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

October 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John. A. Carter, Chief
            Community-Based Planning Division

            Judy Daniel, Team Leader, Bethesda-Chevy Chase/North Bethesda Team
            Community-Based Planning Division

            Dan Hardy, Supervisor, Transportation Planning Section
            Countywide Planning Division

FROM: Margaret K. Rifkin, RLA AICP
            Urban Designer/Planner Coordinator (301.495.4583)
            Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: White Flint Sector Plan Round Table Discussion

INTRODUCTION

On March 8, 2007, the Planning Board held a round table discussion on the White Flint Sector Plan. The discussion covered existing conditions, outreach and major ideas. The Planning Board requested another discussion as work progressed. This is an update on the staff work on the following issues:

• White Flint's role.

• Whether to recommend transit-oriented, mixed-use development on commercial properties.

• How to improve Rockville Pike for pedestrians and transit users while maintaining an acceptable level of mobility in the entire system.

• How to sharpen tools and strategies to ensure the desired outcome.

The work on these issues is presented below beginning with a discussion of land use, followed by transportation, and then retail.

SCENARIOS

Common Features

The scenarios are based on White Flint's role as a regional marketplace, and main urban center for North Bethesda with a conference center district. The concept is for a green, mixed-use downtown with excellent design where intensity is concentrated nearest the Metro station. Rockville Pike continues to carry large amounts of traffic and Mid Pike Plaza and White Flint Mall become mixed-use neighborhoods which are retail/entertainment destinations. There is greater connectivity between east and west sides of the Pike. There is an enhanced local street network and a second entrance to the Metro station. All the scenarios create pressure on schools. Two scenarios would require a site for a new elementary school.

The following are also common features:

- Six complete neighborhoods with grocery stores, open spaces and car-lite/mixed streets

- A hierarchy of green spaces/open spaces, walking loops, and streets which include a central civic green and an east-west promenade

- A fine grained network of streets and pedestrian routes, on-street parking and public garages

- Pedestrian scale, an attractive identity and a clarity provided by landmarks, sight lines and building form

- Tools for implementation which focus on sustainability, design excellence and making the review process more effective

Comparisons

The following analysis highlights the differences between the scenarios. The land use numbers represent what would actually be built. They assume that any density bonuses have already been earned.

- **Scenario One – Minimal:** Intensity increases only on two shopping centers which become mixed-use: Mid Pike Plaza and White Flint Mall. Whether this is enough to trigger redevelopment is a topic of debate. There is an increase in the number of dwelling units to 10,898 from the current plan's 7,083. The 13.8 million square feet of non-residential tops the 9.3 in the current plan.

- **Scenario Two – Moderate:** More dwelling units and less commercial use than Scenario One and industrial use remains the same. Additional intensity is placed near the Metro station. More properties become mixed-use. The number of dwelling units increases to 12,600 with 13.9 million square feet of non-residential. There is an increase in the costs for transportation. Some property owners have stated a concern that this scenario does not provide the incentive to stimulate redevelopment of the profitable auto-oriented commercial into transit-oriented development.

- **Scenario Three – Great:** This has the largest number of dwelling units at 20,500. Non-residential rises to 20.1 million square feet, however there is a reduction in industrial. There is a significant increase in costs for transportation facilities, operations and new programs. There are taller buildings which affect scale, character and sunlight. There are more amenities.

TRANSPORTATION

The main challenge is making it easier and more attractive for people to walk, bike and use transit while maintaining acceptable levels of circulation. This relates to the Planning Board's discussion of the Annual Growth Policy (AGP) and what acceptable levels of congestion are in urbanizing centers such as White Flint. Decisions about the AGP will inform the work on the White Flint Sector Plan.

Measures to improve circulation are required for all the scenarios. One of the most important measures is the creation of a more aggressive Travel Demand Management program. This includes creating a second Metro station entrance and adding local streets to improve the pedestrian network.

A major challenge is walking across Rockville Pike. The road carries 50,000 trips on an average day with six through lanes plus turn lanes. To create a circulation system that tames the Pike, there are several options. They include enhanced medians at crosswalks, fewer turn lanes, enhanced streetscape, grade-separation of the Pike, improving intersections, traffic circles, wider streets, and a multi-way boulevard design. A one-way couplet was also considered. It would divide the middle stretch of the Pike into two parallel streets, one in each direction. The streets can be crossed one at a time and the block between the two can be developed.

