zoning request from GR to NR. The Planning Board requested additional information from staff to clarify options under the current Zone (CRT) and the alternative zone (NR). (10/30/2014) |

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| | | | Homeowners Group via the Law Office of G. Macy Nelson; C. Steinborn; M. Salay)<br>4. Staff's recommendation of a CRT Zone and Lee Development Group's (LDG) request for a GR Zone are out of context with the surrounding Aspen Hill Neighborhood and conflicts with the visions of the Aspen Hill Master Plan and Staff's vision for the Amendment. (Aspen Hill Homeowners Group via the Law Office of G. Macy Nelson) | on the north side of Aspen Hill Rd, which may be consolidated for future development. The CRN Zone would limit retail development to 50,000 SF. Although many uses could be accommodated within 50,000 SF, the typical suburban grocery store, for example, can have a footprint of between 50-65,000 SF or more. The CRN Zone also does not allow Optional Method development, and would therefore not require public benefits should development reach a certain FAR.<br>3. Staff agrees that the GR Zone would be inconsistent with Plan goals and recommendations. (see above)<br>4. The MMPA area is within the heart of one of Aspen Hill's major commercial shopping areas. There are single-family neighborhoods to the west and south, however, there are also community and regionally oriented commercial uses directly to the north and across Connecticut Ave to the east and southeast. The Aspen Hill Rd, Connecticut Ave, and Georgia Ave triangle is not only a destination for the immediate neighborhoods, but also for the larger community. The 1994 Plan included language to address one specific user at the Vitro/BAE site, which at the time, was a great benefit to the community. The market, however, has dramatically changed over the past two decades, and a large, single-use office tenant at the Vitro/BAE site is no longer viable. With respect to the 1994 Plan placing emphasis on housing in Aspen Hill, staff took this into consideration when recommending CRT given the full range of residential uses permitted in the zone. (Housing is a Limited Use in the Employment Zones like GR.) The MMPA includes language in several areas that promotes community serving uses, quality design, and protecting the adjacent single-family neighborhoods. The MMPA attempts to plan for future changes, while, protecting existing uses. | |
| 17. | Vitro/BAE Property | n/a | 1. Opposition to an up-zoning on the Vitro/BAE property. (D. Jeang; J. Libertelli; M. Ryan; U. Onosakponome; N. Nead; M. Valdivia; D&M Klein; K. Felix; F. Wharton)<br>2. The remodeling or reuse of the building should be further explored. | 1. Without the MMPA, on Oct. 31, 2014, the Vitro/BAE property will remap to the EOF Zone with a FAR of 3.0. The current zoning recommendation for the properties on the north side of Aspen Hill Rd has a total FAR of 1.5, less density allowed than if there was no amendment.<br>2. There is nothing in the Plan that would prohibit the property owner from reusing the Vitro/BAE building should a tenant be secured. | |

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| | Issue to Be Resolved | Draft Plan (page) | Testimony (Commenter) | Staff Response | Board Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Design Guidelines** | | | | | |
| 18. | Transitions between uses | Pgs. 15-19 | 1. The Vitro site does not have enough space/land for a big box use and to have provided the appropriate transitions to the residential neighborhood. (M. Ryan)<br>2. Big box stores bring noise and light pollution from delivery trucks and docks (E. Skinner; L. Saekissian; A. Gardsbane; R. Dworkin; M. Callahan; B. Callahan; K. Felix; M. Johnson; M. Martin) | 1. The CRT zone has standards built into the zone to ensure compatibility with, and transitions to, adjoining neighborhoods. In addition, the Plan recommends that *projects adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods should use compatible building mass, height and setback, and façade articulation to create transition to those neighborhoods*. (pg. 15) Further, the Plan recommends a 100 ft. no-build area for commercial structures on the far west portion of the Vitro/BAE property. Any development proposal that is submitted for review will have to comply with the zone and be found consistent with the master plan.<br>2. The Zoning code has standards built in that address both the placement of loading docks and the impact of lighting on adjacent uses. See Sections 6.2.8.A (Loading Design Standards) and 6.4.4 (General Outdoor Lighting) | |
| 19. | Building design/ character | Pgs. 17-19<br><br>1994 Plan, Pg. 47 | 1. Aspen Hill deserves quality design/attractive development. (E. Aschan; L. Wilson)<br><br>2. The Vitro property should develop as mixed use, but with a 3-story max. (M.Codori) | 1. The Plan vision includes language about promoting, as redevelopment occurs, distinctive architecture, strong urban design principles; and defining a stronger local identity. The Plan also includes design criteria to provide further direction to accomplish quality design as redevelopment occurs.<br>2. The 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan includes language that allows for a scenario where the redevelopment of the existing office building could include 2 additional stories beyond the current 3 stories, generally 50-60 ft. in height. The Plan's recommendation of a 60 ft. height limit is consistent with the 1994 Plan and the Zoning remap. The CRT and EOF zones do include height compatibility standards for properties that abut or confront a residential zone. | |
| 20. | Design Criteria | Pgs. 17-19 | 1. There is not a clear distinction between short & long term design criteria; design illustrations need to distinguish between short and long term. Alternative design criteria illustrations and language was provided for the Planning Board's consideration. (W. Kominers; C. Bar)<br>2. Move the first two bullets on page 17, Design Criteria, to the longer term objectives on page 18. (Commissioner Dreyfuss) | 1. Staff is open to further discussion on this point, whether through text or illustrations, to ensure that Plan goals and recommendations are clear/ implemented with greater ease.<br>2. The first two bullets on page 17 are critical to taking steps toward activating the Connecticut Ave frontage and establishing an appeal for pedestrians and cyclists. They also point to enhancing the area's identity and character through architectural elements and maximizing the visibility of new uses. | |

MMPA = Minor Master Plan Amendment

| | Issue to Be Resolved | Draft Plan (page) | Testimony (Commenter) | Staff Response | Board Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21. | Historic Significance | n/a | Vitro building is an example of mid-century modern architecture that, if preserved, could be a beautiful focal point of the community. (S.Dean; J. Adcock) | Historic Staff does not believe that this resource merits evaluation for listing in the Locational Atlas or designating in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. | |
| **Market Analysis** | | | | | |
| 22. | Retail Feasibility Study | Appendix, Pgs. 24-37 | Caution against relying on ESRI Business Analyst due to gaps in retailers included in the database and error rates. (Prof. J. Cowley, submitted by Law Office of G. Macy Nelson)<br>The conclusion that the area is underserved by the retail sector or that there is a retail gap is misleading. (M. Bell) | ESRI Business Analyst has limitations in reporting economic information, similar to other proprietary sources such as Claritas and REIS. ESRI retail sales uses the Census of Retail Trade 2002 and 2007 as its benchmark and updates the information using a variety of sources such as the Dun & Bradstreet business database and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Both sources are considered industry standards. Estimates of market supply are primarily derived from receipts of businesses engaged in the retailing of merchandise, and as a result, accuracy of information tends to improve with larger retailers (since they are more likely to report sales). ESRI acknowledges that smaller establishments without payrolls, such as self-employed individuals and unincorporated businesses, may be underreported, even though they represent more than half all retailers in the United States; however, they represent far less than half of retail sales.<br>Despite potential underreporting, staff believes the retail analysis to be a worthwhile in determining a "ballpark" estimate of net retail potential for feasibility purposes. Considerably more resources and time would be required to improve accuracy and would likely require a business-by-business inventory of all stores in the trade area. | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |
| 23. | Residential Feasibility Study | Appendix Pgs. 8-23 | There are deficiencies with the residential analysis. (M. Bell) | Planning staff may not have clearly indicated the study assumptions. While it was stated that staff "assumes the property will be rezoned to RT-12.5 – Residential, Townhouse" the intent was to determine if townhomes could be economically feasible on the 10 acre vacant property in the MMPA area, and if they warranted further consideration. To arrive at this evaluation, staff assumed the requirements of the RT-12.5 zone – the zone generally appropriate for townhomes.<br>While staff reviewed Aspen Hill's present population makeup we did not assume that a future townhome buyer would share the same demographic characteristics. The staff report states that for a townhome development to succeed in Aspen Hill, it would likely | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |

MMPA = Minor Master Plan Amendment

| | Issue to Be Resolved | Draft Plan (page) | Testimony (Commenter) | Staff Response | Board Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | need to capture home buyers from outside Aspen Hill (page 7). Further, the projected townhome prices were determined by evaluating previous sales in the Residential Trade Area (Zip Codes 20853 and 20906) and comparable townhome prices in Rockville and Wheaton (adjusting for factors such as Metro and freeway proximity, walkability, nearby shopping/dining, etc.) and prices affordable to target markets in Aspen Hill. These included three primary market groups: singles, newlyweds, and one-parent families.<br><br>Staff agrees that land and site preparation costs would be incurred for any potential reuse of the Vitro/BAE site and they are likely to be considerable. This is because of building demolition, remediation of hazardous materials, and site preparation and grading. These anticipated costs may also influence a property owner's/developer's decision to move forward with preparing the site for development, or not. This would be an especially significant decision if development could not generate sufficient revenue or provide an adequate rate of return. The residential feasibility analysis was not designed to compare alternative uses, but merely to test one use and determine if townhomes alone were economically feasible on the vacant property. This analysis required considering these higher land and site preparation costs. All feasibility studies should account for land and site preparation costs because it should not be assumed that land would redevelop without adequate economic compensation. | |
| 24. | Office Feasibility Study | Appendix, Pgs. 2-6 | 1. The Vitro/BAE building could be reused as office space:<br>– Medical office could be a viable market segment within the MMPA. (Prof. J. Cowley, submitted by Law Office of G. Macy Nelson)<br>– Age and lack of amenities of the existing office buildings in AH are more of a factor as to why there are office vacancies rather than a soft market. (M. Ryan)<br>– The right price can move any property. (D. Hess)<br>2. The vacancy of one obsolete office building should be placed in the context of what is | 1. Staff prepared an office market analysis that outlines the challenges of the office market in general as well as reusing the existing building. Currently, there is a significant surplus of office space in the greater Washington region, making leasing office space very competitive. Tenant location and office space preferences have also changed, moving toward more compact, mixed-use, green, transit accessible employment areas, many of which are near or co-located with clients and suppliers.<br><br>Staff agrees that the potential for medical office exists and reflects this on page three of the report. This is further evidenced by the smaller scaled medical office at the Aspen View Professional Center on the south side of Aspen Hill Rd. Class C medical office space, however, is unlikely to become the | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |

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| | Issue to Be Resolved | Draft Plan (page) | Testimony (Commenter) | Staff Response | Board Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | happening in the immediately surrounding communities, for example: Rockville Pike, Rockville, Kensington-Wheaton. (Prof. J. Cowley, submitted by Law Office of G. Macy Nelson) | centerpiece of an economically viable development on the Vitro/BAE site, as its lower rents are unable to generate sufficient revenue to support a 10 acre site. Depending on the ultimate development program, however, Class C medical office space could complement a larger development in the MMPA area. Medical office is a permitted use in CRT and EOF.<br>2. While Aspen Hill is part of the larger office market, it is very distinct from the three other markets used as examples (Rockville Pike, Rockville, and Kensington/Wheaton). All three are proximate to other office users, transit, freeways, shopping and dining, and other features that were discussed in the report, making these areas more attractive for large-scale, potentially Class A, office tenants. | |
| 25. | Impact on Existing Businesses | Appendix, pgs. 30-35 | Existing businesses will be displaced by the new urban redevelopment proposed in the plan (C. Lamari) or by a big box retailer. (S. Eisendrath; D. Jeang; R. Menendez; A. Gardsbane; D&M Klein; J. Fink; D. Hess; J. Benedetto) | The retail market analysis indicates that the trade area could absorb a mix of additional retail for Convenience Goods within a 5-Minute Drive-shed and Shoppers Goods within a 15-Minute Drive-shed. The extent of the retail gap indicates that additional retail development, even at a larger scale, is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on existing businesses. This assumes that existing retail would continue to remain competitive, well positioned (good product quality, differentiation, and variety of merchandise) and well located (good visibility, adequate accessibility, etc.). | No recommended edits or additions. (10/9/2014) |

**End Notes**

[i] Direct testimony from D&L Becker; E. Embrey; M. Bronstein on behalf of the Strathmore Bel-Pre Civic Assoc.; R. Clarke; C. Petzold; B. Lee; Lee Development Group representatives; A. Minckler on behalf of the Aspen Hill Civic Association; B. Lander; and indirectly from other commenters in support the Public Hearing draft, as well as from those offering edits to the Public Hearing draft.

[ii] Due to the large number of commenters on this issue, names have been included in this endnote, rather than as part of the issues above in the matrix. (S. Dean; P. Rivera; J.Libertelli; M. Dame; L. Necastro-Pastel; D. Hess; J.Edwards; M. Segal; R. Rodriguez; J. Holder; R. Semmig; M&E Getz; S. Naas; J&S Cohen; P. Drymalski; J. Salzano; A. Von Saunder; P. Heisserman; E. Skinner; L. Saekissian; R. Dworkin; M. Callahan; B. Callahan; K. Felix; M. Johnson; M. Marti; J. Mitchell; L&A Luchs; D. Jeang; R. Menendez; J. Wolf; N. Nead; L. Kovac; D&M Klein; J. Fink; J. Adcock; B. Iroff)

[iii] Due to the large number of commenters on this issue, names have been included in this endnote, rather than as part of the issues above in the matrix. (E. Aschan; S. Dean; J. Warman; M.Codori; T. Mitryakova & V. Dubitsky; J. Benedetto; S.Montoya; S. Orr; S. Melkisethian; R. Rodriguez; J. Holder; P. Drymalski; M. Segal; A. Von Saunder; E.Skinner; L. Saekissian; R. Dworkin; M. Callahan; B. Callahan; K. Felix; M. Johnson; H. Shah; M. Martin; R. Semmig; R. Jones; J.A. Sommer; P.Rivera; J.Libertelli; S. Eisendrath; M. Ryan; D. Jeang; M&E Getz; J. Wolf; U. Onosakponome; A. Gardsbane; L. Kovac; C. Ginsberg; M. Valdivia; R. Hirschfield; D&M Klein; F. Wharton; W. Morrison; L. Necastro-Pastel; J. Adcock; D. Hess; M. Salay; D. Yamin; M. Pepson). In addition to the aforementioned names, the Aspen Hill Homeowners group collected and submitted as testimony, nearly 1,200 signatures “against rezoning which would permit a big-box store at the former Vitro/BAE site”.

MMPA = Minor Master Plan Amendment

[iv] The list of uses included in Attachment 2 is not an all-inclusive list of uses. For the full table of uses by zone, please see Section 3.1.6 Use Table, Chapter 59, Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance.
[v] See Section 3.5.11.A.1 Combination Retail defined, Chapter 59, Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance.
[vi] See Section 3.5.8.A.1 Life Sciences defined, Chapter 59, Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance.
[vii] (S. Orr; J. Salzano; C. Lamari; R. Semmig; J.Libertelli; U. Onosakponome; J. Adcock; S. Robinson; S. Convery; K. Vaitkus; J. Beerweiler)
[viii] (E. Aschan; M.Codori; T. Mitryakova & V. Dubitsky; P. Drymalski; J. Salzano; R. Jones; S. Levy; J. Mitchell; D.Jeang; J.Libertelli; S. Eisendrath; M. Ryan; M&E Getz; M. Valdivia; L. Gough; S. Robinson; W. Morrison; M. Segal; L. Necastro-Pastel; J. Adcock; C. Steinborn)
[ix] The development standards included in Attachment 3 are not an all-inclusive list of requirements. For the complete list of requirements, Division 4.5 Commercial/Residential Zones and Division 4.6 Employment Zones, Chapter 59, Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance.

# ATTACHMENT 2

| Table 1: Comparison of Uses by Zone | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Commercial/Residential | | | Employment | | |
| ZONE | CRN | CRT | CR | NR | GR | EOF |
| USE GROUP | | | | | | |
| **HOUSEHOLD LIVING** | | | | | | |
| Single-Unit Living | P | P | P | L | L | L |
| Two-Unit Living | P | P | P | L | L | L |
| Townhouse Living | P | P | P | L | L | L |
| Multi-Unit Living | P | P | P | L | L | L |
| **GROUP LIVING** | | | | | | |
| Independent Living Facility for Seniors or Persons with Disabilities | L | L | L | L | L | |
| Personal Living Quarters | | | | | | |
| (Up to 50 Individual Living Units) | L | L | L | L | L | |
| (Over 50 Individual Living Units) | C | C | C | C | C | |
| Residential Care Facility | | | | | | |
| (up to 8 persons) | P | P | P | P | P | |
| (9 to 16 persons) | L | P | P | L | L | |
| (over 16 persons) | L | L | P | L | | C |
| **EATING AND DRINKING** | | | | | | |
| Restaurant | L | P | P | P | P | P |
| **LODGING** | | | | | | |
| Bed and Breakfast | L | L | | L | L | |
| Hotel, Motel | | P | P | | P | P |
| **MEDICAL AND DENTAL** | | | | | | |
| Clinic | | | | | | |
| (up to 4 medical practitioners) | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| (more than 4 practitioners) | L | P | P | C | P | P |
| Medical, Dental Laboratory | | P | P | | P | P |
| **OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL** | | | | | | |
| Office | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Research and Development | | P | P | | | L |
| **RETAIL SALES AND SERVICE** | | | | | | |
| Combination Retail | | C | C | C | C | |
| Retail/Service Establishment | | | | | | |
| (Up to 5,000 SF) | P | P | P | P | P | L |
| (5,001-15,000 SF) | L | P | P | P | P | L |
| (15,001-50,000 SF) | L | P | P | P | P | L |
| (50,001- 85,000 SF) | | L | L | P | P | |
| (85,001 - 120,000 SF) | | L | L | L | L | |
| (120,001 SF and Over) | | L | L | C | C | |

**Key:** P = Permitted Use L = Limited Use C = Conditional Use Blank Cell = Use Not Allowed

**Note:** Table 1 is a sampling of uses and not meant to be an inclusive list. For a full list of uses by zone, see Section 3.1.6 Use Table of the Montgomery County Zoning Code.

