



Committee: PHED
Committee Review: Completed
Staff: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst
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AGENDA ITEM #25C
April 19, 2022
Worksession

Purpose: To make preliminary decisions – straw vote expected

Keywords: #Silver Spring, Adjacent Communities, Master Plan, M-NCPPC

SUBJECT

Worksession to discuss the recommendations of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee regarding the Planning Board Draft of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan.

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Gwen Wright, Director, Montgomery Planning Department
Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director, Planning Department
Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, DownCounty Planning
Atara Margolies, Planner III, DownCounty Planning
Larissa Klevan, Master Plan Supervisor, Down County Planning
Cristina Sasaki, Parks Planner Coordinator, Parks Department
Rebeccah Ballo, Supervisor, Historic Preservation
John Liebertz, Planner Coordinator, Historic Preservation

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Council will take straw votes on the recommendations of the PHED Committee regarding the Planning Board Draft of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan.
- This worksession will cover the district-specific recommendations for eight districts that make up the Silver Spring and Adjacent Communities Plan area.
- The recommendations (too numerous to list here) for this worksession are covered in the attached staff report.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

On January 6, 2022, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan. The Plan makes recommendations within the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan area for land use and zoning, housing, economic development, urban design, transportation, parks and public spaces, environmental resiliency, community facilities, and historic resources.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The PHED Committee has held six worksessions on the Plan to date. A seventh worksession is scheduled for April 20.
- The first worksession, held on March 7, covered the Introduction and four of eight Districts: Downtown North, Ellsworth, Metro Center, and Falklands. Staff report can be viewed at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2022/20220307/20220307_PHED3.pdf
- The second worksession, held March 14, covered two of the remaining four Districts: Ripley, and South Silver Spring (staff report contains staff evaluation of Fenton Village and Adjacent Communities but Committee ran out of time to discuss – these sections are revised and reprinted in the staff report for March 21). Staff report can be viewed at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2022/20220314/20220314_PHED3.pdf
- The third worksession, held March 21, covered the last two Districts: Fenton Village and Adjacent Communities and an Addendum for Downtown North. The worksession also covered Plan-wide recommendations for Housing. Staff report can be viewed at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2022/20220321/20220321_PHED2.pdf
- The Planning Board Draft of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, and associated appendices can be viewed here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/downcounty/silver-spring/silver-spring-downtown-plan/>.

This report contains:

Staff Report for this agenda item.

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MEMORANDUM

April 13, 2022

TO: County Council

FROM: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst
Livhu Ndou, Legislative Attorney
Glenn Orlin, Senior Analyst

SUBJECT: Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan

PURPOSE: Worksession to develop recommendations for Council consideration

This is the Council's first worksession on the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan. It will cover the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee's recommendations for the eight districts (neighborhoods) around which the Plan is organized. The following worksessions will cover the Committee's review of plan-wide recommendations which include recommendations on land use and zoning, economic growth, transportation, and parks and open space. One note, since the start of the Committee's review, the Council has received additional property-specific correspondence that the PHED Committee will review on April 20, therefore it is not referenced in this report.

Councilmembers may wish to bring their copy of the Plan to the meeting.

A link to the Planning Board Draft for those wishing to access the Plan online can be found at the following link: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SSDAC-Planning-Board-Draft-FINAL-FOR-WEB-reduced2.pdf>

BACKGROUND

Downtown Silver Spring is located just north of the Washington, D.C. border. It is somewhat centered around the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road and is surrounded by residential neighborhoods that are comprised primarily of single-family homes. The neighborhoods to the north, east, and west are all considered part of Silver Spring and are included within the East Silver Spring Master Plan and the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan, both from 2000. This Plan expands the boundary from the previous Sector Plan for downtown Silver Spring to include both the area formerly known as the Central Business District and what the Plan has termed the "Adjacent Communities". These are blocks located in several residential neighborhoods primarily to the north and east of the downtown (within about a 10-minute to half-mile walk from either the Silver Spring Transit Center or

the Purple Line station at the Silver Spring Library). The Plan Area covers approximately 505 acres and is generally bound by Eastern Avenue to the south, 16th Street to the west, Ballard and Spring Street to the north, and portions of the Seven Oaks-Evanswood and East Silver Spring neighborhoods to the east.

Silver Spring is renowned for its uniqueness and diversity, as well as for its wealth of locally owned and ethnically diverse small businesses that include restaurants, bars, cafes, and coffee shops. The revitalization of Silver Spring was spurred by the 2000 Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan and related initiatives by the public and private sector.

VISION

According to the Plan, Downtown Silver Spring of the future is diverse, distinctive, and thriving. It is envisioned it as a great place to work, do business, and enjoy the arts, home to small independent businesses, cutting-edge tech companies, hubs for science and research, educational institutions, and arts organizations. Downtown Silver Spring will remain unique, affordable, and attractive to people of all ages and backgrounds. New open spaces will promote a healthier community that is better connected and characterized by green, climate-resilient, walkable streets that are safe and comfortable for everyone.

PLAN GOALS

To achieve this vision, the Plan focuses on strengthening the existing success of Silver Spring and supporting growth and development in the emerging areas of the downtown. The Plan's goals and recommendations are said to aim for equitable economic and civic outcomes by reinforcing one or more of the Plan's key values: diversity, connectivity, resiliency, and community health. More detailed enumeration of the plan goals can be found on page 17 of the Plan.

PLAN-WIDE LAND USE AND ZONING

The Plan lays out eight districts, providing a unique vision for each district, goals for future growth and change, and the recommendations designed to achieve these goals. This staff report follows the format provided in the Plan. However, a brief explanation of a couple key concepts is necessary to provide context for certain district-specific recommendations.

1. Building Height Incentive Zone

The Plan recommends establishing a Silver Spring Downtown Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ), to allow Commercial/Residential (CR)-zoned properties pursuing Optional Method Development to increase building heights by up to 150 percent of the mapped height to a maximum of 300 feet. Approved height will be subject to a Design Review process through a Design Advisory Panel.

