

MEMORANDUM

January 15, 2010

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee
FROM: Marlene L. Michaelson,  Senior Legislative Analyst
SUBJECT: White Flint Sector Plan

This is the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee's fifth worksession on the White Flint Sector Plan. This memorandum addresses various follow-up issues from previous worksessions related to land use and public facility issues. The next worksession on January 26 will address the financing strategy, and the meeting on February 1 will address any unresolved issues (including zoning boundaries and ways to ensure the Sector Plan's housing objectives are met) and staging.

Committee Members should bring a copy of the Sector Plan to the meeting for reference.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Fire Station

At the December 10, 2009 meeting Executive Staff indicated that they were assessing whether the Maryland State Highway Administration property at the intersection of Rockville Pike and Randolph Road would be an appropriate location for a new fire station. Executive Staff will be prepared to update the Committee at the worksession.

School Site

At the last worksession, the Committee decided to support the Montgomery County School Board's recommendation to designate a new site at the southern part of the White Flint Mall property as a school site. While the School Board recommended a few alternative sites, the Committee decided to recommend the Lutrell property as the single alternative site. The Committee indicated that it would consider the Maple Avenue site as an alternative site if Executive staff determined that the site would be

inappropriate for a fire station for reasons that would not apply for a school (and therefore potentially appropriate for a school). To Staff's knowledge, no such determination has been made.

Library, Regional Services Center, and Community Recreation Center

The Committee previously reviewed the Plan's recommendations for an express library and satellite regional services center and recommended that these facilities be co-located with shared common space to create a community destination. The site should be large enough to allow full size facilities if the departments later determine that they are needed. The Committee asked Planning Department staff to consider potential locations for co-located facilities. At the last meeting, the Committee learned that the Department of Recreation was now recommending a new community recreation center in the planning area. Staff has not received any additional information from the Department of Recreation regarding the size or preferred location of the facility.

The attached memorandum from Planning Department staff suggests potential locations for these facilities in the Metro West District on the Conference Center property or Wall Park (see © 1-2). Staff supports the new language recommended by Planning Department staff with a few minor revisions:

- The Plan should indicate that the size of the facilities will be determined at the time of development. Although the Executive is contemplating an express library and satellite regional services center, it is possible that the Executive may determine that full sized facilities are needed at a later date.
- The civic green (which is next to the Conference Center property) may be an appropriate location for the new public facilities (particularly if the final road alignments reduce the size of the block for the civic green and make private development unfeasible).

Zoning of Properties South of Edson Lane

As the Committee considered the district-by-district zoning of individual properties, the Committee expressed concern about the heights and densities at the southern part of the planning area west of Rockville Pike and close to lower density residential communities. The Committee asked Planning Department Staff to reconsider the density and height recommendations for these properties to ensure they provide the best transition to the lower density communities. Planning Department staff reexamined these properties and have provided alternative zoning options that would not allow a significant increase over what currently exists. The chart on © 5 shows the existing height and density of the properties in the North Bethesda (NoBe) District and a corresponding Commercial-Residential (CR) zone that would allow for limited additional height and density. Staff supports the alternative zoning recommendations.

White Flint Mall Recommendations

The Sector Plan recommendations for the White Flint Mall are on pages 46 to 49 of the Sector Plan. Community representatives have raised concerns as to whether the Sector Plan provides an adequate transition to the neighborhood to the south. The central area of the mall property is recommended for a 3.0 floor area ratio (FAR) with heights ranging from 200 feet on the northern part of this area to 100 feet

just above Nebel Street Extended. The area south of Nebel Street Extended, which is recommended for a 1.5 FAR and 50 foot height limit, is now the recommended location for the school site.