To encourage transit use, White Flint needs an improved Metro station arrival experience. The experience is affected by the design of the street system. Bus riders should not have to cross eight lanes of traffic. Southbound buses should be able to get to the station without delay. They also need space to lay over. There should be good sightlines between the station and the attractions of White Flint. The main challenge is locating the bus stops where they do not block important sight lines. The work on this continues.

RETAIL STUDY

White Flint is a major marketplace today. There is more retail than in either downtown Silver Spring or downtown Bethesda. White Flint's future as a marketplace is supported by a study by shopping center consultant Robert Gibbs. He found that the market area is currently underserved. Demand is strong. There is between 1.5 and 2 billion dollars leakage of retail sales. The demand is for moderate, mainstream retail like JC Penney's, Kohl's and Target, big box retail, and small local businesses. As Montrose Parkway extends eastward, it will enlarge the market area and increase the primary market area. According to Gibbs' study, between now and 2011, the market area can support the *addition* of up to 100 corner stores; up to six neighborhood shopping centers with grocery stores; and up to two community shopping centers. In this environment, if retail fails, it is more likely to be the result of poor planning and design than of the market.

Some types of retail helps attract people to live in more compact, walkable areas for the convenience. Retail also affects the attractiveness of the public realm. Empty, failed shop fronts will not attract people who have the means to choose where they live. Because retail is the most unpredictable and risky of the uses in mixed-use development, and because it is so important, a retail concept and strategy for the area should be created with the participation of the private sector. This will advance the concept of clustering retail into designated walkable areas, accommodating more than one retail/entertainment focus, and advancing the synergy between them.

CONCLUSION

Scenario Two should be carried forward with recommendations that can be implemented *without* major new capital and operational expenditures for infrastructure. A modified Scenario Three could also be carried forward and evaluated carefully in terms of urban design, if accompanied by recommendations that can be implemented which include major new expenditures for infrastructure.

MKR:ha: g:\rifkin\White Flint MCPB Roundtable 2

Attachments
1.   Concepts
2.   Comparison of Scenarios
3.   Transportation
4.   Retail

CONCEPTS

Common Features of All Scenarios

Role: Regional Marketplace

North Bethesda's Downtown

with a Conference Center District

Concept: Green Downtown

Sustainable

Excellent Design

Mixed Use

Intensity near Metro

Rockville Pike Carries Traffic

Neighborhoods at Mid Pike Plaza & Mall

East-West Connections

Local networks to walk, bike, drive

Second entrance to Metro

CONCEPTS
For All Scenarios

Neighborhood Concept
Five to seven complete neighborhoods
each with a grocery store, a neighborhood green and
one or more pedestrian streets

neighborhoods

neighborhood green

walk-to grocery store

pedestrian streets

streets

CONCEPT

Urban Open Spaces in White Flint

FOR THE CORRIDOR

A Large Urban Green at Wall Park
With Special Features for Sports, Recreation and Fitness Activities

FOR ALL OF WHITE FLINT

A Central Urban Green
for Gathering Everyone in the Community: A Place for Ceremonies and Celebrations

FOR EACH NEIGHBORHOOD

A Neighborhood Green that is a Meeting Place and a Landmark
Pedestrian Streets

FOR EACH BLOCK

A Green Space for each Cluster of offices/residence/shops
Green Plazas & Pocket Parks
Green Streets

FOR EACH BUILDING

Recreation Space
Common Open Space
Community Garden
Green Roof

FOR EACH PERSON

Private Open Space: Balcony, Terrace, Patio, Rooftop, Deck, Yard

MONTROSE ROAD

Montrose Parkway Regional Trail

RANDOLPH ROAD

PARKLAWN DRIVE

OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD

EXECUTIVE BLVD

MARINELLI ROAD

M

NICHOLSON LANE

Bethesda Trolley Trail

SECURITY LANE

ROCKVILLE PIKE MD. (ROUTE 355)

x:\A2\WF\WF -BASE.dwg

Open Spaces

— Large Urban Green to Gather

— Large Urban Green- Active

— Neighborhood Green

M   Metro

•••• Sector Plan Area Boundary

Links & Loops

— Measured Loops for Walking

— Promenades

— Regional Trails
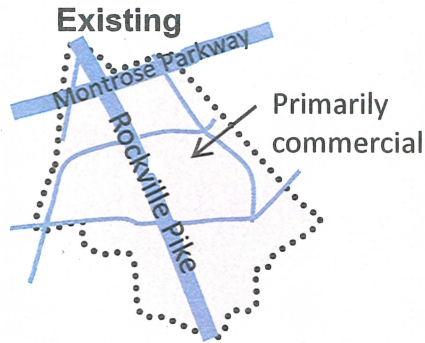
0   4000'