The Plan also recommends that for certain properties identified in the Metro Center District and the Ripley District, the Planning Board may approve an increase in building height up to 360 feet. The increase in height must be consistent with the recommendations of the Sector Plan and Design Guidelines, and subject to the Design Review process through the Design Advisory Panel.

According to the Plan, the maximum height on properties throughout the plan have been increased by at least 20 percent in response to eliminating the existing "T" designation.

2. Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund

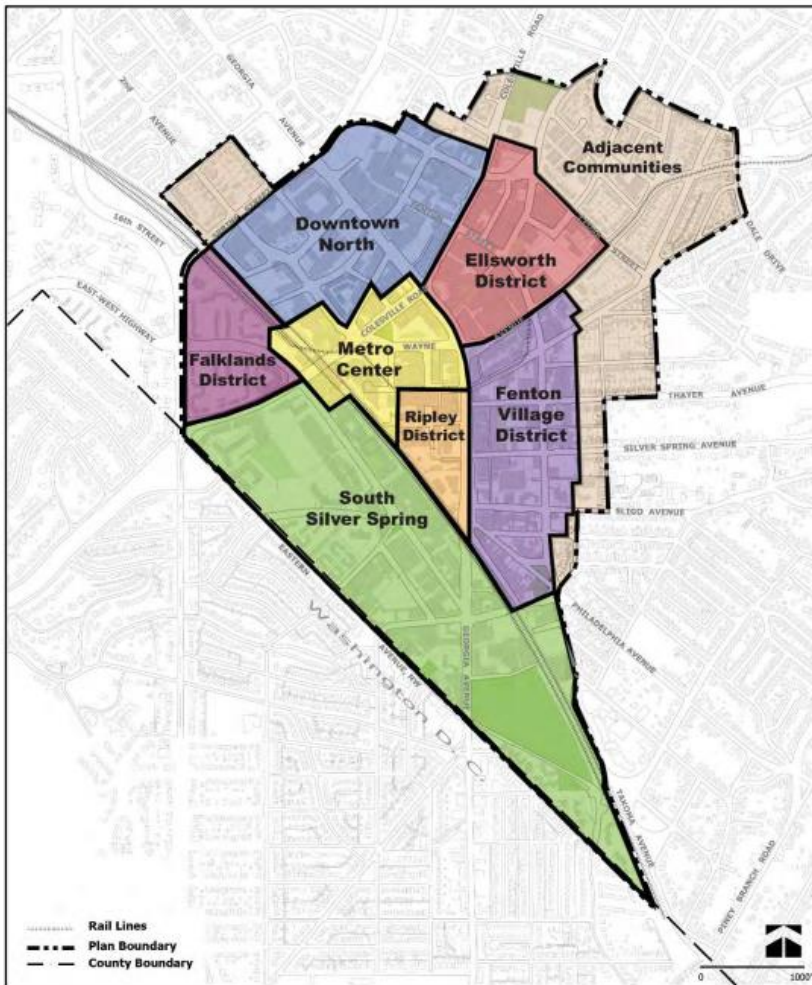
The Plan establishes a Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund (CIF) for Commercial/Residential (CR) properties in the Plan Area that need additional density to reach the mapped maximum building height, or additional height approved for a property in the BHIZ. Additional density is obtained by making a contribution to the CIF.

The Plan recommends equalizing the Commercial and Residential Density values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment. The Plan recommends retaining the existing Total density on most properties, primarily limiting increases in density to correct non-conformities.

A thorough evaluation of these concepts will be provided as part of the review of plan-wide recommendations that will occur after the review of the districts.

DISTRICTS

Silver Spring is home to several distinct neighborhoods within the downtown and the surrounding residential area. Below is Plan map of the districts that make up Downtown Silver Spring and the Adjacent Communities:



DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ellsworth District

The Ellsworth District is the heart of Silver Spring. It is the primary activity center where people from all over the county and the region come to shop, eat, enjoy entertainment, and just hang out. Veterans Plaza and Ellsworth Place are some of the most successful public spaces in the area. Plan goals include improving the pedestrian connection to Ellsworth Place from the intersection of Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue, improving the existing public spaces by expanding the area where vehicle access is limited, providing additional green public space through new development opportunities, and redeveloping remaining opportunity sites in the district following the predominant retail and commercial development pattern.



Recommendations:

Urban Design:

- New buildings along Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue should include a tower setback above the second floor to continue the pedestrian experience along the sidewalk of a low- to mid-rise building form.

Committee recommends (3-0) revising the recommendation to allow more flexibility in setting a story base, with Planning Board approval.

- Establish Ellsworth Drive between Fenton Street and the exit from the Towne Square Garage as a “flexible street” that can be closed for a farmer’s market and other festivals and outdoor events as an expansion of Veterans Plaza. Vehicle traffic would be limited to loading and emergency vehicles, and street parking could be removed or limited.

Committee supports (3-0) the second Urban Design recommendation for the Ellsworth District.

Parks and Public Spaces:

- Support continued work with the Maryland Historical Trust on appropriate improvements to the parking lot at the Silver Spring Shopping Center to better draw pedestrians through the lot into the Ellsworth Place pedestrian mall.
- Provide a Neighborhood Green with the redevelopment of the parking lot at the Whole Foods/Ace Hardware retail development.

Committee supports (3-0) the Parks and Public Spaces recommendations for the Ellsworth district.

Opportunity Sites:

- Parking Lot at Whole Foods/Ace Hardware: The Plan recommends redeveloping this surface parking lot with a mix of uses, structured parking, and a green open space connecting Veterans Plaza to Wayne Avenue.
- 8807 Colesville Road: The Plan recommends redevelopment of this gateway site with the greatest height along Colesville Road and stepping down along Spring Street towards Ellsworth Drive. Redevelopment of this site should consider the views of this site from Colesville Road and Spring Street.
- Ellsworth Drive and Spring Street: The former home of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, this now-vacant site will partner with the Citron multi-family development as the residential gateway for the district. The scale of the development should respond to both the taller buildings on the west side of Spring Street as well as the single-family buildings across the intersection.
- 8551 Fenton Street¹: Opportunity site at the corner of Fenton Street and Colesville Road.
- Parking Lot at Ellsworth Plaza: Refer to Section 3.9.1 in the Historic Resources section on appropriate approach for improving this parking lot.

