

APPENDIX E: ENVIRONMENTAL DISCUSSION OF POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

AIR QUALITY

A multi-state strategy is the most cost-effective approach to reducing ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter pollution. Nevertheless, it is important for the State, Montgomery County and the City to do their part in supplementing that strategy by focusing on local initiatives that can reduce vehicle emissions. The State's Smart Growth initiatives designed to concentrate urban development, reduce suburban sprawl and improve mass transit may eventually contribute to an overall improvement in air quality. Current County programs that encourage ride-sharing and use of public transit directly reduce emissions that create pollution. In addition to State and County efforts, the City of Takoma Park conducts its own transportation planning and purchases alternatively-fueled vehicles.

TREES AND FOREST CONSERVATION

Two regulatory programs aid in the conservation and replanting of trees and forest within the Master Plan area. The City of Takoma Park Trees and Vegetation Ordinance is designed to protect existing tree stock, require replacement planting, and encourage the planting of new trees. The City tree ordinance also requires staff review and citizen input prior to activities that may damage trees or prior to removal of trees on private property. The ordinance also acts to increase public awareness of tree save issues, encouraging citizens to maintain trees properly.

The County Forest Conservation Act is designed to protect existing forest and requires the planting of new forest and trees when protection thresholds are not met. As development occurs in the urban environment of Takoma Park, some properties will be subject to forest conservation requirements. Creating a forest on-site is the preferred option for meeting planting requirements under the statute. However, in these highly developed areas very few on-site areas will be available for planting forests. Off-site reforestation within the Silver Spring/Takoma Park planning area is the next preferred option. If no planting locations for forest are available within the planning area, then tree cover, including neighborhood planting and street trees, can be utilized to meet the afforestation requirements.

To be prepared to take full advantage of developers' planting requirements, priority areas for additional street trees and landscaping should be identified in the entire planning area by M-NCPPC with the help of the County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), the City of Takoma Park Department of Public Works (DPW), and other appropriate agencies. The narrow rights-of-way, utility easements, and dense development pattern in Takoma Park often make it difficult to find space for new or replacement street trees. Innovative options for street trees, including planting outside road rights-of-way and relocation of utility lines, should be examined as part of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS FOR BUILDING DESIGN

Several County and City programs encourage developers and property-owners to improve the energy efficiency of existing and new buildings. The County's Energy Wi\$e program is designed to educate businesses and the public about the pollution prevention benefits of increased energy efficiency. The County also encourages all new construction and building retrofits to follow the County's model energy efficient design standards.

The City of Takoma Park participates in several programs that encourage energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in design. The City takes part in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Energy Star Buildings program by installing energy-efficient lighting and other systems in City-owned buildings. The City is beginning to take part in the Rebuild America program. In addition, the City has approved a *Takoma Park Maryland Local Action Plan for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. One of the main goals of the program is to encourage energy efficiency for new and existing buildings.

The City has adopted *Guidelines for Construction in Takoma Park: Creating a Sustainable Environment* as a guide for use in advising public and private developers on desirable building practices. These guidelines address early planning, access, design and placement of buildings, the grounds, building equipment and materials, and maintenance. The guidelines enhance indoor and outdoor environmental quality.

WATER QUALITY AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater management regulations within the City limits are administered primarily by the City's Department of Public Works (DPW) with some properties under the jurisdiction of the County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). The City also has a stormwater management utility fee to fund maintenance and upgrades to the storm drain system, including potential stormwater management retrofits.

To address the difficulty of stormwater management in older suburban neighborhoods, the State and County are working to create new policies for the redevelopment of sites with high existing imperviousness. The goal is to protect water quality while not allowing stormwater management to become a barrier to redevelopment. This re-evaluation recognizes that stormwater management requirements should complement the State's Smart Growth program, should be flexible, and should reduce impervious surfaces, where possible. The City currently attempts to be flexible and innovative in the application of their stormwater management regulations and is open to incorporating new concepts into their regulations once the County and State have reached some conclusions on revisions to their policies.

In addition to policy reviews, the County is undertaking a Watershed Restoration Action Plan for Sligo Creek that will include an update of stream restoration work completed and planned to date, a trash reduction strategy, and options for interagency stream restoration and stormwater management projects in the Long Branch tributary. Watershed-based stormwater management, such as has been implemented in Sligo Creek, is practical and effective in urban areas, providing greater environmental protection than could be achieved through smaller isolated stormwater management facilities.

The County currently has two water pollution prevention programs. The Clean Water Partners Program encourages businesses to pledge to protect water quality through a variety of on-site procedures, including changes in the use of hazardous chemicals and conducting routine maintenance on water quality facilities. The County is also instituting a new program to educate businesses and the public about the impacts of automobile leakage on water quality