September 10, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA:

Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief

Community-Based Planning Division

FROM:

Sue Edwards, Team Leader, I-270 Corridor

Community-Based Planning Division (301-495-4518)

SUBJECT:

Worksession #2 Germantown Master Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Review public hearing comments concerning urban design

and transportation.

I. SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE WORKSESSIONS

Discussion of Plan recommendations for specific properties will take place at the following worksessions:

Worksession #3

October 6, 2008

Properties on the west side of I-270

Worksession #4

October 20, 2008

Montgomery College

Worksession #5

October 30, 2008

Properties on the east side of I-270

II. URBAN DESIGN

The objective of urban design guidelines for the Germantown plan area is to enhance the character, liveliness, and sustainability created by new development and redevelopment of public and private property as recommended in the Draft Germantown Master Plan. Under current conditions, only private development in the Town Center area and not the larger Germantown study area has been subject to design guidelines that were created following adoption of the 1989 Plan (Germantown Town Center Design Study: Guidance for the Implementation of Future Development of the Town Center, 1992).

Lacking design guidelines for the remainder of the Germantown study area, the resulting development pattern failed to include the basic elements of an attractive, compact, and walkable community. Much of the current development is "placeless" and could occur anywhere. It overlooks the unique references to Germantown's history, founding families and industries, or natural setting.

Much of the existing development has also overlooked any orientation to the street and placed parking facilities between the roadway (or sidewalk) and the building in order to accommodate the automobile. Vast areas of Germantown are characterized by treeless, impervious pavement used for surface parking. Many buildings, even public buildings, place the building entrance where the vehicles are, not at the street front.

Area wide design principles in the Draft Plan reflect the following aspirations:

- Mixed-use development clustered at transit stations
- Recognizable communities created where transit service will occur
- Formation of a **consistent building line** to frame the public realm and allow for public gathering spaces
- First floor retail and restaurants to activate the streets with wide sidewalks that accommodate outdoor gathering space and pedestrian passage
- Attention to **building form**, **height**, **mass and façade** with highest density and height closest to transit stations and a tapering of density and height to the edges of transit neighborhoods for compatibility with residential neighborhoods
- Providing for views and vistas
- Placing parking located on streets, in parking structures or behind buildings that line the street
- The type, height, and placement of signs
- Historic and cultural features and public art incorporated into the design of new projects and redevelopment
- Interconnected roadways, streets, sidewalks, paths and bicycle facilities for access to transit and Germantown attractions
- Tree-lined boulevards and main streets
- A network of **diverse public use spaces** that connect to the larger natural systems surrounding Germantown

Attachment A responds to public hearing comments.

Attachment B contains modifications and additions to specific urban design text in the Draft Plan.

III. TRANSPORTATION

Worksession #2 for the Draft Germantown Master Plan will also address public comments concerning area wide transportation recommendations. Discussion of Plan recommendations for specific properties will take place as noted on page one.

The memorandum from Transportation staff (Attachment C) addresses the following topics:

- Overall balance between land use and transportation
- Transit options such as the Corridor Cities Transitway, MARC commuter rail, and bus service
- Pedestrian and bikeway facilities
- State funded road projects such as Midcounty Highway (M-83) and Frederick Road (MD 355)
- Transportation projects as part of staging recommendations.

Attachment D summarizes the public hearing testimony on transportation, transit, and bikeway issues.

SE:ha M:/Germantown/staff report. Sept 25

Attachments

- A. Memo from Urban Design Division
- B. Area Wide Urban Design Recommendations: Proposed Text, Additions, and Graphics
- C. Memorandum from Transportation Planning
- D. Transportation-related Public Hearing Testimony

ATTACHMENT A



September 11, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief, Community-Based Planning Division

John Carter, Chief, Urban Design Division

VIA:

Sue Edwards, Team Leader, I-270 Team

Community-Based Planning Division

FROM:

Karen Kumm Morris, Master Planner

Urban Design Division

SUBJECT:

Germantown Master Plan - Worksession #2

Area Wide Urban Design Recommendations

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve revised urban design guideline text and graphics

illustrated in Attachment B in response to Public Testimony.

SUMMARY OF PLAN'S AREA WIDE URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Urban Design Framework Plan

 Proposes a series of distinct districts each with its own mixed-use center clustered around transit stations. The heart of Germantown, the core area of the Town Center, is strengthened with the highest densities, tallest building heights and network of urban open spaces along Century Boulevard. A series of smaller mixed-use centers at transit stations along the I-270 Corridor and at the MARC station are recommended.

Centers

 Design principles support street oriented development using the transect principle of stepping down building heights from the center to the periphery of a district and parking in the rear or within structures.

Connections

 Street network recommendations expand the local street network serving the districts, propose a hierarchy of boulevards and main streets, and identify sidewalks, bike and trail connections to better connect centers to destinations, parks, open spaces and transit.

Spaces

• Open space network provides each district with a variety of open spaces such as public parks, green commons, plazas and gathering places. The Town Center with its multiple ownership of properties identifies specific locations for such open spaces. Other districts with single ownership of large properties have "floating" symbols for various types of open spaces to be determined through project plans.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO AREA WIDE DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Framework Plan

Public Testimony: Sub centers within Districts are needed. The Town Center is too large an

area to be developed with a uniform density.

(Lindstrom)

Follow the Urban Land Institute's guidance. (Wrenn)

Response

1. Revise the Framework Map on page 15 to identify the core neighborhood within the Town Center as the focus of economic strength and synergy. See Revised Urban Framework Map, Attachment B.

A hierarchy of centers is needed for Germantown with the Core Neighborhood achieving highest density and diversity of uses. The revised graphic better illustrates the Plan's recommended hierarchy of density.

The core neighborhood within the Town Center is a walkable length, a little longer than ½ a mile in length between the Town Commons shopping center and the Cinemas along Aircraft Drive. Within this area, the Plan creates a sense of center and transition in density and building heights with the highest density at the transit station of 2.0 FAR and 15-story buildings stepping down to 4 and 5-story buildings and .5 FAR along Wisteria Drive.

Centers

Public Testimony: There is general community opposition to tall buildings, density and

concern over radically changing the character of Germantown. (Magda,

Soderberg, Dooley, Beachley, Ferry)

Response

1. Add a new guideline called **Compact Centers** to be the first bullet on page 15. Add new text as follows:

Cluster development at transit stations creating compact, walkable centers.

Add a graphic depicting a conceptual compact center. See Attachment B. This guideline is fundamental to achieving a focus at transit stations and will help address the community concern that density is not distributed indiscriminately throughout the planning area.

2. Rewrite and shift the **Street Oriented Development** principle from page 16 to page 15 as the second bullet in the design guidelines as follows:

Locate buildings adjacent to the street to form a consistent building line with some variation in building setback for public open spaces. Building lines should define the public realm of the sidewalk and street. Provide front entrances along the street to improve pedestrian convenience, activate the street and encourage use of transit by reducing walking distances. Interim development also should be street oriented with parking in the rear.

This principle is fundamental to achieving a compatible and pedestrian friendly character for new development. The revised language better clarifies and instructs development proposals, will better ensure compatible development, and help address community concerns with density.

Replace the Plan's photo with a new image that better captures street oriented development. Add captions to all photos to better identify intent of photo. Insert a 3-D graphic depicting street oriented development, see Century Boulevard – Main Street.