# ATTACHMENT 3

| Table 2: Comparison of Development Standards by Zone | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Commercial/Residential Zones | | | Employment Zones | | |
| Development Standard | CRN | CRT | CR | NR | GR | EOF |
| Max Total Density | 0.25-1.5 | 0.5-4.0 | 0.5-8.0 | 0.25-1.5 | 0.5-2.5 | 0.5-4.0 |
| Max Commercial Density | 0.00-1.5 | 0.25-3.5 | 0.25-7.5 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Max Residential Density | 0.00-1.5 | 0.25-3.5 | 0.25-7.5 | limited to 30% of total site GFA | | |
| Max Height | 25'-65' | 35'-150' | 35'-300' | 25'-50' | 25'-120' | 35'-200 |
| Max total standard method FAR | n/a | > of 1.0 FAR or 10k SF GFA | > of 0.5 FAR or 10k SF GFA | n/a | n/a | > of 1.0 FAR or 10k SF GFA |
| Parking Setbacks (min for surface lots) | | | | | | |
| Front setback | must be behind front bldg line (Apartment, Multi Use, General Buildings) | | | must accommodate landscaping, §6.2.9 (Apt., Multi Use, General Bldgs.) | | must be behind front bldg line* |
| Side street setback | must be behind front bldg line (Apartment, Multi Use, General Buildings) | | | must accommodate landscaping, §6.2.9 (Apt., Multi Use, General Bldgs.) | | must be behind front bldg line* |
| Open Space (standard method, site > 10k SF) | | | | | | |
| Townhouse | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% |
| Apartment (Apt.); Multi Use; General Buildings | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% |
| Building Orientation (entrance facing street or open space) | required | required | required | n/a | n/a | required* |
| Transparency (walls facing a street or open space) | | | | | | |
| Ground story, front and side/rear (min % for Apt., Multi Use, General Buildings) | required | required | required | n/a | n/a | required* |
| Upper story (min % for Apartment, Multi Use, General Buildings) | required | required | required | n/a | n/a | required* |
| Blank wall, front and side/rear (max length for Townhouse, Apt., Multi Use, General Buildings) | required | required | required | n/a | n/a | required* |
| Build-to Area (BTA: max setback & min % of lot width) | Y | Y | Y | n/a | n/a | Y* |
| Optional Method? | N | Y | Y | N | N | Y |
| Sketch Plan and Site Plan | n/a | Y | Y | n/a | n/a | Y |
| Public Benefits | n/a | by tract size or max total FAR | | n/a | n/a | by tract size or max total FAR |
| Open Space (based on lot area & # of frontages) | n/a | Y | Y | n/a | n/a | Y |
| Max Height | n/a | mapped unless add. MPDUs | | n/a | n/a | mapped unless add. MPDUs |

*only applies when development fronts on a business district street or is recommended in a master plan. If site plan is required, PB may waive requirements.

**Note:** Table 2 is a sampling of development standards and not meant to be an all-inclusive list. For all development standards by zone, see Division 4.5 Commercial/Residential Zones and Division 4.6 Employment Zones of the Montgomery County Zoning Code.

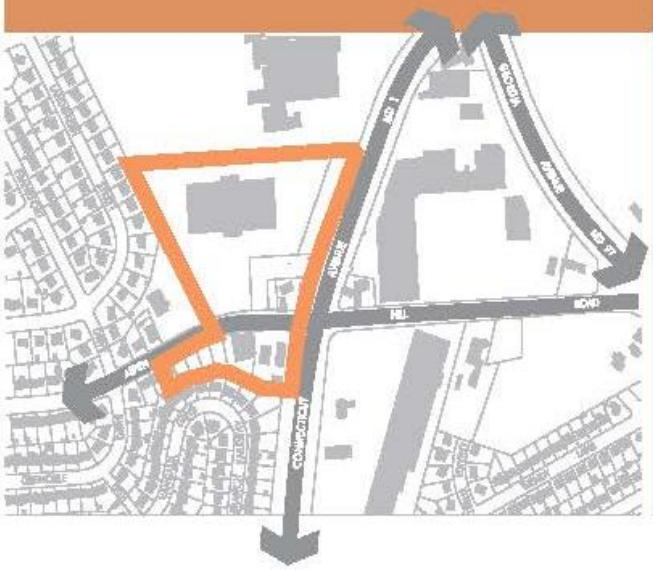
**ATTACHMENT 4**

PLANNING BOARD DRAFT

November 2014

# Aspen Hill

## Minor Master Plan Amendment




An Amendment to the Aspen Hill Master Plan,1994, as amended; being also an amendment to the General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

**Montgomery County Planning Department**
**M-NCPPC**
**MontgomeryPlanning.org**

## ABSTRACT

An area master plan, after approval by the District Council and adoption by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, constitutes an amendment to *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors)* for Montgomery County. Each area master plan reflects a vision of future development that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a County-wide perspective. Area master plans are intended to convey land use policy for defined geographic areas and should be interpreted together with relevant County-wide functional master plans.

This Minor Master Plan Amendment contains text and supporting maps for a minor amendment to the 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan.* This Plan makes recommendations for land use, zoning, design, transportation, and environment. The minor amendment process provides an opportunity to reassess the Subject area and analyze alternative land use redevelopment, design, and zoning opportunities. The review considers existing development and reevaluates the area's potential within the context of a changing market in the region, the intent and rationale of the 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan*, community input, and impacts to the surrounding land uses and transportation network.

Master and sector plans convey land use policy for defined geographic areas and should be interpreted together with relevant County-wide functional plans and County laws and regulations. Plan recommendations provide comprehensive guidelines for the use of public and private land and should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when making land use decisions. Public and private land use decisions that promote plan goals are essential to fulfilling a plan's vision.

Master and sector plans look ahead 20 years from the date of adoption, although they are intended to be revised every 10 to 15 years. Moreover, circumstances when a plan is adopted will change and the specifics of a plan may become less relevant over time. Plans do not specify all development possibilities. Their sketches are for illustrative purposes only, intended to convey a sense of desirable future character rather than a recommendation for a particular design.

Master plans do not specify all development possibilities for a particular property or area. In order to understand the full range of development options, the reader should be aware of additional land uses and development potential available through permitted conditional uses; variances; transferrable development rights (TDRs); Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs); rezoning by local map amendments; public projects and the mandatory referral process; and municipal annexations.

## SOURCE OF COPIES

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760
Online at: http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/aspenhill/

## 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.

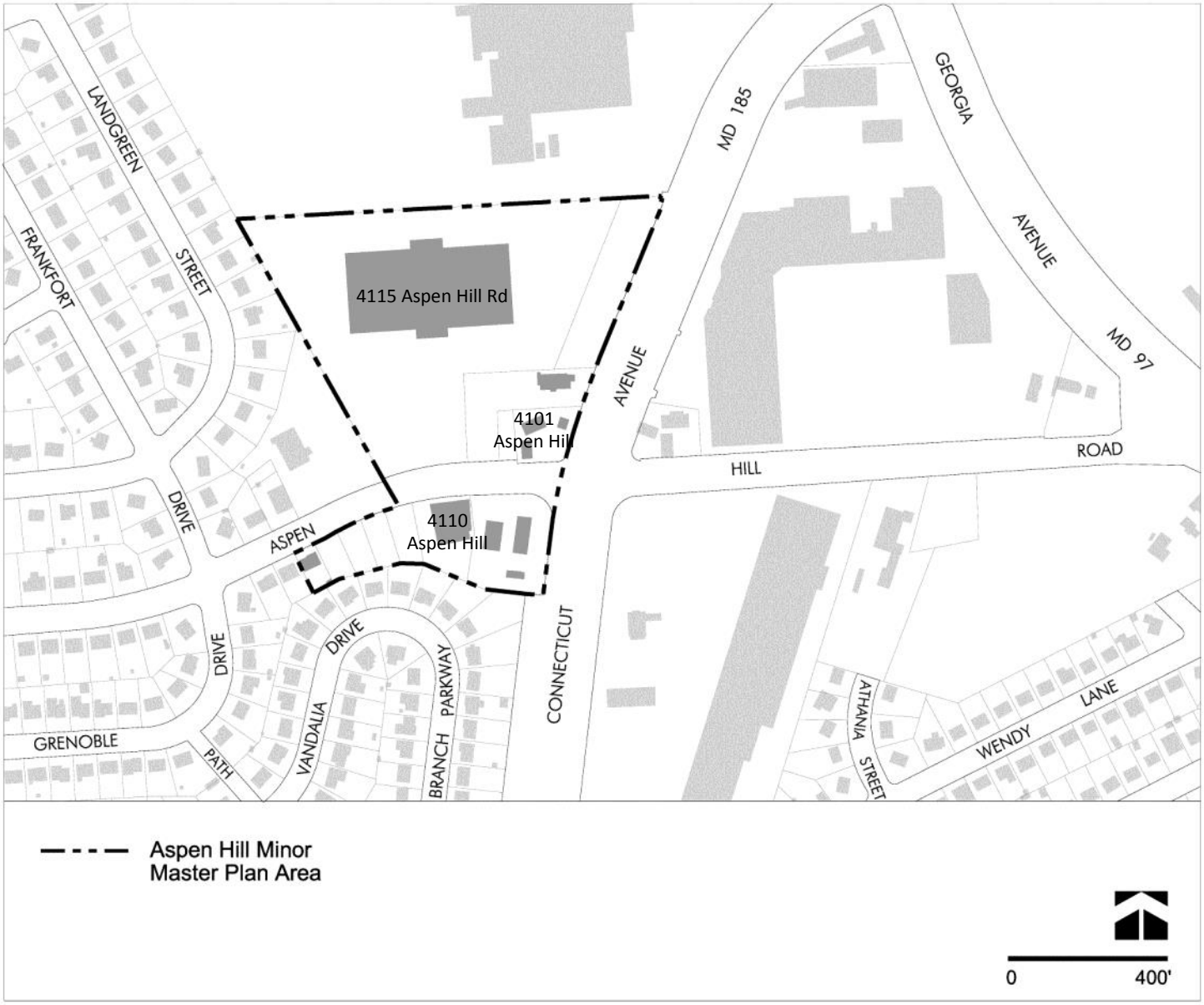
The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting, and amending or extending The *General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors)* for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

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.

## CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

# CONTENTS

**Map 1: Minor Amendment Area**




## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment addresses approximately 14 acres of land located west of the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road, the majority of which was recommended for office zoning in the 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan*. (Map 1) Of the 14 total acres included in the Minor Master Plan Amendment, the vacant office building (Vitro/BAE) at 4115 Aspen Hill Road and its associated parking, encompass approximately 10 acres.

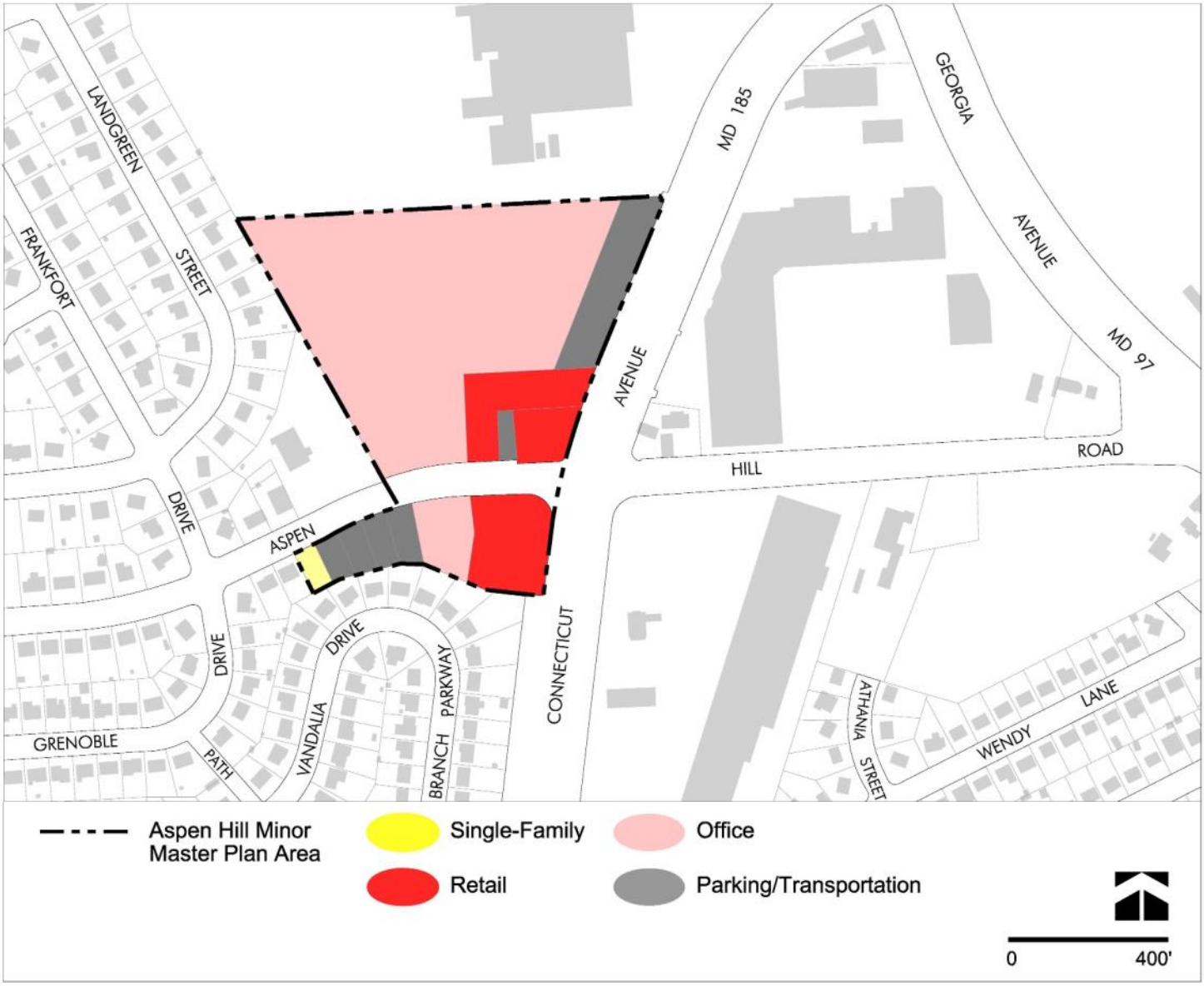
As part of the Minor Amendment process, additional land uses, zoning, design, and redevelopment opportunities have been evaluated for the Subject area. The 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan* limits over half of the Minor Amendment area to office uses and associated parking. When the Master Plan was approved in 1994, the Vitro/BAE office building at 4115 Aspen Hill Road was still occupied by federal government contractors. The building had been constructed specifically for the Vitro Corporation, a defense contractor, in the 1960s and remained occupied until 2010 when BAE Systems

relocated to Rockville, MD. Since 2010, the approximately 265,000 square foot office building and surrounding parking have remained vacant and underutilized. In addition to the empty and deteriorating office property, the Minor Amendment area faces challenges ~~to~~ as a result of vehicular congestion at surrounding intersections; efficient vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation; and pedestrian safety.

### Vision

The Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment area is adjacent to greater Aspen Hill's largest suburban shopping areas, with access via two major highways (MD 185 and MD 97), and a potential future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station and line along Georgia Avenue. Although mature, the commercial area remains under-developed, but with potential to yield a greater mix of uses over time, for the benefit of surrounding communities. As redevelopment occurs, the area will apply strong urban design principles, as well as sustainable and low impact development to improve neighborhood connectivity, create new community open space and, by promoting distinctive architecture, define a stronger local identity. Context sensitive transitions in the scale of new development will be provided to the adjacent single-family residential neighborhoods. Safe, attractive, and well-connected pedestrian and bicycle linkages to and between neighborhoods, services, and amenities will strengthen the walkability and desirability of the area.

**Map 2: Existing Land Use**



## Outreach

Outreach efforts included a combination of community meetings, small group and individual meetings, and online and social media platforms to engage the public in the development of the Staff Draft recommendations. Planners met with individual property owners, business owners, and community residents throughout the process. Spanish translation services, both oral and written, were available if needed.

A project website (www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/aspenhill) was created with applicable meeting presentations and materials, and an opportunity to leave comments. The Planning Department's main webpage was used to announce community meetings and interested parties were notified via e-mail. The Plan was also covered by local newspapers, including an editorial in the Washington Post.

A project kick-off community meeting was held on December 3, 2013, at the Aspen Hill Community Library to introduce the project and timeline to the community. Aspen Hill area citizen and homeowner associations within two miles of the Minor Amendment site were contacted via email. Interested parties that had contacted the Planning Department about the Project in 2013 prior to its initiation were also notified and added to the e-mail distribution list.

