



MCPB
Item No.
Date: 09.15.16

Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan Amendment Scope of Work

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Completed: 09.08.16

Description

Scope of Work for the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan Amendment.

Staff Recommendation

Approve the Scope of Work.

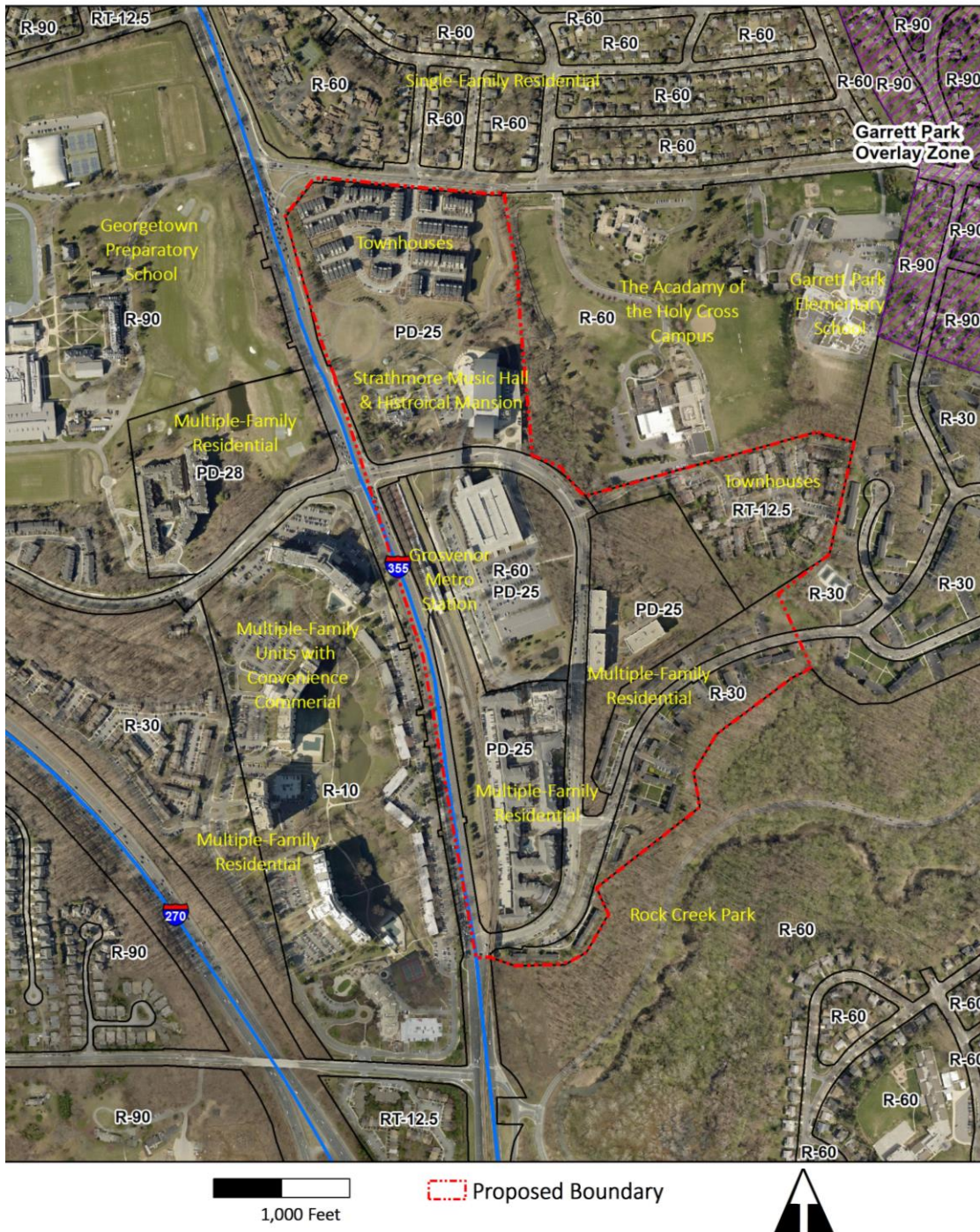
Summary

The Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan Amendment comprises approximately 105 acres located in North Bethesda. This memorandum presents the Scope of Work for the minor master plan, including the proposed boundaries, planning framework, outreach and schedule.

