

April 7, 2008

Dr. Royce Hanson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Dr. Hanson:

Re: White Flint Sector Plan

As representatives of citizen associations adjacent to the proposed White Flint Sector Plan area, we want to take this opportunity to again address our concerns and issues related to the drafting of a new Plan...the creation of a new city. The enormity of the proposed redevelopment is taking shape. We have gone from what we envisioned as an urban village with modest mixed-use development to a city-like district larger than Bethesda and Silver Spring combined. We are concerned about what is being proposed for our community.

We are well aware of the county's economic desire to develop this area, but we caution that we need "excellent" land use and design. Not the same old stuff.

With a redevelopment so enormous, there must be public facilities to accommodate and enhance this area: a library (\$18+ million plus land), a fire station (\$20+ million), community space, schools, recreation space, and public transit. How and where will these be provided? Who pays for them? What about increased demand on Suburban Hospital by the new residents and employees? How will emergency vehicles be accommodated with the increased density? Can there be phased development, staged so that traffic impact may be reassessed?

In the Advisory Committee process, we supported an environmentally and people friendly area: parks (lots of large and small parks); public assembly areas (a people's plaza), a focal point; wide, walkable unobstructed sidewalks; easily accessible and visible public transportation; visual encouragement of bicycles; and Rockville Pike as a boulevard. We all agreed that the highest density would be adjacent to the metro station and stepped-down (transitioned) toward the neighborhoods.

We support the development of a grid-system of roadways to service this area. But, how does this translate into traffic? Not just weekday but weekend. To date there are no studies of weekend traffic. We would like to see such data as part of this plan.

We are extremely concerned that some of the grid-system roadways may be "private." This establishes a public policy of private roads for public use that has not been fully discussed. Such a "private" system exchanges certain public rights for expediency and easier maintenance. We expect that all new streets will be "public."

We are anxious to see how the plan addresses preserving our existing surrounding neighborhoods and maintaining our quality of life. Development compatibility with existing neighborhoods is essential as is the need to lessen any negative impact.

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We are anxious to see what the staff describes as a minimum/maximum densities and just how tall buildings can be with bonus elements, ie TDRs. What is the maximum possible build-out? We would like to see an analysis of infrastructure needs for both the minimum and maximum allowable densities.

Also, we want to know how this redevelopment fits within the overall North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan and other redevelopment plans: Twinbrook, Rock Spring, City of Rockville, the National Naval Medical Center/BRAC, and the proposed Executive Boulevard Sector Plan.

We expect the draft plan to address our questions and concerns. We hope that explanations will be abundant for decisions made. We look forward to commenting further on the draft plan before the Planning Board.

We await the draft plan with both hope that we have been heard and trepidation at such an enormous creation that affects our daily lives.

Thank you

Jay Hansen, President
Garrett Park Estates-White Flint Park Citizens Association

Paula Bienenfeld, President
Luxmanor Civic Association

Edward Rich
Old Farm Civic Association