

INTRODUCTION

COUNTY COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

The Montgomery County Council Resolution of Approval of the 1989 Comprehensive Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan (Resolution No. 11-1498), adopted June 13, 1989, directed the Montgomery County Planning Board to **evaluate alternative actions which the County could take in order to produce a vital Town Center**. This evaluation was to examine all Town Center Analysis Areas and to consider ways to integrate the different Analysis Areas and existing development into a cohesive Town Center. As part of the evaluation, the Planning Board was to seek the input of the County Executive, the landowners, and the public.

In response to the Council's directive several separate but interrelated studies have been conducted to address different aspects of the Town Center.

The first study addressed ways in which the Council could accelerate the development of the Town Center. This also addressed the ways in which the Council could attract business to the Town Center and promote and ensure its ongoing successful operation. This evaluation was presented in two reports.

The first report contained a set of alternative measures for increasing and allocating transportation capacity. This report was reviewed by the Planning Board and transmitted to the County Council on December 13, 1989, so that the alternatives could be taken into consideration during Council's review of the FY '91 Annual Growth Policy and the FY '91-96 Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

The second report, prepared by the consulting firm of Halcyon, Ltd., addressed promotional, funding, and operational issues and presented Town Center development strategies, a promotional events analysis, and alternatives and recommendations for the cultural arts center and the overall implementation of the Town Center. Incorporating comments received from a community workshop, this report was reviewed by the Planning Board and transmitted to the County Council in February 1990.

These reports constitute an important precursor to the Germantown Town Center Design Study.

STUDY PROCESS

The Town Center Design Study represents a continuation of the planning process that resulted in the adoption of the 1989 Comprehensive Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan. The ongoing involvement of the Germantown community was reflected in the February 10, 1990 community workshop at which the Halcyon Report was presented. This workshop also provided the opportunity for citizens to express their views as to what was felt important to be included the Design Study.

A Work Group was appointed by the Planning Board to provide ongoing advice during the study period. The Germantown Town Center Design Study Work Group was composed of fifteen members representing both citizens and landowners. Members included the major landowner/developer interests in the TC-1, TC-2, TC-3, and TC-5 Analysis Areas and representatives of the Germantown Citizens Association, Germantown Alliance, Inc., Germantown Chamber of Commerce, Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, and each of the surrounding Villages. Representatives of various county departments and the State Highway Administration, State Railroad Administration, and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission were also identified and participated in the process.

The Design Study was officially initiated March 17, 1990 with a community-wide workshop. This workshop was instrumental in the initial identification of the vision of Town Center. The Work Group met each month thereafter to discuss the overall concept, the design framework, and the design of the Analysis Areas. In that the landowners/developers of TC-1 and TC-5 were actively involved in the planning of these areas (most of the areas of the Town Center are in one or another phase of planning or design), the process was timely and generated considerable interest and enthusiasm. Considerable time was also devoted to definition of the proposed Cultural Arts Center, and the appropriateness of locating the Germantown Recreation Center in the Town Center.

Throughout the Study, staff held meetings at M-NCPPC with Work Group members, including landowners and their representatives. These meetings were highly productive in the resolution of issues that were raised.

A second community-wide meeting was held in June to present the initial concepts developed in the Study.

GERMANTOWN TOWN CENTER DESIGN STUDY

The Design Study presents the design concept that is desired for the Town Center and, in particular, that of the Town Center Core.

The Study provides a detailed design framework with special emphasis on the elements that are proposed to serve to integrate both existing and planned development into a cohesive, imageable, and identifiable Town Center.

This report describes the existing planning and design context that is applicable to the Town Center. The Town Center Design Context section includes a description of the existing and proposed transportation systems (vehicular, transit, and pedestrian circulation), environmental systems (natural open space systems, wetlands, vegetation, and topography), parkland, cultural and historic resources, and existing land use and development (land use, zoning, and existing and proposed development).

Transportation, parkland/open space, and community facilities components of the Town Center-wide Design Framework are described in the context of the overall Town Center and as they are applied to each of the major Analysis Areas. The Town Center-wide Design Framework section includes: the vehicular circulation system, transit, the pedestrian circulation system (including hiker/biker trails, and bikeways), open space systems, parkland, historic resources, and other public facilities.

The Analysis Area Design Framework includes: vehicular circulation (the hierarchy and layout of the street system), pedestrian circulation (the type and location of sidewalks, street crossings, and special corners), streetscapes (Town Center **gateways**, entrances and special features), parkland/open space, building envelopes (the identification of building zones, setbacks, the location of important walls/edges, **significant** facades, and **focal points**), and recommended building height zones. Also described are the locations for parking (including proposed structures) and, where applicable, recommendations for phasing.

The Design Study places special emphasis on the identification and the description of the design elements that constitute the street environment (streetscape). Design prototypes have been developed for all of the Town Center-wide streetscapes, as well as those recommended for application within each of the primary Analysis Areas. These prototypes are provided for use in both the design and review of these areas.

The Design Study is a guideline for the future development of the Germantown Town Center. Although many specific recommendations are contained in the study, the graphics employed throughout are illustrative in nature.