

Master Plan Process Primer

A. Developing the Recommendations

Participants on Five Task Forces comprised the Damascus Master Plan Review Committee. The Task Forces met 2-3 times each. A few people served on all the Task Forces, many served on 2-3 Task Forces, and some only served on one Task Force. The process was fully open to all to serve as they wished. Gary Richards attended the most meetings of anyone in the community.

<u>Task Force</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
Town Center Charrette	58
Land Use, Housing, and Historic Preservation	56
Environment	33
Transportation	53
Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Community Facilities	44

Nineteen meetings of the 5 Task Forces were held over a nine-month period. The initial cumulative recommendations were presented to the community in December 2003. The final recommendations are being presented today - September 8, 2004.

B. Refining the Recommendations – How the Task Force Process Functioned

Issues presented to the Task Forces – from existing Master Plan, M-NCPPC and Council policy perspectives.

Issues discussed at Task Force - listening to alternative views and additional issues.

Staff further evaluates issues of concern, and returns to Task Force with modifications to concepts that were of concern.

Task Force evaluation of modified concepts. Further discussion or modification if required to resolve concerns if possible. Some concerns are not fully resolvable as they relate to policy conflicts.

C. Process of Creating the Staff Draft

Staff begins work of incorporating results of Task Force discussions into a full document.

Supporting text and recommendations for all areas evaluated is written – adjusted to accommodate varied views and policies in community, County agencies, and M-NCPPC.

Background statistics and supporting graphics are prepared.

Process on hold until completion of Planning Board review of Gaithersburg, Upper Rock Creek, Olney, and Shady Grove Master Plans.

D. Master Plan Adoption Process

Staff Draft findings and major recommendations presented to the Community today.

Staff Draft presented to the Planning Board.

Scheduled for September 30, 2004 at M-NCPPC offices in Silver Spring.

Public Hearing held on Planning Board Public Hearing Draft.

Scheduled for November 4, 2004 in Damascus or Germantown.

Planning Board holds Worksessions on Public Hearing Draft.

To be scheduled beginning in December in Silver Spring. At least five are anticipated.

Planning Board recommends a Master Plan to the County Council – usually modified during the Worksessions process.

County Council holds Public Hearing, and Worksessions through the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee.

PHED Committee makes recommendations to the Council.

County Council evaluates PHED recommendation, Planning Board recommendation, and testimony from their Public Hearing.

County Council adopts a Master Plan.

E. Public Participation in Master Plan Draft Review Process

1. Planning Board Introduction

The Staff Draft will be formally presented to the Planning Board on September 30, 2004 at the M-NCPPC offices in Silver Spring. There is little discussion at that time. This is more for the staff to present their recommendations and describe the process used to determine the recommendations made. A few community representatives will make brief comments. Copies of the Staff Draft will be available the week of that presentation. Copies will be automatically distributed to all Task Force Members.

2. Public Hearing Before the Planning Board

Scheduled for November 4, 2004. It will be held either at the UpCounty Government Center in Germantown or in the Auditorium in the Damascus Library.

Your opinion on the elements of the Master Plan is important!

This is the primary forum for you to express your concerns for or support of the Master Plan recommendations. The presentation and handout tonight will let you start evaluating whether you still support the elements discussed during the Master Plan Task Force meetings. Official public testimony will be taken, and the official record is usually held open for a certain amount of time to allow written comments from those not able to attend the meeting. The Planning Board gives written testimony the same consideration as oral testimony.

The Planning Board Worksessions will address the various elements in the Master Plan, but topics will primarily relate to issues expressed at the Public Hearing. If the Planning Board, staff, and public agree on an issue it is generally not discussed at length.

Issues will probably arise during the Public Hearing that were never discussed during the Task Force Process. Some people, for various reasons, do not participate in the process until the Staff Draft is issued. Indeed, some may not participate until the Plan arrives at the County Council. Your continuing participation and interest is important if there are elements of the Plan you believe are particularly important.

It is important to express what you like as well as what concerns you. Someone else may express a concern with an element you believe to be important to include. The Planning Board needs to know that there is support for recommendations as well as concern.

You will have 3 minutes to talk as an individual, and 15 minutes if you are representing an organization. You may also submit written testimony. Contact the Community Relations Department for further information (301-495-4600).

3. Planning Board Worksessions

The Staff will prepare a report to the Planning Board that responds to the concerns raised in the Public Hearing testimony. The Staff must defend its recommendations to the Planning Board. The Public Hearing testimony and the Staff response form the basis for the discussions at the Worksessions on the elements of the Plan.

The staff is initially proposing five Worksessions. They will probably begin in December:

- 1 Overall Framework and Rural Areas
- 2 Transition Areas
- 3 Town Center
- 4 Town Center Continued
- 5 Wrap Up and Approval

Depending on the discussion, evaluation, and additional research that may be requested; more Worksessions may be required. Worksessions are generally 2-4 weeks apart, depending on the complexity of the issues to be researched for discussion. While there is generally no public testimony at the Worksessions, you may attend the Worksessions. These are generally a discussion of issues raised at the Public Hearing and the Staff response to questions of the Planning Board.

F. Next Steps for the Damascus Public

1. Listen and ask questions tonight.
2. Read the Executive Summary carefully.
3. Contact the staff if you have questions about elements of the Staff Draft:
 - Lead Planner - Judy Daniel
301-495-4559 / judy.daniel@mncppc-mc.org
 - Assistant Lead Planner and Housing Issues - Malaika Abernathy
301-495- / malaika.abernathy@mncppc-mc.org
 - Transportation Issues - Ki Kim
301-495-4538 / ki.kim@mncppc-mc.org
 - Environmental Issues - Katherine Nelson
301-495-4622 / katherine.nelson@mncppc-mc.org
 - Parks Issues - Tayna Schmieler
301-650-4392 / tayna.schmieler @mncppc-mc.org
 - Trails Issues - Lyn Coleman
301-650-4391 / lyn.coleman@mncppc-mc.org
 - Legacy Open Space Issues – Brenda Sandberg
301-650-4360 / brenda.sandberg@mncppc-mc.org
 - Historic Preservation Issues – Clare Cavicchi
301-650-3402 / clare.cavicchi@mncppc-mc.org
4. Start formulating any comments you may want to make at the Public Hearing.
5. Attend the introduction of the Staff Draft to the Planning Board if you can on September 30, to show your support for your community.
6. Review the official copy of the Staff Draft.
7. Attend the Public Hearing on November 4 and express your opinion on the recommendations to the Planning Board. If you wish to make written comments – either in addition to oral comments, or only in writing – address them to:
 - Chairman Derick Berlage
 - Montgomery County Planning Board
 - 8787 Georgia Avenue
 - Silver Spring, MD 20910

Or you may email a letter to: derick.berlage@mncppc-mc.org.