

Resolution No.: 18-964
Introduced: November 14, 2017
Adopted: November 14, 2017

**COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
SITTING AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION
OF THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT
WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Approval of March 2017 Rock Spring Master Plan

1. On April 14, 2017, the Montgomery County Planning Board transmitted to the County Executive and the County Council the March 2017 Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan.
2. The March 2017 Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan contains the text and supporting maps for an amendment to portions of the approved and adopted 1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan and portions of the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan, as amended. It also amends The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, as amended; the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, as amended; and the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, as amended.
3. On June 20, 2017, the County Council held a public hearing on the March 2017 Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan. The Master Plan was referred to the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee for review and recommendations.
4. On July 5, 2017, the Office of Management and Budget transmitted to the County Council a corrected version of the Executive's Fiscal Impact Statement for the March 2017 Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan.
5. On July 10 and July 17, 2017, the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee held worksessions to review the issues raised in connection with the Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan.
6. On October 31, 2017, the County Council reviewed the Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan and the recommendations of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan, dated March 2017, is approved with revisions. County Council revisions to the Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan are identified below. Deletions to the text of the Plan are indicated by [brackets], additions by underscoring. All page references are to the March 2017 Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan.

Throughout the Plan, change the term “Master Plan” to “Sector Plan”.

Page 14: Delete the last sentence of the third paragraph and the bullets as follows:

Meeting discussions addressed linking parks and open spaces, school facility demands and options, transportation networks and connectivity, land uses, and placemaking amenities. In addition, property owners made presentations about approved and prospective plans for their sites. [All of the following meetings were held at Walter Johnson High School, with the exception of the June 6, 2016 meeting at Luxmanor Elementary, and introduced a variety of topics:

- September 17, 2015: Schools.
- October 28, 2015: Presentations by property owners.
- December 14, 2015: Placemaking.
- February 25, 2016: Parks and Transportation.
- May 23, 2016: Plan Concepts, Land Use Scenarios, and Transportation Modeling.
- June 6, 2016: Schools Follow-up.
- July 18, 2016: Preliminary Recommendations.]

Page 15: Add the following sentence at the end of the fourth paragraph as follows:

The recent emergence of new residential development within the office park further signals the readiness of the area for its repositioning as a well-integrated, amenity-rich district for existing employers and future residents. The townhouses currently under construction, along with the significant developments that have been approved at other sites, particularly Rock Spring Centre, have the potential to create a more connected, walkable, mixed-use community. As new residential development occurs, the Plan recommends the creation of affordable housing. For any new residential projects that develop under the optional method, the Plan recommends fifteen percent Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) be provided as a public benefit.

Page 21: Update the map to reflect Council-recommended zoning changes.

Page 24: Revise the third sentence in the third paragraph as follows:

According to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), [current] in the fall of 2017 enrollment at Walter Johnson High School [is] was 2,498, and the school's capacity [is] was 2,330. [MCPS is currently conducting a feasibility study to analyze the potential for adding classrooms to the high school.]

Page 26: Delete the second sentence under "Walter Johnson High School" as follows:

Walter Johnson High School opened in 1956 and sits on approximately 31 acres of land. [MCPS is currently conducting a feasibility study to analyze the potential for adding classrooms to the high school.] Any expansion should take into consideration, as feasible under MCPS regulations and guidelines, integrating new development into the surrounding context and contributing to the advancement of a more pedestrian and bicyclist friendly area. Public schools are discussed in further detail in the Community Facilities section of this Plan.

Page 27: Add a new sentence to the end of the first full paragraph and change the zoning recommendation as follows:

The property at Rock Spring Centre offers unique potential to advance the repositioning of the Rock Spring area. Very few such large, contiguous, undeveloped properties remain downcounty, and in such a central location. The Adequate Public Facilities (APF) validity period for the approved preliminary plan expires in November 2019. Since the time of the property's original approvals, the area has changed and grown. Community facility needs have risen to the forefront of local citizens' concerns during this planning process. Should the APF expire or other amendments to approved plans be applied for, it is recommended, to the extent possible, that the property owners work with Planning staff and the Planning Board to modify the project in a manner that could address current and future community needs. This effort could include exploring the feasibility of incorporating a local community center/meeting space into the project that serves current and future residents of the area. The Plan recommends a small increase in residential FAR to encourage amendments to the existing plans.