Approximately 35 people attended the initial meeting. Two additional community meetings were held on April 1, 2014 and May 13, 2014 with approximately 50 and 70 participants respectively. Each of the community meetings was held at the Aspen Hill Public Library, less than a half mile to the west of the Minor Amendment area.

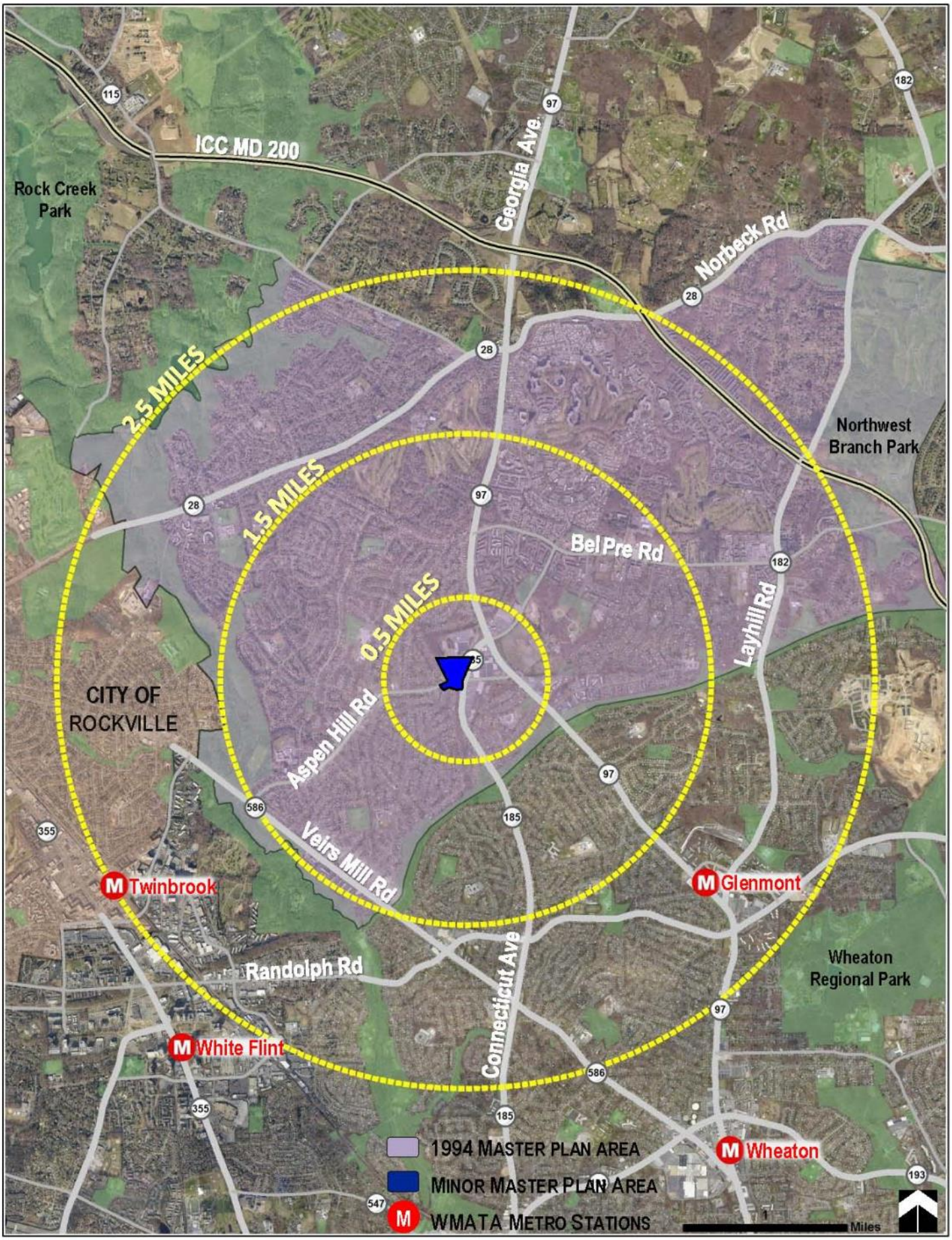
In addition to the community meetings, Staff attended the Aspen Hill Civic Association meeting on April 9, 2014 and the Aspen Hill Homeowners meeting on April 24, 2014 to respond to resident questions and concerns and to promote the final community meeting in May. Both meetings were held at the Aspen Hill Public Library.

A robust dialogue was had at each of the community meetings and included a wide range of input from different stakeholder groups, specifically:

- The vacant Vitro/BAE office building is a blight on the area and needs to be redeveloped;
- The land use and zoning should be changed to allow additional retail in the area;
- There is a need for more reasonably priced commercial goods and grocery in the area;
- The area is challenging for pedestrians;
- Traffic in the area, particularly along Aspen Hill Road, is already excessive and large-scale retail would only make it worse;
- This area should not be rezoned ahead of the large area, 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan* update;
- Instead of land use and zoning that allows large-scale commercial uses, could a smaller-scale commercial land use and zoning classification be considered for the amendment properties at the corners and north side of Aspen Hill Road?

*Community meetings, Aspen Hill Public Library*

**Map 3: Vicinity Map**



## Planning Framework

The Minor Amendment area is located within the approximately 13.2-square mile 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan* boundary (Map 3, previous page), which is situated immediately to the east of the City of Rockville, to the north of the urbanized Wheaton-Glenmont communities, and to the south of Olney. Aspen Hill is considered a Suburban Community as defined by the 1993 *General Plan Refinement*. The 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan* recommended a change in land uses and zoning, accompanied by design guidelines for much of the Minor Amendment area, located to the west of the Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue intersection.

In 2008, the Planning Board approved a *Georgia Avenue Study/Urban Design Framework*, which was intended to inform future master plan work for communities along the Georgia Avenue Corridor, including Aspen Hill. This study envisioned an evolution of the commercial node in Aspen Hill from an auto-oriented group of strip shopping centers to a more walkable community with a grid system of streets, a mix of uses, and enhanced pedestrian amenities.

In November 2013, the County Council approved the *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*, which recommends additions to the County's transportation network. The Plan recommends additional transit facilities along 11 corridors, one of which is North Georgia Avenue, to facilitate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service that will move more people to and from jobs, homes, shopping, and entertainment areas in urbanizing parts of the County. The *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* proposes a future BRT station location at the MD 97 and MD 185 intersection, less than a half-mile from the Minor Amendment area.

In addition to this Amendment to the Master Plan, Montgomery County is concurrently in the final stages of completing an extensive process to update the County Zoning maps (zoning conversion) to reflect the Zoning Ordinance text rewrite that was adopted in March 2014. The new zoning classifications adopted by the rewrite, are scheduled for County Council approval in October 2014. As such, this Minor Amendment evaluates both the existing zoning to-date (July 2014) and the anticipated zoning conversion (October 2014). (see Map 7: Zoning Conversion)

## Demographics

Research and Special Projects Staff established a baseline profile of the greater Aspen Hill Neighborhood to provide background and context for the Plan's recommendations. The 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year estimate from the United States Census Bureau was utilized for 13 census tracts that match most closely to the greater Aspen Hill boundary. (Map 4 below)

**Map 4: Demographic Study Area - Greater Aspen Hill Neighborhood**

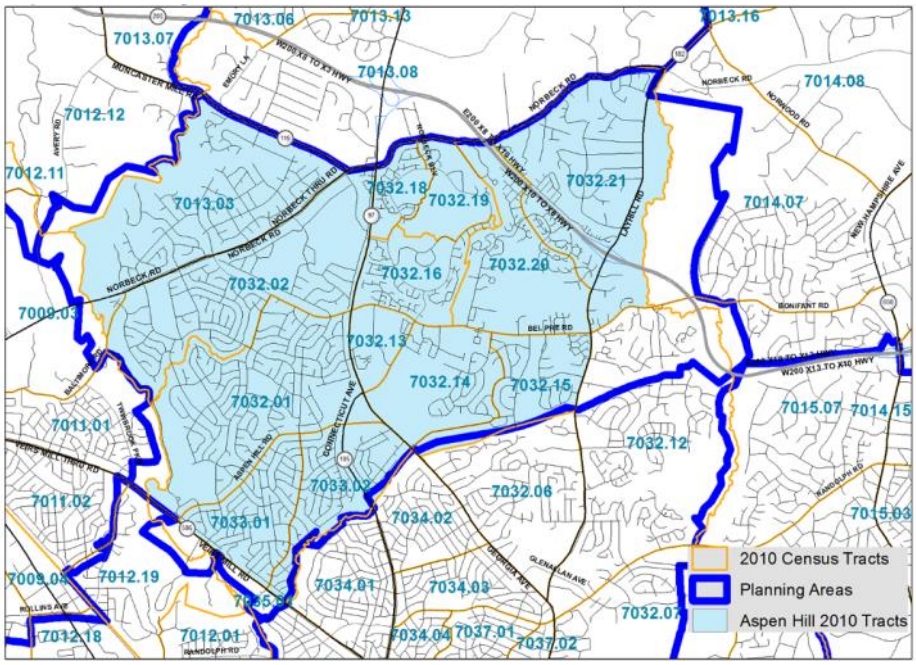


Table 1 below provides a summary of the neighborhood demographic profile as compared to Montgomery County. A full demographic profile for the greater Aspen Hill Neighborhood can be found in Appendix A.

The greater Aspen Hill Neighborhood has a total population of approximately 60,090 people. It is a diverse community with the Hispanic or Latino and Non-Hispanic Black populations higher than the Countywide average.

There is a significantly larger population of seniors age 65 and older in the greater Aspen Hill Neighborhood than the percentage Countywide. This can be attributed to the existence of the Leisure World age-restricted community as well as multiple senior and assisted living facilities within the area.

The greater Aspen Hill area has a lower Median Household Income than the County as a whole, and a much greater percentage of the population that works in the Service industry.

**Table 1: Aspen Hill and Montgomery County Demographic Comparison Profile**

| Data Set | Greater Aspen Hill | Montgomery County |
|---|---|---|
| Total Population | 60,090<br>(6.3 % of County) | 959,738 |
| 65 years & older | 22.0% | 12.2% |
| Race and Hispanic Origin Combined* | | |
| Not Hispanic | 78.3% | 83.5% |
| White | 43.0% | 50.0% |
| Black | 22.8% | 16.7% |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 9.9% | 13.7% |
| Other race | 2.6% | 3.0% |
| Hispanic or Latino** | 21.8% | 16.5% |
| Occupation | | |
| Management, business, science, arts | 40.3% | 55.9% |
| Service | 23.8% | 15.0% |
| Average Household Size | 2.58 | 2.68 |
| Tenure | | |
| Owner-occupied | 69.9% | 68.8% |
| Renter-occupied | 30.1% | 31.2% |
| 2011 Median Household Income | $70,072 | $95,660 |

*Those of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
**Between 2000 & 2011 the Hispanic or Latino population in greater Aspen Hill grew from 14.1% to 21.8%; the fastest growing group with an increase of 63%.
*Sources: 2000 U.S. Census, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau; Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Department, M-NCPPC*

**Map 5: Minor Amendment Area and Surrounding Land Uses**


The Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment area adjoins one of the greater Aspen Hill neighborhood's largest commercial areas, made up of three community shopping centers and two big-box retailers: Home Depot and Kmart. Immediately to the north of the Minor Amendment area is the Home Depot; to the east is Northgate Plaza which includes a Kohl's, Michaels, and Rite Aid; to the southeast is the Aspen Hill Shopping Center which includes a Giant Grocery, U.S. Post Office, and Panera Bread; and east of Georgia Avenue is a Kmart, the Gate of Heaven Cemetery, and the Aspen Manor Shopping Center. Single-family detached homes, interspersed with institutional uses, are predominant to the south and west.

Of the 14 total acres included in the Minor Amendment, the former Vitro/BAE vacant office building and associated parking encompass approximately 10 acres. A Dunkin Donuts is located adjacent to the former Vitro/BAE property to the south. Gas stations are situated on the northwest and southwest corners of the Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road intersection, and the Aspen View Center office building, its associated parking, and a residential detached home converted for an office use make up the remaining amendment properties on the south side of Aspen Hill Road.


## ANALYSIS

The overall goal of the Plan is to facilitate the enhancement of Aspen Hill as a suburb where people can live, shop, work, and walk to community amenities. Different land use and zoning alternatives, design criteria, and infrastructure improvements were evaluated for the Minor Amendment area, including:

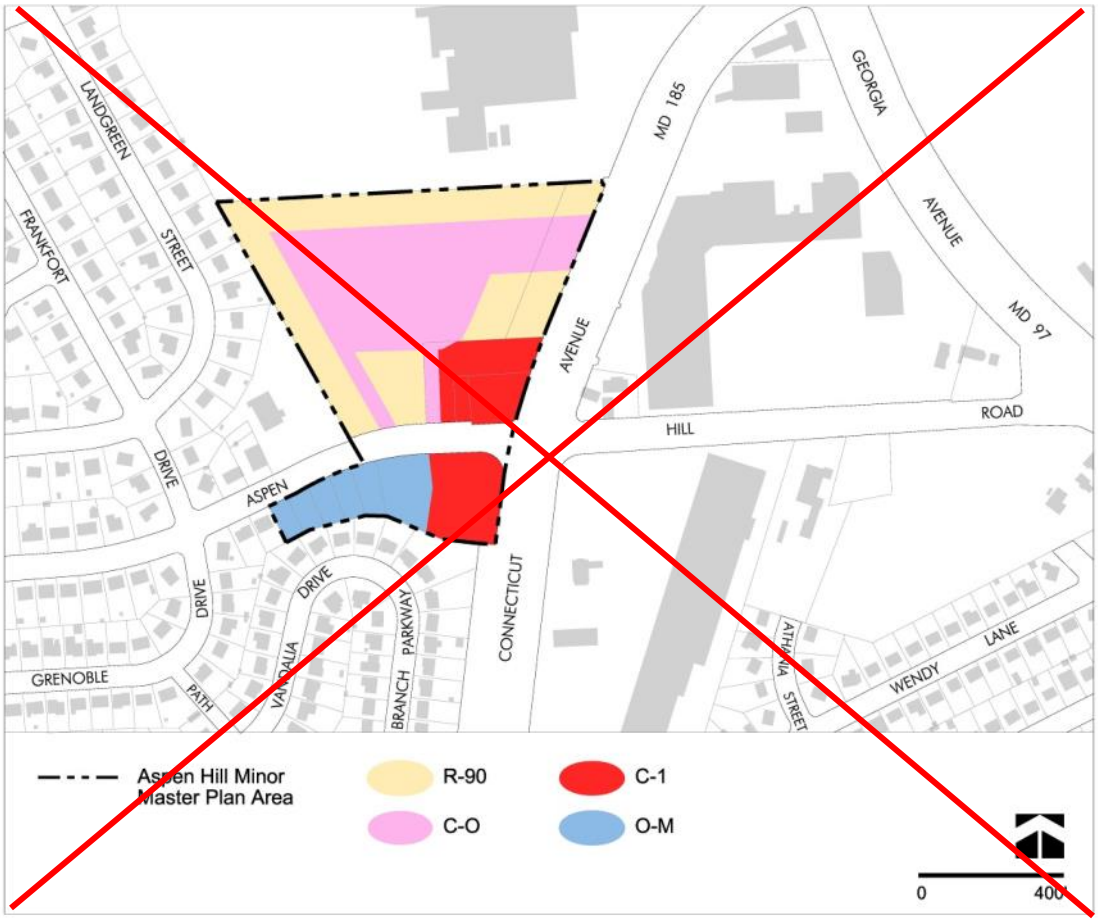
- Rezoning the Minor Amendment area to acknowledge the changed office market and to capture the area's retail market potential, while allowing for a mix of uses, compatible with surrounding land uses, to develop over time.
- Establishing design criteria that address future form and function of the Minor Amendment area.
- Fine-tuning proposed zoning map conversions for properties in the Subject area to ensure consistency with the Minor Amendment.
- Analyzing and addressing the impacts of added vehicular traffic on Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue.
- Addressing pedestrian safety; connectivity; and vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation within the Minor Amendment area.

When the *Aspen Hill Master Plan* was approved 20 years ago, Vitro Corporation occupied the office building at 4115 Aspen Hill Road and had been a long standing employer in the area. Over the past decade, both Vitro and BAE have vacated the site and the 265,000 square foot office building has remained vacant since 2010. In general, the large-scale, single-tenant office market has changed and declined throughout the region. The current trend in office uses is to move away from the suburban car-oriented sprawling campus of past decades and to cluster more compact offices around multiple-use, mass transit centered areas. Medical offices, such as the Aspen View Center located on a smaller footprint on the south side of Aspen Hill Road, may be the exception to this trend, as providers favor suburban locations that are convenient to their patients. The property owner's inability to attract an office tenant to reuse 4115 Aspen Hill Road after four years of marketing the building is indicative of the soft office market, generally, and the decreasing demand for large scale single tenant structures. The full market analysis completed by Research and Special Projects Staff is included in Appendix B.

