

AGENDA ITEM #14  
March 10, 2009

**Public Hearing**

**MEMORANDUM**

March 6, 2009

TO: County Council

FROM: Jeffrey L. Zyontz,  Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Public Hearing - Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Falkland Apartments, #36/12

On December 1, 2008 the Montgomery County Planning Board transmitted the Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Falkland Apartments, #36/12 to the Council. The Falkland Apartments are comprised of 3 parcels; all 3 parcels are currently on the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic sites. The Amendment recommended designating the 2 parcels that are located south of East-West Highway on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. It did not recommend designating the 8.99-acre parcel north of East-West Highway.

On January 23, 2009 the County Executive submitted comments on the Amendment that generally endorsed the Planning Board's recommendation to designate the southern portion of the Falklands:

We believe it is appropriate to designate the South and West Parcels of the Falkland Apartments as historic, while allowing the North Parcel to proceed with redevelopment....the County can support the preservation of much of this reminder of early suburban redevelopment while also promoting smart growth and well-located affordable housing in the redevelopment plan. Such a decision would truly balance these potential diverse public interests.

The Executive expressed concern about including master planned rights-of-way in the environmental setting of the Falklands.

On February 3, 2009 the Council established the Council's public hearing for March 10, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

## Falkland Apartments History

The Falkland Apartments, designed by Louis Justement, were constructed in 2 phases between 1936 and 1938 on the former Blair family estate. The 176 unit first phase was completed in 1937 on the south parcel, east of 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The entire complex consisted of 479 apartments, including duplexes and townhouses, on 24 acres. The Falklands are the first garden apartments constructed in the County; these apartments are also some of the earliest garden apartments in the United States. The architecture of the Falklands is highly representative of the Colonial Revival style. The natural setting was a key feature of the Falklands Plan; it retained mature trees and streams on-site. The aim of the Falklands was to provide a healthy alternative to city living for people of modest means.

The Apartments were the first large-scale housing project in Maryland to be financially backed by the Federal Housing Administration. Eleanor Roosevelt cut the ribbon after the completion of the first phase of the project in 1937.

## Previous Actions Regarding the Falkland Apartments

### Prior Historic Preservation Decisions

The Planning Board listed the Falkland Apartments on the Locational Atlas before 1985. In 1985, the Council designated the cupola building of the Falkland Apartments on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The remainder of the Falkland Apartments complex was, thereafter, removed from the Locational Atlas. In 2003, following a 2002 survey of the Silver Spring CBD, the Planning Board put the Falklands back on the Locational Atlas.

On May 18, 2007, as part of the Purple Line environmental impact study, the Maryland Historic Trust found the Falkland Apartments eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It further determined that the alteration or demolition of a building on the north parcel, 1519 East Falkland Lane, would not have a profound detrimental impact on the entire complex.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the designation of all 3 parcels on August 15, 2007. The November 19, 2007 memorandum to the Planning Board from Planning Staff found that the Apartment complex met the following criteria in the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

The historic resource:

- (1) has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation;
- (2) exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the county and its communities; and
- (3) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

On November 19, 2007 the Planning Board determined that the Falklands were eligible for designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

#### Prior Development Approval

The area of the Falklands south of East-West Highway and east of Draper Lane was zoned CBD-2. In 1992, 34 of the original townhouse apartments in this area were demolished in order to construct the Lenox Park Apartments on the CBD-2 zoned site. This apartment complex contains 400 units on 2 acres. The project included 8 townhouses along Draper Lane as a means of enhancing its compatibility with the remaining Falkland Apartments.

#### Master Plan Recommendation

The Council-approved 1993 Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan concluded that the Falklands' redevelopment should be allowed of the portion on the Falkland site located north of East-West Highway. The north parcel was rezoned CBD-R1 under that recommendation; the portion of the Falklands south of East-West Highway and west of Draper Lane retained its R-20 zoning. The Council reaffirmed that decision in the 2000 Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan.