Recommendation:

- [Confirm the existing] Rezone the property from the CR-1.5, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-275 Zone to the CR-1.5, C-0.75, R-1.0, H-275 Zone.

Page 28: Amend the third sub-bullet under the first bullet as follows:

- [Consistent with a binding element from a previous approval, provide] Provide a green space of at least 30 feet in width measured from the public right-of-way on the Aubinoe property along Berkshire Drive, and on the Wildwood Shopping Center, provide a green space of 40 feet in width measured from the curb along Berkshire Drive. This green space should act as a buffer to screen the adjacent single-family neighborhood from surface parking areas and other more intense commercial or mixed-uses on this property. The only construction to be permitted within this area shall be to provide screening, landscaping, or to provide elements to support the passive recreational use of the area, such as seating areas or trails.

Page 28: Amend the fourth sub-bullet under Georgetown Square Shopping Center as follows:

- Provide a public or private street along the western side of the property as an alternative access, with connections to the existing public high school to the west.

Page 30: Modify the last sentence of the first paragraph as follows:

For properties west of Old Georgetown Road, [Additional] additional flexibility is provided with the option of transferring density through the FAR averaging provision in the CR Zone. This area is designated as a density transfer area.

Page 30: Revise the third sentence of the second paragraph as follows:

Any application for a CRF Zone must include major public benefits [such as a school site, a park, a significant recreational amenity, funding for public transit, a library, or a recreation center] as described in Chapter 6.

Page 31: Update the map key to reflect Council-recommended zoning changes.

Page 32: Amend the first and fourth bullets as follows:

- Democracy Center (6901 Rockledge Drive): CR-1.5, C-1.25, R-0.75, H-[150] 200
- Rockledge Executive Plaza (6600 and 6610 Rockledge Drive): CR-1.5, C-1.0, R-0.75, H-[100] 200

Page 43: Delete the fifth paragraph and replace it with the following paragraph as follows:

[If there is redevelopment within the Rock Spring Master Plan area, several sites may be appropriate for consideration for a public school through an optional method development project. Each and every site should be thoroughly evaluated for a potential school site under the optional method process, notwithstanding any previous development approvals.]

Residential development in the Rock Spring, White Flint, White Flint 2, and Grosvenor-Strathmore master and sector plans has the potential to impact school enrollment. Several potential means of adding school capacity are noted in the sections below. In addition, if there is a major development or redevelopment within these planning areas, several sites or combinations of sites may be appropriate for consideration of a public school. Each and every development application should be thoroughly evaluated for a potential school site, notwithstanding any previous development approvals. It is this Plan's direction that the Planning Board will negotiate for maximum dedication of land for a school and that this be the top priority amenity under the review process for projects proceeding under these plans.

Page 44: Update the figure in the third sentence of the first bullet as follows:

Ashburton Elementary School, which serves the Rock Spring Plan area, has an addition planned that will increase its capacity to [881] 770 students.

Page 44: Update the last sentence of the first bullet as follows:

Therefore, all cluster schools will be at the high end of the range of student enrollment, with capacities ranging from [729] 714 to [881] 777, and no further additions will be considered.

Page 45: Revise the third sentence under the first bullet of “Middle Schools” as follows:

This increase will address projected enrollment through [2021-2022] 2023-2024.

Page 46: Modify the sub-bullet under the first bullet as follows:

- Construct a new middle school. There [are two] is one future middle school [sites] site in the vicinity of the Walter Johnson Cluster: the Brickyard Middle School site is in the Winston Churchill Cluster [and the King Farm Middle School site is in the Richard Montgomery Cluster]. If building a new school at [these locations] this location is not considered feasible, then the purchase of a middle school site could be considered.

