

PART TWO – DIRECTIONS

Issues Ready for Implementation Methods

The staff has identified a series of possible projects to help revitalize older inner suburban communities. The projects are based on the area Master Plans, the Framework for Action report, and various other sources. These are projects that staff will pursue to support implementation of the Master Plans, the Long Branch Task Force report, and numerous other initiatives in the area. These projects will not duplicate the ongoing work of other agencies or jurisdictions. Some of these projects could be initiated in 2004 to 2006, depending on staff resources, to complement other ongoing studies and projects. Following is a list of possible planning initiatives.

Affordable Housing — A Revitalization Assessment

Work Product. Provide an evaluation of options and recommended approaches for maintaining the existing affordable housing resources in the study area. Evaluate the potential for infill development, including various approaches to providing affordable housing. Identify best practices, market realities, planning options, and possible future directions. The study will build on the analysis developed in “An Assessment of Housing and Resident Population in East Silver Spring and Takoma Park” (February 1999), prepared by the M-NCPPC staff for the Master Plans in those areas, and on the affordable housing studies prepared by the Strategic Planning Division.

Master Plan Guidance. The project is consistent with the vision to preserve existing residential character and to encourage neighborhood reinvestment. The Plans support revitalization of single family and apartment communities. The project is supportive of the emerging vision to protect, maintain, and enhance the supply of affordable housing in this area.

Opportunity for Bi-County Coordination. The Prince George’s County Redevelopment Authority study, “International Corridor Community Legacy Plan,” envisions safe, well-maintained apartment areas. Recommended methods emphasize residential leadership, upgraded community infrastructure, eliminating street vending, exterior rehabilitation, and an upgraded image. The Montgomery County study should hold discussions leading to coordination of apartment housing revitalization efforts between both counties.

Project Staffing. The project could be lead by either DHCA or the M-NCPPC staff, and may involve soliciting the experience and expertise of affordable housing providers from around the country. The City of Takoma Park should also be involved. The M-NCPPC staff working on this project should include the Community-Based Planning Division, the Strategic Planning Division, and the Research and Technology Center. The M-NCPPC Strategic Planning Division is currently conducting a countywide study of affordable housing options.

Commercial Area Revitalization — Concept Studies

Work Product. Prepare studies that will support efforts to revitalize the Takoma-Langley Crossroads, Clifton Park Centers, and Flower Village Center. The studies will address pedestrian paths, streetscaping, vehicle access, public spaces, transit service, and building forms. The studies would be coordinated with other efforts to revitalize these commercial areas.

Master Plan Guidance. The Plan provides guidance for revitalizing these commercial centers, as follows:

All Commercial Centers

- Support a diverse range of commercial services to meet a variety of community, highway, and regional needs.
- Apply a newly created Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone that will provide flexibility for parking and other development standards, site plan reviews to assure quality development, and guidance concerning the height of buildings.

Takoma/Langley Crossroads

- Prepare a concept study for the whole area to guide revitalization and redevelopment. Guidance is provided for preparation of an in-depth concept study.
- Support improvements to the Hampshire-Langley Shopping Center, which may include expansion of the grocery store, as well as improvements to parking lot circulation and landscaping.
- Form a task force to coordinate improvements between Montgomery County and Prince George's County. Such coordination should include the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Corporation, the City of Takoma Park, and area civic associations.

Clifton Park Crossroads Centers

- Consider establishing a major gateway feature to enhance community identity and provide a positive image.
- Focus on improving the access from surrounding neighborhoods to each of the four quadrants.
- Improve the pedestrian environment along University Boulevard and Piney Branch Road.
- Encourage the coordinated redevelopment of the market (located in the former Fontana Bowling Alley building) and the adjacent auto-oriented use. Improve the landscaping in the parking lot and the access to existing bus stops.
- Encourage coordinated redevelopment of properties in the northeast quadrant. Provide an attractive public open space. Improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

Flower Village Center

- Prepare a unified improvement plan for Flower Avenue from Arliss Street to Piney Branch Road. (A number of design and building guidelines are provided in the Master Plan.)
- Support a number of specific recommendations from the 1998 Long Branch Bond Bill project.

