

PLAN INTRODUCTION

PLANNING CONTEXT

Montgomery County, Maryland, is one of the most prosperous jurisdictions in the country. The County offers an excellent public school system, extensive park resources, proximity to cultural amenities in Washington, D.C., and a wide variety of employment opportunities, including the federal government, high-tech and biotechnology firms, as well as major corporate, education, and research organizations.

East Silver Spring is part of the County's "Urban Ring," which also includes the Silver Spring Central Business District and the central business districts of Bethesda, Friendship Heights, and Wheaton. The Urban Ring, a concept first established in the 1964 *General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District Within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties* and reconfirmed in the 1993 General Plan Refinement, is the more intensively developed area of Montgomery County nearest Washington, D.C.

The General Plan is based on a "wedges and corridors" concept of regional land use development. Six corridors of urban development radiate like spokes of a wheel from the existing land use patterns in Washington, D.C. The corridors of development are separated by wedges of open space, farmland, and lower-density residential uses. This concept has shaped the County's land use pattern for more than three decades by channeling growth into development and transportation corridors, with the Urban Ring in lower Montgomery County as the most densely developed area.

The Urban Ring communities inside the Capital Beltway in Montgomery County have been designated as part of the State's Smart Growth initiative, a program that focuses development funds and incentives in appropriate growth areas and limits development in agricultural and other resource areas.

Smart Growth Program

What is Smart Growth?

Smart Growth is a State program that invests public funds in older urban areas, revitalizing and maintaining them as desirable places to live, work, and spend time. The State of Maryland is moving forward with short- and long-term solutions to improve specific locations and is developing a comprehensive approach to balancing the demands of growth and traffic with quality of life.

Why use Smart Growth?

Using public funds to encourage private investment in urban areas preserves rural and suburban open space, and maximizes investments already made in urban infrastructure such as roads, transit, and water and sewerage systems.

How can it work in Silver Spring/Takoma Park?

The Silver Spring/Takoma Park community-based planning area is ideally positioned to become a premier Smart Growth community by providing a mix of land uses—housing, retail, jobs, transit access, and civic opportunities—that will support, sustain, and enliven community life.

THE ROLE OF A MASTER PLAN

A master plan provides comprehensive recommendations and guidelines for the use of land within its boundaries. Each master plan reflects a vision of future development that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of County-wide policies. It addresses physical planning issues, such as land use, zoning, transportation, parks, community facilities, and bikeway and pedestrian connections. Master plans are updated every 10-20 years, recognizing that circumstances change and that the specifics of a plan may become less relevant over time.

Master plans include text, design guidelines, graphics, and maps. Generally, graphics in an adopted master plan are for illustrative purposes and are intended to convey a general sense of desirable future character rather than a specific commitment to a particular detailed design.

A master plan is created over time with the input and participation of community members, residents and business people, and with discussion between County and State agencies. Developing a plan is a process that educates, prompting thought and self-definition; it culminates in a commitment to the community's future. Once the plan is approved by the County Council and adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), the rezoning process and special studies needed to implement the plan's recommendations are begun.

THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Silver Spring/Takoma Park community-based planning area covers the portion of Montgomery County that is generally located between the Capital Beltway and the District of Columbia, east of Rock Creek Park and west of Prince George's County. It encompasses several community master plan areas: East Silver Spring, Four Corners, North Silver Spring, the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD), Takoma Park, and West Silver Spring (see Map 3).

The *Master Plan for Silver Spring - East* was adopted in 1977. That Plan established a vision for East Silver Spring that emphasized preservation of existing neighborhoods, upgrading of commercial areas, and adequacy of public facilities and transportation services.

OUTREACH PROGRAM

The East Silver Spring Master Plan was prepared under the streamlined process approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board and the County Council in September 1997 and described in *The Master Planning Process* report published by the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning. As part of this process, a Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) was appointed by the Planning Board. The MPAG included residents as well as people with other interests in East Silver Spring. A draft Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report was presented to the Planning Board in April 1998 and, after input from the MPAG and the community, was approved by the Board in July 1998. The Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report identified those issues to be addressed in the master plan and described the strategy for getting public input during the process.