#### Pending Development Proposal

On November 3, 2006 the owner of the Falklands submitted a project plan application to the Planning Board (application # 920070080). A preliminary plan application was submitted for the same project on January 12, 2007 (application # 120070560). The proposed project would require the demolition of all buildings on the north parcel. The approval of the new project as proposed would allow 1,020 multi-family units and 61,314 square feet of retail uses. The project plan and preliminary plan applications triggered a review of the site for inclusion on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

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PLANNING BOARD DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE  
*MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION*  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND:

FALKLAND APARTMENTS, #36/12



Montgomery County  
Planning Department  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL  
CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING  
COMMISSION  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

November 2008

## **BACKGROUND**

The Falkland Apartments are an individual resource listed on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*, Resource #36/12. The Falkland Apartments are located on three adjacent parcels located at the intersection of East-West Highway and 16<sup>th</sup> Street in Silver Spring. The parcels, identified on the map p.2, are the following:

North parcel –

P393, bounded by East-West Highway, 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and the CSX/Metro transitway

South Parcel –

P555, bounded by Colesville Road, East-West Highway, and 16<sup>th</sup> Street

West Parcel –

P532, bounded by 16<sup>th</sup> Street, East-West Highway, and the District of Columbia

## **Chapter 24A-10 Evaluation**

The owner of the Falkland Apartments submitted a project plan application that proposed demolition of all existing buildings on the north parcel. This application triggered Chapter 24A-10, a Moratorium on Demolition, a process to determine whether in all likelihood the resource merits designation on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The HPC voted unanimously, in August 2007, to recommend all three parcels be found eligible for designation. The Planning Board concurred by a 4-1 vote on December 6, 2007 that all three parcels are eligible for designation. The Planning Board directed staff to initiate an Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* to consider the historic designation of the Falkland Apartments.

## **Evaluation for Designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation**

### **Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission Findings**

The Historic Preservation Commission evaluated the Falkland Apartments amendment on February 27, 2008. The HPC unanimously voted in favor of recommending inclusion of all three parcels of the Falkland Apartment complex on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Commission found that the Falkland Apartments is of a coherent and cohesive design constructed within the 1936-38 period, and that all three parcels are crucial for telling the story of this important garden apartment complex.

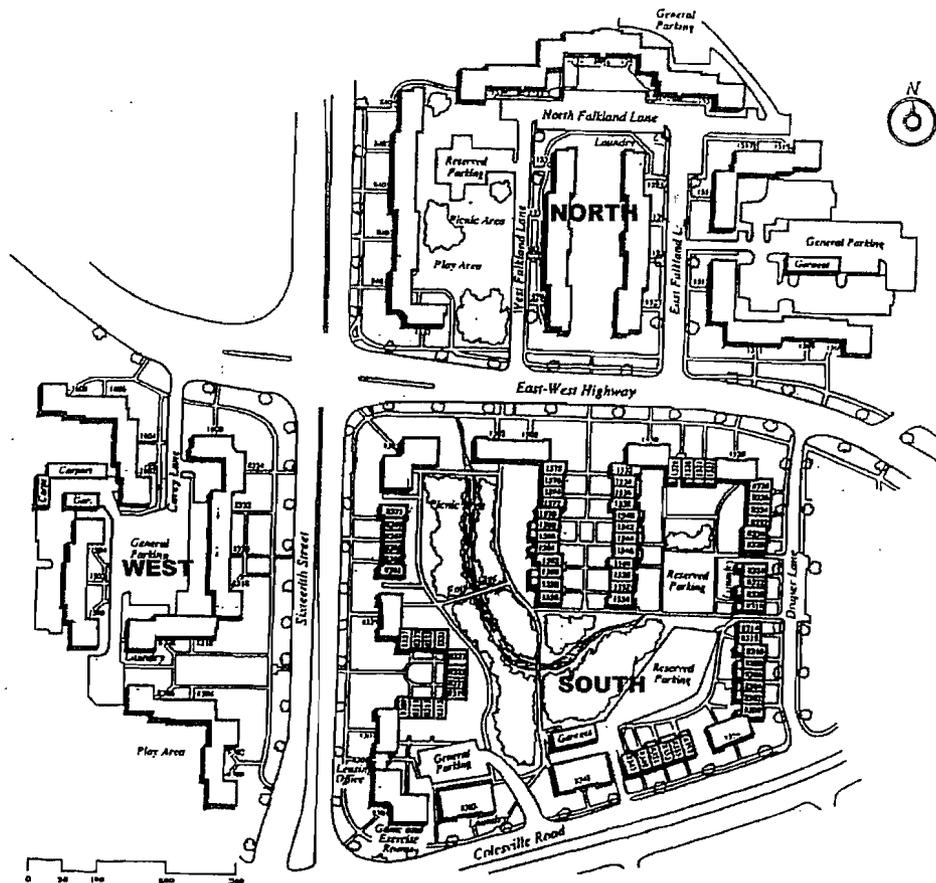
### **Montgomery County Planning Board Findings**

