Rock Spring Master Plan
Community Plan Meeting
October 28, 2015
Agenda

7:00 pm  Welcome and Introductions
7:10 pm  Review of Past Meetings
7:30 pm  Staff Presentations
7:45 pm  Presentations on Future Developments
8:30 pm  Next Steps
Kick Off Meeting

September 1st Master Plan Kick-off Meeting at Walter Johnson High School

- A large turnout of local and nearby residents and office workers
- School capacity issues were a major topic
- Table break out discussions focused on schools, connectivity, pedestrian safety and access, and the need for more recreation space.
After a lengthy discussion on schools and school capacity, several other issues were discussed among the audience in smaller break out tables. At the table discussions, audience members were asked to address the Strengths, Weaknesses, Needs and Wants of the Rock Spring Area.

The following is what we heard from you:

**Strengths:**
- Trees and Open Space
- Access to quality retail
- Great access to highway
- Traffic confined to office park and retail
- Medical offices seen as an asset
Table Discussions

The audience also laid out a number of different challenges outside of school capacity issues for the overall area. The table break out discussions saw the following Weaknesses:

- Overcrowded schools at all levels from elementary to high
- Pedestrian safety and walkability
- Lack of transit connections and accessibility.
- Democracy Boulevard not safe to cross
- Improve infrastructure before developments.
- Too much traffic and congestion
- Intersections can’t handle current traffic
- Affordability
Table Discussions

Needs:
- Schools and acquiring a school site in the plan boundary
- Keep density near I-270. Residents want mixed use but not something as dense as Pike & Rose
- Provide better crosswalks and access on Democracy Boulevard and Old Georgetown Road
- Recreation space and a community center
- Pedestrian and bike trails. More walking paths
- Improve connectivity
- Better access to transit
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Larger library
Table Discussions

Wants:

- New community buildings and parks
- Balanced infrastructure and development
- Senior Community Center and senior housing
- Maintaining the suburban character
- Repurposing buildings
- More open space
- Better school amenities and a new school site
- Restaurants and a Wegmans
- Improve walkability
The major points of the comments that we heard could be summarized into three major subject areas.

**Transportation:**
- Better connections and accessibility both inside and outside the boundary
- Walkability, Problems crossing Democracy Boulevard
- Access to transit

**Recreation and Parks:**
- Need for more parks and open space
- Walking trails and bicycle paths

**Community Facilities:**
- Community center/senior center
- More Schools
After hearing residents voice concerns over school capacity at the Kick-off meetings for Rock Spring and White Flint 2, the staff teams scheduled a meeting on September 17 at Walter Johnson High School that focused on school issues.

Staff also met with:

- September 9  Luxmanor Civic Association
- September 14 Walter Johnson PTA Cluster Coordinator
- September 15 Ashburton Elementary School PTA
- September 16 Luxmanor Elementary School PTA
Rock Spring/White Flint II Joint Master Plan School Meeting

- Both the Rock Spring and White Flint II Master Plans held a joint meeting to discuss school capacity in the Walter Johnson cluster.
- Councilman Berliner and the Planning Board Chair both addressed the crowd and discussed the challenges of school capacity.
- MCPS and Planning staff outlined strategies to accommodate new growth and discuss factors that have led to current capacity issues.

September 17th Joint Master Plan School Meeting at Walter Johnson High School
Rock Spring Master Plan & White Flint 2 Sector Plan

Summary of County Agency Roles

Montgomery County Public Schools/Board of Education

- Re-open closed school sites
- Build additions to schools capable of expansion
- Re-district school boundaries
- Construct new schools

Planning Department/Planning Board

- Recommend master plans that address long term development and school facility needs.
- Recommend modifications to the standards for approving new development set by the Subdivision Staging Policy.
- Approve only subdivisions and site plans that meet the adequacy standards set under the APFO.
- Recommend to the County Executive and County Council public facilities that should be prioritized for inclusion in the County’s CIP.