In light of the soft office market in the region, and the unlikely reuse of the obsolete office building at 4115 Aspen Hill Road, the market feasibility of additional land uses in the area, specifically retail and townhouse development, was evaluated. The strong commercial market base and land use pattern that currently surrounds the Minor Amendment area was an indication that additional retail is supportable in the Minor Amendment area. In addition, a moderately dense residential land use would be an appropriate transition between the more dense commercial uses situated toward Connecticut Avenue and the single-family residential neighborhoods to the west. The *Retail and Residential Feasibility Studies* conducted by the Planning Department concluded that additional retail square footage could be supported in the trade area (a 5-Minute Driveshed for Convenience Goods and a 15-Minute Driveshed for Shoppers Goods, measured from the MMPA area), whereas townhouses may be supported, but their feasibility is less certain at this time. (Appendix B)

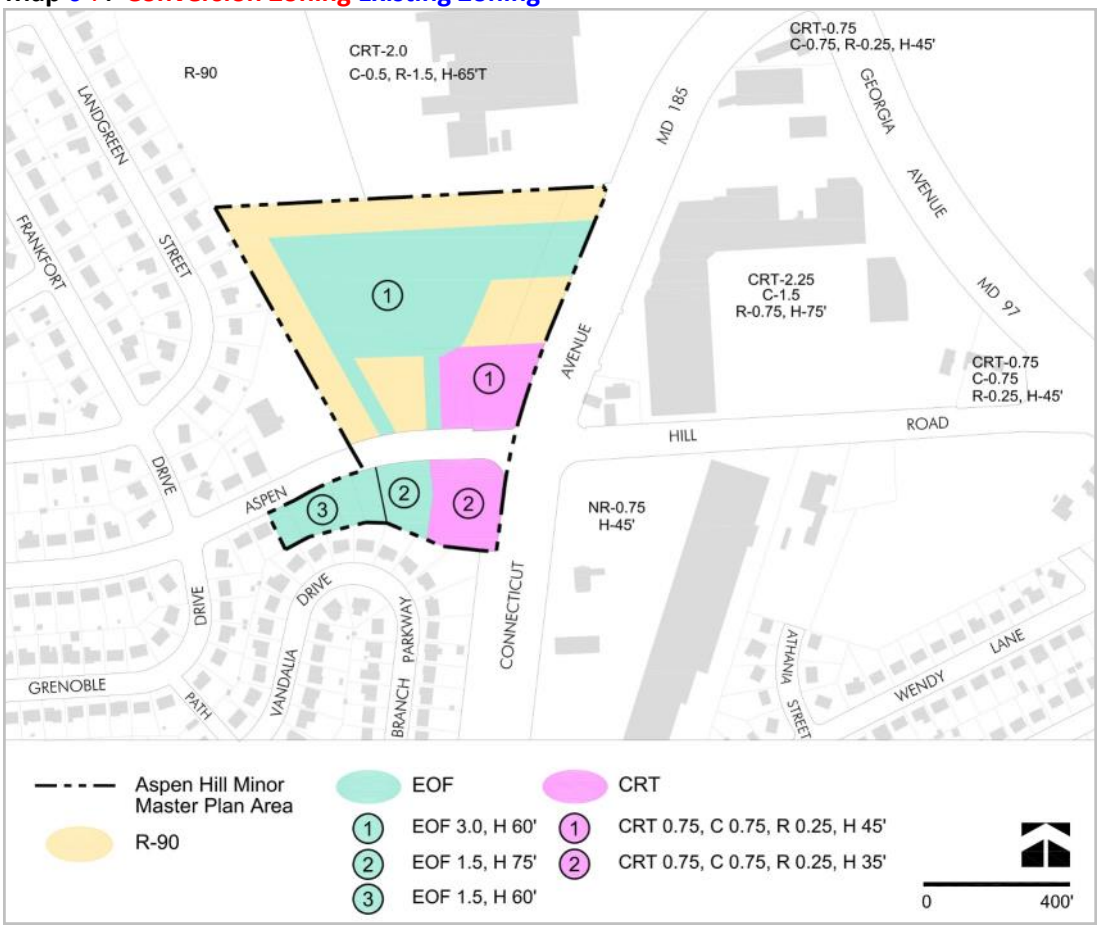

*Examples of townhouse and retail land uses*

**~~Map 6: Existing Zoning~~**

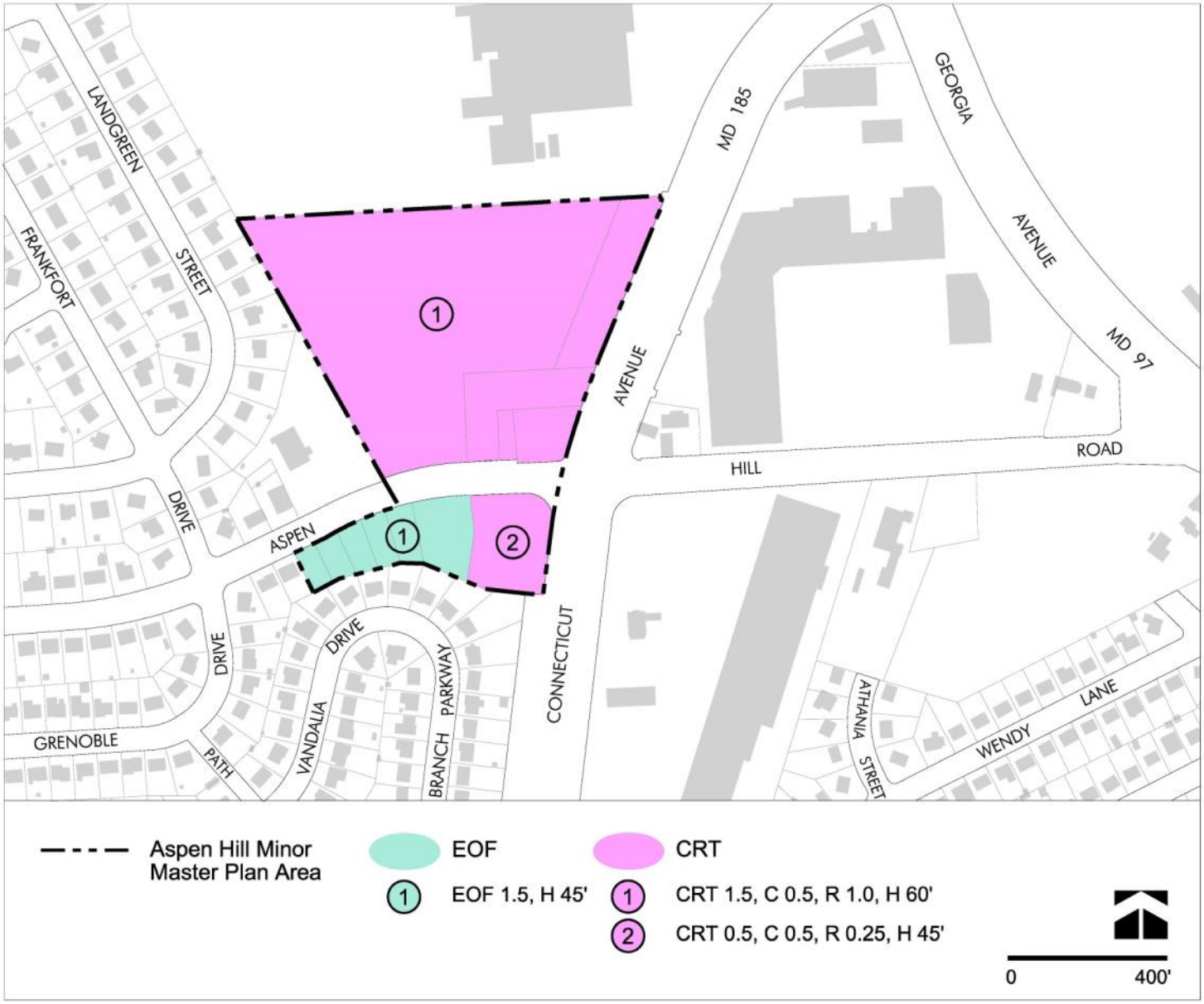



***NOTE TO READER: Map 6: Existing Zoning is no longer in effect and will be deleted. The new zoning code and zoning map became effective on October 30, 2014.***

**Map** 6 ~~7~~: **~~Conversion Zoning~~ Existing Zoning**

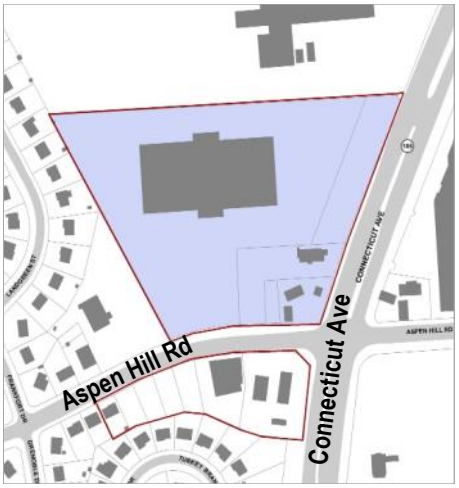


**Map 7 ~~8~~: Proposed Zoning**

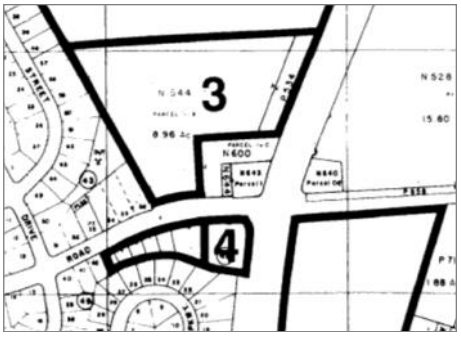


## LAND USE AND ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

### Properties North of Aspen Hill Road




The approximately 11.5-acres situated to the north of Aspen Hill Road include the currently vacant Vitro/BAE office building, parking areas, a Dunkin Donuts, and a Shell gas station. The 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan* identified the majority of this area as *Significant Parcel #3* and stated that the site *should be maintained as an office employment center for the Aspen Hill community* (page 46). The Plan recommended a change in zoning from commercial (C-1 Convenience Commercial) to office (C-O Commercial, Office Building) *so the existing office uses more closely conform to the site's zoning* and to *preserve this site as an employment center and preserve job opportunities for residents to work near their home* (page 47). The R-90 (Residential, One-family) portions of the site which were used for parking, were reconfirmed. The Dunkin Donuts and Shell gas station properties were not included as part of *Significant Parcel #3* in the 1994 Plan. The properties are currently zoned C-1.




*1994 Plan, Significant Parcels 3 & 4*

The properties north of Aspen Hill Road may support mixed-use development as the market evolves in the future, particularly if the properties are assembled and redeveloped comprehensively. More intense redevelopment should be focused toward Connecticut Avenue. Redevelopment of the vacant, former Vitro/BAE office building, should have its primary access off of Connecticut Avenue and access to/from Aspen Hill Road should be limited to a right-in/right-out driveway to alleviate queuing pressures on Aspen Hill Road and intersection congestion during peak hours.

Projects adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods should use compatible building mass, height and setback, and façade articulation to create a transition to those neighborhoods. The 1994 Plan recommends that *no structure for building or parking should be closer to the single-family houses than the existing structure* [at 4115 Aspen Hill Road]. (pg. 46) The existing structure sits approximately 96-feet from the west property line. In the event that this property is redeveloped, and the existing building demolished, the Plan recommends that any non-residential ~~uses~~ buildings maintain a 100-foot no-build area along the western edge of the property adjacent to the single-family residential neighborhood. (see Figure 1, Design Guidelines)

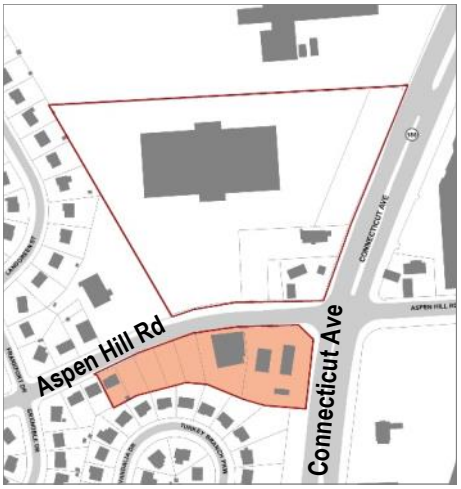
This Plan recognizes that there may be a phased redevelopment of the north side of Aspen Hill Road over a long period of time. It is likely that the former Vitro/BAE property will redevelop in the shorter term, followed by potential redevelopment of the remaining properties over time, as the market evolves to support a moderately dense mix of land uses. While this Plan recognizes the need to accommodate some near-term, single-use development, the long-range goal is to facilitate the opportunity for a comprehensive redevelopment of these sites should any of the properties change use or be consolidated.

### Recommendation

- Rezone the entire Minor Amendment area north of Aspen Hill Road from C-O; R-90; and C-1, to a Commercial Residential Town Zone (CRT-1.5, C-0.5, R-1.0, H-60).

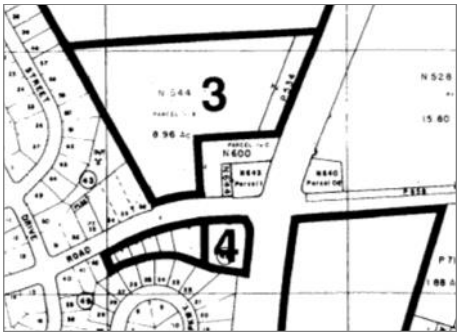
### Properties South of Aspen Hill Road

This area is made up of approximately 2.4-acres of land. A gas station is situated on the southwest corner of the Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road intersection, and the Aspen View Center office building, its associated parking, and a residence that has been converted to an office use make up the remaining amendment properties on the south side of Aspen Hill Road.




The majority of the properties on the southwest side of Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue are identified as *Significant Parcel #4: Mobil Service Station and Aspen View Center Office Building* in the 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan*. The Plan recommended that *the entire service station site be zoned C-1 to better reflect the actual use of the site. The entire office building [Aspen View Center] site would be appropriate for O-M zoning with no expansion of the existing development*. (page 47)

Currently, there are no plans to redevelop the south side of Aspen Hill Road. Should redevelopment occur over the long-term, compatible building mass, height, and setback transitions should be made to the residential neighborhoods to the south and west. Any future development should be focused toward framing the Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road corner and along the Aspen Hill Road frontage. (see Figure 1, Design Guidelines)



*1994 Plan, Significant Parcels 3 & 4*

### Recommendations

- Rezone the southwest corner of Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue from CRT-0.75, C-0.75, R-0.25 H-35 to CRT-0.5, C-0.5, R-0.25 H-45 ~~with an adjustment to maximum building height (H) from 35 feet to 45 feet, for the southwest corner of Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue~~.
- Confirm the ~~proposed zoning conversion to~~ EOF-1.5 (Employment Office) Zone for the remaining properties south of Aspen Hill Road, with an adjustment to maximum building height from 60 and 75 feet to 45 feet.

## DESIGN CRITERIA

The commercial center of Aspen Hill is a fragmented, suburban district where most of the land is dedicated to low intensity uses with vast amounts of surface parking. Although mature, the district remains under-developed, but with potential to yield a greater mix of uses over time, for the benefit of surrounding communities. As redevelopment occurs, the Plan area presents an ~~good~~ opportunity ~~for~~ to apply~~ing strong~~ sustainable urban design principles ~~and sustainable and low impact development~~ to improve neighborhood connectivity, create new ~~community~~ public open space, and define a local identity through distinctive architecture. ~~by promoting distinctive architecture, define a stronger local identity.~~ Connectivity is a particularly important goal of this Plan. As feasible, there should be internal vehicular and pedestrian connections between properties that will encourage dispersal of movement throughout the Plan area. More intense redevelopment should be focused toward Connecticut Avenue, and projects adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods should use compatible building mass, height, setback, and façade articulation to create appropriate transitions to the residential neighborhoods.

~~The recommendations in this Amendment will create conditions that will allow for this type of connected, mixed-use development to occur, but achieving these goals will likely be incremental. Early development phases should set the stage to achieve longer-term goals.~~

### Design Recommendations

At all times, ~~To promote the goals of this Plan,~~ redevelopment of properties within this Plan area should achieve the following:

- Promote the creation of frontages along Connecticut Avenue. Locate buildings as close to Connecticut Avenue as possible. This will begin to establish a street presence ~~wall~~ along this major thoroughfare and give maximum visibility to new uses.
- Locate the front entrances and primary facades of new buildings on Connecticut Avenue, Aspen Hill Road, or the shared entrance drive from Connecticut Avenue, as appropriate. Provide at least one publicly-accessible entrance on every building façade facing a street or public open space. If two adjoining facades each front on a street or public open space, one entrance at the intersection of these facades may satisfy this requirement for both facades. To the extent that a building façade has more than one entrance, the entrances may not be more than 100 feet apart.
- Enhance the area's identity and character by providing architectural elements that articulate ~~the~~ building façades and provide visual interest.
- Provide visual improvements that direct pedestrians to available transit options and ~~that~~ clarify internal circulation patterns for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- ~~All connections should have~~ Along all connections, provide ~~adequate~~ pedestrian amenities, including wide sidewalks, green planting strips between pedestrians and vehicular areas, and significant tree planting.
- Minimize the visibility of loading docks and locate them to have minimal impact on pedestrian activities. Loading docks and service areas must not front on or be directly accessible from Connecticut Avenue.
- Consolidate vehicular entrances at the major roads.
- Locate surface parking areas behind the front building lines; include significant planting areas and highly visible landscaped pedestrian walks connecting uses with enhanced pedestrian areas along the public domain.