LAND USE
Comparison of Scenarios

single use

mixed use

More intense mixed use

Metro station
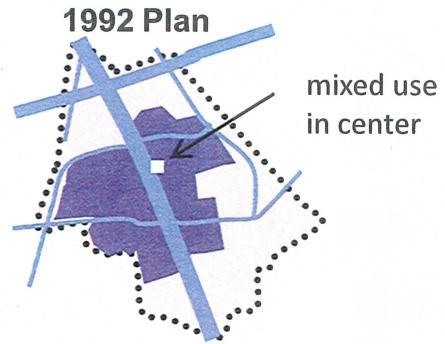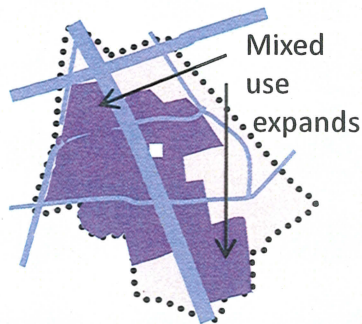
Existing — Montrose Parkway / Rockville Pike — Primarily commercial

1992 Plan — mixed use in center

1 Minimal — Mixed use expands

2 Moderate — More intense mixed use

3 Great — Much more intense mixed use
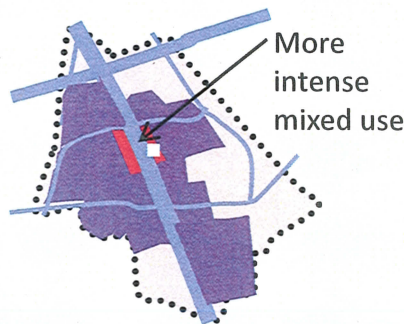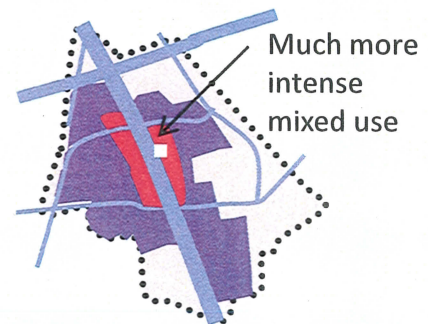
These diagrams are symbolic. There is more detailed information for each scenario.

Table: Comparison of Amount of Development

	Existing	1992 Plan	1 Minimal	2 Moderate	3 Great
Dwelling Units	2,140	7,080	10,900	12,600	20,490
SF of Non-Residential	5.5M	9.3M	13.8M	11.5M	20.1M