Montgomery County Council

- Approve master plans to guide future development.
- Establish standards through the Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) for the MCPB to use in approving new development
- Program community facilities in the CIP.
- Raises $$ to fund capital projects (taxes; required developer contributions; State aid)
The Scope of Work for the Rock Spring Master Plan was approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board on October 8th. At the Planning Board hearing, the board approved the following:

- The Plan Boundary
- Community Outreach Methods
- Purpose of the plan
- Timeline
Purpose of the Plan

• To reimagine the typical suburban office park, with its auto-oriented street network and surface parking spaces.
• Improve connectivity (ex. by identifying opportunities for a new street grid).
• Identify places for public use spaces and amenities.
• Provide a mix of uses and build a sense of place.
• Plan sustainable environmental measures.
• Additional Placemaking Initiatives
Staff Presentation

Economic, Office and Retail Conditions in Rock Spring

Rick Liu, Research Planner
## Economic Base

### Top 5 Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Employees in Rock Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lockheed Martin</td>
<td>3000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriott</td>
<td>3000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Institutes of Health</td>
<td>2000 to 2999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordstrom</td>
<td>250 to 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macy's</td>
<td>250 to 499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Industry Distribution

- **Montgomery County**
  - Company Management: 16%
  - Professional/Scientific/Technical: 9%
  - Retail: 4%
  - Finance/Insurance: 68%

- **Rock Spring**
  - Company Management: 24%
  - Professional/Scientific/Technical: 19%
  - Retail: 20%
  - Finance/Insurance: 7%
  - Other: 30%

*Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, BLS*
Office Challenges

- Montgomery County Office Market Assessment, 2015
- Forces shaping the office market
  - Technology
  - Space Utilization
  - Federal Sequestration
- Strongest markets in urbanized, mixed-use, walkable communities with transit

PIKE AND ROSE

COMSAT BUILDING
Office Challenges

Single-use, auto-oriented office parks are losing their appeal

2014
VACANCY RATE BY AREA

- Montrose Pky: 32.7%
- I-270 Montrose: 31.6%
- Shady Grove LSC: 20.1%
- Rock Spring: 18.7%
- E I-270 at Gude: 17.5%
- Germantown: 16.4%
- Silver Spring CBD: 11.5%
- Bethesda CBD: 10.4%
- Westech: 10.4%
- Rockville CBD: 6.6%

1995
VACANCY RATE BY AREA

- Silver Spring CBD: 24.0%
- E I-270 at Gude: 17.0%
- Germantown: 14.8%
- Montrose Pky: 12.3%
- Bethesda CBD: 12.2%
- Rockville CBD: 10.9%
- Rock Spring: 10.8%
- Shady Grove LSC: 6.4%
- I-270 Montrose to...: 4.2%
- Westech: 1.7%
Rock Spring includes high quality, suburban office buildings that has historically attracted highly recognized companies.
Office Context

But...

• Higher vacancies than County
• Rents are strong, but should be stronger
• Three (3) buildings account for 41% of vacant space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office Market</th>
<th>Rock Spring</th>
<th>Montgomery County</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Buildings</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentable Square</td>
<td>5,447,205</td>
<td>73,394,375</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under Construction (square feet)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>400,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent/square foot per Month</td>
<td>$30.12</td>
<td>$27.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMSAT Bldg  
Capital Gateway 1 B Wing  
Rockledge Exe Plaza 2
Retail Context
Retail Context

- Retail is strong:
  - Rent Rates higher than County (+20%)
  - Vacancy rates lower than County (-60%)

- Rock Spring comprises:
  - ~20% of building supply sales in County
  - Over 10% of GAFO sales in County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Market</th>
<th>Rock Spring</th>
<th>Montgomery County</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Buildings</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2,326</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rentable Square Feet</td>
<td>1,856,217</td>
<td>39,913,783</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under Construction (square feet)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68,742</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent/square foot per Month</td>
<td>$32.00</td>
<td>$27.33</td>
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Monthly and Annual Retail Trade Report, U.S. Census
Staff Presentation

Placemaking

Mike Bello, Lead Urban Designer
Plan Challenges

- Lack of identity
- Lack of pedestrian and bike amenities
- Connectivity; I-270 as a barrier
- Lack of human scale
- A lack of placemaking
Plan Challenges

What is Lack of human scale?