*Shared use path, structures to road, façade articulation*

*Landscaped pedestrian paths between uses*

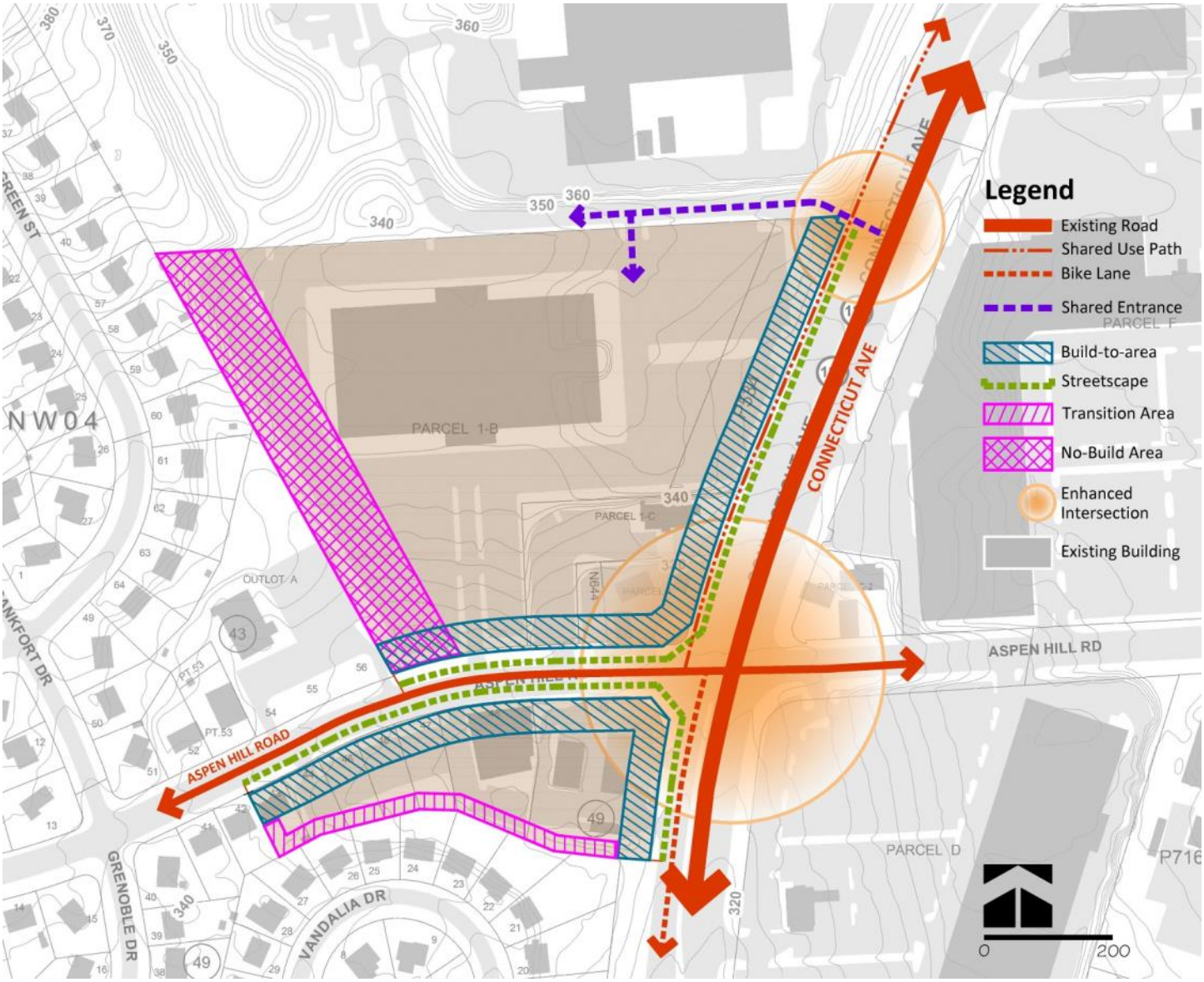
While the following goals may not be attainable in the short-term, as the Plan area evolves over time, redevelopment should foster the following:

- Promote compact, mixed-use development with high levels of internal connectivity.
- Concentrate high densities at locations where multimodal transportation choices are or might be available to reduce dependence on automobile use.
- Provide networks of internal vehicular connections that create blocks that are pedestrian-scaled and walkable. These streets should provide connections to surrounding communities.
- Create a development pattern with short blocks, and human-scaled buildings and streets, to create an inviting and safe public realm.
- Create a recognizable center for the community, with identifiable edges to reinforce the form and identity of the area.
- Provide places for community use where the public feels welcomed and encouraged to congregate, such as plazas, accessible open spaces, seating areas, etc.

### Design Guidelines

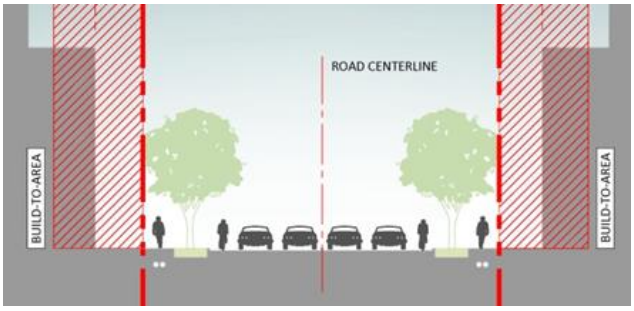
The guidelines focus on the elements of the redevelopment that will reshape the public domain. The following diagrams illustrate where and how each element could be considered.

**Figure 1: Design Criteria**



**Elements**

Build-to areas designate an area along the public right-of-way where the front building façade should be located, to define the public domain and introduce street activating uses in areas where promoting pedestrian activity is desirable. Build-to-areas allow for some flexibility in locating the street wall within pre-established distances away from the public right-of-way. The Zoning Ordinance establishes a maximum setback from the public right-of-way for a standard method project. Setbacks for optional method projects are determined during the regulatory review process, but locating building facades as close as possible to the right-of-way is strongly encouraged.

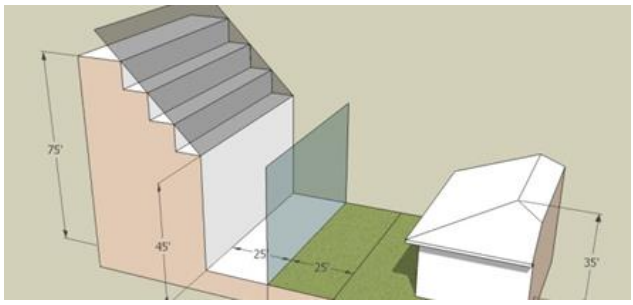


*Build-to-areas*

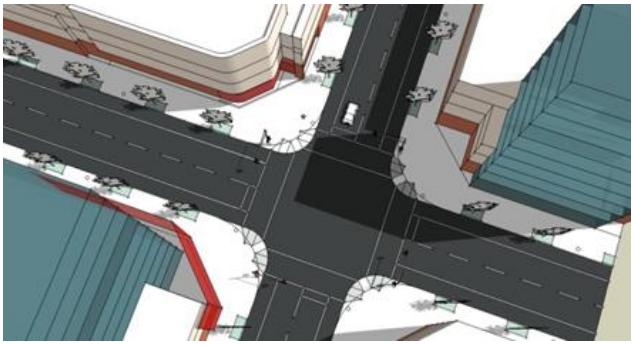
Streetscape Improvements should include wide sidewalks, adequate illumination, landscaping, and street furnishings, to enhance and promote pedestrian activity, and must include implementing the Green Corridors Policy (1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan*, pages 112-117). The green corridors concept designates major highways and through-residential streets that should be safe and attractive for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as vehicles, and preserves the character of those streets that already qualify as green corridors.


*Streetscape improvements*

- Improve Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road with sidewalks where lacking, street lighting where needed, bikeways as recommended by the Plan, trees and planted areas along the curb, and median trees where possible.
- Sidewalks along Connecticut Avenue should include:
  - a 6-foot wide green strip along the curb, with trees centered on the strip; and
  - a minimum 10-foot wide shared use path; or
  - an 8- to 10-foot wide sidewalk.
- Increase vegetation along the corridor to improve visual and environmental quality and to buffer adjacent uses and pedestrians from the high speed and noise of vehicles. The amount of tree canopy through neighborhood roads designated as green corridors should be maintained or enhanced. To promote the creation of a continuous canopy, tree spacing should be ±35 feet on center.



*Transitions*


*Enhanced intersections*

Transitions between commercially zoned properties and immediately adjacent single-family neighborhoods are defined in the Zoning Ordinance. Compatibility requirements, including height compatibility, are described in section 4.1.8.B.

Enhanced intersections refer primarily to how buildings can shape and highlight street crossings linking significant areas, to improve visibility for motorists and safety for pedestrians, while enhancing local character. Enhanced intersections should include:

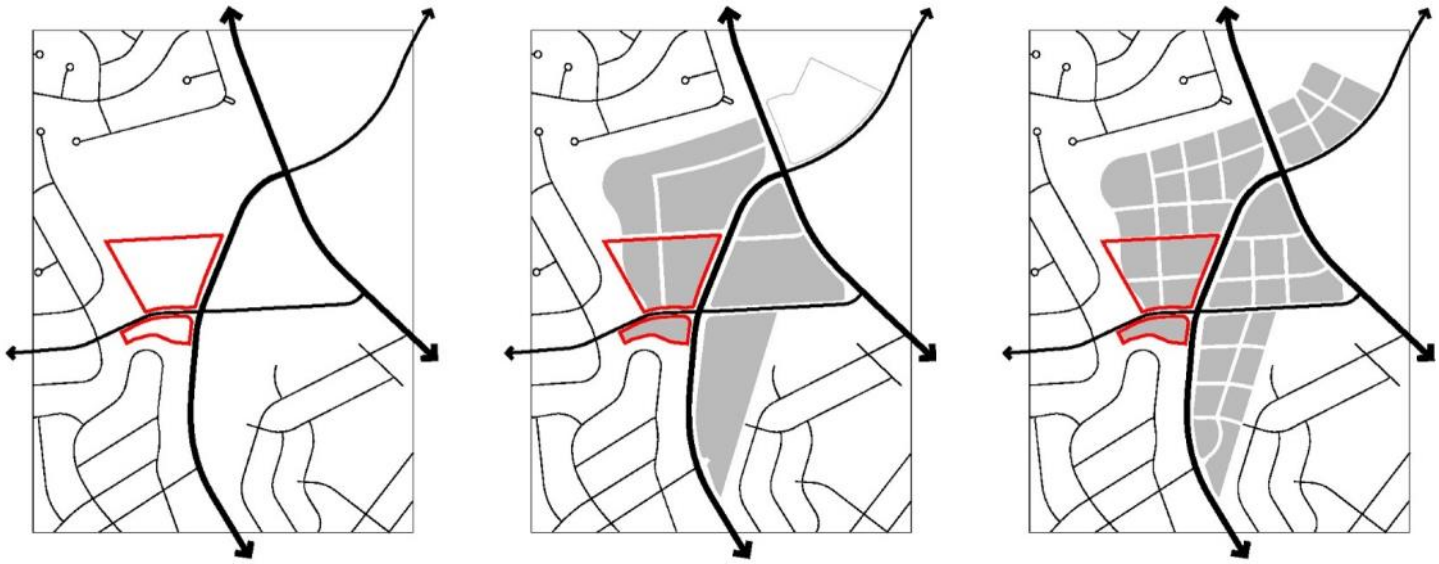
- Where feasible, create street defining buildings at all corners, with entrances and/or activating uses oriented toward or near the corner.
- Sidewalk streetscape elements (including trees) that clear the corner to improve visibility across the intersection for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.
- Building corner placement and articulation that allows adequate space for pedestrians to congregate safely, away from vehicular traffic.
- Consider speed-reducing measures ~~at the road surface such as alternative materials~~ at crosswalks. This would require Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) approval and coordination.

## Looking Forward

The study area is part of a larger commercial cluster, which serves as a neighborhood center for the Aspen Hill area. The scope of this amendment was limited to a group of properties along the western edge of the cluster, so the combined potential of the larger Aspen Hill commercial area was not explored in full detail by this exercise. An update to the 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan* is programmed to begin in July 2015, and will address the larger commercial area. In addition to changing land use dynamics in the region, the approval of priority planning and design studies of the ~~North~~ Georgia Avenue North Bus Rapid Transit line, with a proposed station at Georgia Avenue and Connecticut Avenue, (see Transportation Section) has the potential to catalyze more compact development in this area.

Future studies should include all the commercial properties in the area to assess their joint development potential, and to explore options for improved internal and external connectivity and for providing an interconnected network of spaces for public use. While the design criteria in the Minor Amendment includes considerations for possibly commercial-only development, the zoning recommendation for the current study area would also allow denser and more compact, mixed-use development. Property owners should consider all development scenarios while exploring redevelopment options.

**Figure 2: Illustration of Potential Long-Term Circulation System**



*Existing Grid* *Future Study Area* *Potential Mobility Network*

**Figure 3: Georgia Avenue Study/Urban Design Framework**

*Before* *After*

The 2008 Georgia Avenue Study / Urban Design Framework, prepared by the Planning Department and approved by the Planning Board, illustrated the potential future transition of the Minor Amendment and surrounding areas. The Study recommends that *a future amendment to the Aspen Hill Master Plan should explore the feasibility of creating a compact, mixed-use center on the existing commercially zoned areas at the intersection of Georgia and Connecticut Avenues to create a more walkable center with local retail, community facilities, and additional affordable housing*. (pages 30-31)

# TRANSPORTATION

The Minor Master Plan Amendment area is located on the western side of Connecticut Avenue (MD 185) along both the northern and southern sides of Aspen Hill Road. The portion located north of Aspen Hill Road, mainly occupied by the former Vitro/BAE vacant office building, is accessed by one full-movement access driveway to Aspen Hill Road, which is presently chained closed, and an internal connection to the Home Depot secondary access driveway to Connecticut Avenue.

*Connecticut Avenue (MD 185)* is a six-lane major highway traversing in a northeast-southwest direction along the eastern frontage of the Minor Amendment area. Traffic signals exist at the nearby intersections with Aspen Hill Road and Georgia Avenue (MD 97). The Home Depot secondary access driveway (immediately north of the Vitro/BAE site) is currently undergoing a traffic signal warrant analysis as a condition of approval for the 30,000-square foot Home Depot expansion. This driveway is located approximately 750 feet north of Aspen Hill Road and approximately 850 feet south of the intersection with Georgia Avenue. The posted speed limit on Connecticut Avenue is ~~40~~ 45 MPH. The 2013 annual average daily traffic (AADT) on Connecticut Avenue, as reported by the State Highway Administration (SHA), is approximately 36,300 vehicles per day. This represents a 3.6% decrease from 2011.

*Georgia Avenue (MD 97)* is a six-lane major highway traversing in a northwest-southeast direction approximately a quarter mile east of the properties subject to the Minor Amendment. Traffic signals are in place at the nearby intersections with Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue. The posted speed limit on Georgia Avenue is 45 MPH. The 2013 AADT on Georgia Avenue, as reported by SHA for the segment near ~~Norbeck Road (MD 28)~~ Connecticut Avenue (MD 185), is approximately ~~42,200~~ 43,900 vehicles per day. This represents a 0~~0.6%~~ 3.8% decrease from 2011. Georgia Avenue is planned as a bus-rapid transit (BRT) corridor with a station to be located at the intersection with Connecticut Avenue. SHA, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), and MCDOT is currently considering various design and operations alternatives for this BRT line.