Page 46: Revise the first bullet under “High Schools” as follows:

- Build an addition at Walter Johnson High School. The high school [currently has] had a capacity in the fall of 2017 of [2,335] 2,330 students. [Long] However, long-term enrollment projections for the school show enrollment reaching [3,500] 4,010 students by the year [2045] 2032. This projected enrollment does not include [any] all of the students that would be generated by the White Flint 2 and Rock Spring plans. [If the high school capacity was increased to 3,500 students or more, it may be possible to accommodate the build-out of the White Flint 2 and Rock Spring plans.]

Page 51: Add a new sentence to the end of the first paragraph as follows:

To implement these four goals for parks, trails, and open space, additional private open space and public parkland will be necessary to meet the needs of the residents and employees in this area. The recreational needs in this Plan area are currently not met by existing parkland and open space. The demand that will be generated by potential new residential development in the Plan area will create different open space needs, which will be partially met by the regulatory requirements of the zoning. Each and every site should be thoroughly evaluated for potential park and recreation facilities when optional method projects are reviewed. Multi-family residential development should be encouraged over townhouses, where appropriate, to maximize the opportunities for open space.

Page 52: Amend the sub-bullet under the second bullet and add another sub-bullet as follows:

- Community Open Space and Active Recreation at the Democracy Center property (existing private green space with basketball court and walking trail):
 - Should the existing structures on the site be razed and the property redeveloped, [or if infill is contemplated under optional method development, removal of] the existing open space on the northern portion of the site should be [discouraged. This existing open space should be] considered for the public uses described in Chapter 6, including parkland, [as a public benefit,] either through dedication, or acquisition by the County or Department of Parks. [Multi-family residential development should be encouraged over townhouses.] Any such dedication should qualify either as a public benefit or as fulfillment of the public open space requirement under optional method development.
 - If infill is contemplated under optional method development, complete removal of the existing open space on the northern portion of the site should be discouraged. The portion of the northern open space to be preserved should be considered for conversion to parkland, either through dedication as part of the public open space requirement or a public benefit, or through acquisition by the Department of Parks.

Page 52: Amend the first two bullets under “Sub-area B: Rock Spring Centre” as follows:

- Market conditions have changed since the Rock Spring Centre site plan was approved. Should the site’s Adequate Public Facilities approvals expire and/or an amendment to the approved plans be requested, the opportunity should be taken to explore the possibility of an adjustment to the development proposal that includes, subject to Chapter 6, the creation of a recreational open space to address unmet athletic field needs in the area.
- If the opportunity arises, staff at the Department of Parks and the Planning Department should work with the property owner to incorporate and potentially expand the existing publicly owned land at the former recreation center site with, subject to Chapter 6, the creation of recreational public open space on this site for athletic fields and other community amenities such as a dog park. Given the potential expansion of Walter Johnson High School, and the significant proposed development at the Rock Spring Centre site, additional recreational open space is needed in the area to serve the unmet needs of the surrounding community and the high school. Department of Parks and Planning Department staff will work with the property owner during the development or redevelopment process to create the most appropriate public recreational space. Acquisition of additional land in this sub-area may be considered to create the necessary park and recreation amenities.

Page 58: Remove the fourth paragraph as follows:

[This Plan recommends that the North Bethesda Transitway become a high-priority transit corridor to link the area with its closest Metrorail station, at Grosvenor-Strathmore, to enhance its viability, and signal to area employers and employees that the County values Rock Spring as an important office location.]