Introduction and Background

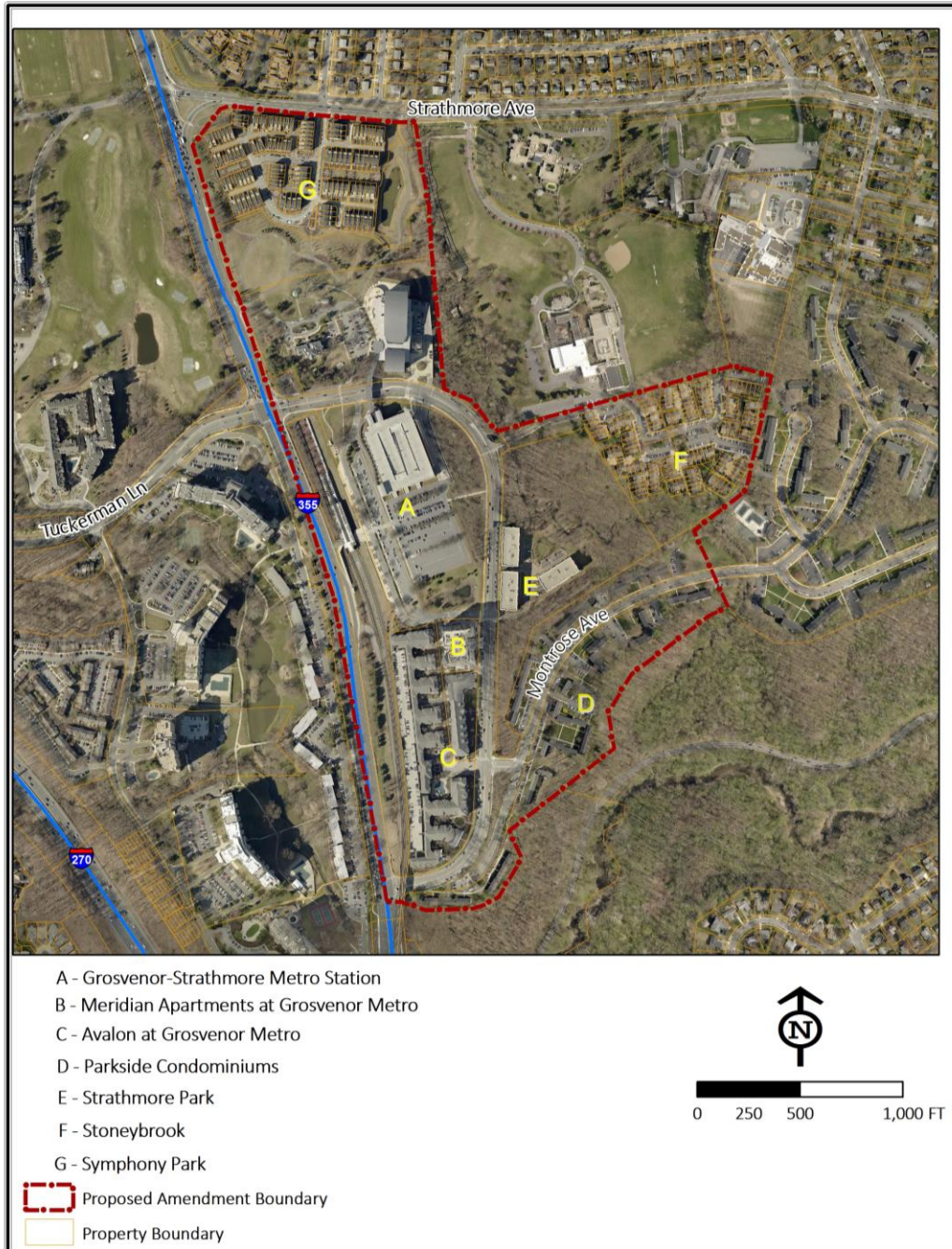
The Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan Amendment will address approximately 105 acres of land located on the east side of Rockville Pike (MD 355), from Rock Creek Park to the south, to Strathmore Avenue to the north. Existing uses within the proposed boundaries of the plan include the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station, the