Opportunities for Bi-County Coordination. The Prince George's County Redevelopment Authority study, the *International Corridor Community Legacy Plan*, envisions a corridor area that is revitalized, memorable, a regional attraction, and serves the multi-cultural community. The Plan recommendations emphasize improved business capacity for self-management, physical improvements, a stronger international theme, improved marketability of the area, and creation of a coherent identity. The concept study for the Takoma-Langley Crossroads area should be a Bi-County planning effort. Ongoing studies are recommended to coordinate marketing and design efforts for all commercial areas in the corridor area.

Project Staffing. Two types of studies could be prepared:

- The M-NCPPC staff could prepare concept planning and design studies. The staff planning team would include economic and transportation staff of the M-NCPPC, in coordination with staff of the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Department of Public Works, and the City of Takoma Park. For example, the Takoma Park Master Plan recommends that a concept study be prepared for the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Center, in coordination with Prince George's County.
- DHCA staff could prepare Revitalization/implementation studies. For example, the East Silver Spring Master Plan recommends that the Department of Housing and Community Affairs prepare a unified improvement plan for Flower Avenue. Such studies should be prepared in coordination with the M-NCPPC staff and with business and community organizations.

Stream Valleys and Local Parks — A Revitalization Plan

Work Product. Prepare a plan and program to revitalize parks in the University Boulevard Corridor area, including the Long Branch and east Takoma Park communities. Address needs for stream restoration/renovation, water quality, stream valley park completion, land acquisition, playfields, park and equipment renovation, community and trail access, CPTED safety issues, nature trails, interpretive trails, and forest management. Develop a methodology through cooperative work with the diverse area population.

In February 2003, the Strategic Planning Division of the M-NCPPC issued a report "Looking Ahead ... Strategies for Planning, Developing and Managing Parks in the Future." The study identified the importance of addressing parks in our more urbanized areas, such as Silver Spring/Takoma Park. The proposed park plan in the University Boulevard Area would provide a good opportunity to address the planning, maintenance, and management recommendations from the "Looking Ahead..." report.

Master Plan Guidance. The Master Plans support land acquisition and park improvements to address the items listed above.

Opportunity to Coordinate Bi-County Studies. The need to coordinate with projects in Prince George's County will be determined by project staff when park studies are initiated.

Project Staffing. The project would be lead by parks staff of the M-NCPPC, with the participation by Community-Based Planning and other appropriate planning staff. The relationship between the park system and the stream valleys should be coordinated within the overall system.

Improvements for Pedestrians and Bicyclists — An Access System

Work Product. Prepare documentation, conduct fieldwork, resolve route recommendations, create concept designs, and develop implementation programs. These plans would use the extensive guidance reflected in the M-NCPPC report, "Pedestrian Routes and Bikeways – Supplement to the East Silver Spring and Takoma Park Master Plans."

Master Plan Guidance. The Master Plan proposes a comprehensive framework for pedestrian and bicycle access in the area, including connections to park trails and to various activity centers. The neighborhood "Pedestrian Routes and Bikeways" study, completed subsequent to the Master Plans, identified the local paths needed to connect the Master Plan framework routes. The Master Plans envisioned by Montgomery County or the City of Takoma Park would initiate area wide studies to resolve neighborhood bike routes and implement Master Plan recommendations.

- Prepare plans to provide missing portions of the **Pedestrian System Framework** within the study area, including pedestrian improvements along major highways and arterials and other sidewalk connections to transit, schools, and commercial or institutional centers. *Project staffing:* The study should be led by DPWT or City of Takoma Park staff, in coordination with SHA and the M-NCPPC staff.
- Prepare plans to provide missing portions of **Bikeway System Framework** within the study area. *Project staffing:* The study should be led by the DPWT or City of Takoma Park staff in coordination with SHA and the M-NCPPC staff.
- Prepare study, design, and programming of **Park Trail Access Improvements** for pedestrian and bicyclists, per the Supplement report. *Project staffing:* Study to be led by the M-NCPPC park and planning staff, in coordination with County, City, and other appropriate community organizations.

Opportunity to Coordinate Bi-County Studies. The need to coordinate with projects in Prince George's County will be determined by project staff when pedestrian and bicycle trail studies are initiated. The Master Plans show potential connections of trails connecting to Prince George's County.