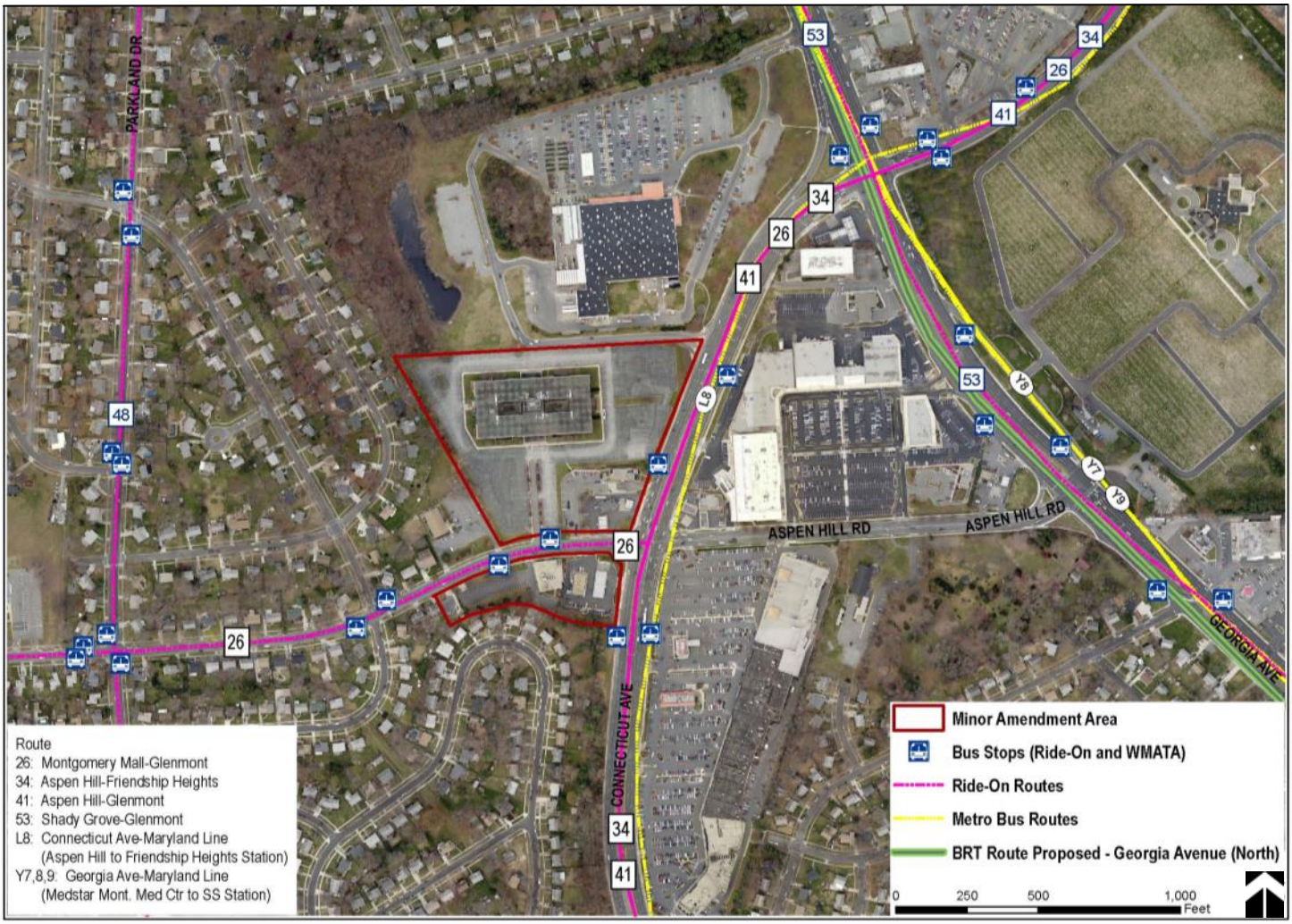
*Aspen Hill Road* is a two-lane arterial west of Connecticut Avenue and a four-lane arterial east of Connecticut Avenue. It traverses in an east-west direction between the northern and southern portions of the Minor Amendment area. Currently, the full-movement primary site access driveway to the Vitro/BAE site is located on Aspen Hill Road approximately 400 feet west of the intersection with Connecticut Avenue. Traffic signals are in place at the nearby intersections with Connecticut Avenue and Georgia Avenue. In 2008, a traffic calming project was undertaken by MCDOT to install neckdowns and on-street parking which effectively reduced the section of Aspen Hill Road west of Connecticut Avenue from four- to two-lanes. According to MCDOT, between 2008 and 2011, the traffic calming project resulted in a reduction of average vehicular speed from 35 MPH to 34 MPH and the number of collisions over a three-year period reduced from 13 to 4. The posted speed limit on Aspen Hill Road is 30 MPH. The 2013 AADT on Aspen Hill Road, along the site frontage, as reported by SHA, is approximately 17,400 vehicles per day. This represents an increase of 0.2% from 2012.

**Existing Bus Service**

The Minor Amendment area is served by a number of bus routes provided by the County's Ride On and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) Metrobus services (see Map 10, following page). Along Connecticut Avenue there are a total of four bus routes, three of which are provided by Ride On (#26, #34, #41) and one route (#L8) by Metrobus. Route #26 also runs east-west along Aspen Hill Road. The bus stops along the segment of Georgia Avenue in the vicinity of the Minor Amendment area are served by a total of five bus routes, one Ride-on (#53) and four Metrobus (#Y5, #Y7, #Y8, #Y9). Depending on time of day, these buses typically run every 20-30 minutes.

There are two bus stops on Connecticut Avenue, between Aspen Hill Road and the shared drive between the Vitro/BAE site and the Home Depot, for which the 2011 SHA *Pedestrian Road Safety Audit (PRSA)* identified relocation to be closer to the intersection with Aspen Hill Road. Based on data collected by MCDOT, Division of Transit Services, more than 300 transit riders are served daily at these two bus stops. Relocation of these bus stops would enhance safety for pedestrians seeking to cross Connecticut Avenue.

**Map 9: Area Transit Services**




## Proposed Bus Rapid Transit on Georgia Avenue

In November 2013, the County Council approved the *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*. The plan recommends 11 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors throughout the County, including the segment of Georgia Avenue through the study area of this Minor Master Plan Amendment, to be developed in order to help ease congestion and improve travel times. According to the plans for this corridor (Corridor 1: Georgia Avenue North) a future BRT station is to be located at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Connecticut Avenue. The MTA, SHA, and MCDOT are in the process of evaluating four different transit and BRT design options that include dedicated lanes for transit vehicles and operational upgrades for traffic signals to give priority to transit vehicles. There is currently no funding source identified for construction of this BRT line, however, the current planning phase is funded.


*Countywide Recommended BRT Corridors*

***NOTE TO READER: TRAFFIC ANALYSIS SECTION HAS MOVED TO APPENDIX C***

**Traffic Analysis**

Since the Vitro/BAE site has been proposed for redevelopment, an analysis was conducted for several possible development scenarios to measure the impacts of increased traffic at three major signalized intersections surrounding the site. Under the recommended CRT Zone or the EOF Zone that would result from remapping the existing Zone pursuant to the Zoning Rewrite project, the Vitro/BAE site could theoretically be redeveloped with a variety of uses including a theoretical maximum of 320,000 square feet of general office, 218,000 square feet of general retail, or 349 multi-family residential units. The following table shows a comparison of trips generated by each of these scenarios, as well as other scenarios such as re-using the existing office building (268,000 square feet) and a 120,000-square foot big box retail building which has been previously discussed by the property owner.

As shown in Table 2, an office development (either re-use of the existing building or maximizing the zoning potential on) would generate the most amount of traffic in the weekday morning peak hour, while a retail use would generate the most traffic during the weekday evening peak hour. Multi-family residential development would generate the least amount of traffic during both weekday morning and evening peak hours.

**Table 2 – Comparison of Vehicle Trip Generation - Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment**

| Weekday Peak Hour | Office | | Residential | Retail * | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | C-O Reuse Exist. Bldg. 268k SF | Max EOF Build-out 320k SF | Max CRT Multi-Fam. 349 Units | Max CRT Build-out 218k SF | Proposed Big Box 120k SF |
| AM | 450 | 660 | 145 | 305 | 185 |
| PM | 405 | 590 | 165 | 1215 | 740 |

Notes: * Retail trips include a pass-by reduction rate of 35%, consistent with the ITE recommended methodology, to account for vehicles that are already on the roadway network in the vicinity of the site that choose to enter the proposed development and then exit the site continuing on their original journey.

The trips shown in Table 2 represent the 'worst-case' scenarios for the Vitro/BAE site. Due to various constraints of the site (i.e., setbacks, parking, slopes) it is unlikely that the maximum allowable square footages for any of the uses could be achieved. Since the property owner has publicly expressed an interest in potentially pursuing a big box retail development, a further detailed trip generation analysis for retail uses was conducted to determine the highest ('worst case') traffic generating methodology. Table 3 below shows a comparison of sources of similar retail-type trip generation data.

**Table 3 – Comparison of Trip Generation Sources for Retail Uses**

| Source | Weekday Peak Hour | Max CRT Build-out 218k SF | Proposed Big Box 120k SF |
|---|---|---|---|
| LATR & TPAR * (General Retail) | AM | 305 | 185 |
| | PM | 1215 | 740 |
| ITE 9th Edition * (#813 Free-Standing Discount Superstore) | AM | 260 | 145 |
| | PM | 615 | 340 |
| Wal-Mart ** (average of 32 sites nationwide) | AM | 235 | 130 |
| | PM | 735 | 405 |

Notes: *Trips shown for Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) & Transportation Policy Area Review (TPAR) Guidelines and Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) sources used a pass-by reduction rate of 35%, consistent with the ITE recommended methodology.
**A pass-by rate of 25% was used consistent with recommendations of the nationwide study.

As shown in Table 3, the highest trip generating rates for a retail use comes from the Planning Department's Local Area Transportation Review and Transportation Policy Area Review (LATR & TPAR) Guidelines. These rates were used in the following traffic analysis conducted by Staff to represent 'worst case' retail development scenarios.

The standard methodology in Montgomery County for determining intersection congestion is to calculate an intersection's critical lane volume (CLV). The CLV measures the traffic throughput of an intersection by determining the amount of conflicting traffic movements in the intersection. In the Aspen Hill Policy Area, the LATR & TPAR Guidelines state that intersections must operate at a CLV below 1475 in order for a proposed development to be approved without intersection improvements or other traffic mitigation. Table 4 shows a comparison of CLVs at nearby study intersections under the existing conditions, background (no build), and development (retail, residential, office) scenarios.

This traffic analysis assumed for all scenarios that the existing primary access driveway for the Vitro/BAE site to Aspen Hill Road would be converted to a right-in/right-out driveway and primary access would be shifted to the existing shared Home Depot driveway onto Connecticut Avenue.

**Table 4 – Critical Lane Volume (CLV) Comparison – Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment**

| Intersection | Peak Hour | Existing Currently Vacant | No Build Remains Vacant | Office | | Residential | Retail | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | C-O Reuse Exist. Bldg. 268k SF | Max EOF Build-out 320k SF | Max CRT Multi-Fam. 349 Units | Max CRT Build-out 218k SF | Proposed Big Box 120k SF | Max SF w/ Accept. CLVs 170k SF |
| Georgia Ave & Connecticut Ave | AM | 980 | 985 | 1005 | 1010 | 1000 | 1010 | 1005 | 1010 |
| | PM | 1095 | 1100 | 1140 | 1155 | 1105 | 1205 | 1165 | 1185 |
| Connecticut Ave & Aspen Hill Rd | AM | 1300 | 1315 | 1430 | 1480 | 1340 | 1385 | 1355 | 1375 |
| | PM | 1120 | 1130 | 1245 | 1300 | 1175 | 1540 | 1380 | 1470 |
| Georgia Ave & Aspen Hill Rd | AM | 935 | 940 | 1025 | 1065 | 970 | 1010 | 980 | 1010 |
| | PM | 1125 | 1130 | 1245 | 1300 | 1160 | 1415 | 1305 | 1365 |

Notes: CLV standard is 1475 in the Aspen Hill Policy Area.

CLV analysis assumed right-in/out access to Aspen Hill Road and primary access driveway on Connecticut Avenue for all scenarios.

As shown in Table 4 above, except for the theoretical maximum build-out of retail and office uses, all intersections in all other scenarios would operate below the CLV threshold of 1475. In the cases of maximum general office and maximum general retail, the only intersection to exceed the 1475 threshold in either of the weekday peak hours is the Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road intersection. In the maximum office build-out scenario, this intersection would barely exceed the 1475 threshold with a CLV of 1480. In the maximum retail build-out scenario, this intersection would exceed the 1475 threshold with a CLV of 1540. As noted, the maximum square footages are unlikely to be achieved due to site constraints and the highest trip generation rates were used for the retail uses to present the most conservative ('worst case') analysis of traffic conditions.

~~An additional retail scenario was analyzed to determine the 1475 CLV 'tipping point' for retail development. The analysis shows that the site could develop with approximately 170,000 square feet of retail without the nearby intersections exceeding the 1475 CLV threshold during either of the AM or PM peak hours. This 170,000 square foot figure could be adjusted higher or lower based on changes to trip generation assumptions, distribution of site traffic, or location/design of access driveways.~~

### Pedestrian Safety

~~Crash data from SHA for the intersection of Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue does not indicate any conclusive collision patterns. There were two reported collisions with pedestrians between 2005 and 2012. Collisions with pedestrians are typically only reported if they result in a serious injury or fatality.~~

In December 2011, SHA released the *Pedestrian Road Safety Audit (PRSA)* Review Report for the 0.6 mile section of Connecticut Avenue (MD 185) between Independence Street and Georgia Avenue (MD 97) including the roadway segment adjacent to ~~in the vicinity of~~ the properties subject to this Plan ~~Minor Amendment~~. The PRSA report evaluated collision data from 2005 to 2009 as well as SHA staff field observations and ~~The study~~ made numerous recommendations to improve pedestrian safety. Over the five year study period, SHA reported a total of 23 collisions between vehicles and bicyclists or pedestrians, resulting in 22 injuries (of which 3 were fatal). The study identified uncontrolled midblock crossings (i.e., not crossing at intersections due to pedestrian impatience with long walking distances and traffic signal cycle lengths) and the presence of many closely spaced commercial driveways as the primary contributing factors to the frequency of collisions in this area. To address these issues, as well as other concerns regarding design, continuity, accessibility, and overall quality of pedestrian infrastructure, the PRSA report recommends various short-term, intermediate, and long-term improvements. The highlights include:

- ~~Reconstruct the Home Depot secondary access driveway to Connecticut Avenue to eliminate channelized islands.~~
- Consolidate driveways to businesses along Connecticut Avenue.
- Construct missing segments of sidewalks along Connecticut Avenue.
- Upgrade handicapped ramps to ADA standards along Connecticut Avenue.
- Improve pedestrian signage and crosswalks along Connecticut Avenue.
- Reduce corner turn radii at the intersection of Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue.
- Relocate bus stop on Connecticut Avenue closer to the intersection with Aspen Hill Road that is served by four bus routes.
- Install a concrete median barrier with pedestrian refuge along Connecticut Avenue.
- Significantly reduce the radius of the free right-turn ramp from Georgia Avenue to Connecticut Avenue.
- Reconstruct the Home Depot secondary access driveway to Connecticut Avenue to eliminate channelized islands.
- Install high-visibility crosswalks where they are currently faded or missing.

### ~~Transportation Policy Area Review (TPAR)~~

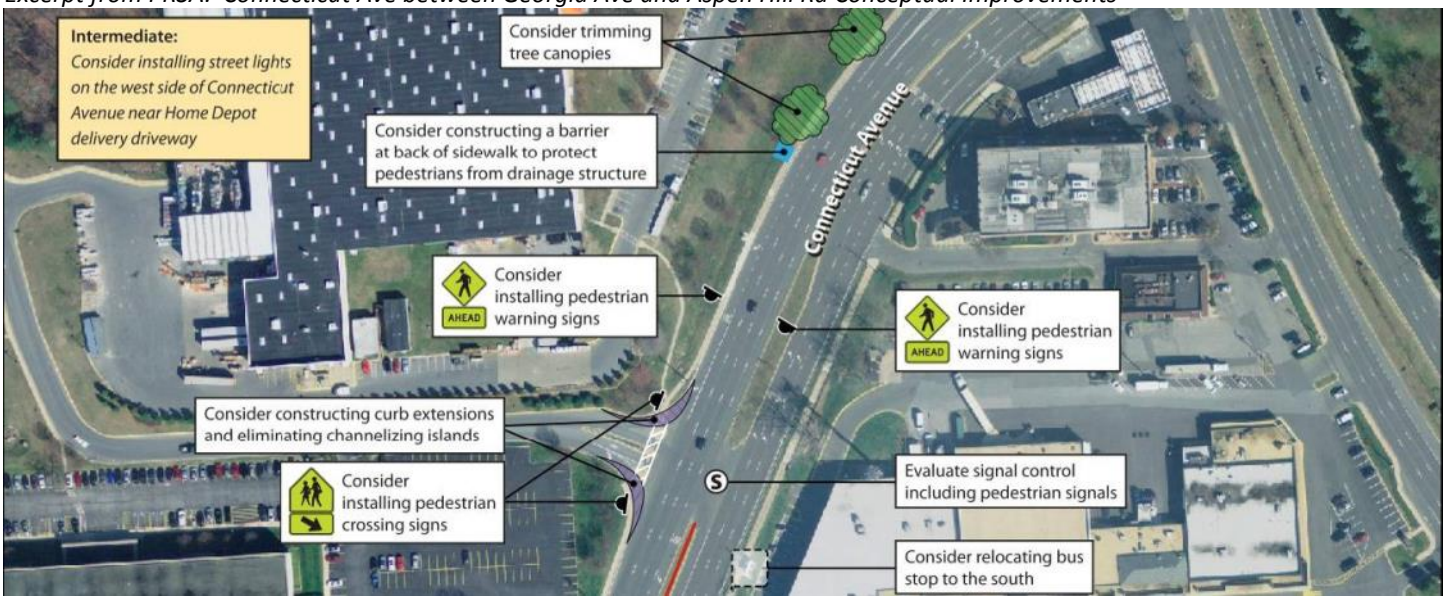
~~Per the LATR & TPAR Guidelines, the Aspen Hill Policy Area is deemed to have both 'adequate' roadway and transit capacity. Therefore, developments in Aspen Hill are not subject to the additional impact tax for transportation improvements.~~