Figure 1. Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan Proposed Boundary



Music Center at Strathmore (see Figure 1) and the residential communities of Symphony Park, Stoneybrook, Parkside, Strathmore Park, Meridian at Grosvenor Station and Avalon at Grosvenor Metro (see Figure 2). Rock Creek Park is within walking distance of the proposed plan area. The minor master plan area was included in the 1992 *North Bethesda/ Garrett Park Master Plan* as the “Grosvenor Sector Plan Area,” which was divided into eight sub-areas. The proposed boundaries for the minor master plan include four of the eight sub-areas from the 1992 plan (see Figure 3).

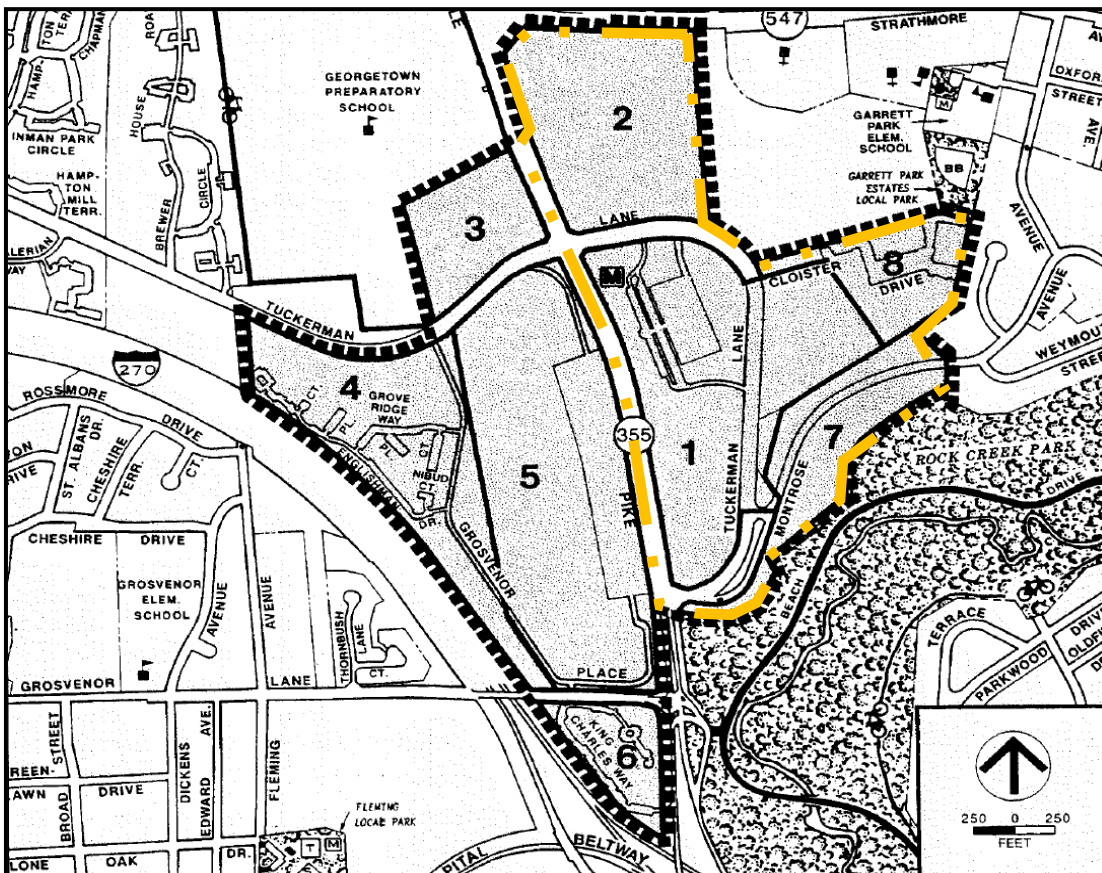
Figure 2: Residential developments within the proposed minor master plan boundary



