

ASPEN HILL

Minor Master Plan Amendment

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions (6:30 PM)

Staff Presentation (6:40-7:30 PM)

Q&A (7:30-8:00 PM)

Community Meeting #2

April 1, 2014

Aspen Hill Library



Planning Process

Comprehensive Master Plans

- Large-scale, community wide
- Process between 2-4 years for plan completion

Minor Master Plans

- May be initiated by the County Council, Planning Department, property owners, or community groups through an application process to the Planning Department
- Smaller, consolidated areas in need of a shorter-term reassessment due to changing conditions or opportunities
- Process between 1-1.5 years for amendment completion



Planning Framework

1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan



Minor Amendment Area

- Approx. 14-acres
- Current Uses:
 - Vacant office building (Vitro, approx 10-acres)
 - Gas stations
 - Active office building & associated parking
 - Dunkin Donuts

Zones

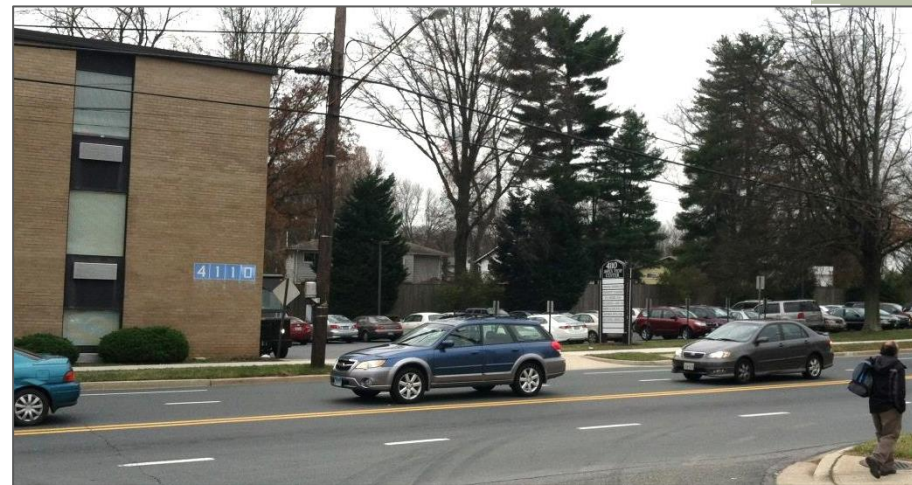
- Commercial
- Residential SF
- Residential Mixed Use



Existing Conditions: N. of Aspen Hill Rd



Existing Conditions: S. of Aspen Hill Rd

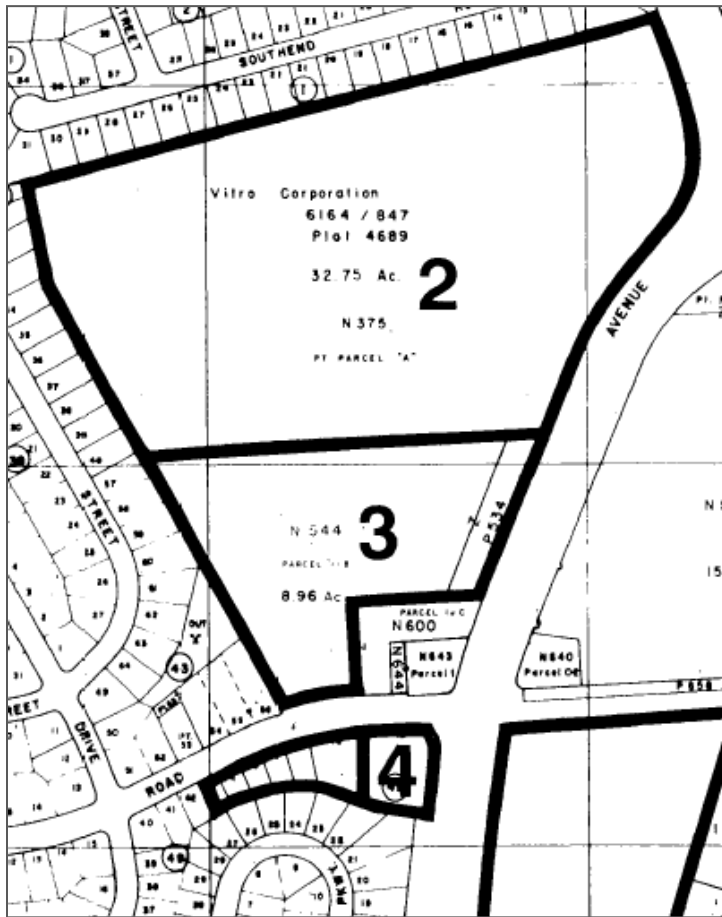


What We Evaluate

- Existing Master Plan
- Demographics
 - who lives and works here?
- Community Input
- Traffic Impact
- Circulation
 - Internal/external and vehicular/pedestrian/bicycle
- Environmental Conditions
- Design Elements
- Land Uses and Zoning
 - Surrounding uses and compatibility
- Market Trends
 - office, retail, housing