Page 59: Add a sentence to the end of the second paragraph as follows:

Old Georgetown Road and Democracy Boulevard are two major highways that form the eastern and southern boundaries of the Plan area. Westlake Drive is an arterial road (from Democracy Boulevard to Westlake Terrace) that forms the western boundary of the Plan area. Within the Plan boundaries, the only roads that are currently classified are Fernwood Road and Rock Spring Drive, which are arterials. (See Figure 17 and Table 2.) Rockledge Drive (both the north-south and curved segments), Rockledge Boulevard, Motor City Drive, and Auto Park Avenue were not designated in the 1992 Master Plan and are not currently classified in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT). This Plan recommends that all public roads within the Plan area be designated as Business District Streets, as shown on Figure 17 and Table 2. This classification provides roadway design flexibility to better accommodate bicycle facilities, narrow travel lanes, lower design speeds, provide on-street parking, and consider traffic calming methods. In the long term, solutions may need to be found to bring several intersections into compliance with the Subdivision Staging Policy's congestion standard, particularly Old Georgetown Road at Democracy Boulevard and Old Georgetown Road at Tuckerman Lane.

Page 68: Modify the third and fourth paragraphs as follows:

The portion of the Plan area east of the I-270 spur is located within the North Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD). The North Bethesda TMD, originally recommended in the 1992 *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* and subsequently established by the County in 1994, covers all of North Bethesda, including the White Flint, Twinbrook, and Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail stations, as well as Rock Spring. TMD staff works in coordination with employers to develop supportive transportation demand management (TDM) programs (e.g., shuttles, carsharing, bikesharing, vanpooling, flexible work schedules, teleworking, parking policies, transit subsidies, etc.) to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles.

Non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) is the metric used to measure the percentage of commuters who are not the driver of a single-occupant vehicle. Based on 2015 survey data provided by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Commuter Services Division, the entire North Bethesda TMD has a current NADMS of 28.2 percent. [This Plan does not recommend increasing the current North Bethesda TMD NADMS goal of 39 percent for the Rock Spring Master Plan area.] This Plan recommends an NADMS goal of 41 percent for trips from home and 23 percent for trips to work in the Rock Spring area at buildout. [However, this Plan does recommend implementation of high quality BRT service linking to Metrorail and recognizes this transit will be critical in substantially increasing the area's NADMS.] This Plan recognizes that increasing the area's NADMS will require a range of transportation management measures and recommends a high quality BRT connection to Metrorail and more frequent bus service generally.

Page 69: Modify the last paragraph and the bullets at the bottom of the page as follows:

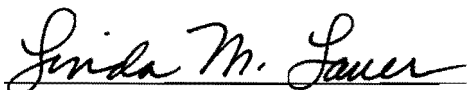
Public benefits provided under the optional method must be chosen from categories outlined in the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board must determine public benefit points under optional method development from the following categories: major public facility, transit proximity, connectivity and mobility, diversity of uses and activities, quality building and site design, protection and enhancement of the natural environment, and building reuse. All public benefits requested by the developer will be analyzed to make sure they are the most suitable for the Plan area, that they are consistent with the Plan's vision, and that they satisfy the changing needs of the area over time. [While applicants for the optional method of development may propose any of the public benefits listed in Section 4.7.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, there are certain benefits that should be prioritized for this Plan area, including the following:] The following public benefits are priorities for this Plan area:

- Dedication of land for needed school sites is the highest priority public amenity.
- Providing fifteen (15) percent Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) is the highest priority public amenity for new residential development, unless the property is required to dedicate land for a school or athletic fields that can be used by MCPS and approximate the size of a local park.
- Other than school sites, [Major] major public facilities include, but are not limited to, [a school,] land for parks and school athletic fields, significant dedications for the North Bethesda Transitway easement, a library, recreation center, County service center, [bike share station,] public transportation or utility upgrade. Major public facilities provide public services at a convenient location where increased density creates a greater need for civic uses and greater demands on public infrastructure.

General

All illustrations and tables included in the Plan will be revised to reflect the District Council changes to the Planning Board Draft Rock Spring Master Plan (March 2017). The text and graphics will be revised as necessary to achieve and improve clarity and consistency, to update factual information, and to convey the actions of the District Council. Graphics and tables will be revised and re-numbered, where necessary, to be consistent with the text and titles.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council