



Rock Spring Master Plan Public Hearing Draft: Worksession #5



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Completed: 2-23-17

Summary

The Planning Board has held three worksessions on the Rock Spring Master Plan Public Hearing Draft, as well as a fourth session that was combined with White Flint 2 to discuss school issues in the Walter Johnson Cluster. The joint Rock Spring/White Flint 2 worksession was held on February 16, 2017, with representatives from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), including James Song, Director of the MCPS Department of Facilities Management, Joel Gallihue, Director of the Division of Long-range Planning, and Debbie Szyfer, Senior Planner with the Division of Long-range Planning. Mr. Song expressed appreciation for the ongoing collaboration between MCPS and the Planning Department, explained how MCPS is approaching the current capacity needs in the Walter Johnson cluster, and briefly described potential future school needs. Mr. Song also indicated that the Rocking Horse Road Center, a former elementary school on an 18-acre site within the White Flint 2 Sector Plan, will eventually need to be reopened, perhaps as a secondary school.

Ms. Szyfer described the Walter Johnson roundtable process that was conducted in 2016 and provided an overview of the new work group that MCPS is undertaking to specifically look at reopening the former Charles W. Woodward High School to provide relief for high schools in the Downcounty area. This work group will include representatives from the Walter Johnson cluster, as well as the adjacent Bethesda Chevy-Chase and the Downcounty Consortium clusters. MCPS representatives stated that it is helpful that master plans recommend specific sites for possible schools in the future. Jack Smith, the MCPS Superintendent of Schools, submitted a letter to Chair Casey Anderson that outlined the challenges of continued enrollment growth, scarcity of available land, and limited funding for land acquisition. (See Attachment 1.) Mr. Smith emphasized that planning solutions that result in dedicated school sites are optimal, and stated that MCPS is committed to exploring more urban footprints for schools. Steve Silverman submitted comments to Chair Anderson stating that the designation of potential school sites in the master plans creates uncertainty for commercial property owners, several of whom he represents, and other options should be explored. (See Attachment 2.)

At the fifth Rock Spring worksession on March 2, staff will present the final, revised zoning recommendations and discuss outstanding issues. At the March 16 Rock Spring worksession, it is

staff's intention to provide the Board with a redline copy of the Planning Board Draft Master Plan for review and approval to transmit to the County Council and County Executive.

Rock Spring Master Plan schedule:

December 15, 2016	Planning Board Worksession #1
January 19, 2017	Planning Board Worksession #2
February 2, 2017	Planning Board Worksession #3
February 16, 2017	Planning Board Worksession #4 (Joint worksession with White Flint 2)
March 2, 2017	Planning Board Worksession #5
March 16, 2017	Planning Board Worksession #6
March 2017	Planning Board Draft transmitted to County Council and Executive
May 2017	County Council Public Hearing
Summer 2017	County Council Worksessions
Fall 2017	Commission adoption, Sectional Map Amendment

The Planning Board should bring their copies of the Public Hearing Drafts that were previously distributed to them.

Attachment 1

Attachment 2

ATTACHMENT 1



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org
MARYLAND

February 15, 2017



Mr. Casey Anderson
Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Vice Chair, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

Dear Mr. Anderson and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

As the Montgomery County Planning Board (Planning Board) receives comments and input about the Public Hearing Draft of the White Flint II Sector Plan (Plan), we would like to offer our perspective on the Plan's recommendations for public school facilities.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) remains fully supportive of the Planning Board's efforts to guide economic development and growth through sector plans such as White Flint II. While additional residential development is inevitable and necessary, it will place significant pressure on MCPS student enrollment, particularly at schools that already exceed capacity in the Downcounty Consortium and Walter Johnson Cluster. Addressing the impact of development and growth on public facilities is our continuing joint enterprise.

MCPS staff and Montgomery County Planning Department (Planning Department) staff have been working together to plan for future school capacity that will be needed not only to accommodate White Flint II development but also new residential units associated with the White Flint I, Rock Spring, and other development plans. In their joint meetings, the Board of Education and Planning Board have discussed the challenges that we face in this area of the county due to the continued enrollment growth, the scarcity of available land, and limited funding for land acquisition. Given these ongoing concerns, we are supportive of any planning solutions which result in dedicated school sites rather than reserved school sites.