1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan



- Georgia Ave, Connecticut Ave, Aspen Hill Rd intersections are the Plan area’s “center of economic activity”
- Northgate Shopping Center area: consideration for “Productivity Housing”
- maintain “parcel 3” as an office employment center; retail activity does not “conform to this Plan’s vision”
- Recommended design guidelines: building scale & height; buffers to single family homes; limit # of parking spaces; pedestrian paths; screening; and lighting

Demographics

	Aspen Hill	Montgomery County
Total Population	60,090 (6.3 % of County)	959,738
65 yrs & Older	22%	12.2%
Occupation		
• Mgmt, business, science, and arts	40.3%	55.9%
• Service	23.8%	15.0%
Average HH Size	2.58	2.68
Tenure		
• Owner-occupied	69.9%	68.8%
• Renter-occupied	30.1%	31.2%
2011 Median HH income	\$70,072	\$95,660

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau; Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Dept., M-NCPPC.



Community Input



Traffic Impact

- Impact of different land uses on traffic volumes at area intersections
- Peak-hour trips generated by different land uses
- State Highway Administration (SHA) 2011 Pedestrian Road Safety Audit



Environmental Conditions





- Forest Conservation
- Streams
- Special Protection Area
- Wetlands
- Environmental Buffers
- Slopes
- Hazardous Materials Mitigation
- Stormwater Management



Circulation



Legend

-  Ride-On Routes
-  WMATA Routes
-  Proposed Shared Use / Bike Path
-  Proposed BRT line

Land Uses and Zoning



Potential Site Uses

- Former Vitro/BAE site is redevelopment focus
- Adaptive reuse of existing building is challenging
 - *Obsolete building / does not meet code*
 - *Specialized use*
- Development cost may be higher than normal...
 - *to prepare the site (building demolition, grading)*
 - *to construct on the site*
- High cost = High barrier to entry
- Not all land uses may be “financially feasible” in the area



Market Concepts

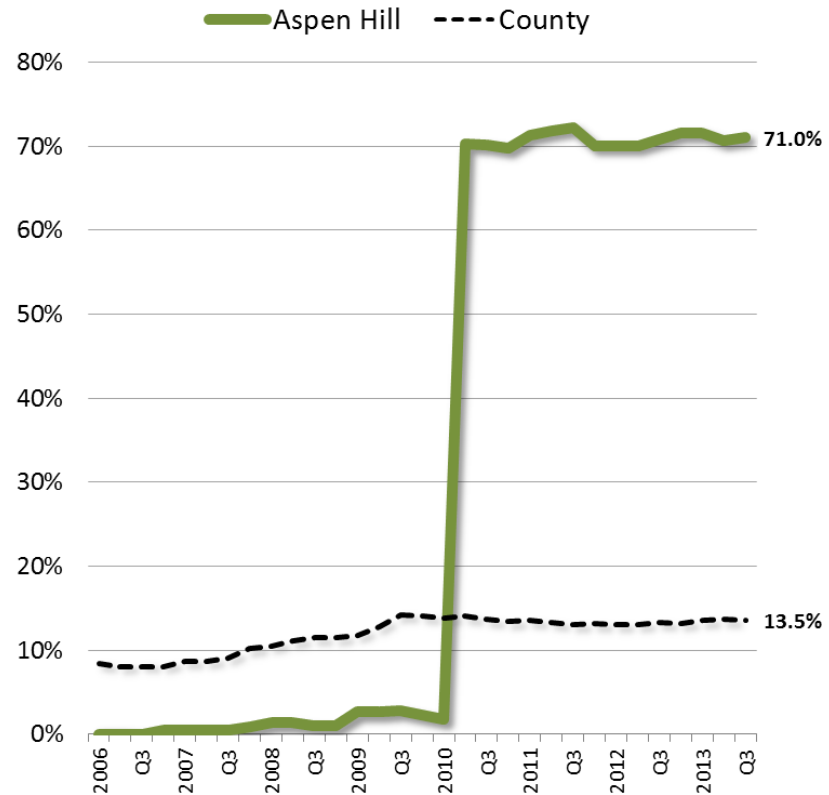
- Office
- Retail
- Housing



Office Concept

- 1994 Master Plan recommended continuing office use at Vitro site
- Finding a suitable office tenant will be difficult

