

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GERMANTOWN CITIZEN FORUM
May 31, 2006

Panel Discussion with Civic and Business Leaders
Black Rock Center for the Arts

Speakers:

Michael Knapp	County Councilman (District 2)
John A. Carter	Chief, Community-Based Planning Division
Dr. Royce Hanson	Director, Center for Washington Area Studies
Allison Bryant, Ph.D.	Principal, The Assignment Group
Stephen Poteat	College Manager, Germantown Technology Park, Montgomery College

Comments by Councilmember Mike Knapp

The Germantown Citizen Forum initiates a two year-process of up-dating the 1989 Germantown Master Plan. This process will explore the extent to which the Plan has been realized and what remains to be realized in the future.

When the last Master Plan was adopted in 1990, only 35,000 residents lived in Germantown. At the end of the 2003 Census count, Germantown's population was 83,000, or 93 percent of the Master Plan build-out of 90,000. A basic purpose of the Master Plan revision process will be to examine the remaining steps in completing Germantown so that the needed components—primarily jobs, services and other economic infrastructure are there—to balance all the people and housing.

Germantown was built from the outside in, with the housing constructed first, and the employment the last to come, and still being still being constructed. Employment will be the focus of the next Master Plan. The 1989 Master Plan zoned for 70,000 jobs; Germantown is estimated to have about 24,000 jobs in 2005, and 44,000 jobs are forecast for 2030, which is 57% of the total job capacity. The review during the Master Plan revision process allows the opportunity to re-position the balance between housing and jobs and to slow down housing growth, while realizing that housing, particularly "affordable" housing goals of the 1989 Master Plan may not have been met.

Germantown has a number of issues to face as a community, including housing affordability, transportation, services, economic sustainability and employment. It is these latter two issues that will make Germantown the important place it is

supposed to be. More jobs and the right type of jobs will ensure that Germantown thrives, and that Germantown residents have the income they need to buy housing.

The Master Plan will examine ways to achieve the 70,000 jobs goal identified by the 1989 Master Plan, and to bring all the pieces of Germantown together, while also examining the criticality of housing. Also, an objective of the Plan will be to try to ensure that 15 percent to 20 percent of the additional jobs created in Germantown can be for its residents. If that objective can be achieved, about 15,000 to 20,000 cars could be diverted from the streets into the Town Center every day, and the people in these cars would be spending their time in the Town Center. Then the Town Center and the Germantown economy would really start to flourish.

Topics primarily addressed by the speakers included the history of the development of Germantown; employment; housing; and The Germantown Master Plan, including the Vision, the Challenges and the Actions. These are as follows:

Comments by John A. Carter (see attached slides)

John Carter is trained as an architect and planner and directs the M-NCPPC division responsible for master plan development and implementation. His work has been recognized by numerous awards, most recently as a contributing staff member for the 2005 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (Downtown Silver Spring Sector Plan)

The Germantown Master Plan Revision is part of a program of master plans for the I-270 Corridor to provide a coordinated system of sustainable communities that are great places to live and work and a thriving 21st century employment center.

As in the preparation of all master plans, planners will be examining the needs of residents, such as for public facilities including public schools, and in the case of Germantown, Montgomery College. Planners will be looking at the character of Germantown, and at the character of its roads, which they will be trying to enhance, since roads create a major part of first impressions.

In viewing master plans, the needs of current and future residents will be considered. The need for more parks, for example will be examined, as they play an important role in attracting residents to Germantown. Parks not only provide a great focus for the Black Rock Center for the Performing Arts, and for other community functions, but provide the remarkable greenbelt surrounding Germantown. Very few other communities have a stream valley legacy all in public ownership similar to Germantown's.

A number of challenges will be faced in preparing the Germantown Master Plan. These will include ensuring a variety of communities, housing for all, locations for 21st-Century jobs, improving transportation, providing learning opportunities, providing locations for essential services, protecting the environment, and providing parks, recreation and open space.

Improving transportation-transit linkages will be especially important, and will include a Plan for the Corridor Cities Transitway, improvements to the feeder bus system, improved transit connections, and provisions for Transportation Demand Management. Improving the transportation character of Maryland 355 will also be very important, as will improving the transportation links for pedestrians and bicycles.