Issues Requiring Follow-up Planning Studies

The following planning studies may not be scheduled until other studies and initiatives are completed. Several major recommendations and new directions may lead to the need for further studies or Master Plan amendments.

Community Vision — A Bi-County Transitway Plan

Work Product. If needed, the Plan would address the alignment and right-of-way, station locations, and any land use changes. The Plan is likely to affect the Takoma Park and the East Silver Spring Master Plans, as well as other Master Plans in the Silver Spring area. Parts of the process could include:

- A feasibility analysis.
- A limited Master Plan amendment, including a recommended transitway alignment and station locations.
- Sector Plans for station areas.
- Sectional Map Amendments and any Zoning Text Amendments.

Master Plan Guidance. The current Master Plans anticipate that approval of a new transit route along University Boulevard would involve planning and design studies pertaining to right-of-way and land use.

Opportunity to Coordinate Bi-County Studies. In Prince George's County, studies by the M-NCPPC and by the Redevelopment Authority point toward significant revitalization and possible future Master Plan amendments to address a similar range of issues. Coordination of amendments for an alignment and land use in both counties will also be needed. The timing of such studies would need to be coordinated between officials in both counties.

Project Staffing. This would be a major work program effort that would include Park and Planning staff with the full range of expertise, in coordination with the County Executive Branch and State agencies.

Demographic, Economic, and Housing Data — An Analysis

Work Product. Determine whether the analysis should also address immigration, health, crime, and other social data.

The last comprehensive analysis was prepared prior to the year 2000 adoption of new Master Plans and was based on the 1990 U.S. Census, with the 1997 U.S. Census update and the bilingual telephone survey. Other special studies have been prepared following availability of 2000 U.S. Census data, including the southeastern Montgomery County diversity analysis and the "Hearing the Views of Diverse Populations" data summary for the University Boulevard Corridor prepared in April 2003 (see Appendix B).

The Research and Technology Center (RTC) at the M-NCPPC is currently completing U.S. Census 2003 Update Survey results, and in the fall, both of these will be available for the Planning Area. The RTC will use both 2000 Census and Update Survey data to prepare appropriate research for Montgomery County policy makers. The RTC may initiate a special study of immigration and the status of various ethnic groups in the County. The RTC continues to explore ways to enhance the usability of the M-NCPPC website for a range of visitors.

Master Plan Guidance. Major comprehensive studies of focused geographic areas are typically prepared prior to major Master Plan amendments. Such studies may be required if a rail transit line is planned for the area. Other studies which focus on a particular geographic area or ethnic group would only be initiated at the direction of the County Council. (This process could begin in 2-5 years.)

Opportunity to Coordinate Bi-County Studies. The need to coordinate with projects in Prince George's County will be determined by project staff when studies are initiated. The many common and related demographic, economic, and housing issues shared by the Bi-County area suggest the inherent value of conducting a coordinated analysis.

Project Staffing. Research and Technology Center staff would typically complete the analysis, assisted by Community-Based Planning staff. Such a study may require coordination with a whole range of participants such as non-profit organizations, County government agencies, and state and federal agencies.

Expanded Historic Preservation Area — An Evaluation

Work Product. Initiate research to evaluate historic district boundaries and 20th century historic resources in both Takoma Park and East Silver Spring. The project could also address viable reuses of existing resources, such as the Flower Theater (possibly in 6-10 years.)

Master Plan Guidance. The Takoma Park Master Plan recommends a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Takoma Park Historic District boundaries. The East Silver Spring Master Plan recommends research to develop a historical context for 20th century historic resources, such as the Flower Theater.

Opportunities for Bi-County Coordination. The need to coordinate with projects in Prince George's County will be determined by project staff when historic resources studies are initiated. A study of potential historic resources was prepared for the areas that were annexed and unified from Prince George's County to Montgomery County.

Project Staffing. Historic Preservation staff would conduct the project. Community-Based Planning staff could assist with planning related studies. The Takoma Park Master Plan recommends coordination of the historic district with the City of Takoma Park, historic preservation organizations, and area residents. The timing of this study will depend on an assessment of priorities for historic resources studies in other parts of the County. The earliest that this project could begin is FY 2009, since projects are scheduled for other areas of the County prior to that time.