The Planning Board held a public hearing on July 10, 2008 and a worksession on September 4, 2008. The Planning Board identified potential public benefits associated with redevelopment of the North Parcel, including the location of a mix of unit types, low-income and workforce housing, and well designed mixed-use

development in close proximity to an existing metro station. At the conclusion of the worksession, the Planning Board voted to recommend designation of the south and west parcels to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

In order to realize these public benefits, the Planning Board is retaining the north parcel on the *Locational Atlas* until approval of a site plan or site plans covering the entire north parcel, at which time the north parcel will be automatically removed from the *Locational Atlas*. In the event more than one site plan is filed for the north parcel, that parcel will only be removed from the *Locational Atlas* with approval of the certified site plan covering the last portion of the north parcel for which no certified site plan has been approved.

The County Council will make the final decision on whether the Falkland Apartments are designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* in whole or in part, or not at all.



## THE AMENDMENT

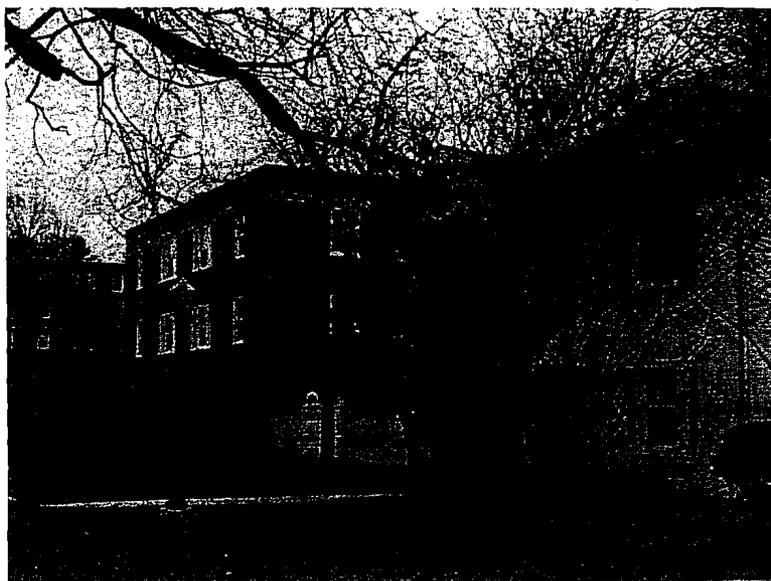
The Amendment recommends designation of two parcels, located on parcels P555 and P532, being the south and west parcels, on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, thereby extending to them the protection of County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