Committee supports (3-0) the Opportunity Sites proposed for the Ellsworth District with the following minor revisions:

- *8551 Fenton Street: Opportunity site at the corner of Fenton Street and Colesville Road. Refer to Section 3.9.1 in the Historic Resources section for more information on this historic district property.*
- *Parking Lot at [Ellsworth Plaza] Silver Spring Shopping Center: Refer to Section 3.9.1 in the Historic Resources section on appropriate approach for improving this parking lot.*

Zoning:

- Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.
- Rezone existing EOF properties to CR.
- Parcels in the Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights above the maximum mapped height per specifications of the BHIZ.

¹ The Plan referred to this property as 8551 Colesville. The Council received a letter from Ms. Sears on behalf of the property owner of 8551 Fenton Street. She requested language be added to the bullet designating this property as an Opportunity Site which would read “Redevelopment of this site would be appropriate for a tall building”; however, the Committee is recommending all heights in the BHIZ be mapped.

Committee supports the zoning recommendations for the Ellsworth District.

2. Fenton Village District

Fenton Village will build on and sustain its diversity with new community open space, new development at an appropriate scale to support small businesses, and an expanded presence for the arts. Plan goals include maintaining zoning that provides low-rise development on Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street with taller development in the middle of the block, enhancing Fenton Street as the main street for the district by preserving and improving opportunities for active retail, promoting the redevelopment of public parking lots and garages in collaboration with the Parking Lot District, providing new outdoor community space and linking this new open space to the Green Loop segment along Fenton Street, and building on relationships with nearby Artspace Silver Spring and Montgomery College to further expand opportunities for public art and arts-related uses.



Figure 13. Fenton Village: Illustrative Diagram

Recommendations:

Urban Design

- Consistent with the Fenton Village Overlay Zone, buildings should step back above the base to maintain a low-rise character along the street.
- Retail bays should be small enough to house small local retailers to preserve the economic diversity typical of Fenton Village.
- New development interior to the blocks between Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue should be composed of buildings that are divided into smaller components, instead of one large, monolithic structure.
- Transform Bonifant Street into a pedestrian-friendly retail corridor along the Purple Line, with sidewalk cafes and street trees.
- Implement the Green Loop on Fenton Street.
- Provide public through-block connections throughout the district to enhance walkability and connectivity within long or large blocks.

Committee supports (3-0) the Urban Design recommendations for the Fenton Village District.

Parks and Public Spaces

- Expand the existing Fenton Street Urban Park into a cohesive neighborhood gateway park that is directly connected to the Green Loop.
- Provide a ½-acre green public space along Fenton Street with any redevelopment of Public Parking Garage 4.

The Committee supports the intent of both recommendations; however, the expansion of Fenton Street Park would require acquisition of 4-5 privately owned properties in the light industrial area of the Plan. The Plan also includes a Plan-wide goal to “maintain existing light industrial zoning to support community-serving auto repair and related small businesses”. **Committee recommends (3-0) adding to the park recommendation the phrase, “should property in this area become available².”**

With respect to the 1/2-acre public green space associated with Parking Lot 4, there is a more detailed recommendation under Opportunity Sites below. The Committee’s recommendation is provided in the next section.

Opportunity Sites

- Public Garage 4: Encourage the redevelopment of Parking Garage 4 and surrounding properties through a public-private partnership with the Parking Lot District. The Plan recommends that this large block be divided via a new north-south connection that aligns with the north-south connection at the block to the north. This connection could provide loading and service connections for the new development. In addition, the Plan recommends an east-west through-block pedestrian connection as part of any redevelopment of the garage parcel. A ½-acre green community-focused open space should be located at this site, fronting on Fenton Street. This open space could be an opportunity to celebrate local artists and the diversity of Fenton Village. This site is also

² Which would allow the light industrial property owners to redevelop under a light industrial use or to make the property available for acquisition, both of which support the goals of this Plan.

large enough that it may provide a unique opportunity to consider urban agriculture facilities, either at the ground or as part of a green roof concept.

Testimony: The Council received a letter from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) providing comments and suggested text in reference to redevelopment of Public Parking Garage 4.

“Garage 4: Due to the nature of Parking Lot District obligations and the County’s desire to maximize affordable housing in Silver Spring, the County is requesting flexibility for the redevelopment of Garage 4. The Plan proposes a new north-south street, a new east-west pedestrian connection, and new open space on this site. These connections and open space are all important elements, but current draft language severely limits the design and is too prescriptive.”

The Plan makes several relatively specific recommendations for the potential redevelopment of Garage 4, including the green loop connector, a new north-south connection that ties-into the block to the north, and the provision of public open space, which work together as a whole to support several Plan goals. **The Committee recommends (3-0) retaining the recommendations for this site but modifying the Opportunity Site text to read:**

“A [½-acre] green community-focused, consolidated open space of approximately ½ acre, but no less than 1/3 acre, should be located at this site, fronting on Fenton Street.”

- County Parking Lot 29: The Plan recommends redevelopment of this surface parking lot with a mix of uses compatible with the adjacent residential development.
- Safeway grocery site and adjacent parcels: The Plan recommends the redevelopment of the existing Safeway grocery site and the adjoining sites including County Parking Lot 38 for mixed-use development. Maintaining a full-size grocery store in Fenton Village is very important for access to food. For any redevelopment, vehicular access to the site for parking and/or loading should not be from Fenton Street; the frontage along Fenton Street should have active ground-floor uses. A new north-south street that aligns with the north-south connection at the block to the south is recommended for this site.

The Committee supports (3-0) the other Opportunity Site recommendations.

Zoning

- Revise the Fenton Village Overlay Zone with minor updates as presented in the Implementation section. These include zoning text changes proposed to support small businesses.
- Maintain zoning pattern that allows for a transition between the commercial corridor of Fenton Street and the residential neighborhood of East Silver Spring.