To ensure that the County's master plan process is responsive to changing community conditions, the Planning Department has a minor master plan amendment process. While most master plans and sector plans prepared by the Department are comprehensive plans with a 15- to 20-year horizon, the minor master plan amendment process is targeted and focused to address current and pressing planning issues.

The minor master plan process provides an opportunity to reassess limited aspects of an existing master plan in a condensed time frame that is responsive to changing conditions, present-day priorities, or the need to clarify issues in the previous master plan. Like comprehensive master and sector plans, minor master plan amendments involve public participation, including community meetings and opportunities for the public to testify before the Planning Board and the County Council.

Figure 3: 1992 North Bethesda Garrett/Park Master Plan with Grosvenor Sector Plan sub-areas. Proposed minor master plan boundaries are shown with dashed yellow line.



Grosvenor is a predominantly residential community lying between a major mixed-use destination to the north (White Flint) and an employment center to the south (Walter Reed National Military Medical Center/National Institutes of Health). Residential densities in the plan area range from 12 to 84 dwelling units per acre. The plan area also includes the Music

Center at Strathmore, a regional destination for visual and performing arts. The Mansion at Strathmore (the former Corby Mansion), the historic mansion adjacent to the music center, is part of the County's *Master Plan of Historic Preservation*.

Figure 3: Mansion at Strathmore, Music Center at Strathmore, Georgetown Preparatory & Holy Cross Academy



The Music Center at Strathmore, which opened in 2001, consists of a 1,976-seat concert hall and education center. Proximate to the plan area are two well-established private educational institutions, Georgetown Preparatory School and the Academy of the Holy Cross, as well as a public school, Garrett Park Elementary.

Purpose

County land use policy has historically planned for the highest density and intensity of development to occur at Metro stations to encourage transit use and maximize the public investment in transit. The Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan will explore the potential for development that would advance the public policy goal of transit-oriented development at the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station. In addition, this planning effort will evaluate ways to enhance visibility and connectivity to the Mansion and the Music Center at Strathmore (“Strathmore”), improve pedestrian linkages throughout the area and create a shared identity for this community through public space and art.

In November 2013, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), which operates the Metrorail system, released a “Joint Development Solicitation” that offered part of the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro site for redevelopment to achieve a substantial, predominantly residential joint development by WMATA and a private developer. Most of WMATA’s original 45 acres at this Metrorail site have been developed for residential use since the adoption of the 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan*. The remaining

WMATA land is approximately 15 acres, including the surface and garage parking, bus loop and Kiss and Ride areas. WMATA's solicitation initially identified 4.5 acres of the 15-acre site for joint development, but there may be some additional acreage as well. Within the proposed minor master plan boundaries, only the land being made available for development by WMATA is being considered and analyzed for future development. WMATA selected Fivesquares Development of Washington, DC as the developer for this site.

This minor master plan amendment will evaluate potential development densities and zoning for the developable WMATA parcels at this Metro station location. The analysis will include an evaluation of potential increases in density above what is currently permitted in the 1992 *North Bethesda/ Garrett Park Master Plan*. Considering the existing community, and its built and natural environments, the review will evaluate the area's potential within the context of a changing real estate market in the County as a whole, the intent and rationale of the 1992 plan, and impacts to the surrounding transportation network and public school cluster. In addition, the plan will explore the potential for expansion of cultural resources that enhance Strathmore's visibility and connectivity into the community. The community's involvement in this process is essential and there will be opportunities for public engagement and dialogue throughout.