3. Add a new guideline entitled **Building Form and Architectural Facade Design** to address community concerns over tall buildings and compatibility with nearby residents. Add new text as follows:

Reduce building bulk through building design and facade treatment to improve light on the street, minimize shadows and create a pedestrian scale along the street. Achieve reduced building bulk by such means as narrow building footprints, upper floor step backs for tall buildings and orientation of buildings along the street. Design buildings with articulated facades and architectural elements that de-emphasize horizontal mass and bulk. Achieve compatibility with adjacent residential communities.

Insert a new photo illustrating articulated facades. The community's concern with tall buildings and incompatible relationships is better addressed with this guideline.

4. Modify text for **Building Heights and Transitions** on page 15 as follows:

Locate tallest buildings in Germantown, 10-15 stories at the Town Center transit station. All Districts should have defined centers created by the tallest buildings located at the transit station. Building heights should step down transitioning towards adjoining residential communities to achieve compatible relationships. Individual tall buildings should step back upper floors above 3 or 4 stories to achieve more light and air at street level and create a pedestrian scale. Design roof tops to create a visually interesting skyline.

This guideline will ensure that tall buildings will achieve a pedestrian scale, provide more light and air along sidewalks and achieve compatibility with nearby residents. Opposition to tall buildings reflects a concern over the potential incompatibility of tall buildings adjacent to low rise residential communities.

Insert a graphic illustration of building step backs.

5. Add a new guideline called **Views and Vistas** on page 16. Add text as follows:

Respond to important views or vistas with significant buildings and façade treatment such as vertical towers, angled corners or rooftop design features. Create a visually interesting design feature on axial alignment with the view.

This guideline will result in special design attention to views and vistas helping to address community concerns with the visual appearance of new development.

Public Amenities

Public Testimony: The Plan lacks sufficient references to Germantown's history and its

family-oriented sense of place. (Soderburg, Hulley)

Response

1. Add more instructive text for **Public Amenities** that includes programming of spaces and a list of specific, placemaking amenities located in the Appendix. Shift this section to follow the discussion of Spaces. Revise Public Amenities text on page 16 as follows:

Provide public amenities within public and private development to improve community identity, public enjoyment and overall attractiveness. Public amenities shall enhance the sense of place and should include but are not limited to fountains, seating, lighting, pavements, artwork, streetscape and extensive plantings. Amenities should be publically accessible, visible, safe and maintainable. Design elements should incorporate historic, cultural and nature oriented themes to reinforce community identity and be interactive where appropriate. Programming of open spaces should be provided to encourage public enjoyment with festivals, family events, concerts and other community oriented activities. See list of potential amenities in Appendix.

The revised text is needed to highlight amenities that create special places and to identify programming as a way to encourage use of urban spaces. Add a photo depicting the placemaking artwork at the Transit Station as an illustration of integrating historic themes into public amenities.

Community Identity

Public Testimony: Germantown's history is not sufficiently recognized in the Plan and needs

to be treated as an important element of community identity. (Soderberg,

Hulley)

Response

1. Community Identity is a very important element that should be included in the overall Framework Plan principles. Add the following recommendation to strengthen community identity as the fourth bullet on page 15:

Strengthen community identity and attractiveness by incorporating historic, cultural and nature oriented themes into public and private development.

2. Emphasize that high quality design creates a sense of place and identity derived from its history. Rewrite the design recommendation on page 10 as follows:

Encourage high quality design that enhances community character and identity. Distinct neighborhoods, green streets and attractive urban spaces that integrate history and culture will give Germantown a strong sense of place. High quality design is expected from both public and private development.

Community Facilities

Public Testimony: The Community expressed concern over a lack of adequate public

facilities such as schools and other facilities to support proposed land uses.

(Hulley)

Response

1. List the Plan's proposed Community Facilities on page 17 as follows:

Provide the new public community facilities to support additional employees and residents recommended in the Plan. These facilities include:

- 1) a family oriented public park in the Town Center,
- 2) an upgraded, renovated open space, the Town Commons, in front of Black Rock Center for the Performing Arts,
- 3) the expansion and redevelopment of the District 5 Police and Fire Station with affordable housing, and
- 4) a new urban recreation center with outdoor open space.

The Plan provides a number of new community facilities to support the proposed growth. Revised text and a list is needed to better clarify the proposed facilities. The adequacy of school facilities will be discussed in future worksessions.

Connections

Public Testimony: Cannot understand this section. Need to emphasize transit and pedestrian

friendly street design. (Lindstrom)

Short block lengths recommendations are too rigid, cannot always achieve

as a standard. (Smith)

Response

1. Rewrite section to improve understanding of recommendations and provide more instructive guidance for development. Revise text is as follows:

Connections

Germantown should be served by an interconnected network of roadways, streets, sidewalks and bikeways that link the community to desired destinations such as transit, schools and commercial services. Roadway and street designs should promote pedestrian use and achieve a high quality of streetscape character.

- Street Network
 - Create an interconnected street network within all districts and large parcels. Provide new streets with short block lengths, such as 250 to 350 feet in length, to promote walking. Allow mid-block pedestrian crossings for longer block lengths to promote a pedestrian friendly environment. See Street Network Map.
- Street Character
 - Improve Germantown's identity by providing an extensive network of tree lined boulevards and main streets that enhance the character of the public realm. Boulevards and main streets reflect the hierarchy of the proposed roadway system and are enhanced through streetscape improvements. Improvements should include but are not limited to closely spaced street trees and landscaped medians, provision of special paving where appropriate, and use of pedestrian lighting and other furnishings that meet pedestrian's needs and provide comfort. A detailed streetscape plan will be developed following the approval of the Master Plan. See Boulevards and Main Streets Map.
- Trails, Bikeways and Sidewalks
 Weave trails, bikeways and sidewalks through all districts promoting an alternative
 to the vehicle use and improving access to such destinations as transit stations,
 schools, commercial services, parks and natural areas. See Urban Open Space,
 Parks and Trails Map for network of bikeways and trails.

Improve understanding of the Plan's extensive proposed street network and trail connections by adding the Street Network Map, Boulevards and Main Street Map and a bikeway, trail connection map showing connections to the greater community. The illustrative cross sections need to appear adjacent to the Boulevards and Main Street Map to explain the character of these streets. The Plan supports short block lengths to encourage walking but also allows for flexibility in block lengths to meet individual situations.

Spaces

Public Testimony: There is a general concern that new development will diminish the sense

of place and community that residents currently enjoy. (Soderberg,

Hulley)

The Plan's open space recommendations for the Lerner Property and Seneca Meadows were questioned by property owners. (Chod, Brewer)

Response

1. Expand text to the list of the design elements needed to create desirable urban open space. Provide new photos that better depict the character of public urban parks, green commons, plazas and gathering places. Shift the Public Amenities guideline to follow after Spaces.

Public Urban Parks

Public urban parks are focal points of activity within the community. Locate parks in visible and centrally located sites within mixed-use neighborhoods and along pedestrian routes. Design parks with a variety of interactive activities, walkways, moveable tables and chairs, shade trees and special features such as public art and historic elements that celebrate Germantown's history.

Green Commons

Incorporate a green common into all districts with lawns, trees, moveable tables and chairs, seating areas, walkways and other special amenities. Green commons provide residents and workers a place to enjoy nature, exercise, walk and enjoy social gatherings. Include special features such as fountains, artwork, gazebos and other amenities. Privately provided green commons for public use will be integrated into neighborhood designs and privately maintained by property owners or by the proposed maintenance district.