Staff agrees that the Sector Plan could more clearly address this transition and recommend lower heights and a greater mix of residential development for the area just north of Nebel Street Extended. There are 3 options for accomplishing this. The first would be to split zone the property with different CR zones to more clearly indicate transitions between different heights and the mix of residential and commercial uses. The problem with this approach is that there are no clear boundaries for zoning lines, and such lines could bisect the existing mall (although future roads could provide the demarcation at a future date). The second option would be to change the graphic on page 46 to further limit heights on the area just north of Nebel Street Extended, perhaps by extending the buffer east of Nebel Street Extended and also adding language to the Plan recommending a greater mix of residential development on the southern portion of the site. The final option would be to leave Figure 39 on page 46 unchanged but add language to the text of the Sector Plan on page 49 further elaborating the need for transitions and buffering for the neighborhood, with lower heights and a greater mix of residential at the southern portion of the site.

The community has also expressed concern about the interim condition of the school site. While Staff does not believe that the County has any ability to require a change in these sites before the mall redevelops, the Sector Plan could indicate that, if the mall site redevelops before Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is ready to redevelop, the County should consider potential interim uses for this site that would provide an appropriate transition to the neighborhood.

Zoning on SHA Site North of Montrose Road

The Sector Plan recommends locating a fire and police station on the property owned by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) north of Montrose Road and west of Rockville Pike and, therefore, recommended retaining the existing C-2 zoning. Since the Executive is now considering alternative locations for the fire station, the Committee asked the Planning Department to reconsider whether C-2 is the correct zone. Their answer appears on © 4. They now recommend CR 2.0; C 1.5; R 0.75; H 100. Staff recommends that the Committee discuss with Planning Department staff the rationale for the decrease in total density and whether residential development could be accommodated on this small site surrounded by major roads.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
January 11, 2010
Agenda Item #4

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
FROM: Piera Weiss, Planning Department
SUBJECT: White Flint Sector Plan Outstanding Issues - PHED Worksession

Outstanding Issues

1. Co-location of Community Facilities

The Planning, Health and Economic Development (PHED)) Committee discussed the issue of co-locating community facilities. During the PHED worksessions, the Department of Recreation decided that a new recreation center was warranted to serve the proposed development in the White Flint Sector Plan and should be included in the co-location discussion. Executive Branch staff has not yet determined what the amount of square feet or any specifics regarding which community facilities should be included in the co-location program.

Planning Staff has assumed that the community facilities are an Express Library, a Recreation Center and a County Services Center and offers the following regarding possible locations in the sector plan area. If all these facilities were located in one structure or at one location, it should be located in the core area, which the sector plan defines as the Metro West and Metro East Districts. These two districts are at the Metro Station and at the center of the sector plan area. While both districts are suitable because of proximity to Metro and centrally located, there are considerations which make one preferable over the other.

The Metro East District has four different properties, but one party, LCOR, owns the majority of the district. There are approved Development and Subdivision Plans that cover most of the LCOR holdings. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission recently chose the site for the headquarters expansion. The Metro West District has 11 different properties and a number of owners. The County owns the largest parcel (the Conference Center Site); MNCPPC owns the second largest parcel, Wall Park. A number of road realignments and new roads are necessary to

create developable parcels within a new road grid. The sector plan recommends that a civic green, a public park of more than one acre, be located in this district to create a civic core linked to the Conference Center and Wall Park. Additional public facilities organized or related to the civic green would reinforce this District as the civic core for the sector plan area. It is also possible for the Recreation Center to be incorporated in the Wall Park expansion.

The realignment of public roads and the acquisition of the civic green will require significant upfront public costs. The road projects must be completed in the first stage in order to create the circulation work-around for Rockville Pike. The road realignment can be accomplished in conjunction with acquisition of the civic green more efficiently than if done separately. Costs incurred by the County could be offset through a special fund created for White Flint to which all new development could contribute as part of CR zoning requirements.