Committee supports (3-0) the zoning recommendations for the Fenton Village District.

3. Metro Center

The area around the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit Center is the commercial center of Silver Spring and will continue to host some of the tallest buildings and the densest development in the downtown. The Metro

Center District will welcome visitors with a reimagined hub of activity with the highest-intensity commercial development in the downtown, world-class public space, and safe and inviting connections to surrounding districts. Plan goals include encouraging the redevelopment of opportunity sites, including county parking garages and surface lots, with spaces for a diversity of tenants; creating a world-class destination arrival experience for all users of the transit center; and enhancing the pedestrian experience.



Figure 14. Metro Center: Illustrative Diagram

Recommendations:

Urban Design

- For building massing, comply with the design guidelines that will accompany this Plan to address the street-level pedestrian experience for the taller buildings allowed in this district.
- Sponsor an invited charrette and design competition for the creation of a world-class arrival experience at the transit center.
- Improve the Metrorail and Purple Line underpasses with art, lighting, wayfinding, and other interventions to make the pedestrian environment safer and more inviting.
- Enhance pedestrian connections via the Green Loop from the transit center to surrounding districts.

Committee supports (3-0) the Urban Design recommendations for the Metro Center District.

Parks and Public Spaces

- Expand and reinforce the open space connection between the arrival experience at the transit center, the recently redeveloped spaces along Wayne Avenue to Ellsworth Drive, and beyond to the Civic Building.

Committee supports (3-0) the Parks and Public Spaces recommendation for the Metro Center District.

Opportunity Sites

- **Transit Center Development Site:** Design a signature building or buildings at the intersection of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue and consider integrating the development with the Transit Center. The new development should activate the corner at Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue with a ground-floor use appropriate to the center of an urban area. This building should be architecturally significant and a landmark for Silver Spring. As this site is constrained, consider providing no parking or developing this site along with part of the Bonifant/Dixon garage site. The Plan recommends that the maximum building height on this site be permitted to exceed 300 feet, consistent with the provisions of the Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ).
- **County Parking Garages 5/55 (Bonifant/Dixon Garage):** In alignment with the Parking Lot District's goals for this site, redevelop this garage that is located in both the Metro Center district and the Ripley District. The Plan recommends that the upper-level connections over Bonifant Street and Dixon Avenue be removed, which will create two large redevelopment sites and a small site that may be appropriate for an open space (see Ripley District recommendations). The redevelopment of the parcel located in the Metro Center District (north side of Bonifant Street) could maintain a large parking garage that could provide both public and private parking or could provide additional support for bus operations at the Transit Center as needed. This site is a prominent, visible site from Colesville Road and the Transit Center and would be appropriate for a low base of several stories with an articulated tower set back above the base. The ground floor experience on this site should respond appropriately to the Purple Line tracks that will occupy all of Bonifant Street in this location. The Plan recommends that the maximum building height on this site be permitted to exceed 300 feet, consistent with the provisions of the Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ).

Committee recommends (3-0) clarifying the maximum building height on the Transit Center Development site and the County Parking Garages 5/55 (Bonifant/Dixon Garage) may exceed the mapped height up to 360 feet, and only with Planning Board approval.

- **Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue Northwest corner:** A hotel is currently approved on this key site. The Plan recommends expanding the development site to include the adjacent two-story commercial property for a signature mixed-use development.
- **Colesville Road and East-West Highway Northwest corner:** This site is located immediately adjacent to the northern Metro Station entrance but is significantly constrained by the WMATA substation central to the site. The Plan recommends continuing to pursue relocation of the substation to promote a signature development at this location. The Plan recommends incorporating or connecting this site to the arrival experience at the transit station.

Committee recommends (3-0) that in the event relocation of the substation is not feasible, the Plan should allow for it to be incorporated into redevelopment of site.

- **8407 Colesville Road:** This site is currently under-utilized and is home to a McDonald's

Committee supports (3-0) this Opportunity Sites recommendation.

Zoning

- **Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.**

- Parcels in Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights above the maximum mapped height per specifications of the BHIZ.

Committee supports (3-0) the Zoning recommendations for the Metro Center District.

4. Ripley District

Over the last decade the Ripley area has emerged as a micro-neighborhood within the downtown. Ripley will be a vibrant complete multi-family residential district steps from the Metro, Purple Line, and Metropolitan Branch Trail, with a new central open space and a pedestrian connection to South Silver Spring across the Metrorail/CSX tracks. Plan goals include encouraging redevelopment of under-utilized sites, increasing the housing stock with a diverse mix of multifamily unit sizes at all levels of affordability, improving the pedestrian connection and visitor arrival experience at the Purple Line station at Bonifant and Ramsey Streets, creating a new open space in the Ripley District for active recreation and social gathering opportunities, and connecting the Ripley District across the Metrorail/CSX tracks to South Silver Spring.