Chart: Comparison of Amount of Development

Square Feet Millions

Scenarios: Existing, 1992 plan, 1 Minimal, 2 Moderate, 3 Great

Residential

Non-Residential
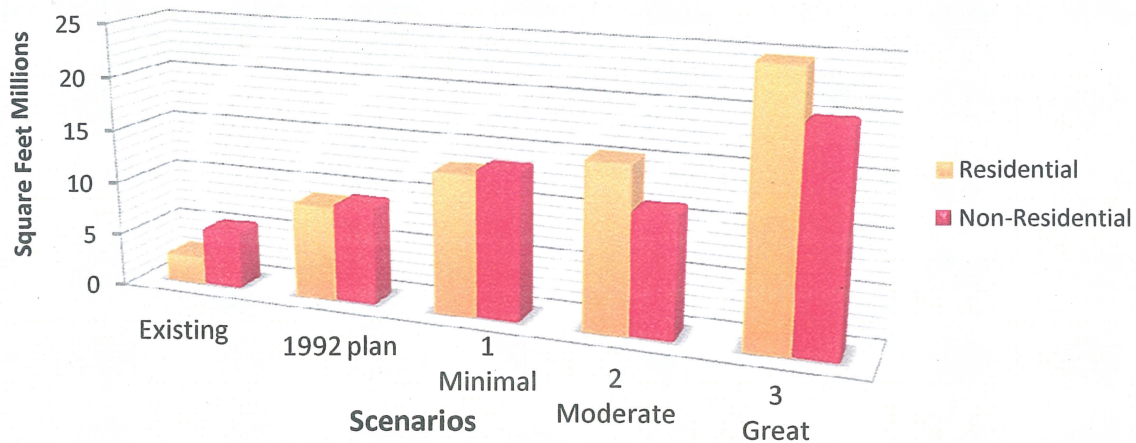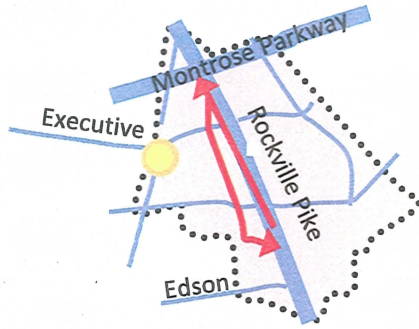
TRANSPORTATION
Comparison of Circulation Networks Tested with Scenario 2
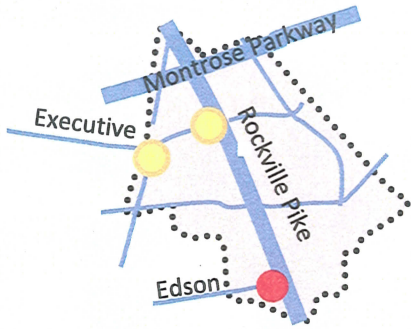
A

Local Streets
- Complete master planned local street network (Montrose Parkway, Nebel and Chapman)
- Additional local streets on redeveloping blocks
- Additional capacity needed along MD 355 – could include wider median
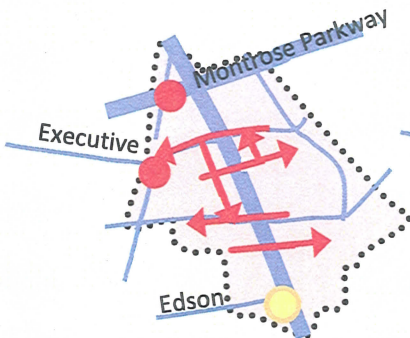
B

MD 355 Couplet
- Start with local street network in Network A
- Convert Rockville Pike to Northbound only
- Construct/convert Woodglen Drive to southbound only
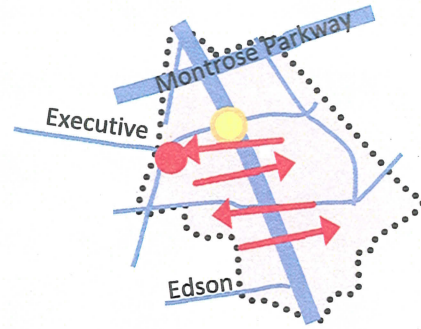
C

East-West Couplets
- Start with local street network in Network A
- Convert east-west local business streets to one-way couplets: Main Street/Marinelli Nicholson/Executive

D

Retail Core + MD 187 Link
- Start with local street network in Network C
- Shift westbound one-way street from Main to Old Georgetown
- Provide high-capacity direct connection for MD 187 along Old Old Georgetown Marinelli westward extension through Wall deleted
- Additional capacity needed along new MD 187 connection
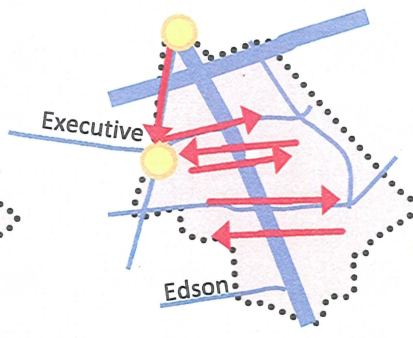
E

East-West MD 187 couplets
- Start with local street network in Network C
- Convert MD 187 into one-way pair northeast of Executive: SB via Old Old Georgetown extended
- NB via Old Georgetown
- Marinelli westward extension through Wall LP deleted
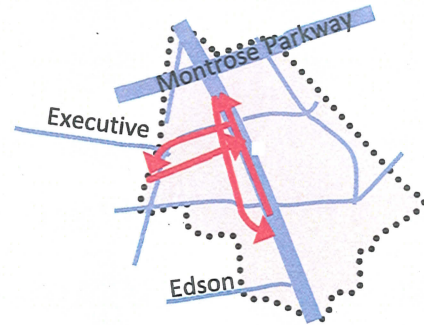
F

Intersection analysis of this network will be presented 10/8/07

MD 355 Couplet with Old Georgetown Splitting into Couplet

🟡	Intersection Congestion
🔴	Greater Intersection Congestion

These diagrams are symbolic. There is more detailed information for each network.