Plazas and Gathering Places

Develop a variety of plazas, gathering places and urban spaces within each district defined by buildings and activated by retail and restaurants. Urban spaces must provide seating with moveable tables and chairs, landscaping, lighting, public art and other amenities that contribute to one's enjoyment. Incorporate historic and cultural themes into designs.

Transit station areas in addition to the above list of features will have shelters and transit information kiosks. Plazas, gathering places and urban spaces should be privately developed for public use and maintained by the property owner or by the proposed maintenance district.

The revised text is needed to highlight the needed design elements that create desirable urban open space for each type of open space. The intent is to ensure that a high quality of design and a greater reflection of Germantown's unique sense of place is achieved. The guideline on Public Amenities should follow the section on Spaces because urban open spaces are enriched by amenities.

Specific property open space recommendations will be addressed in subsequent worksessions for these properties.

Implementation

Public Testimony: General community concerns over how compatible proposed highrise

development will fit in Germantown. (Magda, Soderberg, Dooley,

Beachley, Ferry)

Response

1. Revise text under Implementation Plan on page 60 as follows:

Additional plans, studies and guidelines will be created as part of Plan implementation as follows:

- Develop a Town Center Design Plan with detailed design guidance for public and private development.
- Develop a comprehensive set of design guidelines for each District.
- Provide an area wide Germantown Streetscape Plan.
- Provide a MD 355 Corridor Design Plan with intersection recommendations.

The revised text highlights and adds clarity to ensure that community's concerns with compatibility will be further addressed with detailed implementation actions. This approach is consistent with the Chairman's comments that master plans should provide urban design principles and major design recommendations with more specifying design guidance provided in subsequent Planning Board approved plans.

KKM:ha: G:Germantown/Worksession#2UrbanDesign

ATTACHMENT B

Area Wide Urban Design Recommendations Proposed Text Revisions, additions (in Italics) and Graphics

Key Recommendations

Replace fourth bullet with following text, page 10:

 Encourage high quality design that enhances character and identity. Distinct neighborhoods, green streets and attractive urban spaces with historic and cultural references will give Germantown a strong sense of place. High quality design is expected for public and private development.

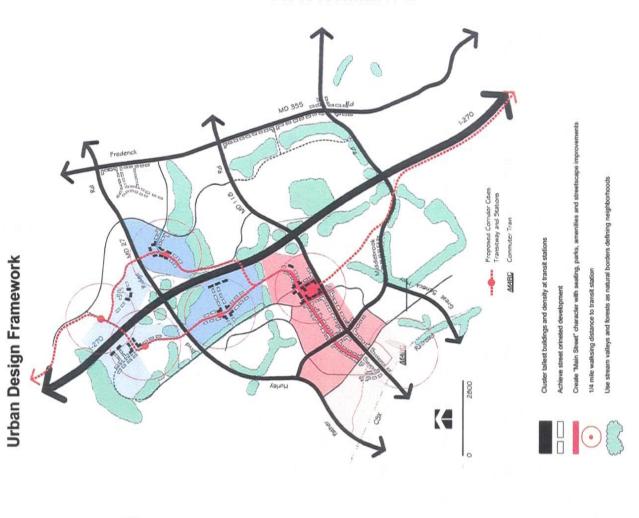
Urban Form

Replace Urban Design Framework Map, page 15.

Design Framework

Replace bullets on pages 15-16 with following text:

- Create mixed use centers around transit stations within each District to encourage use of transit, provide convenience and create a focus of activity.
- Create an interconnected network of streets, bikeways and pedestrian routes to create walkable communities and improve access.
- Expand the urban and natural open spaces to increase and improve amenity, recreation and environmental quality.
- Strengthen community identity and attractiveness by incorporating historic, cultural and nature oriented theme into development.



Centers

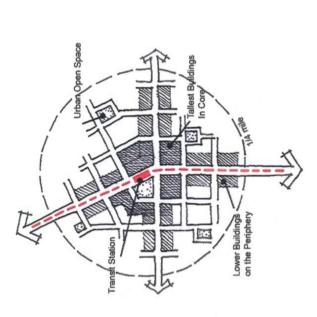
Compact Centers

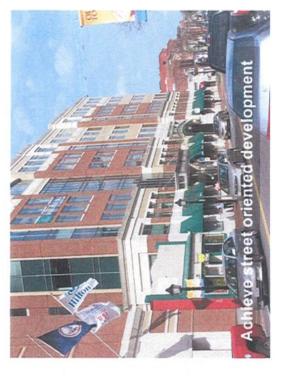
Cluster development at transit stations creating compact, walkable centers. Place highest density at center transitioning down to lower density at the edges.

Street Oriented Development

Locate buildings adjacent to the street to form a consistent building line with some variation in setback for public open spaces. The building line defines the public realm of the sidewalk and street.

Front entrances along the street to improve pedestrian convenience, activate the street and reduce walking distances.



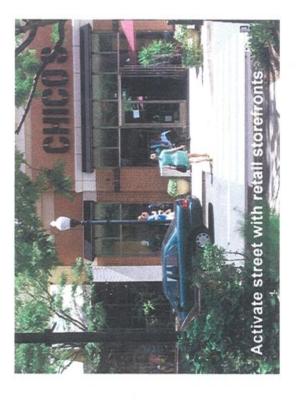


Street front Retail and Restaurants

Provide street level retail uses along streets where active street activity is desired. Retail uses bring people together for shopping, eating, and socializing contributing to a sense of community life and vitality. Active retail, restaurants and other uses should occupy highly visible locations along boulevards and main streets, adjacent to urban open space to add vitality and convenience.

Design retail storefront with large, clear glass windows for merchandise display that promotes retailing and adds visual interest to the street.

Provide wide sidewalks, 20 to 26 feet where cafes and seating areas are desired.





Building Form and Façade Design

Reduce building bulk and mass through building design and façade treatment to improve light on the street, minimize shadows and create a pedestrian scale along the street. Achieve reduced building bulk by means such as narrow building footprints, upper floor step backs over 4 to 5 stories and orientation of buildings along the street. Design buildings with articulated facades and architectural elements that de-emphasize horizontal mass and bulk. Achieve compatibility with adjacent residential communities.

Building Heights and Transitions

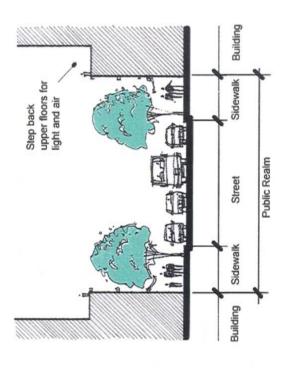
Locate tallest buildings in Germantown, 10 to 15 stories, at the Town Center transit station. All Districts should have defined centers created by the location of the tallest buildings at transit stations.

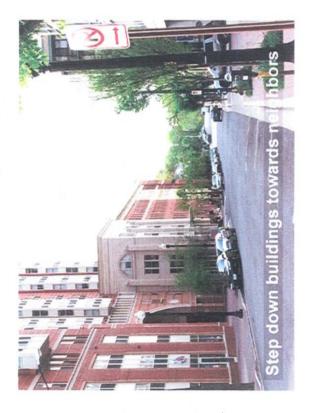
Building heights should step down transitioning to adjoining residential communities to achieve compatible relationships.

Provide varied building heights and roof designs to create a visually interesting skyline.

Views and Vistas

Respond to important views or vistas with significant buildings and façade treatment such as vertical towers, angled corners or roof top design features. Create a visually interesting design feature on axial alignment with the view.