Planning Framework

The entirety of the proposed Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan Amendment was included in the 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan*. The 1992 master plan covered a large geography and focused on the areas around Metrorail—the Twinbrook, White Flint and Grosvenor-Strathmore stations, as well as the office park at Rock Spring. Communities that were previously part of the 1992 master plan are now the subject of separate, smaller area plans, including the 2009 *Twinbrook Sector Plan*, the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* and the plans currently underway for White Flint 2 and Rock Spring (see Figure 4).

The 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* described Grosvenor as the gateway to North Bethesda:

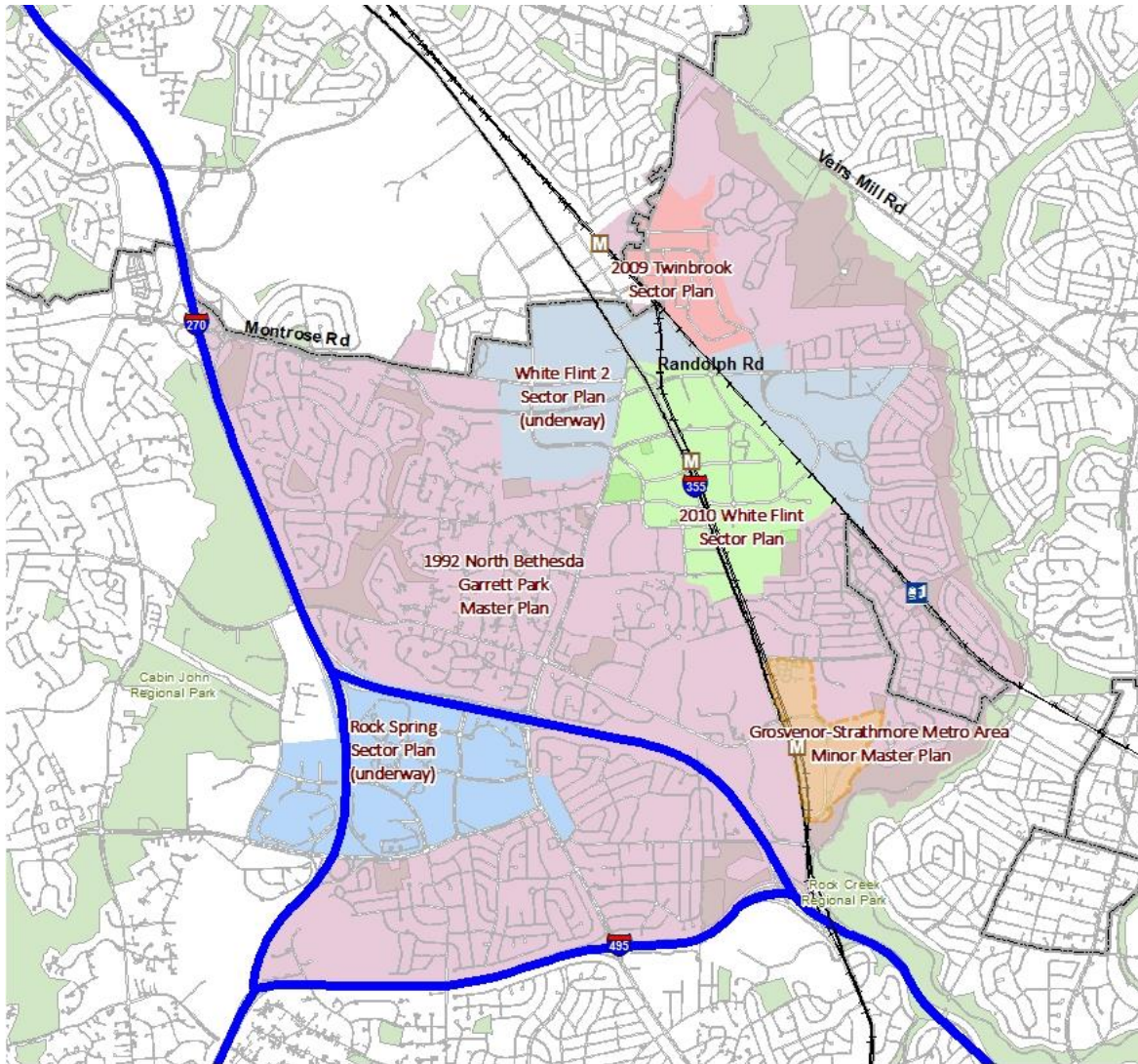
Grosvenor marks the entrance to North Bethesda for those traveling north on Wisconsin Avenue. It is a residential island, nearly surrounded by open space, including the preserved woodland of Rock Creek Park and the campuses of Georgetown Preparatory School and Strathmore Hall. The existing residential towers will continue to function as landmarks and, together with the proposed high-rise residences east of the Pike, will form a gateway to North Bethesda.