For these reasons, staff suggests that the Planning Board recommend that the PHED Committee add the following italicized wording to the Sector Plan on page 60, after the second paragraph under a new title: Co-Location of Community Services:

Co-Location of Community Facilities

Community facilities, such as an express library, a new recreation center, and a county services center can help create an important civic presence in the Metro West District. Two locations, both in public ownership, offer exceptional opportunity for the co-location of facilities--the Conference Center property, adjacent to the civic green, and Wall Park. The Conference Center property has the greatest potential to contribute to the creation of a great central place. The county owns the conference center land; it is close to the Metro portal, and adjacent to the civic green. This building could front on the green. If it is selected, a public building of exceptional design should be provided to house the facilities, either as a CIP project or as part of a public-private partnership. The civic building should meet all the standards of the CR zone in which it is located. Wall Park is less central and should not contain the service center or library, but the area's recreational opportunities would be enhanced by co-locating the recreation center with the aquatic center. An alternative would be to locate a separate recreation center nearer Metro as one of the public benefits obtained through the optional method of development of a large private tract.

2. More CR Zones

Council staff has noted that discrete CR zones can be applied over a small or large area, depending on the intent of the land use plan and to specific certain desired outcomes. For example where a difference height was desirable, a CR zone with the same FAR as adjoining CR zones but different height could be applied to property or part of a property. The Planning Board discussed this with respect to White Flint, especially the issue of how many different CR zones were necessary to achieve the goal and intent of the sector plan and simultaneously address specific issues on individual properties or groups of properties. The Planning Board was mindful

of split zoning individual properties The Planning Board concluded that it was wiser to use as few zones as possible and that height and density maps could serve as a guide where changes in height and density should occur within a particular CR zone. After lengthy debate, the Planning Board concluded that it wanted flexibility at the time of development to be able to consider issues that may not have been anticipated and for that reasons limited the number of different combinations of CR zoning and split zoned properties only where it was deemed necessary. The Planning Board included Height and Density Maps to delineate key areas where heights should be less than the maximum and stated in the Draft Plan the Height and Density Maps are to be used in conjunction with the Zoning Maps and the Design Guidelines to guide the distribution of density and height during the development approval process.

Council staff's issue is whether or not there should be more CR zoning categories to memorialize the intent of the Height and Density Maps or would additional language clarify the intent and avoid future confusion or issues of sector plan interpretation.

Planning staff thinks that adding language rather than more CR zoning categories is preferable. Zoning lines are inflexible. More explanatory wording language can detail the intent and limit the scope of future interpretations. Staff suggests the following underlined language be added to the existing language on page 28, third paragraph, after the third sentence.

Three maps accompany each district. The location maps identify blocks, properties, and special features. The height and density maps indicate how density should be dispersed through the recommended street grid and the location of public use spaces to create an interconnected public open space network.

Each CR zone indicates the maximum FAR densities for overall development, the proportion of residential and non-residential uses and height. In order to create a distinctive urban fabric, proposed designs should provide variation and transition within each CR zone. The height and density maps suggest where variation and transitions should occur given existing conditions, compatibility and the goals of the sector plan to create great places.

These maps indicate where heights should be lower than the maximum permitted in the zone to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods and where transitions in both density and height within a district are important to achieve both the Plan's vision and compatibility with surrounding development. A set of urban design guidelines, a separate document, will describe in greater detail the form that new development should take to create a distinctive character for each district. The zoning maps identify recommended zoning changes.

3. Appropriate zoning for the SHA ROW north of Montrose Road in the Mid-Pike District.

The Draft Plan recommended retaining the C-2 zoning since the site was identified as suitable for a fire station. However, the PHED Committee is now considering alternative locations for the fire station and has asked what the appropriate zoning should be: confirm, the C-2 or consider a CR zone. If the PHED Committee is considering CR zoning, Planning staff believes that CR 2.0 with more emphasis on commercial than residential FAR and building height of 100 feet is suitable. CR 2 would transition between the CR densities the sector plan proposes for properties south of Montrose Parkway (CR 3) and existing high rise development north of Montrose Parkway outside the sector plan area.

Staff suggests that the Planning Board consider recommending the CR 2.0; C 1.5; R 0.75 H 100 Zone for the property identified as SHA ROW on Figure 23 and as having C-2 Zoning confirmed in Figure 25.