Rockledge Blvd

Rockledge Drive

Rockledge Drive

Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Plan Challenges

What is human scale?
Plan Challenges

What is human scale?
Changing Character

MASTER PLAN
Placemaking
CONNECTIVITY + EXPERIENCE NOW
Placemaking
CONNECTIVITY + EXPERIENCE NOW
Placemaking
ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE BY HIGHLIGHTING ROCK SPRING’S EXISTING CHARACTER | CAMPUS
Placemaking
ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE WITH ENGAGING ACTIVITIES
Placemaking

ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE BY HIGHLIGHTING

ROCK SPRING’S EXISTING CHARACTER | CONNECTIVITY
Placemaking
ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE BETWEEN STREETS
Placemaking

ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE BETWEEN STREETS

April 29th 2008
Placemaking
CONNECTIVITY + EXPERIENCE TOMORROW
Placemaking
ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE ALONG STREETS

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Placemaking
ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE ALONG STREETS
Staff Summary

Office Vacancy
• Office Vacancy Task Force
• Montgomery County Development Corporation
• ULI TAP

Schools
• Interim Superintendent Report
• Subdivision Staging Report to the Planning Board on November 5th
Planning Department is sponsoring efforts focused on office vacancies:
- *Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel* (December or January)
- Consultant Study to Explore Adaptive Reuse of Office Buildings (January – March 2016)

Planning Department is updating the Countywide:
- *Subdivision Staging Policy* - ensures public facilities, including schools and roads, are adequate to meet new growth and development.
- Kick-off Meeting held October 19
- SSP reviewed every four years; will be approved by the County Council in 2016.
Montgomery County Government is forming:

- **Office Market Working Group** will explore options to help reduce office vacancies  
  (November 2015)
- **Economic Development Corporation** is a new public-private entity focusing on strategic priorities to enhance the County’s economic growth and vitality (November 2015)

Montgomery County Public Schools

- Interim Superintendent’s Recommended CIP for 2017-2022 now available
- Interim Superintendent Recommends formation of the **Walter Johnson Roundtable Discussion Group** to address near-term and long-term facility issues; BOE vote on 11/16/15.
To speak about the changing character of Rock Spring we have the developers or property owners of recent pipeline approved developments who will speak about their projects more in depth. Tonight we have developers representing the following:

**Westfield Montgomery Mall**
- Jim Agliata & Eric Howard of Westfield

**Montgomery Row**
- McLean Quinn of EYA

**Rock Spring Center**
- Steve Robins, attorney representative & DRI Development Services
Montgomery Mall

Westfield Montgomery Mall

- Jim Agliata & Eric Howard of Westfield
Montgomery Row

- McLean Quinn of EYA
Rock Spring Center

- Steve Robins, attorney representative & DRI Development Services
Next Steps

All comments, questions and concerns will be recorded on the project webpage (www.montgomeryplanning.org/rockspring) and summarized at our next community plan meeting.

**November 18** 6:30 – 9:30 pm White Flint 2 Sector Plan Community Meeting #4
Rocking Horse Road Elementary School

**December 14** 7:00 – 9:00 pm Rock Spring Master Plan Community Meeting #4
Walter Johnson High School

**Subdivision Staging Policy Meetings**
- **October 19** Kick-off Meeting
- **November 5** Planning Board Overview Briefing
- **December 3** Planning Board Briefing on Transportation Policy Area Review