Parking

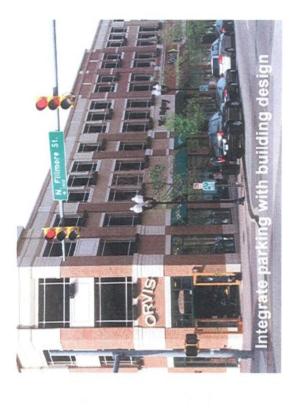
Locate parking on the street, in mid block structures or in structures lined with street activating uses on the first floor. Minimize driveways widths to minimize conflicts with pedestrians.

Minimum parking requirements should be considered the maximum parking allowed.

Evaluate the feasibility of a parking district in the Town Center to promote urban development by consolidating parking facilities. Consider providing public structured parking at the Up-County Services Center and the police station.

Public Amenities

Provide public amenities within development to improve community identity, enjoyment and attractiveness. Public amenities shall enhance the sense of place and include but are not limited to fountains, seating such as movable tables and chairs, lighting, pavements, artwork and extensive plantings. Amenities should be publically accessible, visible, safe and maintainable. Design elements should incorporate historic, cultural and natural themes to reinforce community identity. Programming of open spaces should be provided to encourage public use providing for events such as festivals, family oriented activities, concerts and other community oriented activities. See list of specific recommended amenities in Appendix.





Signage

Signs throughout the community, in centers and along roadways should aid in wayfinding, be incorporated into building design, and be placed as part of landscaped features. Pole mounted or freestanding signs are not appropriate.

Historic Features

Commemorate Germantown's history, families and industries with amenities, building design and interpretative elements that tie together the past with and future. New development, where appropriate, should incorporate elements that depict Germantown's history and achieve compatibility with designated historic sites.

See Historic Preservation Section for further information.

Cultural Facilities

Germantown is emerging as the Up-County's cultural center with the Black Rock Center for the Performing Arts, the Germantown Regional Library, the Germantown Historic District, and Montgomery College's cultural programs. This Plan supports a policy that continues to locate cultural facilities and programs within the Town Center and other transit serviced districts to strengthen Germantown's role as the Up-County cultural center.

Community Facilities

Provide several new public community facilities to support the additional workers and residents recommended in this Plan. These facilities include:

- 1) a family oriented public park in the Town Center,
- 2) upgraded, renovated improvements to the Town Commons at the Black Rock Center for the Performing Arts
- 3) redevelopment of the District 5 Police and Fire Station
- 4) a new urban recreation center with outdoor space.

Privately provided community facilities integrated with new development should include facilities such as daycare, community centers and meeting rooms and other publically needed facilities.

Connections

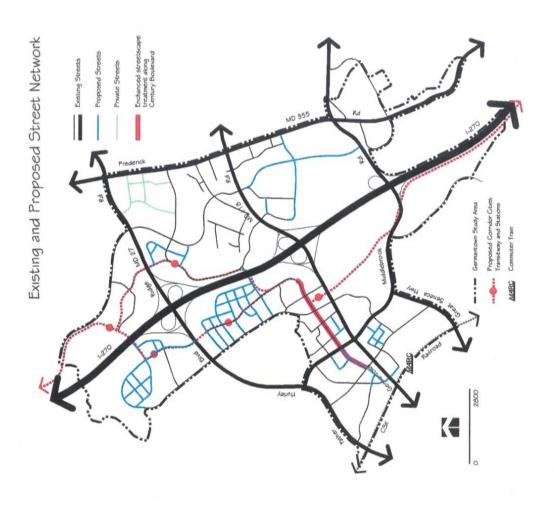
Replace text on page 17 as follows:

Germantown should be served by an interconnected network of roadways, streets, sidewalks and bikeways that link the community to desired destinations such as transit, schools and commercial services. Roadways and street designs should promote pedestrian use and achieve a high quality of streetscape character.

Street Networks

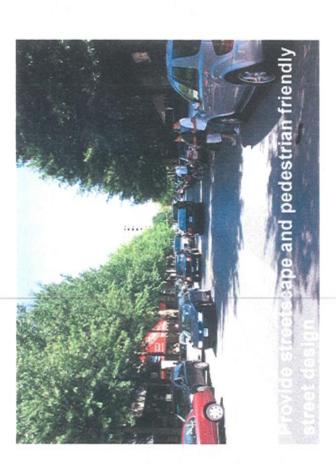
Create an interconnected street network within all districts and large parcels. Provide new streets with short block lengths, such as 250 to350 feet in length, to promote walking. Allow mid-block pedestrian crossings to reduce longer block lengths. See Street Network Map.

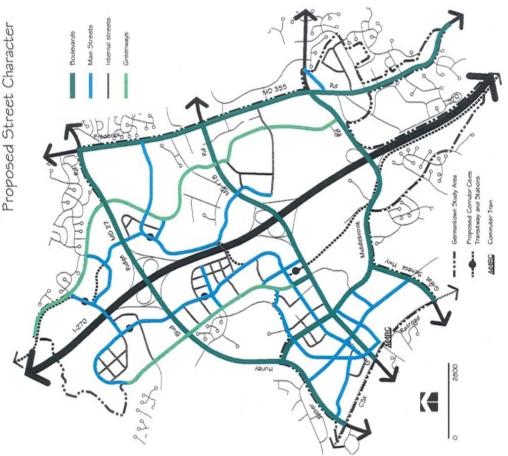




Street Character

Improve Germantown's identity by providing an extensive network of tree lined boulevards and main streets that enhance the character of the public realm. Boulevards and main streets reflect the hierarchy of the proposed street system and are enhanced through streetscape improvements. Improvements include, but are not limited to, closely spaced street trees and landscaped medians, provision of special paving where appropriate, and use of pedestrian scaled lighting and other furnishing that meet pedestrian needs, provide comfort and enhance safety. A detailed streetscape plan will be developed following the approval of the Master Plan.

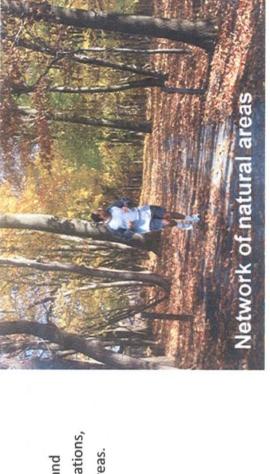


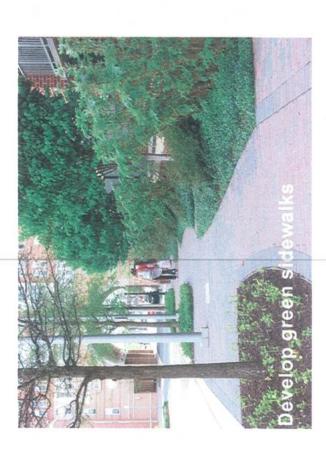


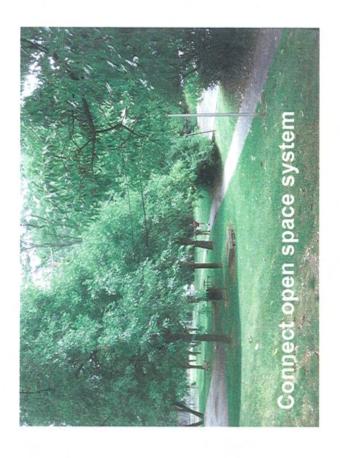
See proposed street cross sections

Trails, Bikeways and Sidewalks

Weave trails, bikeways and sidewalks through all districts promoting an alternative to the vehicles and improving access to destinations such as transit stations, schools, commercial services, parks and natural areas. See Urban Open Space, Parks and Trails Map.