OFFICE VACANCY RATE



Office Concept

Demand for office space is declining regionally:

- 10 million square feet vacant Countywide
- Changing use of office space

Vitro site is not competitive for office use

- Tenant location preferences have changed
- Preferred locations have ample, affordable Class A space - with more in the pipeline
- Costly to upgrade building



Retail Concept

Retail analysis assumed big-box retail based on...

- Compatibility with surrounding land use
- At least one major retailer has shown interest in locating there



Retail Concept

Retail is well-established in Aspen Hill

- 1.26 million square feet
- Big-Box and Shopping Plaza Format
- Most retail space is pre-1970
- Low retail vacancy rates
 - Shopping centers are 96% to 100% occupied
 - Plaza del Mercado is exception - 64% leased

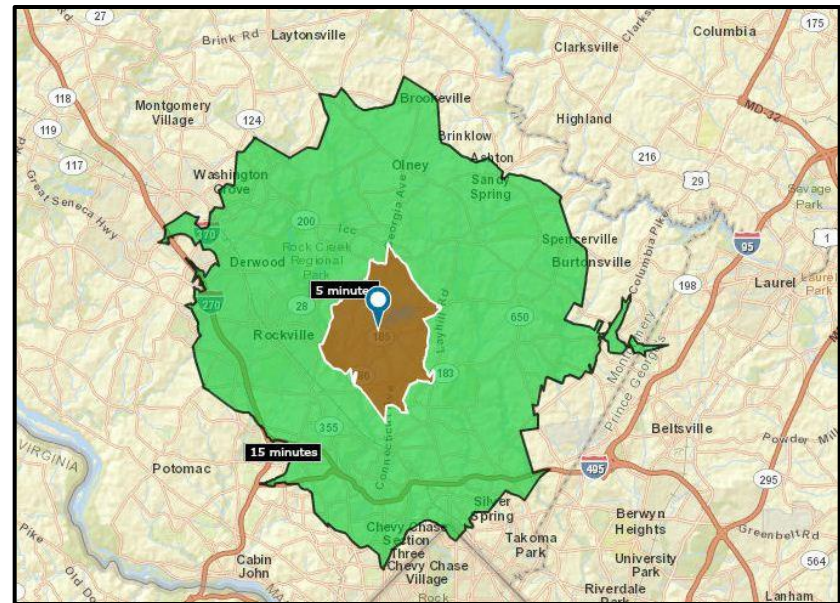


Retail Concept

Retail Trade Areas

Size of trade area depends on retail category

- Shoppers Goods/General Merchandise
 - 15 Minute Drivetime
- Convenience Goods/Groceries
 - 5 Minute Drivetime



Retail Concept

Retail Market Analysis

- Greatest retail opportunity in Trade Area is in General Merchandise (e.g. Target, WalMart)
- Estimated demand for new retail space in Aspen Hill
 - **General merchandise** (clothing, electronics, sporting goods, etc.)
 - Significant retail potential in trade area
 - Market may support around 380,000 square feet
 - **Groceries**
 - More limited retail potential in trade area
 - Market can support around 83,000 square feet



Retail Concept

Potential Retail Options for Site

- Retail “Supercenter”, “Category-Killer”
 - Usually between 85,000 SF - 120,000 SF
- Neighborhood Shopping Center
 - General Merchandise Anchor Tenant with attached smaller retailers
 - Usually between 70,000 SF – 100,000 SF



Housing Concept

Housing analysis assumed **Townhomes** based on...