ATTACHMENT 4

Last saved by Margaret.RifkinD:\1Area - White Flint Bethesda Chevy Chase Team\Robert
Gibbs.docLast printed 7/17/2007 5:00 PMPage 1 of 1

Gibbs - Summary of Retail Study for White Flint

The study is based on 2000 U.S. Census data and ESRI forecasts for 2006 and 2011.

- ❑ The area is currently under-served. Demand is strong. $2B leakage of retail sales (2006): Demand includes:
  - ○ Moderate, mainstream retail like JC Penney's, Kohl's & Target
  - ○ Big box retail
  - ○ Small local businesses

- ❑ Montrose Parkway will further increase demand by enlarging trade area.

- ❑ The area can support the addition of the following currently/by 2011:
  - ○ Up to 100 corner stores
  - ○ Up to 6 neighborhood centers with grocery stores
  - ○ Up to 2 community centers

- ❑ One of the three regional malls, such as White Flint, is likely to convert to another type of center.

- ❑ One Life Style Center on each side of the Pike is easy; however, one large one straddling the Pike is more difficult, but still achievable.

Key Points from Heapes' Presentation – Street-Works: Heapes: The Five Simple Things

1. Balance of uses (Live, work, learn, play) that are tailored to the needs, desires and habits of the community

2. Retail + Public Space = Address. Mixed-use programs are driven by retail. When focused around an immersive place it adds value to all other uses.

3. It's not just a project! It's best when it grows out of the existing context. It should be thought of as a district or neighborhood.

4. It must be real, authentic and local. Public uses are important to ensure authenticity and create a sense of community ownership and familiarity.

5. You have to partner with community. MXD's require private/public partnerships. Private capital leads with public infrastructure underwriting.

Heapes' "Messy Vitality" per Venturi. Desirable: Vibrant, organic, retail -based places are market driven not form-driven. article NewUrbanNews2005:Design Principles for Retail: Variety and Contrast.

Freedman Critique of Alt. A: 5 Big Ideas from White Flint Critique

Concentrate retail in one area, focus on one quadrant, and provide curbside parking.

1. Use 2-way boulevard and make it great rather than 1-way couplet.
2. Unify east and west sides with boulevard design and building type rather than retail
3. Line the boulevard with residential and office with access only from side streets to help thru put.
4. Many small public spaces are better than big ones. Limit width of green main street median to 50'-60' to make retail work.

Note from Freedman: Good solutions for a specific place cannot be formulaic/one-size fit all. They require an in depth look that goes beyond this quick critique. Freedman works primarily on revitalization projects for the public sector.

TYPES OF SHOPPING CENTERS: International Society of Shopping Centers (from 7/10/07 course)

Type	SF	Characteristics	Location	Trade Area-miles	Homes	Example
Corner Store	2,000-5,000 (1,000)	New urbanism 7Eleven	A corner in a neighborhood	¼	500-1000	
Convenience Shops	15,000-25,000	Each business may own its premises including the entire building	Between 2 neighborhoods On a major road	1	1,500-2500	across from WF Metro
Neighborhood Center	150,000 (80,000-100,000)	Anchored by a super-market (50,000sf),	Intersection of major roads. Several can locate at one		8,000	Loehman's Plaza
Community Center	500,000 (300,000-600,000)	discount store; name brands at low prices. 80% of shops are Jr. Anchors 10-20,000 sf	On a major road at an intersection.	5-7	30,000-50,000	Montrose Crossing
Power Center						
Regional Center	1,000,000+	Fashion malls often enclosed but can be open air		12	100,000-150,000	White Flint Mall
Lifestyle Center	200,000	Walkable. Open air. Authenticity is important.		5-7	60,000-100,000	Bethesda Row
Town Center		Life Style Center mixed with residential & office				