### Individual Site Recommended for Designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

FALKLAND APARTMENTS, Resource #36/12, Silver Spring

- Designate two parcels:
  - South Parcel, P555, bounded by Colesville Road, East-West Highway, and 16<sup>th</sup> Street
  - West Parcel, P532, bounded by 16<sup>th</sup> Street, East-West Highway, and the District of Columbia
- The Falkland Apartments complex was designed by architect Louis Justement, a Washington D.C. area architect who was active in the Washington D.C. chapter of the AIA. Falklands was built in two phases, the first 178 units were built on the South Parcel in 1936 and 1937, and 301 units were built on the West and North Parcels, from 1937 to 1938. The complex is of a coherent and cohesive design constructed within the 1936-38 period.
- The Falklands are significant in the history of community planning as an early example of a building type: the garden apartment. Garden apartments are a planned suburban community consisting of moderately priced houses in a natural setting. In contrast to urban apartments, they were built in groups, integrated in a natural setting, often around a courtyard, and typically 2-3 stories tall. The aim of garden apartments was to provide a healthy alternative to city living conditions for people of modest means. Falkland Apartments is the first example of a garden apartment complex in Montgomery County, and one of the earliest of its type in the United States.
- The Falkland Apartments are highly representative of the New Deal era. Eleanor Roosevelt herself inaugurated the Falkland Apartments in a ribbon-cutting ceremony in 1937, when the first phase was complete and the second phase was underway. The complex represents the explosion of population in lower Montgomery County following the New Deal programs. The flood of people coming into the region to work in the new federal government programs needed places to live. The county's population grew more than 70% in the 1930s. Falkland Apartments was the first large-scale rental housing project in Maryland whose mortgage was backed by the newly established Federal Housing Administration (FHA).

- The complex is representative of construction and design standards set by the FHA for comfortable, functional, and attractive housing. The resource is highly representative of the formal and traditional Colonial Revival style architecture of its era. The success of the site plan design was noted in contemporary journals, including *Architectural Record* and *Architectural Forum*. Notable design elements of garden apartments include landscaped courtyards, staggered setbacks, tree-shaded winding pathways, ample green space, and preservation of natural features. A natural setting was a key feature of the Falkland plan. Architect Louis Justement described the goal of carefully preserving the Y-shaped stream valley and original flora. The north section includes specimen white pines, hawthorns and cedars.
- In the history of Silver Spring development, the Falkland Apartments are contemporaneous with the first Silver Spring Post Office (1937) and the Silver Theatre and Shopping Center (1938). Both are Master Plan sites. The Falklands were built three years earlier than another Master Plan site, the Montgomery Arms Apartments, three Art Deco apartments arranged around a single courtyard.
- The Falkland Apartments have had some alterations. A portion of the original block of apartments, consisting of six two-story buildings west of Draper Lane, was demolished and replaced in 1992 by the high-rise Lenox Park Apartments. The Falkland Apartments have suffered some material change, notably window replacement. Despite these changes, the Falkland Apartments retain a high level of integrity.
- Meets criteria 1a, 1d, and 2a.