Particularly when faced with constrained land resources, it is incumbent on us to develop new and innovative school construction approaches that work with available parcel sizes and configurations and continue to deliver an appropriate instructional program. As we work with our Planning Department colleagues, we are committed to exploring options to build more urban schools with a reduced footprint that match the more urban settings of much of our new developments. The first critical step in this effort is to have dedicated school sites to ensure that space for this vital element of the community is preserved as the development moves forward.

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

850 Hungerford Drive, Room 122 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850 ♦ 301-279-3381

Mr. Casey Anderson
Members of the Montgomery County
Planning Board

2


February 15, 2017

MCPS is evaluating a long-term growth management strategy for each school cluster, in addition to leading a work group on reopening the former Charles W. Woodward High School to provide relief for high schools in the downcounty area. MCPS also continues to implement its Capital Improvements Program which provides near-term school capacity through school additions, school reopenings, revitalization/expansion projects, new construction, and school reassignments.

MCPS greatly values the dedicated work of the Planning Board members and Planning Department staff in studying and grappling with the public school facility needs facing our county.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Andrew M. Zuckerman, chief operating officer, at 301-279-3627, or Mr. James Song, director, Department of Facilities Management, at 240-314-1064.

Sincerely,



Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

JRS:AMZ:lmr

Copy to:
Members of the Board of Education
Dr. Navarro
Dr. Statham
Dr. Zuckerman
Dr. Johnson
Mr. Song
Mr. Ikheloa

ATTACHMENT 2

From: Steve Silverman [<mailto:Steve.silverman@ssgovrelations.com>]

Sent: Monday, February 20, 2017 9:23 AM

To: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>

Cc: Anderson, Casey <Casey.Anderson@mncppc-mc.org>; Councilmember.Berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Rice@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Elich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Katz@montgomerycountymd.gov; Yearwood, Nkosi <nkosi.yearwood@montgomeryplanning.org>; Sturgeon, Nancy <nancy.sturgeon@montgomeryplanning.org>; Michaelson, Marlene <Marlene.Michaelson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Ossont, Greg <Greg.Ossont@montgomerycountymd.gov>; rpaul@ronaldpaulcos.com; Lang, Marvin (mlang@guardianrealty.com) <mlang@guardianrealty.com>; blang@guardianrealty.com; Jason Goldblatt <JGoldblatt@willco.com>; dolson@monumentrealty.com; dpeel@peelproperties.com; speel@peelproperties.com; Amy Phillips <amphillips@monumentrealty.com>; sarobins@lercheearly.com; Stacy Silber (spsilber@lercheearly.com) <spsilber@lercheearly.com>; fcarrier@bregmanlaw.com; bsears@linowes-law.com; vaiase@ballardspahr.com; Wright, Gwen <gwen.wright@montgomeryplanning.org>; Afzal, Khalid <khalid.afzal@montgomeryplanning.org>; Jordan Silverman <jordan@ssgovrelations.com>

Subject: SCHOOL SITES IN WJ CLUSTER

Dear Chair Anderson:

As a follow-up to the Planning Board session discussing school issues in the Walter Johnson Cluster, I wish to reiterate our interest in looking at alternative sites for elementary schools and a possible third middle school in the WJ Cluster other than properties on or along Executive Blvd.

Representatives of MCPS indicated a willingness to look at various options which involve smaller sites than MCPS usually uses for both elementary and middle schools. That was also indicated in their Feb. 15 letter to you. MCPS also indicated a desire to have sites identified during the process.

Accordingly, we believe that the pending development at the WMAL site would be suitable for an elementary school site as it is currently in the process of obtaining approval and would provide certainty for MCPS and property owners in WF2.

In addition, MCPS representatives indicated that Rocking Horse could also be a potential site for a new middle or high school. Since MCPS owns the site, it makes sense to indicate that site as the most viable site for a new middle school rather than creating uncertainty by specifically designating potential sites in WF2 or Rock Spring. MCPS has a site and should use it.

The mutual goal should be to provide MCPS, the PTAs, and property owners with as much certainty as possible in the Master Plan process. These options meet that goal.

Steve Silverman
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