**Transportation Recommendations**

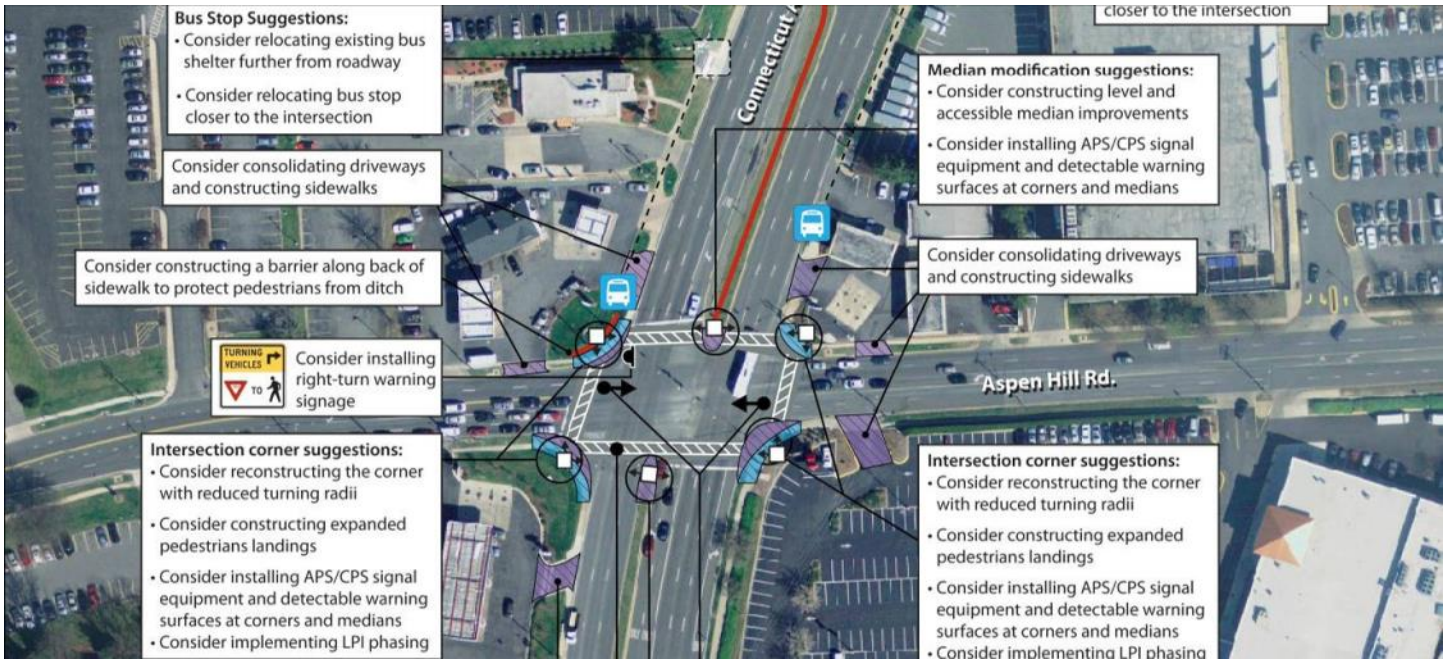
Based on the traffic analysis, site observations, community feedback, and studies conducted by other transportation agencies, this Plan recommends the following:

- Access to Aspen Hill Road from the Vitro/BAE site should be provided via a right-in/right-out driveway. This will prevent entering/exiting left-turning vehicles from worsening the existing back-ups on eastbound Aspen Hill Road from the nearby traffic signal at Connecticut Avenue. Additionally, on the northern side of Aspen Hill Road between the Vitro/BAE site driveway and Connecticut Avenue traffic signal there are already three other curb cuts (two for the Shell gas station, one for Dunkin Donuts) in the short span of approximately 400 feet. This driveway should serve as secondary access and be shifted as far west as possible at the time the property is redeveloped.
- Primary access to the Vitro/BAE site should be provided via the existing full-movement Home Depot access driveway to Connecticut Avenue. A traffic signal should be installed at this intersection to improve both traffic flow and pedestrian safety~~, subject to approval by SHA~~.
- The SHA recommendations for improved access management and improved pedestrian safety (as proposed in detail in the 2011 PRSA Review Report) should be implemented along both Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road in the vicinity of the Minor Amendment area ~~and~~ including ~~at~~ the intersection with Aspen Hill Road.
- When/if the Vitro/BAE site and/or nearby properties are redeveloped (notably Dunkin Donuts and the Shell gas station) attention should be given to consolidating site driveways and creating interparcel access between properties. This will require future coordination between the developers, The Planning Department, and MCDOT.
- The existing transition from four-lanes to two-lanes heading westbound on Aspen Hill Road should be shifted as far west as feasibly possible to provide more merging room for westbound vehicles and more stacking space for eastbound vehicles queuing from the traffic signal at Connecticut Avenue.
- The southbound free-right ramp from Georgia Avenue to Connecticut Avenue should ultimately be removed. Instead, southbound right turns should come to the traffic signal with all other traffic. Removal of the free-right ramp will slow traffic traveling southbound on Connecticut Avenue by the Vitro/BAE site.
- The 2005 *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan* recommends a shared use path along the western side of Connecticut Avenue (reference code SP-27) to connect to the regional network including the Matthew Henson Trail. This shared use path should be constructed commensurate with redevelopment of the Vitro/BAE site.

*Excerpt from PRSA: Connecticut Ave between Georgia Ave and Aspen Hill Rd Conceptual Improvements*




*Excerpt from the PRSA: Connecticut Ave at Aspen Hill Rd Conceptual Improvements*




*Source*: Pedestrian Road Safety Audit Review Report (PRSA), Connecticut Ave from Independence St to MD 97, MCDOT and SHA, Dec 2011

# ENVIRONMENT

The 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan* area is located in the Turkey Branch subwatershed of the Rock Creek watershed. The area is highly urbanized and completely developed with auto-centric uses. Most of the development occurred at a time before stormwater management regulations were in place. There are almost no natural resources or environmental functions remaining and there are no sensitive areas to protect.

This Plan envisions more sustainable development within the footprint of the existing development. Incorporating new development into the existing developed area will reduce land consumption and vehicle miles travelled, improve our carbon footprint, and water and air quality. While the Amendment area is currently more than 90% impervious with very little stormwater management or tree canopy, redevelopment provides the opportunity to improve environmental conditions and create a greener community.

Recommendations focus on increasing the livability of the community while optimizing the land use within the existing development footprint. Implementation will occur through the redevelopment process.

### Carbon Footprint Analysis

Montgomery County Bill number 32-07 establishes a goal to stop increasing greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2010, and to reduce emissions to 20 percent of 2005 levels by the year 2050. There are three main components to greenhouse gas emissions: embodied emissions, building energy emissions, and transportation emissions. Embodied emissions are emissions that are created through the extraction, processing, transportation, construction and disposal of building materials as well as emissions created through landscape disturbance (by both soil disturbance and changes in above ground biomass). Building energy emissions are created in the normal operation of a building including lighting, heating cooling and ventilation, operation of computers and appliances, etc. Transportation emissions are released by the operation of cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, etc.

While it is not possible to quantify the carbon footprint of this Plan due to the small geographic area, it is possible to qualitatively analyze the impacts of the recommended land uses on the County's carbon footprint. The embodied emissions contribution to total greenhouse gas emissions will increase, due to the demolition of existing structures and construction of new structures. Newly developed buildings have decreased energy emissions due to substantial advances in energy efficiency. Total transportation emissions will increase because the majority of the current plan area is currently occupied by a vacant building. Mixed use development would typically have a lower carbon footprint than redevelopment under the current zoning due to the reduction of single-function automobile trips.

### Recommendations

Increase tree canopy cover by:

- Using advanced planting techniques such as constructed soil and interconnected tree pits to increase the soil area for tree roots for new streets and sidewalks.
- As feasible, satisfy Forest Conservation requirements on the Vitro/BAE site through the use of canopy credit, in order to increase tree cover in the planning area.
- Establishing a minimum of 30% tree canopy cover for new surface parking.

Minimize and mitigate for impervious surfaces by:

- Using Environmental Site Design to reduce runoff from all impervious surfaces, including roofs, terraces, and paving.
- ~~Building new streets as "green streets" with urban stormwater management facilities in the right-of-way.~~

Reduce energy consumption by:

- Promoting non-auto transportation by providing for pedestrian and bicycle linkages and incorporating transit stops within new development.
- Integrating geothermal systems to reduce energy consumption and allowing and encouraging wind energy conversion systems and large district energy systems.

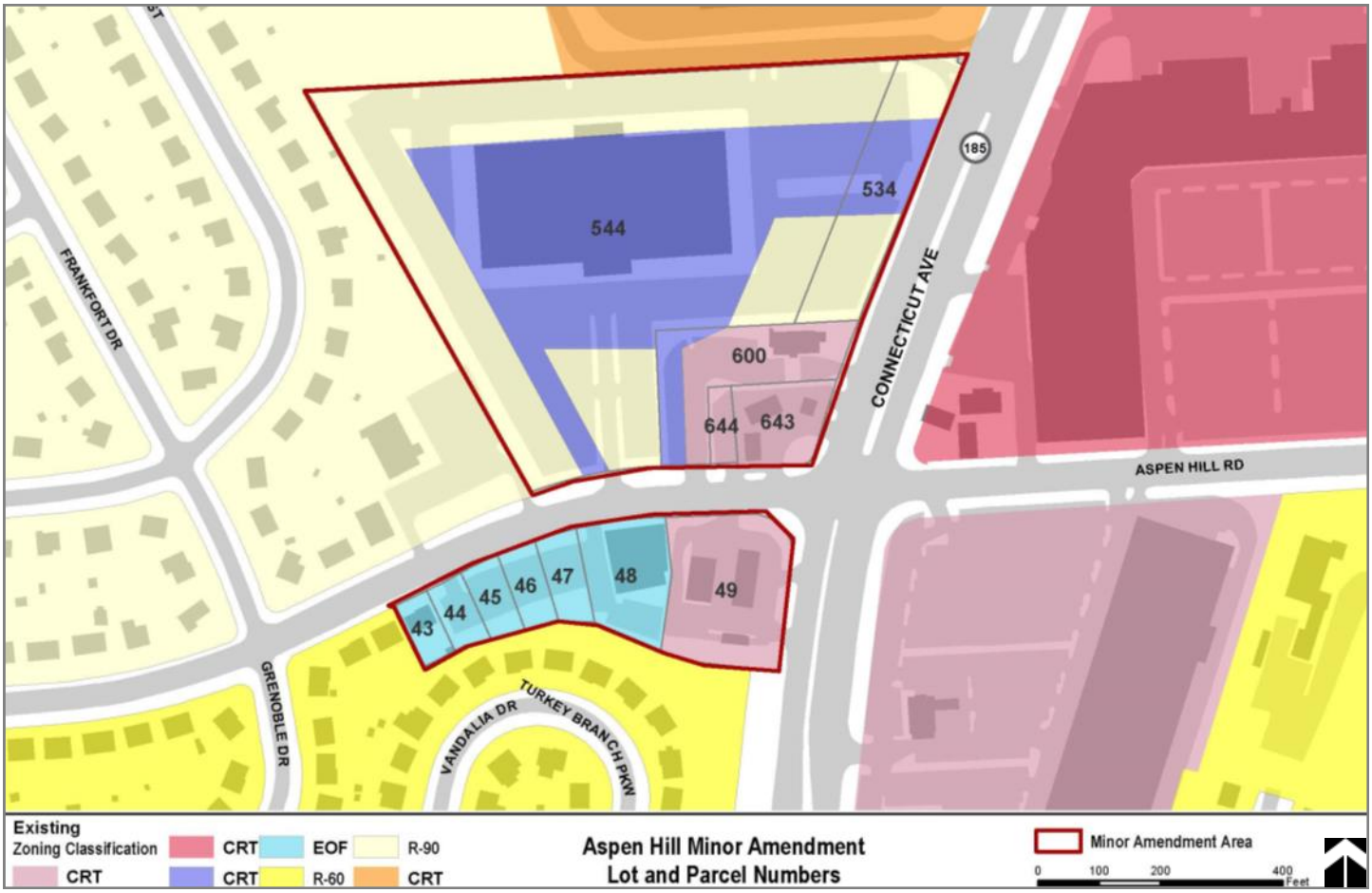
## IMPLEMENTATION

This section outlines those steps necessary to implement the zoning recommendations of this Amendment. After the adoption of this Plan, the Zoning recommendations will be implemented through a Sectional Map Amendment.

### Proposed Zoning

The following table summarizes the zones proposed in this Minor Amendment:

| Property | Size (acres) | Existing Land Use | ~~Existing Zone~~ | ~~Conversion~~ Existing Zone | Proposed Zone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parcel 544 | 8.96 | Office (vacant Vitro/BAE) | ~~C-O; R-90~~ | EOF-3.0 (H-60); R-90 | CRT-1.5 (C-0.5 R-1.0 H-60) |
| Parcel 534 | 1.07 | Parking | ~~C-O; R-90~~ | EOF-3.0 (H-60); R-90 | CRT-1.5 (C-0.5 R-1.0 H-60) |
| Parcel 600 | 0.97 | Retail (Dunkin Donuts) | ~~C-1; C-0~~ | CRT-~~1.0~~ 0.75 (C-0.75 R-~~0.5~~ 0.25 H-45); EOF-3.0 (H-60) | CRT-1.5 (C-0.5 R-1.0 H-60) |
| Parcel 644 | 0.12 | Parking | ~~C-1~~ | CRT-~~1.0~~ 0.75 (C-0.75 R-~~0.5~~ 0.25 H-45) | CRT-1.5 (C-0.5 R-1.0 H-60) |
| Parcel 643 | 0.46 | Retail (Shell Gas) | ~~C-1~~ | CRT-~~1.0~~ 0.75 (C-0.75 R-~~0.5~~ 0.25 H-45) | CRT-1.5 (C-0.5 R-1.0 H-60) |
| Lot 49 | 1.03 | Retail (Sunoco Gas) | ~~C-1~~ | CRT-~~1.0~~ 0.75 (C-0.75 R-~~0.5~~ 0.25 H-35) | CRT-0.5 (C-0.5 R-0.25 H-45) |
| Lot 48 | 0.53 | Office (Aspen View Center) | ~~O-M~~ | EOF-1.5 (H-75) | EOF-1.5 (H-45) |
| Lot 47 | 0.19 | Parking | ~~O-M~~ | EOF-1.5 (H-60) | EOF-1.5 (H-45) |
| Lot 46 | 0.17 | Parking | ~~O-M~~ | EOF-1.5 (H-60) | EOF-1.5 (H-45) |
| Lot 45 | 0.16 | Parking | ~~O-M~~ | EOF-1.5 (H-60) | EOF-1.5 (H-45) |
| Lot 44 | 0.14 | Parking | ~~O-M~~ | EOF-1.5 (H-60) | EOF-1.5 (H-45) |
| Lot 43 | 0.14 | Residential Detached/Office | ~~O-M~~ | EOF-1.5 (H-60) | EOF-1.5 (H-45) |



# ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

**County Council**

Craig Rice, President
George Leventhal, Vice-President
Phil Andrews
Roger Berliner
Cherri Branson
Marc Elrich
Nancy Floreen
Nancy Navarro
Hans Riemer

**County Executive**

Isiah Leggett

**The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission**

Elizabeth M. Hewlett, Chair
Casey Anderson, Vice Chair (*effective August 13, 2014*)

**Commissioners**

Montgomery County Planning Board*
Casey Anderson, Chair ~~(*effective August 13, 2014*)~~
Marye Wells-Harley, Vice Chair
Norman Dreyfuss
Natali Fani-Gonzalez
Amy Presley

Prince George's County Planning Board
Elizabeth M. Hewlett, Chair
Dorothy F. Bailey, Vice Chair
Manuel R. Geraldo
John P. Shoaff
A. Shuanise Washington

~~**The Montgomery County Planning Board that approved the Public Hearing Draft Plan on July 10, 2014 consisted of:**~~

~~Françoise M. Carrier, Chair~~
~~Marye Wells-Harley, Vice Chair~~
~~Casey Anderson~~
~~Norman Dreyfuss~~
~~Amy Presley~~

## THE PLAN PROCESS

A plan provides comprehensive recommendations for the use of publicly and privately owned 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 should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when making land use decisions.

The STAFF DRAFT PLAN is prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department for presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Planning Board reviews the Staff Draft Plan, makes preliminary changes as appropriate, and approves the Plan for public hearing. After the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

The PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT PLAN is the 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 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 relevant Council 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.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gwen Wright, Director
Rose Krasnow, Deputy Director

**Project Team**

*Area 2 Division*

Glenn Kreger, Chief
Nancy Sturgeon, Master Planner Supervisor
Andrea Gilles (Lead Planner)
Luis Estrada Cepero, Urban Design
Amy Lindsey, Environment
Ed Axler, Transportation
Aaron Zimmerman, Transportation

*Research and Special Projects Division*

Valdis Lazdins, Chief
Richard Liu
Lisa Tate
Pam Zorich

*Park Planning, Department of Parks*

Brooke Farquhar
Charles Kines

*Management Services*

Bridget Schwiesow, Communications Manager
Kevin Leonard

*Legal*

Carol Rubin, Associate General Counsel
Nicholas Dumais, Associate General Counsel


Montgomery County Planning Department
M-NCPPC
MontgomeryPlanning.org

ATTACHMENT 5

# APPENDIX C

# Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment

## Transportation Analysis

Prepared by:

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Montgomery County Planning Department
Area 2 Planning Division

**Traffic Analysis**

Since the Vitro/BAE site has been proposed for redevelopment, an analysis was conducted for several possible development scenarios to measure the impacts of increased traffic at three major signalized intersections surrounding the site. Under the recommended CRT Zone or the existing EOF ~~Zone that would result from remapping the existing Zone pursuant to the Zoning Rewrite project~~, the Vitro/BAE site could theoretically be redeveloped with a variety of uses including a theoretical maximum of 320,000 square feet of general office, 218,000 square feet of general retail, or 349 multi-family residential units. The following table shows a comparison of trips generated by each of these scenarios, as well as other scenarios such as re-using the existing Vitro/BAE office building (268,000 square feet) and a 120,000-square foot big box retail building which has been previously discussed by the property owner.