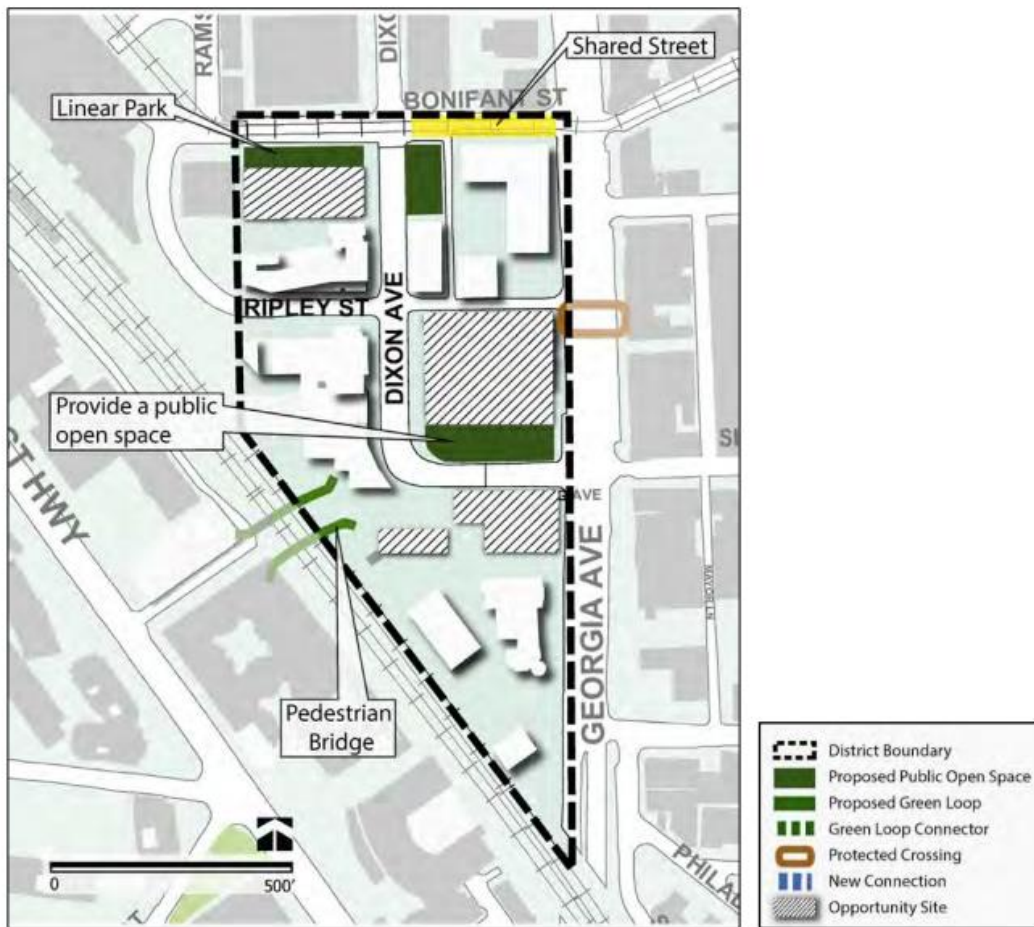


Figure 19. Ripley District: Illustrative Diagram

Recommendations:

Urban Design:

- At redevelopment sites along Georgia Avenue, design buildings with a low-rise two-story base that relates to the scale of the commercial development across the street. Setback upper floors by a minimum of 15 feet so that there is a clear articulation between base and tower.

Committee recommends (3-0) revising the recommendation to allow a larger story base, with Planning Board approval.

- Create a sense of arrival with a welcoming pedestrian connection along Bonifant Street to Georgia Avenue to the Purple Line station at the upper level of the Transit Center.
- Connect the Ripley District to South Silver Spring via a landscaped pedestrian bridge over the train tracks, with infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Introduce a mid-block crossing at Georgia Avenue and Mayor Lane to connect the Ripley District with Fenton Village.
- Implement the Green Loop concept along Silver Spring Avenue so that street, along with the proposed pedestrian bridge, will function as a connector to the Central Loop.

Parks and Public Spaces:

- Create a Civic Green at the center of the Ripley District per the recommendations of the 2010 Green Space Plan Guidelines for Silver Spring that will be an important focal point and social gathering space for this neighborhood. It will connect to the proposed pedestrian bridge over the Metrorail/CSX tracks between the South Silver Spring District and the Ripley District.
- Create an urban recreational park at the parcel currently occupied by the stair tower of Parking Garage 5/55 on the south side of Bonifant Street to the east of Dixon Avenue, adjacent to an existing alley. This park can have small scale recreation activities to serve the residents of the Ripley District.

Committee supports (3-0) the Parks and Public Spaces recommendations for the Ripley District.

Opportunity Sites:

- Parking Garages 5/55 (Bonifant/Dixon Garage): In alignment with the Parking Lot District's goals for this site, redevelop this garage that is located in both the Metro Center district and the Ripley District (refer to Metro Center District recommendations above). Provide a linear green space with a continuous pedestrian connection from the Purple Line station at the Transit Center to Georgia Avenue and the center of the downtown. This green space will also serve as a buffer from the rail tracks that will occupy all of Bonifant Street between the station and Dixon Avenue. Currently the garage bridges both over Bonifant Street and an alley to the east of Bonifant Street. The Plan recommends that the redevelopment of this garage eliminate these bridges. The development site in the Ripley District should respond to both the need for a safe, green, inviting pedestrian connection along Bonifant Street to Georgia Avenue for commuters and visitors, and the opportunity for a tall, architecturally distinctive tower in such a prominent location proximate to the transit center. The Plan recommends that the maximum building height on this site be permitted to exceed 300 feet, consistent with the provisions of the Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ).
- Block of Ripley Street, Dixon Avenue, and Georgia Avenue: This is a large potential development site along Georgia Avenue. The Plan recommends redevelopment of this site to

include a central open space, potentially connected across Ripley Street to the 8230 Georgia Avenue site.

- 8126 Georgia Avenue: This long narrow site has frontage on Dixon Avenue Extended and Georgia Avenue. The Plan recommends mixed-use redevelopment of the site with access from Dixon Avenue.
- 8230 Georgia Avenue (Sherwin-Williams site): This site is significantly constrained by the Master-Planned right-of-way for Ripley Street between Dixon Avenue and Georgia Avenue, the dedication of which would significantly reduce the developable area. Previous efforts to incorporate this site into adjacent developments were unsuccessful. Staff recommends coordinating redevelopment of this site with the property across Ripley Street.

Committee recommends (3-0) clarifying the maximum building height on the County Parking Garages 5/55 (Bonifant/Dixon Garage) may exceed the mapped height up to 360 feet, and only with Planning Board approval.

Zoning:

- Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.
- Parcels in Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights above the maximum mapped height per specifications of the BHIZ.
- Revise zoning for Site 39B to reflect height previously approved by the Planning Board through the Ripley-South Silver Spring (RSS) Overlay zone. This Plan recommends deletion of the RSS overlay zone.

Committee supports (3-0) the Zoning recommendations for the Ripley District.

