



Hand Delivered

January 23, 2008

Dr. Royce Hanson, Chairman, and Planning Board members
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver spring, MD 20910

Re: Planning Board Agenda Item 17#
MD 355/I-270 Corridor Project

Dear Dr. Hanson and members of the Board:

I represent a number of property owners in the White Flint Sector Plan. We applaud your effort to analyze the entire MD 355/I-270 Corridor in a comprehensive fashion. This effort permits the Planning Board and County Council to establish a generalized vision for this important portion of the county, identifying the appropriate role each sub-area plays in the county's long-term development.

We have reviewed this report and have some concerns with references to White Flint. While your draft Report at page 34 recommends reinforcing White Flint as a downtown for North Bethesda that recommendation is located among the design recommendations. In addition, at page 26, the Report discusses types of centers with the only reference to White Flint is to White Flint Mall as a "regional retail place".

White Flint at present is a regional, auto-oriented retail center, but it also includes a Federal Government Resource, the NRC, and it also includes the Montgomery County Conference Center and associated hotel, and is increasingly a high-density housing resource near a Metro station.

White Flint offers a strategic opportunity for the county to incorporate economic development, expansion of transit-oriented housing, and further development of the hospitality industry near a Metro station. This can be accomplished by identifying and planning for White Flint to be developed as a true downtown CBD, characterized by multiple urban villages.

The employment base established by NRC can be expanded to provide additional employment opportunities served by Metro. Higher-density housing can be provided for young professionals, empty nesters, and others within one-quarter to one-half mile of Metro. This housing could be a resource not only for White Flint area employees, but also could help relieve the demand at Bethesda Naval Medical imposed by BRAC.

Location of a MARC station within White Flint would permit this housing resource also to serve the Silver Spring employment base. The Conference Center and hotel, when combined with the demand for business visitor accommodations, will generate demand for more hotels, restaurants, entertainment, and hospitality facilities.

All of these uses are interdependent upon one another. Additional housing can provide a better balance to the jobs-housing ratio in this area. The new residents will need restaurants, food stores, drug stores, athletic clubs, and similar retail services, and business visitors who stay in the area will also frequent these establishments.

With sufficient intensity and diversity in the mix of uses, a real downtown can be created reflecting a compact, pedestrian-friendly environment characterized by less auto-dependence. We feel the MD 355/I-270 Corridor Report should state with more clarity that the role and character of White Flint is a multi-faceted downtown for North Bethesda, with an elaboration of the intensity and rich mix of uses that designation reflects to be refined in the coming sector plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this study.

Sincerely,



Perry Berman,

On behalf of the following White Flint Neighborhood Area 2 property owners:

Jack Fitzgerald
Robert Eisinger
Kap Kapastin
Dave Draiman
Lee Barnes
Phillip Feliciano
Paul Klinedinst
John Bigelow