- land use compatibility
- visual compatibility



Housing Concept

Target demographic groups for townhomes typically include:

- Singles
- Newly-weds
- One-parent households

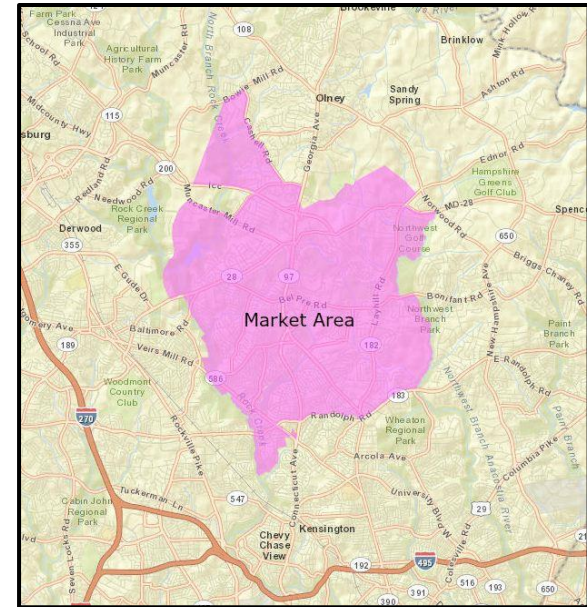


Housing Concept

Demographic Support

Currently Aspen Hill has.....

- High proportion of...
 - married families (with children)
 - age 65+ seniors (expected to grow)
- Low proportion of....
 - age 25-34 population
- Weaker market support for NEW townhomes
- Aspen Hill attracts those looking for..
 - single family detached houses
 - budget-friendly multifamily units



Housing Concept

Aspen Hill Housing Inventory

- Half are single family detached units
 - Average price ~ \$400,000
- Half are attached units and multifamily
 - Average price of townhomes ~ \$280,000
 - Most are older and more affordable
- Few newer-built attached units or condos
 - Market challenges for new townhomes....
 - Current Market Price
 - Lack of proximity to mass transit and major employers
 - Lack of walkable environment

Source: Metropolitan Regional Information Systems



Housing Concept

Financial Analysis

- Current Market Scenario: 70-80 townhome units @ \$375K-\$400K/unit
 - Financial “gap” estimated as high as \$16M
 - Limited “spread” between cost of construction and market price per unit
- Under current model, would need to construct estimated **~270-300 units** to see positive returns
 - However.....
 - Uncertain market demand
 - May be constrained by zoning requirements (such as open space)



Land Use Alternatives



- Near term alternative
- Most existing uses would remain
- Would activate vacant property
- Retain no-build areas for non-residential uses
- Existing parking configuration would remain