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The Land Use and Zoning chapter of the 1992 plan divided the Grosvenor Sector Plan area into eight sub-areas and provided guidance for each (see Figure 2). Most of the area was developed with existing residential uses and the 1992 plan did not recommend any changes. For those areas specifically west of Rockville Pike (sub-areas 3, 4, 5, and 6) and east of

Tuckerman Lane (sub-areas 7 and 8), the plan recommended no land use or zoning changes. The areas of significant potential change that the 1992 plan addressed were the 45-acre WMATA site (sub-area 1) and the 30-acre Strathmore site (sub-area 2).

Figure 4: North Bethesda Master Plans and Sector Plans



In the 1990s, WMATA began contemplating joint development projects with private developers for its large site around the Grosvenor Metro Station. The 1992 plan provided the following guidance for the WMATA site (sub-area 1):

WMATA is currently considering inviting joint development proposals involving the integration of the existing transit facilities with a residential development project. The land use and zoning recommendations are based on the premise that relatively high density residential development, compatible with existing development in the Grosvenor Sector Plan area, will encourage use of the Metro system, as

well as provide a suitable living environment for people in the down-County area. Therefore, the most intensive development is recommended at the center of the Sector Plan area, in close proximity to the Metro station itself.

The purpose of the Plan's recommendations is two-fold: to provide additional housing in the Planning Area and to expand potential Metro ridership. (Page 66)

In the nearly 25 years since the 1992 plan, several residential communities have been developed on WMATA land (in sub-area 1) adjacent to the Metrorail station. The 1992 plan retained a base zone of R-60, but recommended a floating zone (PD-25; Planned Development Zone at a density of 25 units per acre) when development occurred in the future (see Figure 1).

Meridian at Grosvenor Station is a 15-story building with 312 dwelling units located along the west side of Tuckerman Lane. Adjacent to Meridian, Avalon at Grosvenor Metro is a 4-story complex with 497 dwelling units located between Tuckerman Lane and the Metrorail tracks. Strathmore Park condominiums include three 4-story buildings with 473 dwelling units on the east side of Tuckerman Lane. Per guidance in the 1992 plan, Strathmore Park was built in the southwest corner of its large site in order to preserve environmentally sensitive portions of the property. Significant buffering was provided adjacent to the Parkside and Stoneybrook communities, and building heights were limited to four stories.

The 1992 plan also supported development of a cultural arts campus at Strathmore and, in 2001, construction began on a 1,976-seat concert hall and education center -- the Music Center at Strathmore. The Center is an extraordinary cultural resource and has rapidly become a regional destination. Strathmore has partnerships with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Washington Performing Arts, National Philharmonic, Levine Music, City Dance and Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras.

North of and adjacent to the Strathmore Music Center, the Symphony Park townhomes were built in the mid-2000s along Strathmore Avenue. The community of 112 townhouses has sidewalks that lead to the Strathmore complex, as well as open spaces to advance the environmental goals in the 1992 plan (pages 247-248). Approximately five acres were dedicated to Strathmore to complete an outdoor 250-seat amphitheater.