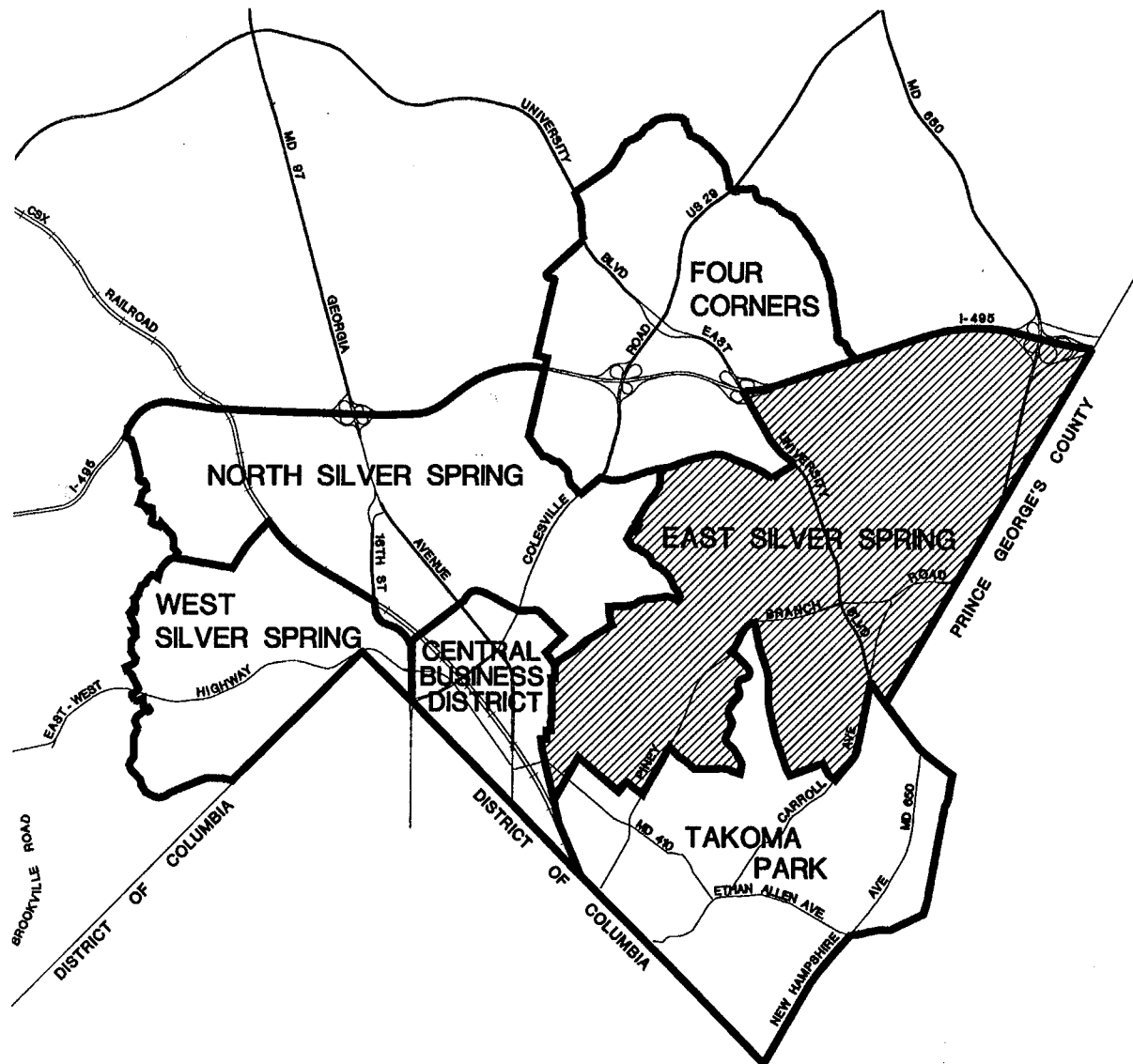
The MPAG members met with staff on a regular basis and discussed a range of issues during the development of the master plan. Community workshops and forums were also held to broaden public participation opportunities in the planning process.

A draft illustrative concept plan, a graphic illustration of major master plan themes, was developed with community and MPAG input and presented at a community workshop. The MPAG and staff then began to identify and evaluate alternative master plan options. During this process, a Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of staff from relevant County and State agencies, as well as Park and Planning staff, provided valuable input on implementation issues associated with master plan alternatives and preliminary recommendations.

During the development of this Plan, several other initiatives provided valuable information about the East Silver Spring communities. A telephone survey conducted in English and Spanish provided information about the community—the concerns and opinions of Silver Spring and Takoma Park residents—and was presented to the Planning Board. An economic health assessment of the area's retail activities was prepared, as was an assessment of housing and the resident population. A transportation and circulation report was prepared by Planning staff to look comprehensively at the overall circulation system and develop informed recommendations in the five Silver Spring/Takoma Park master plan areas. (See report in Appendix G.)

East Silver Spring/Takoma Park Master Plan Area

Map 3



— Master Plan Boundary

▨ East Silver Spring

Not To Scale



OVERARCHING ISSUES

Both the East Silver Spring and the Takoma Park Master Plans were updated at the same time so that issues common to both areas could be addressed collectively. Such issues include apartment zoning, commercial centers, community facilities, parks, traffic circulation, and pedestrian and bikeway connections.

NEXT STEPS

After data collection, community outreach, and MPAG meetings, recommendations that reflect a balanced response to the needs of the East Silver Spring community were developed and presented in a Staff Draft Master Plan.

The Staff Draft was reviewed by the Planning Board and approved for release as a Public Hearing Draft, with necessary modifications, for public comment at a public hearing. The Board held worksessions to review testimony and the Plan's recommendations. The Planning Board recommended the Planning Board Draft Master Plan to the County Council.

The County Council conducted a similar review process, including a public hearing and worksessions. The County Executive prepared a fiscal analysis of the Master Plan's recommendations. After close scrutiny and appropriate modifications, the Plan was approved by the County Council and adopted by the M-NCPPC. The zoning recommended by the Plan will be implemented by a Sectional Map Amendment.

The East Silver Spring Master Plan Process

Phase One

Undertake detailed data collection, technical analysis, map preparation, and community information gathering;
undertake Silver Spring/Takoma Park telephone survey

Phase Two

Develop Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report and form Master Plan Advisory Groups (MPAGs)

Phase Three

Finalize Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report; form Technical Working Group(TWG)

Phase Four

Develop draft Illustrative Concept Plan; meet with MPAG and TWG, hold community workshops and
outreach forums; develop Master Plan recommendations

Phase Five

Prepare and finalize Staff Draft Master Plan; present to the Planning Board

Phase Six

Hold Planning Board Public Hearing and Worksessions; transmit Final Draft Master Plan
and Framework for Action to the County Council and County Executive

Phase Seven

Receive County Executive comment and fiscal impact analysis on the Final Draft Master Plan
Framework for Action

Phase Eight

Hold County Council Public Hearing and Worksessions; approve Master Plan and Action Strategy

Phase Nine

Plan adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Phase Ten

Plan implementation monitored through the Framework for Action and the Master Plan Status Report

Figure 1