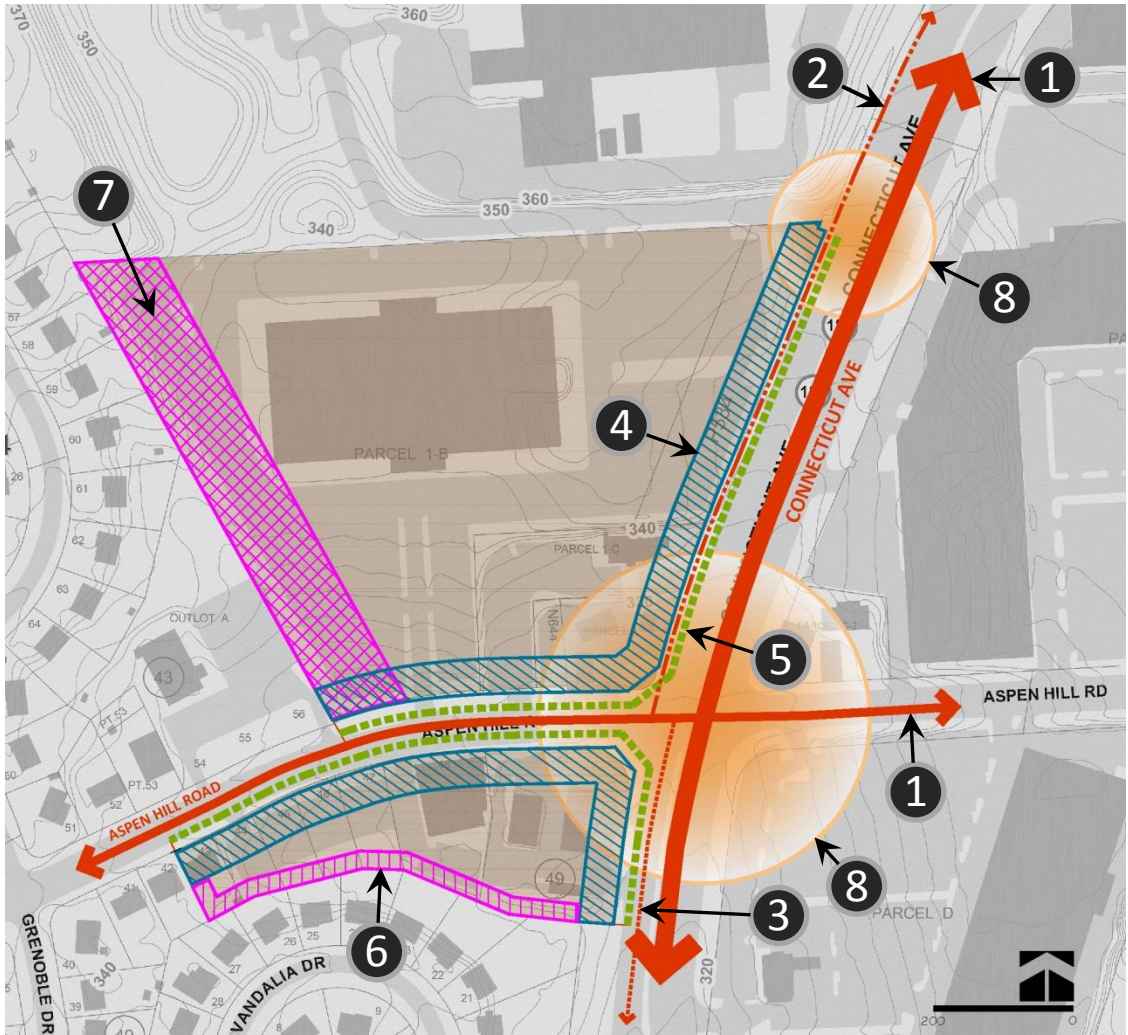


- Potential commercial and mixed-uses along major roads
- Would require combining properties and considering structured parking
- Medium density residential uses could transition appropriately to existing residential
- Retain no-build areas for non-residential uses



- Full build out long term alternative
- Commercial and/or mixed uses along major roads
- Attached single family could transition to existing residential
- Would allow residential uses