Grosvenor-Strathmore Neighborhood Summary Profile

Area 2 staff is coordinating with Research and Special Projects Division staff to establish a baseline statistical profile of the greater Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area. Research staff has compiled summary demographic information, shown in the table below. The data are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates for Census Tract 7012.14, which closely approximates the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan district.

The initial data show that the neighborhood has a relatively large proportion of residents between the ages of 20 and 39 years old (43 percent in Grosvenor versus 38 percent of the population Countywide).

| Data Set | Grosvenor-Strathmore* | Montgomery County |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Population | 2,003 (0.2 % of County) | 1,005,087 (100%) |
| Age Groups | | |
| • 20 to 29 | 21% | 12% |
| • 30 to 39 | 22% | 26% |
| • 65 years & older | 12% | 13% |
| Race and Hispanic Origin** | | |
| • Not Hispanic | 89% | 82% |
| • Hispanic or Latino | 11%** | 18% |
| Occupation | | |
| • Management, business, science, arts | 86% | 56% |
| • Service | 5% | 15% |
| Average Household Size | 1.95 | 2.75 |
| Tenure | | |
| • Owner-occupied | 22% | 67% |
| • Renter-occupied | 78% | 33% |
| 2014 Median Household Income | \$112,912 | \$98,704 |

*Block Group 1, Census Tract 7012.14

**Those of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department analysis of **2014 5-year American Community Survey estimates**, U.S. Census Bureau; *Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Dept., M-NCPPC*

An even higher percentage of Grosvenor’s resident workforce (86 percent versus 56 percent) work in management, business, science and arts occupations. Nearly all of these residents commute to jobs outside the plan area. Further research will yield additional data about current commute patterns and modes. Research staff will provide more detailed data and analysis as the process continues, including an analysis of market conditions.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Transportation and Connectivity

The Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan Amendment will explore how to improve walkability and bike access for residents in surrounding neighborhoods as well as for visitors to the area. Although comprehensive traffic modeling is not done for minor master plan amendments, staff will analyze the surrounding intersections and the transportation impacts of different land use scenarios. The transportation and connectivity

analysis will explore access and circulation to the Metro station as well as to Strathmore to and from the surrounding communities.

Community Facilities

The 2016 Subdivision Staging Policy indicates that the Walter Johnson cluster is close to a moratorium for all school levels. Additional residential development and the pace of its delivery will affect the Walter Johnson cluster, as well as the adjacent Downcounty Consortium secondary schools. This planning process will assess the impact to the cluster from proposed residential development in the minor master plan area, given anticipated residential development elsewhere in the cluster.

Environmental Sustainability

The minor master plan area has some characteristics of a sustainable community — transit, parks and cultural opportunities – but the area could improve its pedestrian connections, mix of uses, and features that could make it a more sustainable environment. The plan will seek opportunities to increase safe connections and pervious surfaces, enhance existing landscapes, and encourage environmental site design techniques.

Redevelopment is an opportunity to improve environmental conditions and create a healthier community. The plan will promote environmental sustainability, recommend urban environmental solutions and encourage green building choices. The plan will explore whether new parks, trails and open spaces could be provided and what techniques could improve air quality, reduce emissions and provide alternatives to single-occupant vehicles.

Land Uses

The minor master plan comprises four of the original eight sub-areas, sub-areas 1, 2, 7, and 8, established by the 1992 plan. Sub-area 1 includes the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail Station, which has a Kiss and Ride loop, short-term parking, a 6-story parking garage, 10 bus bays and bicycle racks and lockers. There are four pedestrian entrances to the Metro site, including a bridge over Tuckerman Lane to the Music Center at Strathmore and a pedestrian tunnel under Rockville Pike to the residential communities on the west side of the Pike. Avalon at Grosvenor, the Meridian and Strathmore Park are residential communities within sub-area 1. Parkside Condominiums are located in Area 7, Stoneybrook is located in Area 8, Strathmore and Symphony Park are located in Area 2 (see Figure 2).