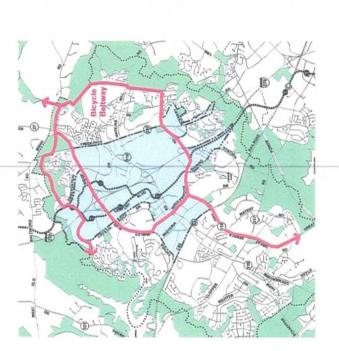


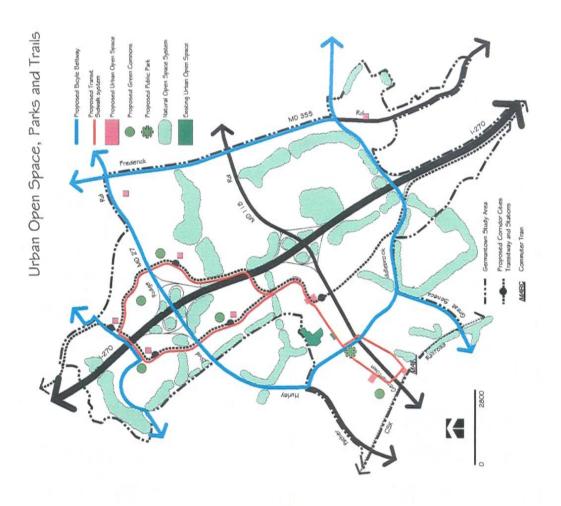




Spaces

From the regional stream valley parks and green belt to the small urban plazas, Germantown will have a network of diverse, public spaces. Each district should have its own open space plan determined early in the development process to establish appropriate spaces that connect to the larger system. Along with defining the community structure and providing civic spaces, urban spaces also should incorporate green design to improve the natural environment.



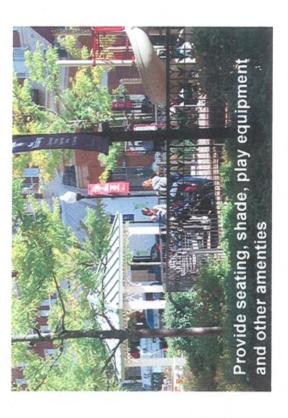


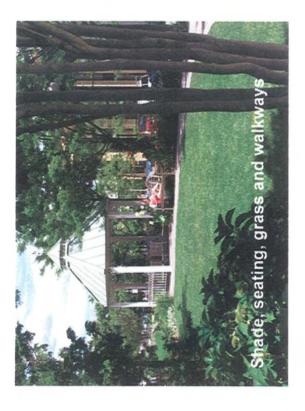
Public Urban Parks

Public urban parks are focal points of activity within the community. Locate them in visible and centrally located sites within mixed use neighborhoods and along pedestrian routes. Design parks with a variety of interactive activities, walkways, moveable tables and chairs, shade trees and special features such as public art and historic elements that celebrate Germantown's history.

Green Commons

Incorporate green common into all districts providing lawns, trees, shaded areas, moveable tables and chairs, walkways and other special amenities for public use. Green commons provide residents and workers a place to enjoy nature, exercise, walk and enjoy social gatherings. Special features such as fountains, artwork, gazebos and other amenities that invite public us should be included. Privately provided green commons for public use will be integrated into neighborhood designs and privately maintained by property owners or by the proposed maintenance district.





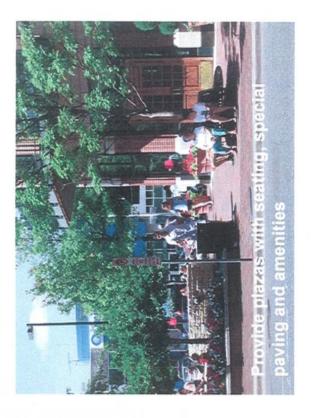
Plazas and Gathering Places

Develop a variety of plazas, gathering places and urban spaces within each district. Such spaces should be defined by buildings and activated by retail or restaurants. Urban spaces must provide seating with moveable tables and chairs, landscaping, lighting, public art and other amenities that contribute to one's enjoyment. Incorporate historic and cultural themes into designs.

Transit station areas in addition to the above list of features will have shelters and transit information kiosks. Plazas, gathering places and urban spaces should be privately developed for public use and maintained by the property owner or by the proposed maintenance district.

Natural Area Networks

Preserve and expand Germantown's natural area network to provide wildlife habitat, protect water quality, mitigate urban heat island effect, and improve air quality. This green infrastructure also should provide opportunities for recreation and scenic views. Connect stream valley parks to adjacent communities and the surrounding greenbelt regional parks with trails, bikeways and sidewalks. Seek opportunities to retain, establish, or enhance connections between natural areas. Where high quality natural areas exist adjacent to existing parks, pursue acquisition through dedication or purchase.



ATTACHMENT C



September 9, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Sue Edwards, I-270 Corridor Team Leader

Community-based Planning

VIA:

Dan Hardy, Acting Chief

Transportation Planning

FROM:

Katherine Holt, Senior Planner KH

Transportation Planning

SUBJECT:

Germantown Master Plan

Worksession #2

Transportation Discussion Topics

Worksession #2 for the Germantown Master Plan on September 25 will provide an opportunity for staff to solicit Planning Board guidance on several overarching policy questions relating to transportation system design, performance, and implementation. We will use the discussion at Worksession #2 to inform subsequent worksessions in which site-specific transportation recommendations will be addressed.

This memorandum summarizes the discussion topics for Worksession #2:

- 1. How do we define and achieve an overall balance between land use and transportation?
- 2. How should the Corridor Cities Transitway serve the Plan area?
- 3. Are planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities sufficient?
- 4. How should the relationship between M-83 and MD 355 be reflected in the Plan?
- 5. How should transportation performance be reflected in the staging plan?

Attachment D summarizes Public Hearing testimony on transportation issues, with brief responses for items included in this memorandum.

1. TRANSPORTATION / LAND USE BALANCE

On September 4, the Planning Board focused on three basic questions from the public hearing testimony that reflect the balance between land use and transportation:

- Are the levels of forecast multimodal mobility in the Public Hearing Draft Plan sufficient to support the recommended land use?
- Would greater levels of congestion or limited parking help reduce traffic volumes?
- Should the Public Hearing Draft Plan recommend changes to the mobility objectives applied to Germantown?

The following paragraphs provide affirmative recommendations on these questions.

Each master plan adopted by the County Council in the past two decades has assessed whether or not the land use and transportation system are "in balance". The term balance has traditionally meant that the forecasted end-state land use in the plan area could be supported by the end-state transportation system and satisfies the Adequate Public Facilities (APF) requirements of the Growth Policy in place at time of plan end-state analysis.