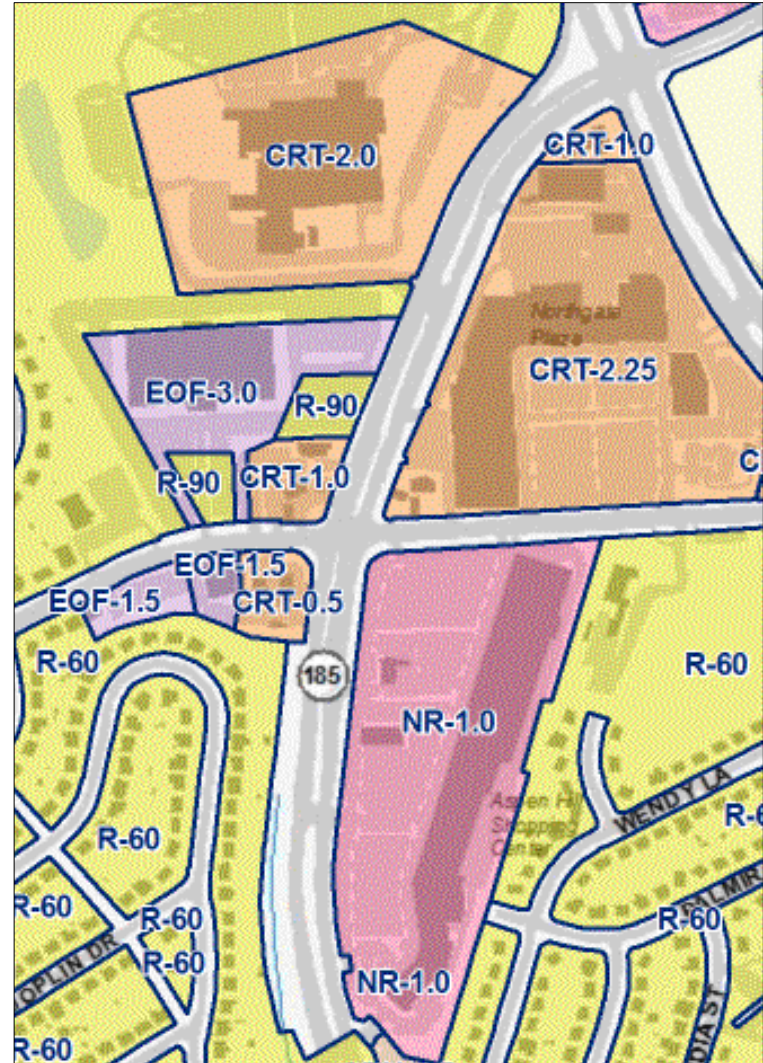
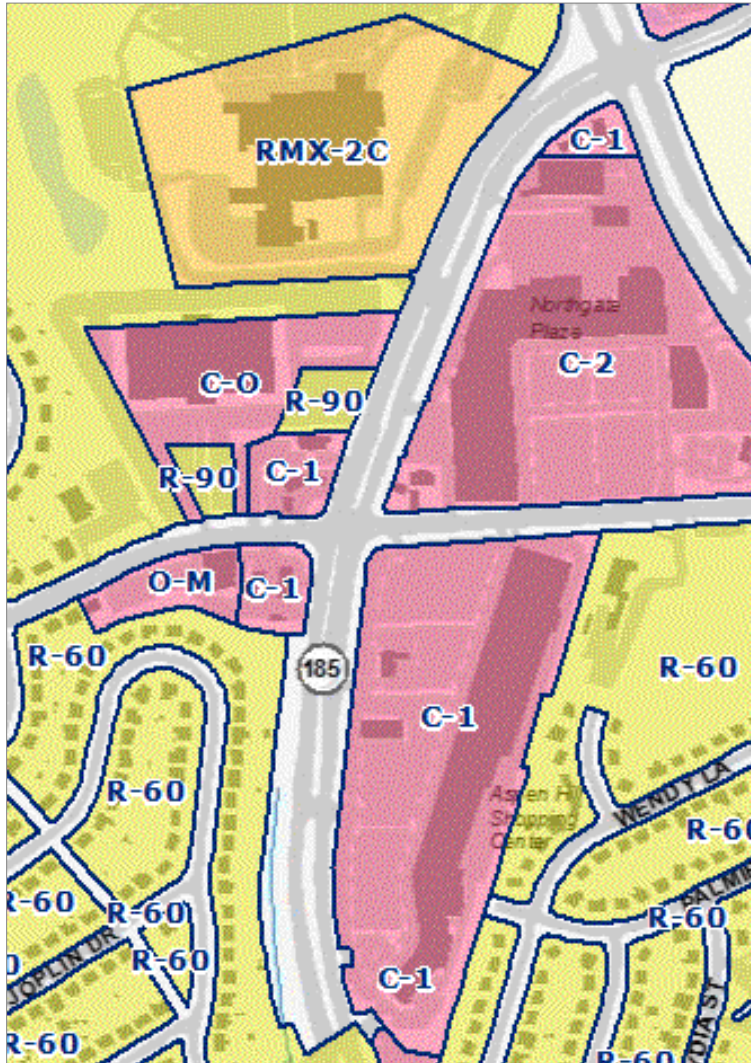
Development Guidelines



Legend

- 1 Existing Road
- 2 Shared Use Path
- 3 Bike Lane
- 4 Build-to-area
- 5 Streetscape
- 6 Transition Area
- 7 No-Build Area
- 8 Enhanced Intersection

Zoning Conversion



Project Timeline and Next Steps

✓	Community Meeting #1	Dec 3, 2013
✓	Scope of Work to Planning Board	Jan 23, 2014
✓	Initial Staff Recommendations	Feb - Mar 2014
✓	Community Meeting #2	April 1, 2014
	Staff Briefing to Planning Board	April 24, 2014
	Community Meeting #3	May 2014
	Staff Draft Plan	June 2014
	Planning Board Public Hearing	July 2014
	Planning Board Work Sessions	Sept 2014
	Planning Board Draft Plan	Oct 2014
	County Executive Plan Review	Nov - Dec 2014
	County Council Public Hearing	Jan 2015
	Approved Plan	Mar 2015



Contacts and Information

Montgomery County Planning Staff Contacts:

Area 2 Planning Division

Andrea Gilles, Project Lead | 301-495-4541 | Andrea.Gilles@montgomeryplanning.org

Nancy Sturgeon, Master Plan Team Lead | Nancy.Sturgeon@montgomeryplanning.org

Glenn Kreger, Area 2 Chief | Glenn.Kreger@montgomeryplanning.org

Luis Estrada, Urban Designer | Luis.Estrada@montgomeryplanning.org

Ed Axler, Transportation Planning | Ed.Axler@montgomeryplanning.org

Research and Special Projects Division

Rick Liu, Economic & Development Specialist | Rick.Liu@montgomeryplanning.org

Lisa Tate, Senior Research Planner | Lisa.Tate@montgomeryplanning.org

Project Website:

<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/aspenshill/>