Other areas of focus in preparing the Master Plan Revision will be providing for learning opportunities, providing sites for essential services, protecting the environment, and providing parks, recreation, and open space.

The next step in the preparation of the Master Plan will be the four-day study by the Urban Land Institute at the end of June 2006 and the release of the Purpose and Outreach Report in October 2005. The Staff Draft of the Germantown Master Plan will be presented to the Planning Board in December 2007, and the Planning Board Draft of the Germantown Master Plan is expected to be considered by the County Council in May 2008.

Comments by Dr. Royce Hanson

Dr. Hanson has extensive experience in public policy, land use and urban economics. He served as Chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Board from 1971-1981. He holds both the Ph.D. (government and public administration) and J.D. from American University.

Dr. Royce Hanson was Vice-Chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Board during the development and adoption of Germantown's 1974 Master Plan and played a key role in the formation and adoption of that Plan. The 1974 Plan was the first detailed Master Plan for Germantown; a generalized Master Plan was prepared in 1967. He recalled that only about 2,000 people lived in Germantown at that time of the 1974 Plan, and that in many cases, their families had lived there for generations.

Planners had only a few examples of existing new towns when they began to lay the framework for the "new town" embodied by the 1974 Germantown Master Plan. Reston, Columbia and Montgomery Village were the only existing examples in the Washington area. Germantown was the first free-standing Corridor City in

Montgomery County over which the County had jurisdiction, since Rockville and Gaithersburg were self-governing.

The planners used the stream-valley park system to create a greenbelt around Germantown. This greenbelt has remained Germantown's truly unique feature and benefit ever since.

Germantown was more challenging for planners than other regional new towns, since the other locations were under consolidated ownership. A dozen developers, however, were interested in Germantown, and thus the County was required to act as a type of overall manager to coordinate the activities of private property owners and to develop new tools to help in the coordination.

At the time the 1974 Germantown Master Plan was developed, Germantown had mostly Euclidean zones which allows developed primarily by right. The 1974 Germantown Plan enacted Planned Unit Development (P. U. D.) Zones which were envisioned to help implement the broad concepts of the 1974 Plan. The County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) was also created in order to better stage public facilities and to give some form to the village concept, the Town Center and the employment corridor along the I-270 Corridor.

One of the key concepts the planning agency was concerned with at the time was the location of Montgomery College. The College Board of Trustees was then looking for a site off Riffle Ford Road at Germantown's southern edge. The Planning Board very seriously considered that location, but preferred that the college locate near the center of town, preferably west of I-270. Other than the Atomic Energy Commission, (the predecessor for the Department of Energy), the Planning Board was not anticipating very many large employers near the Town Center. (Generally, with new towns, the employment core develops after the residential portion). Thus, the Planning Board looked at the College as an important magnet in attracting a quality community. Fortunately, the College Board of Trustees agreed with this concept and moved closer to the Germantown center.

The other big planning concern for the 1974 Plan was a transportation system to serve the new system. At that time, only one interchange served the Germantown community which was the intersection of I-270 with MD 118/Germantown Road. The planning agency had to ensure a second interchange was possible so that the County could have the type of employment needed. The agency anticipated that Plan needed to last 20 to 25 years at the maximum and that most of the employment would not occur within that timeframe. If a second interchange location were not achieved within the timeframe of the 1974 Plan, however, Germantown's long-range employment needs would not be met. This interchange was planned during the 1974 planning cycle and a permit was acquired, although the 1989 Plan was much more devoted to employment than the 1974 Plan.

The other important concept included in the 1974 Plan was a transitway—to provide for an extension of Metro—which had not yet reached Silver Spring in 1974, or at least to provide for some extension into Germantown.

Comments by Allison Bryant, Ph.D. (see attached slides)

Dr. Bryant has served on the Montgomery County Planning Board since 1997 and will complete his current term in June 2008. Prior to service on the Planning Board he was senior member of the Montgomery County Board of Appeals. He holds masters degrees in Urban Studies and Education and the Ph.D. in Educational Administration.