Transportation system capacity for master plans includes forecasting future travel demand, a process that includes two levels of analysis consistent with the current Growth Policy transportation reviews:

- A regional travel demand analysis is used to develop baseline conditions reflecting
 planned land use and transportation changes outside the Germantown Master Plan area.
 This effort produces Relative Transit Mobility (RTM) and Relative Arterial Mobility
 (RAM) forecasts for the year 2030 for a long-range Policy Area Mobility Review
 (PAMR)
- A local area model analysis is used to evaluate more detailed alternative land use and transportation options within the Master Plan area. This effort produces forecast intersection volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratios for the year 2030 using the Critical Lane Volume (CLV) technique for a comprehensive plan area Local Area Transportation Review (LATR)

Policy Area Mobility Review

From a Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR) perspective, we conclude from the end-state analysis that the proposed land use and transportation system are in balance, due in large part to implementation of regional facilities already in the master plan including

- I-270 widening,
- the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT),
- Midcounty Highway Extended (M-83), and
- MD 355 widening to six lanes.

As indicated in Figure 1, the Germantown master plan area includes portions of three Policy Areas:

- · Portions of the Germantown West Policy Area,
- The entire Germantown Town Center Policy Area, which is surrounded by the Germantown West Policy Area and incorporated into Germantown West for PAMR purposes,
- Portions of the Germantown East Policy Area

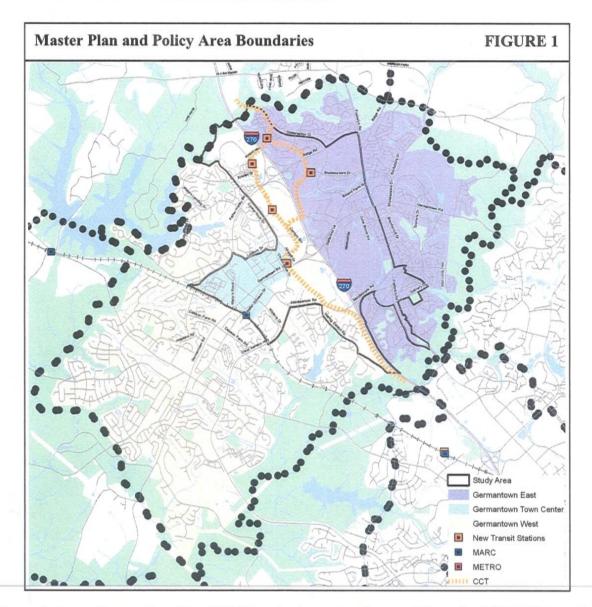
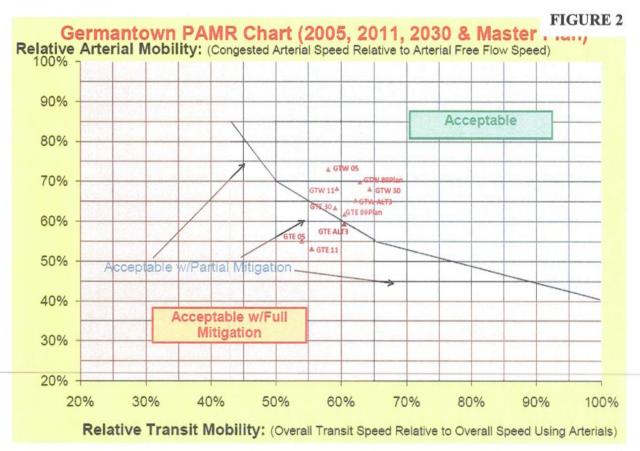


Figure 2 shows the results of the PAMR analysis, comparing conditions for 2005, 2011, and Alternative 3, the working title for the highest amount of land use tested during alternatives analysis. The plan's recommended land use is commensurate with, but slightly lower than, that tested as Alternative 3. Figure 2 uses the following nomenclature to identify forecast Relative Transit Mobility (RTM) and Relative Arterial Mobility (RAM) conditions:

GTE refers to the Germantown East Policy Area

- GTW refers to the Germantown West Policy Area (including the Germantown Town Center Policy Area)
- 05 refers to year 2005 conditions
- 11 refers to forecast year 2011 conditions, per the 2007-2009 Growth Policy
- 30 refers to forecast year 2030 conditions assuming Round 7.1 cooperative forecast land uses
- 89 Plan refers to forecast year 2030 conditions assuming the yield from the 1989
 Germantown Master Plan, and
- ALT3 refers to the current staff recommendations.

The objective of the master plan balance assessment is to ensure that the end-state conditions are acceptable with either partial or full mitigation. In other words, the GTW ALT3 and GTE ALT3 markers both need to be "above the stairstep" and in either the white or green areas on the chart in Figure 2. The PAMR analysis allows us to conclude that while the recommended land use and transportation system is slightly more congested than that in the 1989 Plan, that both the Germantown East and the Germantown West Policy Areas have adequate mobility scores and that the recommended plan therefore has a balance between land use and transportation.



Gtown_PAMR_Mitigation_temporal\Gtwon_PAMR_Chart_Mitigation

12/14/2007

Local Area Transportation Review

Critical lane volume (CLV) is an analysis used for existing signalized intersections in the area to determine the level of intersection congestion. CLV is a calculation for intersections that evaluates conflicting movements such as through traffic and traffic turning left against oncoming traffic. For the Germantown area, there are two different policy standards of congestion. The Germantown Town Center area has a congestion standard of 1600, while the rest of Germantown has a congestion standard of 1425. CLVs listed for the study area in existing conditions can be seen in **Table 1** with a star noting CLVs congestion standards of 1600 and shading illustrating over the congestion standard. The 2030 column "without turn lanes" represents CLVs with future year traffic volumes on the road, but did not include any localized intersection improvements.

| | | | | 20 | 30 netw | ork | 2030 | networ | k with |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|---------|-----------|----------|-----------|------|----------|--------|
| Table 1 | | Existing | | with | out turn | lanes | t | urn lane | es |
| | AM | PM | V/C | AM | PM | V/C | AM | PM | V/C |
| Middlebrook/Crystal Rock* | 812 | 715 | 0.51 | 2013 | 1992 | 1.26 | 1602 | 1631 | 1.02 |
| Middlebrook/GS HWY | 795 | 984 | 0.69 | 1104 | 1317 | 0.92 | 905 | 1317 | 0.92 |
| GS HWY/WISTERIA | 637 | 877 | 0.62 | 1144 | 1444 | 1.01 | 930 | 1110 | 0.78 |
| MD 118 /DOE* | 880 | 1080 | 0.68 | 1521 | 1983 | 1.24 | 1286 | 1501 | 0.94 |
| MD 118 /Crystal Rock* | 887 | 1477 | 0.92 | 1864 | 1790 | 1.17 | 1540 | 1645 | 1.03 |
| Middlebrook/MD 118* | 863 | 1288 | 0.81 | 1559 | 1905 | 1.19 | 1406 | 1519 | 0.95 |
| WISTERIA/MD 118* | 843 | 1356 | 0.85 | 1136 | 1359 | 0.85 | 888 | 948 | 0.59 |
| MD 355/Middlebrook | 992 | 1374 | 0.96 | 1258 | 1750 | 1.23 | 1212 | 1750 | 1.23 |
| Father Hurley/Middlebrook* | 684 | 720 | 0.45 | 1471 | 1404 | 0.92 | 887 | 825 | 0.55 |
| Waring Station/Middlebrook | 959 | 1035 | 0.73 | 1202 | 1245 | 0.87 | 1040 | 1055 | 0.74 |
| MD 355/MD 118 | 1565 | 1390 | 1.10 | 1985 | 1897 | 1.39 | 1637 | 1555 | 1.15 |
| Observation/MD 118 | 636 | 863 | 0.61 | 1571 | 1819 | 1.28 | 1386 | 1509 | 1.06 |
| MD 355/Shakespeare | 1269 | 1101 | 0.89 | 1629 | 1519 | 1.14 | 1516 | 1217 | 1.06 |
| MD 355/Henderson Corner | 1088 | 854 | 0.76 | 1341 | 1306 | 0.94 | 1341 | 1112 | 0.94 |
| MD 355/Ridge Rd | 1011 | 1496 | 1.05 | 1666 | 1902 | 1.33 | 1364 | 1616 | 1.13 |
| Observation/Ridge | 1160 | 1427 | 1.00 | 1750 | 1866 | 1.31 | 1172 | 1409 | 0.99 |
| Crystal Rock/Father Hurley | 984 | 956 | 0.69 | 2221 | 2111 | 1.56 | 1536 | 1492 | 1.08 |
| Crystal Rock/Kinster | 401 | 550 | 0.39 | 1075 | 1058 | 0.75 | 1075 | 1058 | 0.75 |
| Crystal Rock/Cloverleaf | | | | | | | | | |
| Center | 620 | 546 | 0.44 | 808 | 1173 | 0.82 | 808 | 1173 | 0.82 |
| MD 118/Bowman Mill | | | | 711 | 910 | 0.64 | 711 | 910 | 0.64 |
| 0-0.8 = gre | en; 0.8-1 | L.0 = yell | ow; 1.0 |)-1.2 = 0 | range; | 1.2+ = re | ed; | | |