4. CR Zone options for Properties south of Edson Lane

The PHED Committee requested more detailed information regarding existing development between Nicholson Lane and the southern edge of the sector plan area within the NoBe District. The Committee was interested in applying the CR zone but was not convinced that the Draft Plan proposals were appropriate and asked what combination of CR zones would more closely match existing development, especially south of Edson Lane. Table 1 indicates the Draft Plan recommendations from north to south along Rockville Pike. The last column contains alternative CR zoning that more closely follows existing conditions south of Edson Lane. Italics indicate those properties south of Edson Lane.

5. Relationship of Zoning Envelope and Recommended Staging Capacity

Council Staff requested more detailed information regarding the relationship between the proposed zoning envelope and the staging ceiling. Staff has reviewed the proposed and zoning envelope and has recalculated the holding capacity based on changes discussed during the PHED work sessions in Table 2. The changes include: adding CR zoning for the Forum Property, confirming the I-4 zoning at Nicholson Court and assuming no mixed-use redevelopment for the WMATA site and the Fire Station site at Maple Avenue. The total holding capacity for the sector plan is approximately 41,000,000 SF. The staging capacity (existing and proposed development that can be accommodated by the transportation network) is approximately 30,500,000 SF. The staging capacity is a little more than 73% of the zoning capacity.

TABLE 1: CR Zone Options for the NoBe District along Rockville Pike

Property	Existing Height	Proposed Height	Existing FAR	Proposed Alternative FAR	Draft Plan	Proposed Alternative CR Zones
N. Bethesda Market	285	300	2.29	4	CR 4.0 C 3.5 R 3.5 H 300	No changes
Rockwall East * Rockwall West**	120	150* 250**	3.11	4	CR 4.0 C 3.5 R 3.5 H 300	CR 4.0 C 3.5 R 3.5 H 150*/250**
Cascade	100	150	2.26	3	CR 3.0 C 2.5 R 1.5 H 150	CR 3.0 C 2.5 R 1.0 H 150
Prim McShea	60+	130	1.63	2.0	CR 2.5 C 2.0 R 1.25 H 150	No changes
<i>Dynamics</i>	<i>60+</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0.81</i>	<i>1.25</i>	<i>CR 2.5</i> <i>C 2.0</i> <i>R 1.25</i> <i>H 150</i>	<i>CR 1.25</i> <i>C 1.0</i> <i>R .75</i> <i>H 100</i>
<i>Shopping Center</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>CR 2.5</i> <i>C 2.0</i> <i>R 1.25</i> <i>H 150</i>	<i>CR 1.0</i> <i>C .75</i> <i>R .50</i> <i>H 50</i>
<i>Dietles/Addies</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>.50</i>	<i>CR 1.5</i> <i>C 0.75</i> <i>R 1.5</i> <i>H 50</i>	<i>CR 0.50</i> <i>C .25</i> <i>R .25</i> <i>H 50</i>

TABLE 2: Zoning Envelope and Staging Capacity

Capacity from CR zoning assuming 60% residential and 40% non-residential split	
• 17,052 DU @1,200 SF/unit	20,462,400
• Non-residential SF	8,420,886
Zoning density remaining for non CR properties (includes I-4 for Nicholson Ct per PHED)	2,460,000
Sub-Total A	31,343,286
Existing and Approved Development	
• Existing and Approved 4,544 DU @1,200 SF/unit	5,452,800
• Existing and Approved Non-residential SF	7,290,000
Sub-Total B	12,742,800
Sub-Total A	31,343,286
Sub-Total B	12,742,800
Zoning Envelope	44,086,086
Difference between new CR zoning and previous TSR/TSM approvals	2,960,000
Zoning Envelope	44,086,086
Minus Difference	2,960,000
Revised Zoning Envelope	41,126,086
Sector Plan Staging Capacity	30,100,000
% Staging Capacity of Zoning Envelope	73.2%