One of the things that has allowed Germantown to develop as it has been that it has been an economic engine that has allowed housing and jobs to develop. Yet as stated previously, residential growth has far out-paced employment growth. The basic objective of the Master Plan Revision will be to concentrate on-job growth and accommodating the companies bringing job growth. Currently, Germantown has the highest percentage of residents working in Montgomery County of all areas in the County. A focus of the new Plan will be to provide quality jobs for a substantially larger percentage of residents within Germantown.

Of the existing jobs in Germantown, 53 percent are office jobs, 24 percent are retail jobs and 8 percent are industrial jobs. Currently, Germantown ranks second in the County in new commercial construction, with 2.4 million square feet of gross floor area added between 2000 and 2005.

Office jobs are likely to continue to supply most of the future job growth in Germantown, and account for an estimated 14,785 new jobs or 94 percent of the jobs in the commercial development pipeline. Currently, Germantown ranks second in the County in new commercial development, with 2.4 million square feet of gross floor area added between 2000 and 2005. (An estimated 747 new retail jobs and 159 other jobs are in the pipeline)

By 2015, jobs are expected to exceed housing capacity in Germantown. A challenge is going to be to determine how to achieve those job increases and deal with critical housing needs—especially affordable housing needs.

Townhouses comprise of 44 percent of the housing units, while 30 percent of the units are multi-family, and 26 percent are single-family. (Germantown, in fact, has the highest percent of townhouses relative to other types of housing structures in the County). The percentage of single-family detached units is expected to continue to be low, as almost two-thirds of approved housing units in the approved construction pipeline are multi-family. (The majority of those approved are west of I-270). Twenty percent of the units in the pipeline are townhouses and 15 percent

are single-family units. Total units in the pipeline of approved development in Germantown is 1,704 units. Germantown ranks second in new housing production in the County, with 4,520 units built between 2000 and 2005.

An objective to consider during the Master Plan revision process is compensating for Germantown's current lack of housing for those with special needs. Germantown has no parcels set aside for affordable housing, or any housing for the physically and mentally handicapped. Housing needs for those over 55 also need greater consideration in Germantown.

The cost of-living in Germantown is about the equivalent of that Countywide. Housing costs in Germantown, on average, are slightly less than the County average in most categories. The price of a new home averages \$769,125 compared to a County average of \$778,235. Monthly homeowner costs, at \$1,223 monthly, are close to the County average of \$1,436. The cost of renting in Germantown is also close to the County average, at \$1,044 monthly in Germantown, compared to \$1,060, Countywide.

Comments by Stephen Poteat (see attached slides)

Steve Poteat served 15 years as Director of the Upcounty Regional Service Center in Germantown and participated in the 1989 Germantown Master Plan. Since 2002, he has been with the Office of the Provost of Montgomery College as Operations and Community Outreach Services Director. He is College Manager for the Montgomery College Science and Technology Park and is facilitating construction of the planned academic Bioscience Center and the Germantown Technology Incubator.

The Germantown Technology Park involves a public/private partnership in technology and the life sciences in a vision to contribute significantly to the technology employment along the I-270 corridor. Currently, 5000 students are enrolled at the Montgomery College Germantown campus.

The Technology Park just received planning funds to start the design of the fifth major building devoted to biotech needs. The vision for the Science and Technology Park is a 1 million-square-foot business park on 40 acres with office, laboratory and flex space.

The Technology Park is one of three parts of the Germantown Development Project. The other two parts are the Bioscience Education Center and the Germantown Technology Incubator. The Bioscience Education Center is a planned 126,900 square feet academic building with laboratory and classroom space. The Germantown Technology Incubator is a County-planned 30,000 square-foot business incubator that can be expanded up to 100,000 square feet.

Among the goals of the Germantown Development Project are to provide a source of a Baccalaureat degree in biotechnology in the County, a well-trained and educated workforce, a technology park with over 4,000 new jobs and over \$1.9 million in annual tax return, and to ensure the County is a premier technology and biotechnology center in the nation.