5. South Silver Spring District

South Silver Spring is a large district with a great diversity of housing types, commercial and educational uses, and public spaces, including Jesup Blair Park. The rail tracks separate this district from the rest of downtown. Plan goals include encouraging the redevelopment of under-utilized parcels; supporting the redevelopment of opportunity sites to provide a mix of housing options for people of all ages, income levels, and household size; collaborating with the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus of Montgomery College to expand educational and science and technology programs in the district; providing new public open space; reconnecting Jesup Blair Park to the downtown; and supporting the redevelopment of the Blairs per the approved preliminary master plan for the site.



Figure 21. South Silver Spring Illustrative Diagram

Recommendations:

Urban Design

- At redevelopment sites along Georgia Avenue, design buildings with a low-rise two-story base that relates to the scale of the existing retail development along Georgia Avenue south of East West Highway. Setback upper floors by a minimum of 15 feet so that there is a clear articulation between base and tower.

Committee recommends (3-0) revising the recommendation to allow a larger story base, with Planning Board approval.

- Redevelopment sites along or near to Eastern Avenue should step down toward the residential neighborhood across Eastern Avenue in Washington D.C.
- Redevelopment sites along East-West Highway and 13th Street should provide some active ground-floor uses such as retail or other community amenities.

- Implement the Green Loop concept along East-West Highway as a key component of the Central Loop.
- Create a new mid-block crossing on Georgia Avenue at Montgomery College for improved access to the campus.

Committee supports (3-0) the remaining Urban Design recommendations for the South Silver Spring District.

Parks and Public Spaces

- Provide a new urban recreational park in South Silver Spring per the recommendations of the 2010 Green Space Plan Guidelines for Silver Spring. The Plan recommends this park be located between Kennett Street and East-West Highway and will serve as both a park and a through-block connection between those streets. The vision for this park is an active recreation space that can serve as a complement to the historic, contemplative setting of Acorn Park just up the street. This park will also provide a green space that can support the retail and food services establishments along East-West Highway.

Testimony: The Council received written testimony from NRP Properties, the contract purchaser and developer of 8040 13th Street. Testimony noted that there is a proposed mixed-use development at this site, where the public open space is in a different location to address community concerns.

Committee recommends (3-0) revising Figure 21 to relocate the proposed public open space.

- Renovate Jesup Blair Park to create a unique open place that includes social, active and contemplative experiences throughout its 14 acres. The new Jesup Blair Park will be a gateway and a destination that promotes an active lifestyle and offers the unique historical and cultural setting of a special park designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Increasing transit connections to this park should be studied further. For a full vision of the program of this proposed renovation, see Parks and Public Spaces Recommendations in Section 4.2.

Committee recommends (3-0) adding language to this section for the proposed public open space in the northern parcel of South Silver Spring District.

Testimony: The Council received several pieces of written testimony regarding Jesup Blair House, all requesting that the plan include more language about plans to restore Jesup Blair House.

Committee recommends (3-0) adding language that supports the renovation of Jesup Blair Park House.

Opportunity Sites

- 7980 Georgia Avenue: The Plan recommends considering the redevelopment as a mixed-use development on the portion of the parcel that fronts on Georgia Avenue, while preserving the existing community garden at the western end of the parcel. Improve connections in this area of South Silver Spring by creating a through-block connection at this site from King Street to Georgia Avenue that aligns with the midblock connection adjacent to the Galaxy Apartments. The Plan recommends retaining the community garden as part of any redevelopment.

- 8040 13th Street/Days Inn: This is a key opportunity site in South Silver Spring and a strong site for mixed-use development with active ground floor uses along 13th street, including retail. This site should include a through-block connection providing pedestrian access through the site and connecting to the proposed Urban Recreational Park along Kennett Street. Heights should step down towards Eastern Avenue as identified in the existing zoning. This Plan further recommends coordination with the Parking Lot District regarding the potential use of the existing surface lot and parking garage as a parking resource for any redevelopment.
- Montgomery College: The Plan recommends working with the College to explore and develop opportunities to expand the campus program in the South Silver Spring district.
- 8045 Kennett Street (Caldor Building): The Plan recommends the adaptive re-use of this building, possibly as an educational facility or for future employment.
- 8001 Newell Street (Self-Storage): The Plan recommends that redevelopment of this site transition in height to the garden apartment buildings across Newell Street and the single-family homes across Eastern Avenue Northwest in D.C.
- 7996 Georgia Avenue: The Plan recommends redevelopment of this key site at Georgia Avenue and East-West Highway for institutional/educational uses to support Montgomery College across Georgia Avenue, or other mixed-use development.

Committee recommends (3-0) adding language for the Opportunity Sites in the northern portion of this District that are not already listed above, consistent with Figure 21.

Zoning

- Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.
- Correct zoning to bring existing non-compliant parcels into conformance.
- Parcels in Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights above the maximum mapped zoning per the proposed recommendations in Section 4.1.

Committee recommends (3-0) the Zoning recommendations for the South Silver Spring District.

6. Downtown North District

The area north of Colesville Road includes a mix of housing types, commercial, institutional, and civic uses, as well as retail and entertainment uses including the Fillmore concert venue. Downtown North will build on the connection between the state-of-the-art South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center and the world-renown United Therapeutics campus to create a unique health- and health sciences-focused district. Plan goals include, encouraging redevelopment of under-utilized parcels including existing public parking garages and surface lots, connecting the east and west sides of the Downtown North District via Cameron Street, promoting infill development on either side of Georgia Avenue north of Colesville Road, improving the road network by extending existing connections or creating new connections to divide super blocks and create a more cohesive urban environment, supporting the expansion of life-sciences and other bio-tech related industry facilities, and promoting active ground floor uses in all redevelopment projects, whether retail, community use, or arts focused.