As shown in Figure 3, there are several locations where we forecast localized congestion problems that are generally either related to I-270 access points or locations where major highways intersect. The proposed partial interchange at I-270/Dorsey Mill and several new master planned streets break up the superblocks, with additional connectivity supporting both the

distribution of vehicular traffic and accessibility by non-auto modes. The plan recommends interchanges are constructed at the MD 355 intersections with Ridge Road, MD 118, and Middlebrook Road and at the MD 27 intersection with Observation Drive.

The localized congestion problems shown in Figure 3 reflect the current growth policy intersection congestion standards. Figure 4 shows locations where congestion could be alleviated with additional turn lanes, corresponding to the rightmost column in Table 1. The only locations where a V/C ratio greater than 1.1 is forecast for a scenario with turn lanes is at the three intersections along MD 355 where grade-separated interchanges are recommended.

For those intersections where future interchanges are not recommended, full pedestrian accommodation needs to be incorporated within any proposed reconstruction. Travel demand management measures should be considered as the first priority for addressing congestion. In the Plan's urban areas and transit station areas, intersection widening should be considered a last resort, as some transit-oriented development will likely need to be implemented in advance of full CCT implementation.

This plan does not explicitly recommend capacity improvements to achieve the current growth policy intersection congestion standards for three reasons:

- The balance between vehicular congestion and pedestrian accessibility should be made on a case-by-case basis through subdivision cases or facility planning studies as needs arise,
- The level of travel demand forecasting performed for Master Plan analysis is useful for assessing long-term trends, but not for programming 20-year needs on an intersectionspecific basis,
- Current growth policy standards are evaluated on a biennial basis and are subject to change during the lifetime of the Master Plan. The next update for Growth Policy will be 2009.

The concern regarding appropriate congestion standards for transit-oriented development in Germantown was a topic of both Planning Board and County Council discussion of the Growth Policy last year. The County Council adopted revisions to the CLV congestion standards for the Germantown plan vicinity in the 2007-2009 Growth Policy as follows:

- The Germantown Town Center Policy Area CLV congestion standard was raised from 1450 to 1600, reflecting that greater congestion levels should be tolerated because overall multimodal mobility will improve with anticipated CCT transit service, and
- The Germantown West and Germantown East Policy Area CLV congestion standards were reduced from 1450 to 1425, reflecting the Council's interest to set higher roadway mobility expectations (i.e., accept slightly less congestion) in much of the upcounty area.

More stringent congestion standards do not necessarily translate into wider roads. The Growth Policy requires the Board to prioritize transportation impact mitigation in the development review process by considering trip reduction strategies, non-auto facilities, and transit service provision in lieu of widening; a philosophy reinforced by the draft Germantown Plan. We will

be reviewing all the Growth Policy recommendations during the next several months in preparation for the biennial review of the Growth Policy by the Planning Board and County Council in late spring 2009. This review will provide the opportunity to consider and revise the definition of adequacy in Germantown on par with adequacy elsewhere in the County; therefore staff does not recommend changing APF methodologies or standards at this time.

The consideration of wider intersections in the realm of multiple, competing public policy goals is not new to this Germantown Plan amendment; similar guidance has been incorporated into the analysis and recommendations for recent master plans and sector plans for Silver Spring and vicinity and Shady Grove. In each of these cases, the County Council has found master plans to be in balance based on areawide network performance, recognizing that some intersections may experience greater levels of congestion than the current growth policy standards. The Germantown analysis is consistent with our historic practice.

Page 22 of the Draft Plan states that "the intersections with MD 118 should not be widened." Testimony from the Department of Transportation expressed concern that the presentation of conditions with potential turn lanes is inconsistent with the Plan guidance that MD 118 not be widened. Staff does concur that the statement regarding MD 118 widening is vague, and recommends changing the Plan guidance to:

"Discourage further expansion of MD 118 intersections in the Town Center unless needed for pedestrian safety, improved bus access, or bicycle access and safety."

Congestion Levels and Parking Restrictions as Modal Shift Inducers

The Planning Board has asked whether or not relaxed congestion standards or more regimented parking management strategies would help reduce the need for auto facilities. We do recommend that where we have great transit service and utilization, it is appropriate to allow higher levels of congestion. We do not foster the opposite approach, however, that congestion should be a tool applied to force a modal shift, for three reasons. First, it can take a substantial amount of delay to induce modal, or temporal, shifts in commuter behavior. There are many factors other than travel time and transit availability that influence mode choice, as evidenced by the number of failing intersections documented in the past four editions of the Highway Mobility Report. Second, many transit users in Germantown will rely on local bus service in addition to, or in place of, the CCT, and roadway congestion adversely affects the provision of transit service as well. Finally, the imposition of congestion on the arterial system can have an adverse affect of diverting traffic to neighboring residential communities, a topic to be discussed regarding providing the right balance between access and mobility along newly proposed Arterial roadways such as Observation Drive in the Montgomery College District.

Parking policies can be a more progressive means to induce changes in traveler behavior. We believe more restrictive parking space requirements and incentives to pass the cost of providing parking to the user should be explored in the comprehensive zoning ordinance revision, rather than on a case-by-case basis in each new zone or master plan. We do not recommend a Parking Lot District to manage public parking in Germantown because the CCT transit station neighborhoods are fairly small, there is little County land with which to leverage

| parking structure construction, and most development parcels can "park themselves" without unduly constraining site design. |
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ATTACHMENT D

