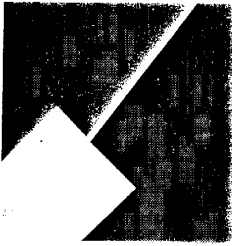


M-NCPPC



## MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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July 21, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marilyn Clemens, Planning Coordinator

FROM: *for* Dan Hardy, Supervisor  
Shahriar Etemadi, Planner/Coordinator  
Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Woodmont Triangle Amendment Traffic Impacts

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The Woodmont Triangle Amendment contemplates changes to the land use and zoning within a portion of the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). We have compared the land use changes you provided with those tested in the recent Comprehensive Local Area Transportation Review (CLATR) analysis that was used to support moving to Stage II development. **We conclude that the Woodmont Triangle Amendment will have a very minor effect on traffic conditions in the Bethesda CBD.**

Our conclusion is based on the fact that the number of vehicle trips generated for the Woodmont Triangle Amendment land use scenario during the weekday peak periods would be generally equivalent to those generated by development tested in the CLATR analysis. This land use scenario includes a greater number of new residential dwelling units than assumed in the CLATR analysis but a lower square footage of additional office and retail space. Compared to the CLATR, this land use scenario is expected to affect total CBD peak hour vehicle trip generation during the weekday peak periods only slightly, with one percent increase during the morning peak period and less than a one half percent decrease during the evening peak period.

The remaining portions of this memorandum describe the recent Planning Board action on Bethesda CBD Sector Plan staging, the primary findings of the CLATR analysis that supported the staging plan recommendation, and the results of the sensitivity testing performed to determine the effects of the Woodmont Triangle Amendment.

## **Prior Planning Board Actions**

At the regularly scheduled meeting of April 8, 2004, the Planning Board endorsed the staff recommendation to move to Stage II as described in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan, conditional upon the establishment of a 5,000 job cap on future job approvals during Stage II. No cap on housing units will be established. Subsequent to this action, the Planning Board has approved commercial development in the Bethesda CBD yielding a total of eight jobs, so that the Stage II job ceiling currently stands at 4,992.

## **Comprehensive Local Area Transportation Review Analysis**

The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan recommends implementing six objectives in Stage I, prior to moving to Stage II. One of the six staging plan objectives is to complete an analysis of traffic congestion to identify plans and programs that may be needed during Stage II. This analysis is described as a Comprehensive Local Area Transportation Review. At most intersections examined in the CLATR, geometric improvements are considered that would be consistent with the guidance in the current master plans for the Bethesda CBD and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. The CLATR indicates that policies and programs described in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan are sufficient to accommodate projected Stage II development within the CBD. At three intersections outside the CBD, traffic congestion already exceeds current policy thresholds, and planned policies and programs do not effectively relieve the existing or forecasted congestion at those three locations.

The Comprehensive Local Area Transportation Review provided the following findings:

- The existing and forecasted area wide transportation level of service meets an acceptable AGP standard. This finding contributed to the staff recommendation that the Bethesda CBD move to Stage II.
- Reasonable travel demand management objectives and intersection improvements can be implemented to achieve Stage II development except at three locations in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Policy Area (Wisconsin Avenue at Jones Bridge Road, Connecticut Avenue at Jones Bridge Road, and Connecticut Avenue at East-West Highway). At all three locations:
  - Both current and forecast congestion levels exceed applicable standards
  - At-grade capacity improvements have recently been studied in detail
  - The forecasted congestion cannot be resolved to satisfy current congestion standards by merely improving CBD mode share goals or by adding auxiliary turn lanes
  - Further study would be needed to assess the feasibility or desirability of grade-separated interchanges
  - A master plan amendment would be needed to resolve forecasted congestion by either changing land use, mode share goals, the number of through travel lanes on selected area roadways, or recommending grade-separated interchanges

The unresolved concerns regarding congestion at these three intersections in the Bethesda/Chevy Chase policy area formed the basis for the staff recommendation that a new ceiling of 5,000 jobs be established for Stage II.

Staff did not propose establishing a Stage II ceiling for households because vehicle trips generated by housing in the Bethesda CBD tend to generate primarily off-peak direction travel at the three intersections of concern. These intersections are located north or east of the CBD. The prevailing commuter flows at these locations that contribute to congestion are southbound and westbound during the morning peak period and northbound and eastbound during the evening peak period. These prevailing flows are substantially affected by the general regional flow of traffic between residential trip productions to the north and commercial trip attractions to the south. Therefore, jobs in the CBD (south of the two intersections) contribute significantly to the prevailing commuter flow at the intersections north of the CBD. Housing units in the CBD do not contribute significantly to prevailing commuter flows at these intersections north and east of the CBD.

### **Woodmont Triangle Amendment Analysis**

The Woodmont Triangle land use analysis included the following changes from the land uses analyzed in the CLATR:

- An increase of 1,616 dwelling units.
- A decrease of 125,300 square feet of office space.
- A decrease of 118,400 square feet of retail space.

Staff assessed the transportation effects of these changes by comparing the vehicle trips generated by the net change in land uses per our Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines. Exhibit 1 demonstrates the results of this evaluation.

**Exhibit 1. Effect of Woodmont Triangle Amendment on Vehicle Trip Generation**

Land Use	Net change, CLATR to Woodmont Triangle Land Use	Vehicle Trip Generation Rate		Vehicle Trips Generated	
		AM	PM	AM	PM
Residential	1,616 dwelling units (DU)	0.30 trips / DU	0.30 trips / DU	485	485
Office	-123,100 square feet (GSF)	1.50 trips / DU	1.50 trips / DU	-188	- 188
Retail	- 196,600 square feet (GSF)	0.65 trips / DU	2.60 trips / DU	- 77	- 308
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>222</b>	<b>- 11</b>

As indicated in Exhibit 1, the net effect of the Woodmont Triangle Land Use Scenario is an increase of 222 peak hour vehicle trips in the weekday morning peak period and a decrease of 11 vehicle trips in the weekday evening peak period. The CLATR analysis indicated that the total number of peak hour trips generated by all land uses within the Bethesda CBD at the end of Stage II development would be approximately 20,200 during the weekday morning peak period and 25,400 during the weekday evening peak period. The Woodmont Triangle land use scenario, therefore, represents an increase of approximately one percent during the AM peak period and a minimal decrease in trip generation during the PM peak period.

SE:gw

mno to Clemens re Woodmont Triangle