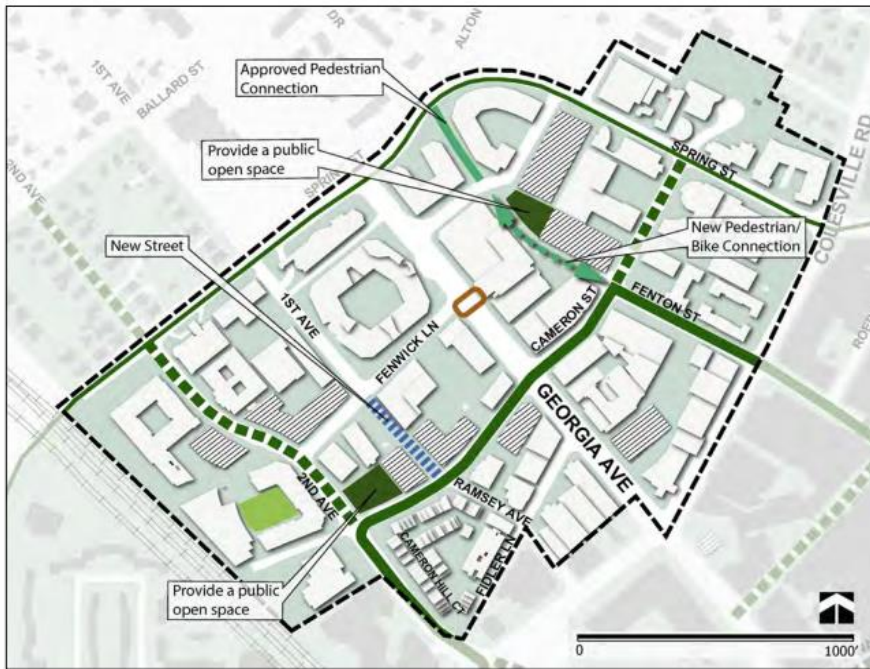
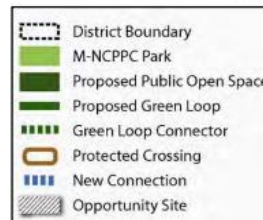


Figure 22. Downtown North: Illustrative Diagram



Recommendations:

Urban Design

- At infill redevelopment sites along Georgia Avenue provide active ground floor uses.
- Implement the Green Loop concept along Cameron Street between Fenton Street and 2nd Avenue as a key component of the Central Green Loop. Cameron Street between Fenton Street and Spring Street should be a Green Loop connector with some elements of the Green Loop implemented as feasible.
- Implement Green Loop elements along Spring Street as part of the secondary Outer Loop.
- Increase public open spaces and community gathering opportunities in this district through development projects on existing opportunity sites.
- Improve pedestrian crossings on Georgia Avenue north of Colesville Road.
- Provide public through-block connections throughout the district to enhance walkability and connectivity between long or super blocks.

Committee supports (3-0) the Urban Design recommendations for the Downtown North district, consistent with Committee recommendations for the Green Loop.

Parks and Public Spaces

- Create an Urban Recreational Park proximate to Cameron Street and 2nd Avenue to support the increased level of activity and number of occupants in this area as a result of the new mixed-use project that includes residential towers over a new County Recreation Center. This park's direct connection to the Green Loop via Cameron Street will complement other active facilities in the Plan, including the Recreation and Aquatic Center across the street.

Committee supports (3-0) the Parks and Public Spaces recommendation for the Downtown North District.

Opportunity Sites

- Parking Garage 7: Redevelop this existing garage in collaboration with the Parking Lot District. Extend 1st Avenue south through the site to align with Ramsey Avenue where it intersects with Cameron Street. The Plan recommends that any new development at this location should include neighborhood-serving retail on the ground floor and incorporate a public open space that is accessible to all.
- Parking Garage 2: This garage can also be redeveloped in collaboration with the Parking Lot District. The Plan recommends continuing Fenton Street north through the site as a pedestrian and bicycle connection to align with the through-block connection under construction at the 8787 Georgia Avenue site. Active ground floor uses should front on both Cameron Street and Spring Street.
- Additional opportunity sites in this district include: 8615 Georgia Avenue, 8676 Georgia Avenue, 8600-8606 2nd Avenue, 1323 Fenwick Lane, and 1327 Fenwick Lane.

Committee supports (3-0) the recommendations for the Downtown North Opportunity Sites.

Zoning

- Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.
- Correct zoning to bring existing non-compliant parcels into conformance.
- Parcels in Building Height Incentive Zone are able to achieve heights above the maximum mapped zoning per the BHIZ specifications.

Committee supports (3-0) the Zoning recommendations for the Downtown North District³.

7. Falklands District

The Falklands District will retain its historic fabric of affordable housing south of East-West Highway while embracing the opportunity for higher-density mixed-use development north of East-West Highway. Plan goals include maintaining and protecting the existing public realm of the Falklands, including significant green cover, a mature tree canopy, and an existing stream; and providing public open space and access to the existing stream valley in the southern parcel of the Falklands.

³ For Map Number 66, Table 6 shows only one existing zoning classification, EOF-3.0 H-100, with a proposed zoning classification of CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-100. However, there are two existing zoning classifications for Map Number 66. In addition to the EOF classification, there are two parcels currently zoned R-60 that are being recommended for CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-100. The Council received testimony from the neighboring homeowners objecting to the proposed rezoning with a height of 100 feet. The Committee supports the zoning recommendation in the Plan noting that the CR zone Height Compatibility Standards provide sufficient protection for abutting residential properties.



Figure 23. Falklands District Illustrative Diagram

Recommendations:

Urban Design:

- Redevelop the Falkland property on the north side of East-West Highway. The redevelopment should be designed with a variety of building heights, with an internal circulation pattern that honors and retains the existing landscaped character of the site.
- Connect the renovated stream valley in the southeast quadrant to a consolidated public use space on the north parcel that is green and clearly public in nature.
- Implement the recommendation from the 2010 Greenspace Guidelines for a renovated stream valley in the southern portion of the Falklands parcel between East-West Highway and Colesville Road.
- If the northern Falklands parcel is redeveloped as a mixed-use site, consider the feasibility of creating a connection across the rail from the Falklands District to the Downtown North District.

Committee supports (3-0) the Urban Design recommendations for the Falklands District.