Streetscape, 16<sup>th</sup> Street

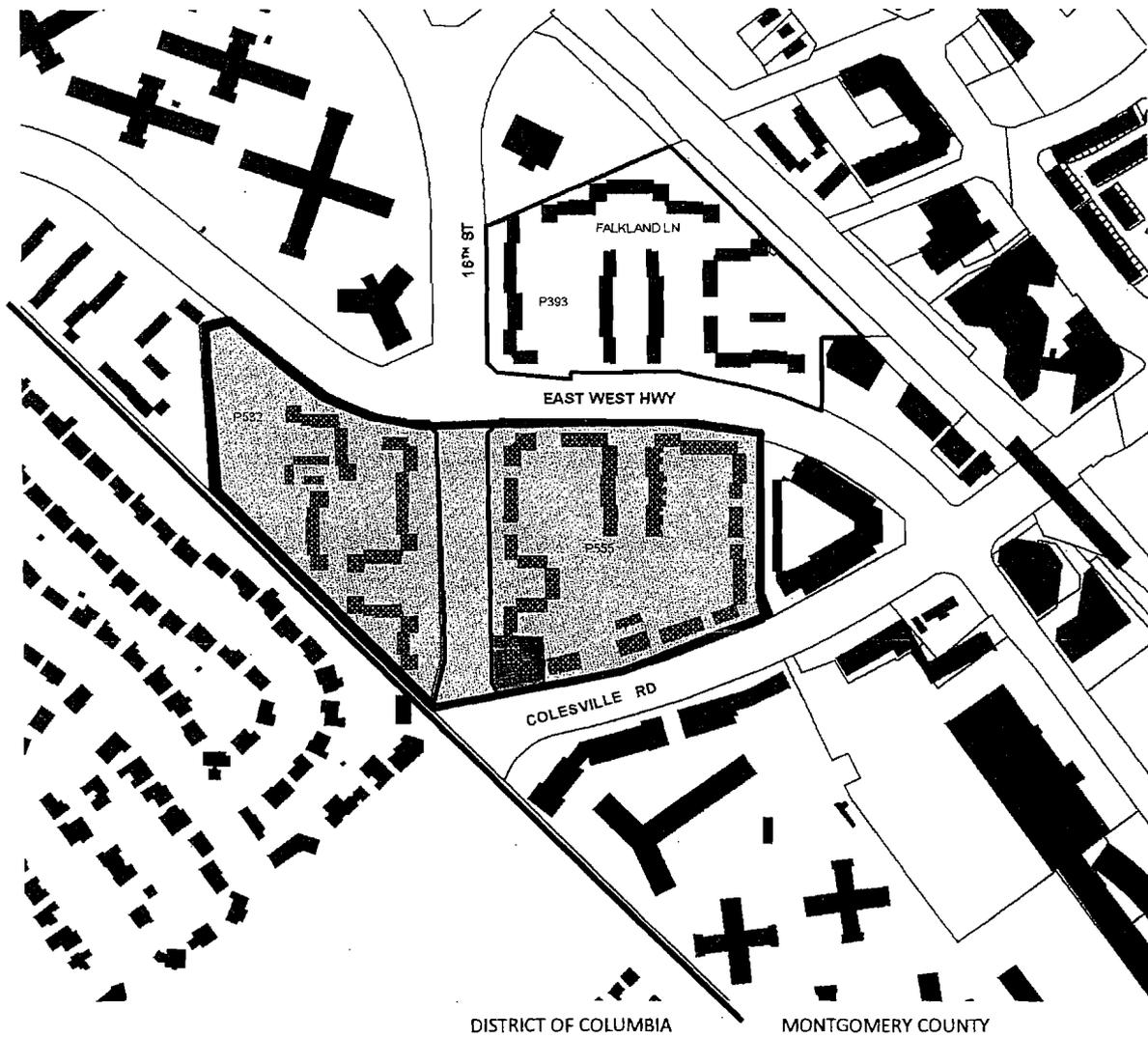


Stream Valley, south parcel



Interior Courtyard

FALKLAND APARTMENTS, #36/12



Designate on *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*



Cupola Building already designated on *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Isiah Leggett  
*County Executive*

Richard Y. Nelson, Jr.  
*Director*

MEMORANDUM

January 23, 2009

TO: Philip M. Andrews, President  
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Richard Y. Nelson, Jr., Director   
Department of Housing and Community Affairs

SUBJECT: Master Plan for Historic Preservation – Amendments – Falkland Apartments

On behalf of County Executive Isiah Leggett, I am transmitting comments on the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendments to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation – Falkland Apartments. The Executive Branch generally endorses the Planning Board recommendation. We believe it is appropriate to designate the South and West Parcels of the Falkland Apartments as historic, while allowing the North Parcel to proceed with redevelopment pursuant to the development plan submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Board by Home Properties.

