

# AREA-WIDE ELEMENTS

## HOUSING

Within the I-270 Corridor, the *Shady Grove Sector Plan* offers an opportunity to increase the range of housing to meet countywide needs for housing. The Plan's goal is to increase housing choice and affordability options while providing adequate recreation, schools, and community services to create a strong and balanced community. The proposed redevelopment of the County Service Park and Metro station area will provide potentially 5,400 to 6,500 new units. This new residential community reflects County policies to locate housing near transit to increase ridership, and near jobs to decrease commuting time and distance.

### Policy Context

The long-standing County policy is to adequately meet the housing needs of a diverse workforce.

- The County's 2001 *Housing Policy* reiterates a continuing commitment to provide a variety of housing in sound neighborhoods for all County residents. The policy encourages "innovative design and planning efforts" and "compact residential development in areas served by transit."
- The County Council's 2003 *Transportation Plan* supports increasing housing in the I-270 Corridor and at Metro stations to provide the option of living near work and the potential to decrease commuting times and distances.
- The Planning Board's 2003 *Housing Montgomery* initiative identified both the need for more housing in the County and ways to create it. The report notes that significant housing can be achieved in "mixed use development at transit-oriented locations," specifically in new Metro station zones that encourage housing, the fundamental recommendation of this Plan.
- The County Council's 2003 *Action Plan for Affordable Housing* lists specific and varied actions to increase the supply of affordable housing and techniques to make it more accessible to qualifying households. The *Action Plan* identifies a number of master plan efforts, including new zones and increasing housing density near transportation centers that have been pursued in this Plan.

The provision of affordable housing is another important County policy. As *Affordable Housing in Montgomery County, Status and Inventory* (September 2000) points out, affordable is a relative term. That report identified affordable housing as those units available to households at or below 80 percent of the County's median income. This definition covers subsidized and MPDU units as well as rental and for-sale market rate housing within the income limit. This Plan will use the same definition, consistent with its goal to provide a range of housing types.

### Existing Conditions and Needs

Each planning area meets countywide housing objectives by identifying opportunities unique to its area and making specific recommendations. From a demographic review, the Shady Grove planning area is primarily a single-family community and does not offer a significant range of housing options. Given its current stock and proximity to transit, this is a good location for adding new housing types that can create a range of choices and maximize access to transit.

The majority of residents in the Shady Grove planning area live in single-family detached dwellings and in households that are comparatively large. The planning area's housing mix is 58 percent single-family detached, 32 percent townhouse, and 10 percent multi-family.

Residents in Shady Grove are less likely to rent their housing than households Countywide, and the area attracts a high proportion of families with children and working parents. The planning area has a small population of persons aged 65 and older. There is no specialized housing for the elderly, such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities, in the planning area.

### **Objectives**

- Create a diverse and balanced community that offers a range of housing choices, including affordable housing, near Metro.
- Redevelop land around the Shady Grove Metro Station with a variety of distinct residential communities, in a pattern that enables pedestrian access to Metro for existing and new residents, at a density that creates a buffer and offers redevelopment incentive, in a mix that accommodates a range of incomes and households.
- Recognize the need for County services and relocate or reconfigure them for continued and more efficient service delivery.

### **Concept**

This Plan recommends a significant increase in housing around the Metro station area offering a range of housing choices. The mix of unit types and affordability will serve the County's diverse population with a range of housing types and sizes. This housing will be built in five new neighborhoods, each with a provision of recreation facilities, open space, and community-serving retail integrated into the new communities. Land assembly is encouraged to create the desired residential block pattern.

### **Recommendations**

- Rezone land west of Metro, between MD 355 and the station, for high-density residential development, primarily a range of multi-family units. Larger, family-sized units must be provided.
- Rezone the land east of the Metro station for residential development and do not exceed a maximum of 78 percent multi-family units and a minimum of 22 percent single-family attached units.
- Provide a range of unit sizes within each housing type. Multi-family and townhouse units should provide a range of unit sizes. Back-to-back townhouse units are to be avoided.
- Ensure that Metro Neighborhood communities have a component of affordable housing, provided by the public sector, non-profit groups, or through a partnership.
- Design residential areas to create attractive communities with defensible public and private space, in a defined neighborhood unit.
- Require MPDUs to be constructed in stages with the market, rather than at one time.
- Enforce the requirement that MPDUs be distributed throughout the five neighborhoods, rather than clustered in one location.
- Provide senior housing developments within the planning area. Appropriate sites include The Grove shopping center site, the VEIP property, and WMATA's property on the station's east side.
- Ensure that land exchange agreements meet the County's functional needs.
- Support the provision of accessory apartment units into existing neighborhoods through the existing development process.