The minor master plan will analyze land uses and densities for WMATA's available, developable parcels at the Metro site. The plan seeks to reinforce the relationship between Strathmore and surrounding neighborhoods by exploring educational needs and enhancing the community's distinct identity as a cultural arts center.

Placemaking

The Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area reflects a residential character; surrounding the Metro station are apartments and townhouses that are nestled in parkland and open spaces. Located just north of the Metro station, the Music Center at Strathmore is the area's cultural center, offering classes as well as performances.

In developing the minor master plan, the planning team seeks to work with the community and local stakeholders to better leverage these distinct cultural and environmental community assets. Studies will include generating a community identity around its cultural center, connecting surrounding residential neighborhoods, protecting existing green spaces and creating usable, central open spaces.

The proposed minor master plan will seek to foster a sense of place so that the area functions as a neighborhood rather than a collection of unrelated buildings. Potential tools include a central public space, convenience retail, building height transitions, walkable streets and public art.

Outreach

A community kick-off meeting was held on July 7, 2016 at the Music Center at Strathmore to introduce the project, timeline and key stakeholders to the community. Community members, Walter Johnson cluster representatives and other interested persons attended the meeting. The meeting included presentations by Planning Department staff, WMATA, Fivesquares Development (the developer selected by WMATA) and Strathmore; there was time for questions after each presentation.

Approximately 115 people attended the kick-off meeting and raised the following issues and concerns:

- Impact of additional traffic on Tuckerman Lane and Rockville Pike, which are already congested, needs to be addressed;
- Access from Grosvenor Place to Beach Drive is not safe or efficient for cars, bicycles or pedestrians;
- Access and circulation for pedestrians and bicycles is not safe or clearly recognizable;
- Parking is a problem around the Metro station and Music Center at Strathmore;
- Additional educational, and recreational facilities are needed in the area---the plan area should incorporate such uses;
- Existing schools are overcrowded and cannot support additional housing;
- Great sense of place needs to be created;
- Service retail should be provided, as recommended in the 1992 plan;
- Proposed towers above heights already built would not relate to the residential community character;
- Loss of trees and green spaces, and increased stormwater runoff are concerns;
- Recreation and green spaces should be considered for building rooftops.

Ongoing outreach will include a combination of community meetings, small group meetings, possibly a mini-charrette (workshop) and online media platforms. Planners will meet with a variety of groups throughout the process to receive input, and ensure that the views of all stakeholders are heard during the development of Plan recommendations.

In addition to community meetings, outreach efforts include a project website and opportunities to testify before the Planning Board and the County Council. All public meeting dates, events, PowerPoint presentations and staff reports will be posted on the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan website:

<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/grosvenor-strathmore/>.

Schedule and Next Steps

This minor master plan amendment was initiated in May 2016 and the current work program indicates that the Planning Board will complete its review and transmit a draft plan to the County Council and County Executive within one year. Staff will hold several community meetings during fall 2016 and will then prepare and present preliminary recommendations, first to the community and then to the Planning Board.

Staff anticipates that the Working Draft Plan will be presented to the Planning Board by January 2017 with work sessions held during February and March 2017, and completion of the Planning Board Draft Plan by May 2017. The County Council review of the Plan is currently scheduled to be completed by fall 2017.

Upon completion of the Council’s review and action, a Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) will be initiated to implement the Plan’s zoning recommendations. It is anticipated that the SMA process will completed during the first quarter of 2018.

| Date | Anticipated Planning Board Milestones |
|--------------------|--|
| September 15, 2016 | Scope of Work to the Planning Board |
| January 2017 | Working Draft to Planning Board |
| February 2017 | Planning Board Public Hearing |
| March - April 2017 | Planning Board Worksessions |
| May 2017 | Planning Board Draft Approved and Transmitted to County Council and County Executive |

STAY CONNECTED

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