As shown in Table 1 ~~2~~, an office development (either re-use of the existing building or maximizing the zoning potential on) would generate the most amount of traffic in the weekday morning peak hour, while a retail use would generate the most traffic during the weekday evening peak hour. Multi-family residential development would generate the least amount of traffic during both weekday morning and evening peak hours.

**Table 1 ~~2~~ – Comparison of Vehicle Trip Generation - Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment**

| | Office * | | Residential | Retail *** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Weekday Peak Hour | ~~C O~~ Reuse Exist. Bldg. 268k SF 1.20 FAR | Max EOF Build-out 320k SF 1.5 FAR ** | Max CRT Multi-Fam. 349 Units 1.0 FAR | Max CRT Build-out 218k SF 0.50 FAR | Proposed Big Box 120k SF 0.27 FAR |
| AM | 450 | 660 | 145 | 305 | 185 |
| PM | 405 | 590 | 165 | 1215 | 740 |

Notes:
* Office square footages were calculated based on the existing approximately 5-acre EOF Zoned portion of the Vitro/BAE property only. Residential and retail sizes were calculated based on the future consolidated 10.3–acre Vitro/BAE property.
** In the remapped EOF zoning district on the property, 1.5 FAR is the baseline maximum amount of developable office space with an option to achieve a 3.0 FAR if certain criteria are met.
*** Retail trips include a pass-by reduction rate of 35%, consistent with the ITE recommended methodology, to account for vehicles that are already on the roadway network in the vicinity of the site that choose to enter the proposed development and then exit the site continuing on their original journey.

The trips shown in Table 1 ~~2~~ represent the 'worst-case' scenarios for the Vitro/BAE site. Due to various constraints of the site (i.e., setbacks, parking, slopes) it is unlikely that the maximum allowable square footages for any of the uses could be achieved. Since the property owner has publicly expressed an interest in potentially pursuing a big box retail development, a further detailed trip generation analysis for retail uses was conducted to determine the highest ('worst case') traffic generating methodology.

Table 2 ~~3~~ below shows a comparison of sources of similar retail-type trip generation data.

**Table 2 ~~3~~ – Comparison of Trip Generation Sources for Retail Uses**

| Source | Weekday Peak Hour | Max CRT Build-out 218k SF | Proposed Big Box 120k SF |
|---|---|---|---|
| LATR & TPAR * (General Retail) | AM | 305 | 185 |
| | PM | 1215 | 740 |
| ITE 9th Edition * (#813 Free-Standing Discount Superstore) | AM | 260 | 145 |
| | PM | 615 | 340 |
| Wal-Mart ** (average of 32 sites nationwide) | AM | 235 | 130 |
| | PM | 735 | 405 |

Notes: * Trips shown for Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) & Transportation Policy Area Review (TPAR) Guidelines and Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) sources used a pass-by reduction rate of 35%, consistent with the ITE recommended methodology.

** A pass-by rate of 25% was used consistent with recommendations of the nationwide study.

As shown in Table 2 ~~3~~, the highest trip generating rates for a retail use comes from the Planning Department's Local Area Transportation Review and Transportation Policy Area Review (LATR & TPAR) Guidelines. These rates were used in the following traffic analysis conducted by Staff to represent 'worst case' retail development scenarios.

The standard methodology in Montgomery County for determining intersection congestion is to calculate an intersection's critical lane volume (CLV). The CLV measures the traffic throughput of an intersection by determining the amount of conflicting traffic movements in the intersection. In the Aspen Hill Policy Area, the LATR & TPAR Guidelines state that intersections must operate at a CLV below 1475 in order for a proposed development to be approved without intersection improvements or other traffic mitigation. Table 3 ~~4~~ on the following page shows a comparison of CLVs at nearby study intersections under the existing conditions, background (no build), and development (retail, residential, office) scenarios.

This traffic analysis assumed for all scenarios that the existing primary access driveway for the Vitro/BAE site to Aspen Hill Road would be converted to a right-in/right-out driveway and primary access would be shifted to the existing shared Home Depot driveway onto Connecticut Avenue.

**Table 3 4 – Critical Lane Volume (CLV) Comparison - Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment**

| Intersection | Peak Hour | Existing (2014) Currently Vacant | No Build* (2020) Remains Vacant | Office ** | | Residential | Retail | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | C-O Reuse Exist. Bldg. (2020) 268k SF | Max EOF Build-out (2020) 320k SF *** | Max CRT Multi-Fam (2020) 349 Units | Max CRT Build-out (2020) 218k SF | Proposed Big Box (2020) 120k SF | Max SF w/ Accept. CLVs (2020) 170k SF |
| Georgia Ave & Connecticut Ave | AM | 980 | 985 | 1005 | 1010 | 1000 | 1010 | 1005 | 1010 |
| | PM | 1095 | 1100 | 1140 | 1155 | 1105 | 1205 | 1165 | 1185 |
| Connecticut Ave & Aspen Hill Rd | AM | 1300 | 1315 | 1430 | 1480 | 1340 | 1385 | 1355 | 1375 |
| | PM | 1120 | 1130 | 1245 | 1300 | 1175 | 1540 | 1380 | 1470 |
| Georgia Ave & Aspen Hill Rd | AM | 935 | 940 | 1025 | 1065 | 970 | 1010 | 980 | 1010 |
| | PM | 1125 | 1130 | 1245 | 1300 | 1160 | 1415 | 1305 | 1365 |

Notes: CLV standard is 1475 in the Aspen Hill Policy Area.
CLV analysis assumed right-in/out access to Aspen Hill Road and primary access driveway (with a traffic signal) on Connecticut Avenue for all scenarios.

* Pipeline projects assumed to be constructed by 2020 and factored into traffic analysis include Home Depot Expansion, Homecrest 2, and Layhill Overlook.

** Office square footages were calculated based on the existing approximately 5-acre EOF Zoned portion of the Vitro/BAE property only. Residential and retail sizes were calculated based on the future consolidated 10.3–acre Vitro/BAE property.

*** In the remapped EOF zoning district on the site, 1.5 FAR is the baseline maximum amount of developable office space with an option to achieve a 3.0 FAR if certain criteria are met.

As shown in Table 3 4 above, except for the theoretical maximum build-out of retail and office uses, all intersections in all other scenarios would operate below the CLV threshold of 1475. In the cases of maximum general office and maximum general retail, the only intersection to exceed the 1475 threshold in either of the weekday peak hours is the Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road intersection. In the maximum office build-out scenario, this intersection would barely exceed the 1475 threshold with a CLV of 1480. In the maximum retail build-out scenario, this intersection would exceed the 1475 threshold with a CLV of 1540. As noted, the maximum square footages are unlikely to be achieved due to site constraints and the highest trip generation rates were used for the retail uses to present the most conservative ('worst case') analysis of traffic conditions.

An additional retail scenario was analyzed to determine the 1475 CLV 'tipping point' for retail development. The analysis shows that the site could develop with approximately 170,000 square feet of retail without the nearby intersections exceeding the 1475 CLV threshold during either of the AM or PM peak hours. This 170,000 square foot figure could be adjusted higher or lower based on changes to trip generation assumptions, distribution of site traffic, or location/design of access driveways.

# ATTACHMENT 6

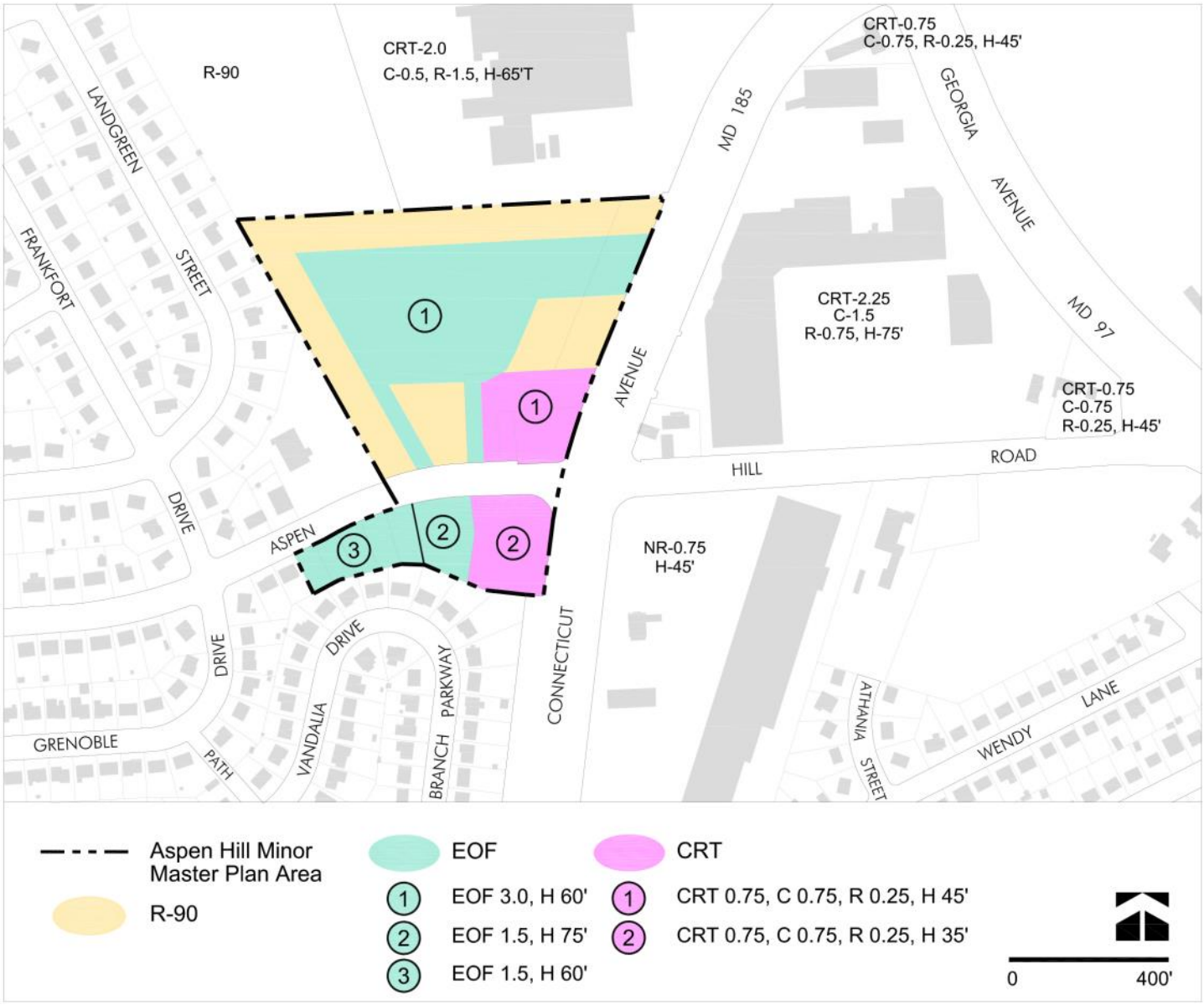
## Neighborhood Retail (NR) Zoning Option

### Summary

At the second worksession on October 30, 2014, the Planning Board requested additional information to clarify the alternate NR Zoning option. The information in this attachment includes maps and text to reflect the main edits to the Public Hearing Draft, proposed by staff for Planning Board consideration. Specifically:

Map 1: Existing Zoning (provided for comparison purposes)
Map 2: Proposed NR Zoning Option 1
Map 3: Proposed NR Zoning Option 2
Text: Proposed Design Criteria and Design Requirements for NR Zoned properties
(text on this document, page 5, would replace text on page 17 of the Public Hearing Draft. All other pages in the Design Guidelines section would remain.)

**Map 1: Existing Zoning**



**Map 2: Proposed NR Zoning Option 1**


**Map 2: Proposed NR Zoning Option 2**

## DESIGN CRITERIA *NOTE TO READER: THIS PAGE IN THE CURRENT DRAFT ( PAGE 17) WOULD BE REPLACED BY TEXT ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE*

~~The commercial center of Aspen Hill is a fragmented, suburban district where most of the land is dedicated to low intensity uses with vast amounts of surface parking. Although mature, the district remains under-developed, but with potential to yield a greater mix of uses over time, for the benefit of surrounding communities. As redevelopment occurs, the area presents a good opportunity for applying strong urban design principles and sustainable and low impact development to improve neighborhood connectivity, create new community open space and, by promoting distinctive architecture, define a stronger local identity. Connectivity is an important goal of this Plan. As feasible, there should be internal vehicular and pedestrian connections between properties that will encourage dispersal of movement throughout the Plan area.~~

~~The recommendations in this Amendment will create conditions that will allow for this type of connected, mixed-use development to occur, but achieving these goals will likely be incremental. Early development phases should set the stage to achieve longer-term goals.~~

~~To promote the goals of this Plan, redevelopment should achieve the following:~~

- ~~Promote the creation of frontages along Connecticut Avenue. Locate buildings as close to Connecticut Avenue as possible. This will begin to establish a street wall along this major thoroughfare and to give maximum visibility to new uses.~~
- ~~Locate the front entrances and primary façades of new buildings on Connecticut Avenue or Aspen Hill Road, as appropriate, or the shared entrance drive from Connecticut Avenue. Minimally, one entrance per building façade, per user, that fronts on a street or open space should be incorporated into building design. Enhance the area's identity and character by providing architectural elements that articulate the façade and provide visual interest.~~
- ~~Provide visual improvements that direct pedestrians to available transit options, and that clarify internal circulation patterns for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.~~
- ~~All connections should have adequate amenities for pedestrians, including wide sidewalks, green planting strips between pedestrians and vehicular areas, and significant tree planting.~~
- ~~Minimize the visibility of loading docks and locate them to have minimal impact on pedestrian activities. Loading docks and service areas must not front on Connecticut Avenue.~~
- ~~Consolidate vehicular entrances at the major roads.~~
- ~~Locate surface parking areas behind the front building line; include significant planting areas and highly visible landscaped pedestrian walks connecting uses with enhanced pedestrian areas along the public domain.~~

*Shared use path, structures to road, façade articulation*

*Landscaped pedestrian paths between uses*

## DESIGN CRITERIA

The commercial center of Aspen Hill is a fragmented, suburban district where most of the land is dedicated to low intensity uses with vast amounts of surface parking. Although mature, the district remains under-developed, but with potential to yield a greater mix of uses over time, for the benefit of surrounding communities.

### Purpose

As redevelopment occurs, the Plan area presents an opportunity to apply sustainable urban design principles to improve neighborhood connectivity, create new public open space, and define a local identity through distinctive architecture. Connectivity is a particularly important goal of this Plan. As feasible, there should be internal vehicular and pedestrian connections between properties that will encourage dispersal of movement throughout the Plan area. More intense redevelopment should be focused toward Connecticut Avenue, and projects adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods should use compatible building mass, height, setback, and façade articulation to create appropriate transitions to the residential neighborhoods.

### Design Requirements

The properties recommended for NR zoning within this Plan area may be appropriate for CRT Floating Zones as the area further evolves. To facilitate the potential transition of this area to CRT zoning, any redevelopment of the properties recommended for NR zoning must incorporate certain mandatory design elements. Under no circumstances should such properties redevelop without incorporating all of the following requirements:

1. **Public Realm Enhancement:** Orient building uses to activate pedestrian areas. Along all connections, provide pedestrian amenities, including wide sidewalks, green planting strips between pedestrians and vehicular areas, significant tree planting, street lighting, and street furnishings. Integrate bikeway facilities recommended by the 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan*.
2. **Building Placement**: All buildings must front on a street or public open space, with a preference for concentrating new development along Connecticut Avenue to establish a street presence along this major thoroughfare and give maximum visibility to new uses. All new buildings must comply with the following requirements:
    - At least 50% of the front facade of any building fronting on Connecticut Avenue or Aspen Hill Road must be within 35 feet of the right-of-way on which the building fronts.
    - At least 50% of the front facade of any other building must be within 20 feet of the street or public open space on which the building fronts.
    - Any building at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road must front on either Connecticut Avenue or Aspen Hill Road.
    - On the north side of Aspen Hill Road, non-residential buildings may not be constructed within 100 feet of an adjacent lot improved with a detached house.
3. **Building Entrances:** Provide at least one publicly-accessible entrance on every building façade facing a street or public open space. If two adjoining façades each front on a street or public open space, one entrance at the intersection of these façades may satisfy this requirement for both façades. Any publicly-accessible entrance at a location other than a street or public open space must be accessible via well-designed pedestrian connections to adjacent streets and public open spaces.
4. **Façade articulation:** Provide architectural elements to articulate façades, create visual interest, and to enhance the community's identity and character. Articulation strategies may include (but are not limited to) changes in plane, alternative materials, building transparency, incorporation of public art, and incorporation of green elements (e.g. green walls). Building façades may not include blank walls greater than 35 feet in length.
5. **Parking and Loading Areas:** Surface parking areas must not abut the Connecticut Avenue or Aspen Hill Road rights-of-way and must be set back behind the front building lines of buildings fronting on those rights-of-ways. All parking areas must incorporate significant planting areas and accessible pedestrian walks that connect to enhanced pedestrian areas along the public domain. Loading docks and service areas must not front on or be directly accessible from Connecticut Avenue.
6. **Open Space:** Consolidate public use space allocated to meet zoning requirements in centralized locations to create substantial urban space for neighborhood use.