The acreage of the South and West Parcels comprises approximately two-thirds of the total Falkland Apartments complex. By recommending historic designation for only the South and West Parcels of the Falkland Apartments, and not for the North Parcel, the County can support the preservation of much of this reminder of early suburban Silver Spring, while also promoting smart growth and well-located affordable housing in the redevelopment plan. Such a decision would truly balance these potentially diverse public interests.

The Department of Transportation has voiced several concerns about the relationship between the recommended environmental setting of the designated historic resource and the master planned rights-of-way of adjacent transportation facilities. A copy of these concerns is attached.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

IL:sns

Attachment



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

January 16, 2009

Arthur Holmes, Jr.  
Director

TO: Diane Schwartz Jones, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer  
Offices of the County Executive

FROM: Bob Simpson *RSimpson*  
Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation  
Falkland Apartments, #36-12  
Planning Board (Final) Draft

Thank you for your memorandum of January 9, 2009 providing a copy of the subject Draft document for Department of Transportation (DOT) review and comment. We are pleased to submit the comments below for your consideration. We request that they be included in the coordinated Executive Branch comment package that is submitted to the County Council, and transmitted to appropriate Council and Planning Board staff.

DOT's main concern regarding this type of individual historic resource designation is the relationship between the recommended environmental setting and any adjacent transportation right-of-ways. The figure on page 6 in the Draft shows the recommended environmental setting for the proposed resource in relation to the existing transportation right-of-ways. However, the figure does not show the ultimate, master planned right-of-ways for the transportation resources per the *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (M-NCPPC, March 2001). Identifying these ultimate right-of-ways is important, and the figure needs to show them. Furthermore, there is a serious discrepancy between the Draft text and the figure on page 6 with respect to the Sixteenth Street (MD 390) right-of-way; the text excludes the right-of-way from the environmental setting but the figure incorrectly includes it.

Therefore, based on the information in the Draft, and a review of the *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan*, DOT finds as follows:

- The recommended environmental setting for the Falkland Apartments is adjacent to three master-planned transportation facilities:
  - Colesville Road/MD 384 (an existing State Highway and master planned Major Highway) with a minimum 125' wide right-of-way adjacent to the South Parcel.
  - East West Highway/MD 410 (an existing State Highway and master planned Major Highway) with a minimum 118' wide right-of-way

Office of the Director

101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor • Rockville, Maryland 20850 • 240-777-7170 • 240-777-7178 FAX

