

INTRODUCTION

The Shady Grove Sector Plan is a step toward the future of the I-270 Corridor in Montgomery County. While the Shady Grove Metro Station may still be at the end of the line, the community around it is fast becoming a mixed-use center. This Plan makes recommendations to build community, incorporate transit, expand open space and parks, improve connections and access, and ultimately, create a “place.”

Today, Shady Grove functions as a transportation center and a focus of service and industrial uses. At the junction of highways, it serves industrial traffic, but the central location of the Metro station gives it the potential to be a transit-centered residential resource. For residents of the neighborhoods surrounding the Metro station, Shady Grove is a community, one that needs to be protected and enhanced.

Ideas for this planning area were conceived in a series of community meetings held between 2000 and 2003. These “charrettes” gathered designers, residents, property owners, and government officials in a short time frame to generate ideas for Shady Grove’s future. The charrettes, coupled with County and State land use policies, has resulted in this Plan’s recommendations for significant land use change, to create a new, mixed-use residential community in the I-270 Corridor.

This Plan provides for appropriate development at a Metro station while reinforcing and protecting nearby residential communities.

WITHIN THE I-270 CORRIDOR

Context

The Shady Grove planning area is centrally located in the I-270 Corridor identified by the *General Plan on Wedges and Corridors* at the junction of two transportation systems, the Metro red line and the interstate highway. The planning area is home to the County Service Park that provides the I-270 Corridor with a variety of needed services. The planning area is less densely developed than other areas of the I-270 Corridor, despite the presence of the Metro Station (see *Wedges and Corridors*).

Planning History

Local planning efforts are guided by Maryland’s 1992 Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act, which encourages development “concentrated in suitable areas,” such as Metro stations. The State’s 1997 Smart Growth Act encourages development principles designed to maximize existing infrastructure and focus investments in new infrastructure, including communities that are walkable and transit accessible. The Shady Grove planning area is identified as a Certified Priority Funding Area under the Smart Growth Act.

Redevelopment in Shady Grove and in the I-270 Corridor is governed by the County’s *General Plan*. Its vision of wedges and corridors strives to consolidate development in corridors and leave the wedges open for low-density development, open space and agricultural uses. Land use growth should occur at Metro stations and the *General Plan* generally encourages mixed uses, including housing. The *General Plan* also stresses the need for compatibility with existing communities and protection of these communities from encroachment of non-conforming land uses, excessive noise, and through traffic.

Finally, it recommends expanding transportation options and encourages a pedestrian-scale development with an emphasis on urban design features and traffic management to create a safe and attractive environment.

Planning for the I-270 Technology Corridor is intended to promote transit-focused communities around the existing high-technology uses and transit stations. To create this vision of the I-270 Corridor, the following goals are recommended:

- Provide housing within the Corridor to improve the ratio of jobs and housing, and increase housing choices to a variety of renters and buyers.
- Build new development in a transit-oriented pattern to create walkable communities.
- Provide new transit facilities, including the Corridor Cities Transitway and expanded bus service and park-n-ride facilities.
- Improve pedestrian and bike access and safety to encourage transit use.
- Provide adequate public facilities such as schools, parks, and recreation centers.

The Shady Grove Plan offers the opportunity to reach the goals described in both the *General Plan*. Previous master and sector plans for the area include:

- The 1977 *Shady Grove Sector Plan*. This Plan provided the guidance for the location of the Shady Grove Metro Station, the County Service Park, and the residential community to the east. It proposed rezoning tied to transportation improvements and recommended commercial centers, residential neighborhoods, and light industrial uses.
- The 1985 *Gaithersburg and Vicinity Master Plan*. This Plan included the Shady Grove planning area within its boundaries and reduced the number of required schools. The Plan's primary focus was on the study areas north and south of this Master Plan.
- The 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan*. This Plan recommended a shift in land use on the west side of the Metro station from industrial uses to "a major employment and housing center." Recognizing that Shady Grove would not always be a terminal station, the Plan recommended redevelopment of the surface parking lots for mixed-use development. This Plan also recommended the mixed-use neighborhood called the King Farm that has since been annexed by the City of Rockville.
- A 1996 *Amendment to the Gaithersburg and Vicinity Master Plan*. This Plan designated the alignment of the Corridor Cities Transitway to connect the Shady Grove Metro Station with the Life Sciences Center to the west and to stops further north along the I-270 Corridor.

The planning area has built out substantially in accordance with the land use planning recommendations of these plans. From the foundation laid in 1977, this area is ready to be revisited. As this area becomes more attractive for development and redevelopment, this Plan seeks to shape growth into a strong community that offers housing, transportation, employment, and recreational opportunities for all groups.