Parks and Public Spaces:

The Plan does not include any recommendations under “Parks and Public Spaces” for the Falklands District.

Committee recommends (3-0) adding a Parks and Public Spaces section, consistent with the goals of the district and the illustrative diagram showing two proposed public open spaces.

Opportunity Sites:

The Plan does not include any recommendations under “Opportunity Sites” for the Falklands District.

Committee recommends (3-0) adding an Opportunity Sites section, consistent with the goals of the district and the illustrative diagram showing an opportunity site.

Zoning:

- Equalize Commercial and Residential Density Values in CR zones for maximum flexibility in future redevelopment.

Committee supports (3-0) the Zoning recommendations for the Falklands District.

Testimony: Written testimony was received from Marcie Stickle, Silver Spring Historical Society, Advocacy Chair, requesting that the “Falkland North Parcel” be included within the Garden and Mid-Rise Apartment District.

Committee does not recommend (3-0) including the “Falkland North Parcel” in the Garden and Mid-Rise Apartment District because the northern parcel was studied several years ago and rejected for preservation. In addition, the northern parcel already has an approved site plan for redevelopment of the site.

8. Adjacent Communities

According to the Plan, the vision for the Adjacent Communities is a greater variety of housing types, which is consistent with the recommendations of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative. The diversity of housing types is envisioned a being fully integrated into the existing neighborhood fabric, to allow a wider range of residents to enjoy the valued proximity to the downtown. Plan goals include maintaining the Adjacent Communities as primarily residential, preserving the mature tree canopy found along many streets, encouraging a greater diversity of housing types as recommended by the proposed Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative, and preserving existing market-rate affordable housing in the District.



Figure 26. Adjacent Communities Illustrative Diagram

Testimony: Slightly more than half the testimony the Council received on the Silver Spring and Adjacent Communities Plan was directed at the Adjacent Communities. The vast majority of those who reached out to the Council were concerned with potential recommendations in the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative (AHSI) currently being worked on by the Planning Department, and the impact of these recommendations on their neighborhoods.

The Committee considered three options:

1. Revise the Vision and Goals to remove all references to AHSI. Below are possible edits to the text.
2. Revise the Vision and Goals to remove all references to the AHSI *and* diversity of housing types⁴.
3. Revise the Vision and Goals to remove all references to AHSI as suggested under Option 1 and redraw the Plan boundary to exclude most of the R-60 properties⁵.

⁴ The Vision statement would need to be rewritten and the second goal for the district would be deleted. These changes would address the concerns related to the AHSI and the potential impact of changes in housing types throughout the adjacent communities. However, it would also be inconsistent with proposed changes for blocks that also contain properties in the Fenton Village District.

⁵ The new boundary would include R-60 blocks that confront or abut a property in the RT-12.5 zone, or Senior Facility . Map Numbers 75A, 76A, 78, 79, and 99 would contain the only R-60 properties within the new boundary for the Adjacent Communities district. Map Numbers 71-74, 77, 80-87, 89, 91, and 93 would be outside the Plan boundary.

The Committee recommends (3-0) Option 1 with the following edits to the Vision and Goals:

Vision: [Consistent with the recommendations of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative,] The Adjacent Communities may [can] include a greater variety of housing types, fully integrated into the existing neighborhood character and fabric, to allow a wider range of residents to enjoy the valued proximity to the downtown and nearby transit options.

Goals:

- Maintain these neighborhoods as primarily residential and preserve the mature tree canopy found along many streets.
- [Encourage] Support a greater diversity of housing types. [as recommended by the proposed Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative.]
- Preserve existing market-rate affordable housing in this District.

These edits retain the idea that a variety of housing types are envisioned for the Adjacent Communities, even without the AHSI reference. Under the revised language changes to the code that allow diverse housing types where certain criteria are met, such as where *consistent with the master plan* would apply to the Adjacent Communities.

Recommendations:

Urban Design

- Refer to Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative on building form and relationship to street for new permitted housing types.
- All new buildings in these neighborhoods should be compatible in scale with the surrounding development, regardless of building type.
- Maintain mature tree canopy by continuing to plant and replace street trees as needed.
- Implement as many Green Loop elements as possible along the following streets that will be Green Loop Connectors into the downtown:
 - 2nd Avenue,
 - Ellsworth Drive, and
 - Bonifant Street.

The Committee recommends (3-0) eliminating the first bullet consistent with removal of other references to the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative and supports the other Urban Design recommendations.

Parks and Public Spaces

- Ellsworth Urban Park will continue to serve as a key destination in this district; the Plan recommends renovating this park, particularly along the frontage on Colesville Road.

Committee recommends (3-0) the Parks and Public Spaces recommendation.

Opportunity Site

- Block including 8505 Springvale and 620 Pershing Drive: This site currently includes a facility for seniors. The Plan proposes a rezoning from R-60 to CRT to support the potential future redevelopment of the full site for multifamily housing.

Committee recommends (3-0) the Opportunity Sites recommendation.

Zoning

- Confirm all zoning with the exception of the mapped areas shown and described in the table below.
- Convert parcels zoned EOF to CR as shown in the map and the table⁶.
- Convert parcels zoned RT-12.5 to THD as shown in the map and the table.
- Rezone R-60 parcels on blocks in East Silver Spring that include CR parcels in Fenton Village to CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40 as shown in the map and described in the table. This includes the block south of Wayne Avenue and north of Bonifant Street.
- 8901 Colesville Road (former Silver Spring Library site): The current zoning is R-60 with a project currently approved for this site. If the approved project is not realized on this site, this location could be considered for an alternate use and would be appropriate for a Commercial/Residential floating zone. Any potential future use beyond what is currently approved should align and coordinate with the adjacent park.
- Block including 8505 Springvale Road and 620 Pershing Drive: This block currently includes a senior housing facility. Proposed rezoning to CRT for future flexibility for multi-family and/or senior housing.

The Committee recommends (3-0) the zoning recommendations.

⁶ This reference will be removed, these parcels are in the Downtown North District.