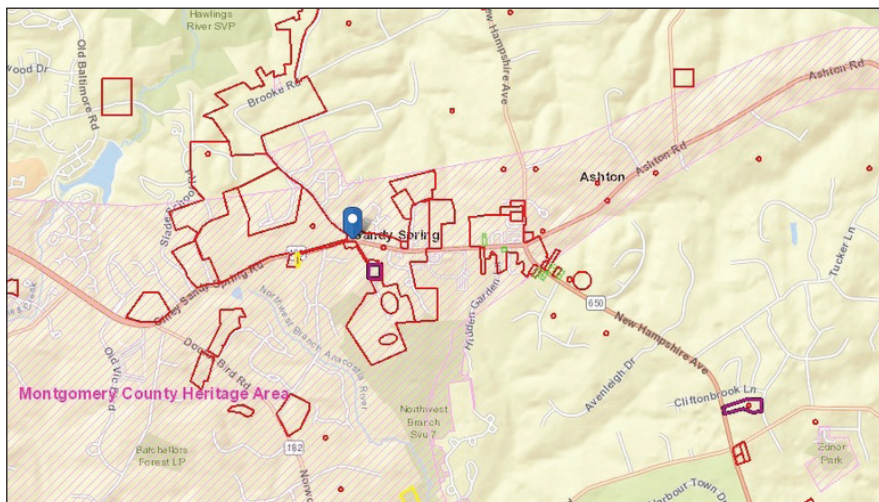


February 25, 2021

Dear County Council Members ::

I am writing to ask the Council to prevent the over-development of Ashton. The property known as “Ashton Meeting Place” falls within the area specifically designated as “historic” by Heritage Montgomery and named as the “Quaker and Underground Railroad” sector (see pink hashmarks on Heritage Montgomery map)::



As I read the Planning Board proposal, the height and density will allow as many as 160 dwelling units on this 9.3 acre piece of property. Considering a modest estimate of 3 people per household (and their pets), that's roughly 480 new human beings . . . and their 320+ new cars.

This over-development of the community of Ashton really makes no sense since it sits at the far Eastern border of the county, just one mile from the more rural parts of Howard County. It is all but devoid of public transportation which forces the people who choose to live here into cars, driving out onto rural roads already significantly choked with excessive traffic.

Ashton is a simple crossroad :: 2 rural 2-lane roads and because of our peripheral situation in the County, that won't change anytime soon. . . even considering the vision of Thrive Montgomery 2050. Here is what the Thrive document has to say about growth in the County and **not** sacrificing historic and rural areas to fulfil the plan::

How do we preserve Montgomery County's history while creating opportunities to grow?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 does not see preservation and growth as mutually exclusive goals. The Plan highlights the need to balance accommodating future growth **with preservation of historically significant** pieces of the county's culture. Montgomery County has a history of doing this successfully; policies like the Agricultural Reserve have successfully protected large parts of the county from losing their rural character and agrarian roots. Preserving our past also means we must continue to **focus our growth in already developed places, especially ones served by transit.** Making better transit, walkable and bikeable connections to existing historical and cultural assets also is recommended in Thrive Montgomery 2050. Thrive Montgomery's **focus on culture as an important aspect of design,** placemaking and historic preservation is reflected in recommendations related to considering the cultural significance of buildings and spaces for different communities as a way **to celebrate history and culture** equitably across the county.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 seeks to add as many as 200,000 new residents in the decades to come. This is great, but it should be obvious to a sensible planner that the optimum area for development would be the Georgia Ave. corridor since the Metro would logically extend from Glenmont in that direction. . . NOT along New Hampshire Avenue.

Proposed Building Heights ::

The building heights suggested by the Planning Board proposal are excessive and are ridiculously out of character for a rural village, not to mention the dense population these buildings would allow.

Even though the present bank building is slated for destruction, in the following chart, I am using it to illustrate the scale as compared to the developer's own suggested design he submitted to the Planning Board::



In its present situation—and considering one of the the styles and designs that the developer would like to explore for this project— the look of the project might appear something like this::

Neither design is rural. Because of that we urge an amendment to the Planning Board Proposal to **limit all structures on the site to 3 stories.**

Implementation Advisory Committee ::

All of the citizens of Ashton I've talked to are in favor of development—especially convenient commercial properties and encouraging low and middle-income homebuyers, but almost universally, they resist the mass and density of this proposal. Because of that, we are urging that an Implementation Advisory Committee be created to help any and all developers in the Ashton/ Sandy Spring area in designing projects that are acceptable to all parties.



We are very grateful for the protections the County Council has always provided to small communities like ours, to rein-in excessive development and maintain a vision for the rare and precious history of so many parts of our county.

Sincerely,

Charles Glendinning