

marc rail communities plan

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Why is the Planning Department undertaking the MARC Rail Communities Plan?

The MARC Brunswick line is a well-traveled commuter rail line connecting West Virginia to Washington, DC. The Boyds and Germantown MARC stations areas are historic communities along this line, located less than 2.5 miles apart. While the area around the Boyds station has remained rural, the area around the Germantown station has experienced increased development in recent years.

Although they have developed unique identities, both stations are integrally connected by rail lines and roads, and face common challenges. Parking at both stations is insufficient for current MARC ridership and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is considering how to increase the number of spaces and provide better Ride On bus service to the two stations. Additionally, the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) is studying how to improve vehicular circulation in and around the Boyds MARC station area to alleviate traffic pressures.

The focus of this limited master plan is to tie together all of the various studies of the station areas and study parking and transportation issues affecting these locations. In addition, planners will seek short- and long-term recommendations for better pedestrian, bicycle, bus and auto connections to the two stations and enhancements to the historic communities around each MARC station area.

What will the MARC Rail Communities Plan do?

The new MARC Rail Communities Master Plan will build on the recommendations of the previous 1985 Boyds Master Plan, the 1989 Germantown Master Plan and the 2009 Germantown Employment Sector Plan. Specifically, the new Master Plan will:

- Evaluate land uses and zoning near each station area.
- Enhance placemaking by protecting valued activities and places.
- Provide recommendations to improve pedestrian, bicycle, bus and public transportation access to each station.
- Ensure compatibility with each historic district.
- Identify strategies, agencies and partners to help implement goals.

What is the responsibility of County and state agencies in this planning effort?

SHA and MCDOT have jurisdiction over all of the right-of-way elements, including streets, sidewalks, street trees and lights, within the plan boundaries. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) operates the entire MARC system, which runs on tracks owned by CSX. The Montgomery County Planning Department will work extensively with these agencies, private landowners and community residents to develop the vision for the MARC rail station areas in Boyds and Germantown.

Will this plan bring better MARC service to Boyds and Germantown?

The operations of the MARC rail system are the responsibility of MTA and not addressed in the master plan for the station areas. However, the master plan will provide goals and recommendations for each station area that may guide the MTA and CSX as they evaluate the future of MARC rail service on the Brunswick line.

How will zoning change when the MARC Rail Communities Plan is completed?

Once the MARC Rail Communities Plan is adopted by the County Council, a Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) will be initiated to implement any zoning changes proposed in the adopted plan. Depending on the proposed zoning changes, it may take several months to finalize any zoning change through a County Council action. The community is welcome to provide recommendations to County planners, Planning Board and County Council about any proposed zoning change.

What is the schedule for the planning effort?

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| • January 28, 2016 | Scope of Work presentation to the Planning Board |
| • March 14-16, 2016 | Community Design Workshop to develop recommendations |
| • Spring 2016 | Preliminary recommendations presented to the community |
| • Spring 2016 | Briefing to the Planning Board |
| • Spring 2016 | Refinements to preliminary recommendations |
| • Summer 2016 | Working Draft of Plan presented to the Planning Board |
| • Fall 2016 | Planning Board Public Hearing and Work Sessions |
| • Fall 2016 | Planning Board Draft presented to County Council |

How can the public get involved in the planning effort?

Attend the Community Design Workshop in March 2016 to brainstorm ideas for the plan. Subscribe to our [email list](#) to keep up with the latest updates and schedule of public meetings. Contact the Planning Department staff at the telephone numbers or email addresses provided below to schedule a special community presentation. We look forward to your participation in the process.

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