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

Located one block west of the Rockville Metro Station

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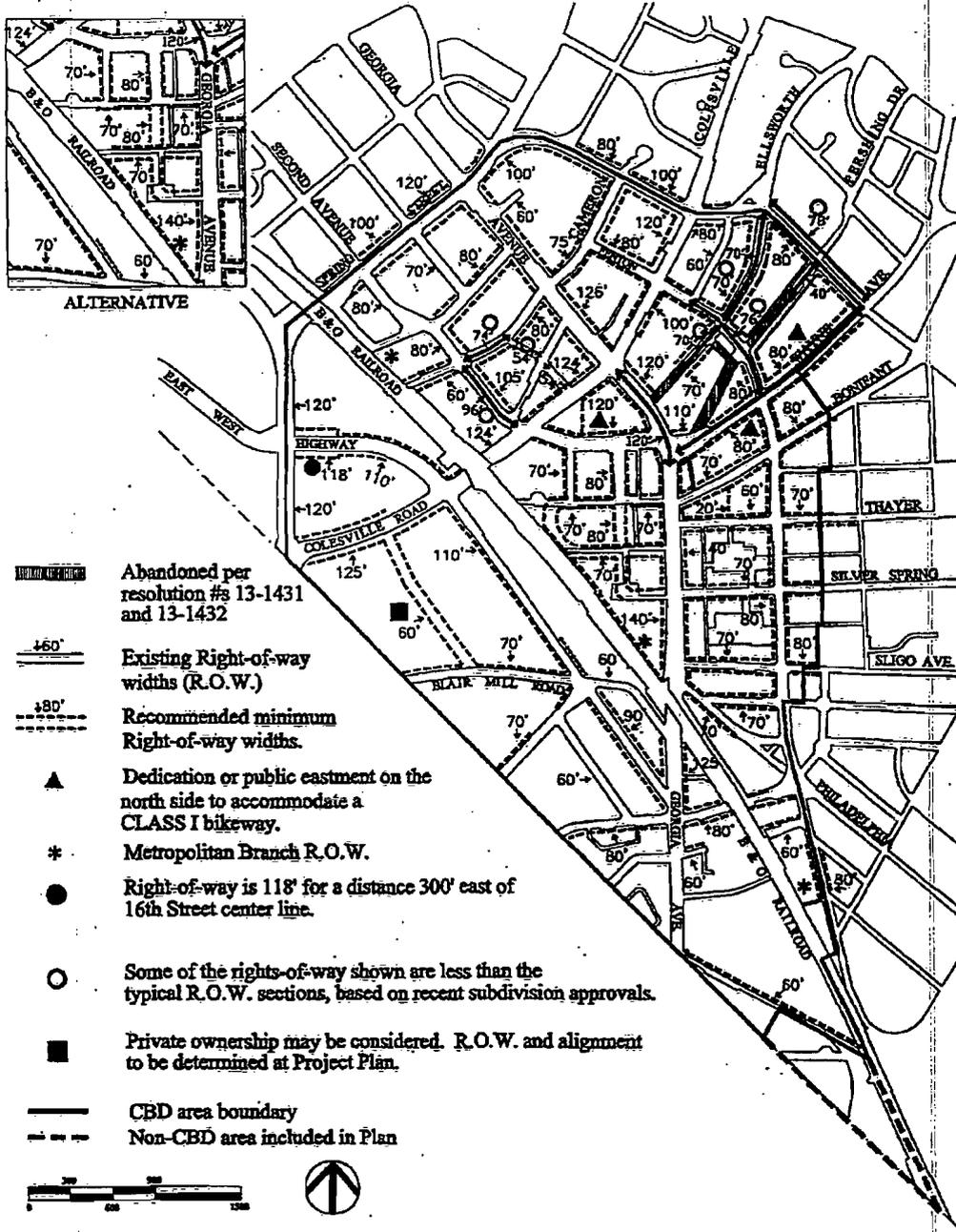
adjacent to the South Parcel and 120' wide right-of-way adjacent to the West Parcel

- Sixteenth Street/MD 390 (an existing State Highway and master planned Major Highway) with a minimum 120' wide right-of-way between the South Parcel and the West Parcel
- The recommended environmental setting, as shown on the Draft figure on page 6, does not indicate where the master planned right-of-way lines are located. Therefore, we are concerned that a conflict may be created between an already approved and adopted transportation right-of-way, and a newly recommended historical boundary.
- Furthermore, the Draft text only designates two parcels (the South Parcel or P555 and the West Parcel or P532); it does not designate the right-of-way for Sixteenth Street as part of the environmental setting. Therefore, the figure on page 6 needs to be corrected so as to delete the entire master planned right-of-way for Sixteenth Street from the environmental setting. Otherwise, we are concerned that the Draft text and figure may be creating a conflict between master planned transportation resources and a master planned historic resource.

In conclusion, DOT is seeking clarification with the relation of the recommended historic resource environmental setting to the ultimate master planned transportation right-of-ways. We request that the figure be revised to show the ultimate master planned right-of-way lines in the vicinity of this setting, and that the environmental setting be modified as necessary to conform to the ultimate right-of-way lines and exclude those right-of-ways.

Again, thank you for providing this review opportunity. If you have any questions, or need further information regarding this submission, please feel free to contact me at voice-mail extension 7-7193 or e-mail [bob.simpson@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:bob.simpson@montgomerycountymd.gov). Your continuing coordination of Executive Branch plan reviews is appreciated.

Map 34 CBD Rights-of-Way



(11)