| | Person/Company | District | Question/Comment | Response or Worksession number |
|---|-----------------------------|----------|--|--|
| | Cindy Snow | Areawide | The CCT should go south along the east side of I-270 in Germantown to incorporate Hughes and the College. Parking should be limited to encourage transit use. Like wide sidewalks in the core for people to walk and bike. | The Plan recommends a bifurcated alignment for the Corridor Cities Transitway between the Germantown Town Center and Dorsey Mill Road with alignments along both the west side (via Century Boulevard) and east side (via Seneca Meadows Parkway). The western alignment is under study by MTA. The staging and operation of the eastern alignment will depend in part on the selection of either light rail or bus rapid transit for the CCT. The primary purpose of the eastern alignment is to connect transit-oriented development to the Germantown Town Center. Staff determined that a formal CCT alignment serving Montgomery College would not be practical, considering the cost of each crossing of I-270, the topographic challenges in the vicinity of Middlebrook Road, the environmental resources along the western edge of the college site, and the fact that the planned development of the college campus, without a single transit-oriented development node, facilitates local bus service but not linehall service such as the CCT. |
| 7 | Katine Hulley CAC member | Areawide | Can more MARC riders be accommodated? Can the metro (Shady Grove station) accommodate increase in riders from the transfer of people from the CCT to the metro? | Staff has coordinated with both MTA and WMATA regarding development throughout the I-270 corridor. The MARC and Red Line corridors have sufficient line-haul capacity to accommodate planned growth in the corridor, but funding for both capital improvements (including rail cars) and operations must continue to be committed. |

| n, The focus of the Germantown bikeway plan is on shared use path connections between the here is Town Center, adjacent residential communities, and the greenbelt park system. On slower speed streets within the Town Center, bikes will be accommodated on shared-use roadways. The 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan recommends bike lanes along MD 118 as part of a bike lane network into Gaithersburg. Changes to the County's road code and design standards will ensure all roads are designed to accommodate bikes. | rea be Center Policy Area is 1600 per the new Center Policy Area is 1600 per the new Local Area Transportation Review guidelines. However, areas outside of the Town Center have a congestion standard of 1425. | • The Plan envisions a comprehensive transit system, including the Corridor Cities Transitway, MARC rail, and continuation of express bus services serving the Germantown transit center (to be incorporated within the Town Center CCT station, provision of park and ride spaces at the Manekin and Dorsey Mill stations with direct access from I-270, and expansion of |
|---|---|---|
| No bike lanes or shoulders in the plan, which makes experienced cyclists, avoid the area. The roads are being widened, there is space available, and you are doing bicyclists a disservice. | CLV for Town Center Policy Area be increased to 1600 and that the boundaries of the Town Center be enlarged to match the Town Center boundaries as outlines in the Master Plan. The congestion levels should correspond to an urban, not suburban setting. Keep two-way streets and remove oneway streets from the plan. | • Transit must be addressed comprehensively. Transit riders going anywhere but W. Gaithersburg will continue to take MARC or express buses on I-270 to Shady Grove Metro. More express bus routes should be mapped, especially on MD 355. This would coordinate with the Shady Grove Sector Plan recommendation. |
| Areawide | Areawide | Areawide |
| Lynne Rosenbusch | Marilyn Balcombe | Pamela Lindstrom |
| <i>c</i> | 4 | 5 |

| better serve Montgomery College. | |
|---|--|
| Bus Rapid Transit is not discussed under the Bus Rapid Transit section title. | The term "Rapid" should be removed from the Bus Transit section title. |
| Expansion of MARC should be stressed, not just access to the station. | The expansion of MARC is described in the MTA Growth and Investment Plan. Additional details might be added to the Germantown Plan. |
| Need a map of bikeways. Cycling for commuting and errands should be discussed. | A map will be included in the master plan showing bikeways for the area. |
| • The section on regional highways is shocking in a plan that is supposedly transit-oriented. Using all these road facilities in traffic modeling is misleading, since they are not all likely to be built. | • No comment |
| • This plan should not rely on interchanges on MD 355. MD 355 is treated as a main urban blvd in the | • No comment |
| vision for the I-270 corridor and in plans for the rest of the corridor, | |
| beginning in Gaithersburg. Turning it into a freeway and speeding traffic | |
| is unethical at any time, most especially now, when the policy should | |

| MD 355 is a prime corridor for rapid bus transit, and that proposal should be treated more concretely, and become the major recommendation. Page 23 - needs a map showing all facilities including Midcounty Highway. It needs traffic modeling results under several scenarios, including various levels of transit and density of development. The results should include mode shares, number of trips by different modes, and peak preriod road concestion. | | • No comment | The roads found in the planning area can be | viewed in a map located in the Technical Appendix. | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | be discouraging driving. | MD 355 is a prime corridor for rapid bus transit, and that proposal should be treated more concretely, and become the major recommendation. | • Page 23 - needs a map showing all | facilities including Midcounty Highway. It needs traffic modeling | results under several scenarios, including various levels of transit and | density of development. The results | should include mode shares, number of | trips by different modes, and peak | period road congestion. |

| The Plan recommends establishing CCT parking outside the Town Center, at the Dorsey Mill and Manekin stations. | Worksession 3 |
|--|--|
| Identify specific location(s) for additional commuter parking to serve the Town Center. | The partial interchange to and from I-270 N. at Dorsey Mill road would be too close to the existing interchange at I-270 and Father Hurley Boulevard/Ridge Road. MNCPPC should consult with State Highway Administration and the Federal Highway Administration to determine whether or not this partial interchange is feasible prior to testing it and including it as part of the transportation network in the plan. The Executive Branch opposed the second crossing of I-270 between Century Boulevard and Seneca |
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| | Worksession 3 | Worksession 3 | Worksession 4 |
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| Wisteria Drive to Waterford Hills Boulevard and Waters Road. This alignment passes through several developed properties is making the extension difficult, unless implemented through the redevelopment of the site. More importantly, it is difficult to discern on an operational level how this improvement would work in concert with the other network additions with respect to geometrics and separation of distance. We recommend that MNCPPC take a closer look at this recommendation. | • Construction of New Road B-17 to connect to Crystal Rock Drive and Century Boulevard since the proposed alignment would pass through office buildings and their parking facilities. | • Oppose the designation of Middlebrook Road "from Father Hurley Boulevard to Germantown Road" as a Business Street (B-20). Middlebrook Road should remain master planned as a Major Highway (M-85) because it performs a principal arterial function. | • It is unclear where the section of Goldenrod Lane is located. If the section described as extending "from end of road, about 1,000' south of |
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| | Worksession 3 | Worksession 3 and 4? | | Worksession 3 |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Germantown Road to Cider Press Road" traverse the Montgomery College campus area, we have pedestrian safety concerns. | Opposes the recommendation to change the circulation pattern at Aircraft and Crystal Rock Drives to one-way couplets as operational issues are outside the purview of Master Plans. Concerned about emergency vehicle response time. | Opposes the recommendations to reduce the ROW widths of the following roads because the road is already constructed. | Father Hurley, Observation Drive, Ridge Road | • Opposed the recommendation to reduce travel lanes on Crystal Rock Drive to create a 50-wide linear, landscaped open space and greenway along Crystal Rock Drive for recreational use and to provide access to Black Hill Regional Park. The travel lanes along Crystal Rock Drive will be needed. If access to the Park is important, a different solution must be found. |
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| | on 3 | on 3 | on 3 |
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| | Worksession 3 | Worksession 3 | Worksession 3 |
| Middlebrook Road. Traffic increase will create unsafe conditions for children, residents, and businesses using the current dead end street. Turning movements and two way traffic will be dangerous | Want Kinster to stay a dead-end | Concerned about pedestrian crossing the street because of traffic, commercial development, and safety. Want Kinster to stay as a one lane in each direction street and doesn't want the proposed 4-lane divided street. | Proposed new alignment for the Century Blvd extension and a new alignment for Waterford Hills Blvd because distance is too |
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| Mumtaz Jahan Day Care Business Owners | Justine Cloverleaf Townhome Association | Mike Lives in Kinster/Cloverleaf neighborhood | Mark Wildman |
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