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Rockville plans for potential growth

City invites comments at Sept. 13 public hearing

by Sean Patrick Norris | Staff Writer

If Rockville is going to grow, city staff wants it to grow well, says Planning Director Susan Swift.

That's why the city is asking residents to attend a public hearing during the Sept. 13 City Council meeting to help shape Rockville's future.

"This isn't providing the solutions yet, but it's about having us (as a city) look at what the general implications of growth will be," Swift said. "We want to see how we can affect that growth, direct it where we want it to go while make sure that our facilities are adequate."

Residents are being asked for their comments on two documents within the city's master plan: municipal growth and water resources. The impetus for the changes is a mandate by state law, passed two years ago, saying all municipalities must add or review the elements in their master plan.

The documents are available online the city's Web site at www.rockvillemd.gov/masterplan/elements/index.

Swift said the city wants to make sure it stayed up to date.

"We did have a lot of the (mandated) information, partly in our master plan and partly in other documents," she said. "We updated it and took the next step. We wanted to do more than the minimum."

The municipal growth portion of the master plan discusses where population and employment growth should be and what impact that growth would have on public facilities. This is not related to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, a law that requires the city to project the impact of a specific project on public facilities.

Swift said the council's discussion on municipal growth may lead to future discussion of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

The municipal growth element also examines what areas not currently within the corporate city limits of Rockville would be considered for annexation.

In order to be annexed into the city a property owner must petition for inclusion. Rockville cannot unilaterally annex a property unless it is surrounded by city land.

The city has already set what are called maximum expansion limits, but decided to review and alter those borders. The city submitted its plans to Gaithersburg and Montgomery County for comment, as required by law.

The proposed changes to the city's expansion limits include pushing Rockville's border to include the Shady Grove Metro station and land one block south of Montrose Road.

"The community says this is the area outside of our boundaries that we would consider if someone wanted to annex," Swift said. "This is how far out we would want to consider."

The other document under review identifies additional sources of water that could be used to accommodate growth. The document also considers water resource protection.

The city Planning Commission approved the documents at its July 28 meeting.

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To learn more

For more information on municipal growth, the city asks residents to call planner Manisha Tewari at 240-314-8200.

For information on water resources, residents are asked to call Mark Charles, chief of environmental management, at 240-314-8870.

To have your say

Residents can submit comments on municipal growth and water resources by attending the Sept. 13 hearing, e-mailing the mayor and council at mayorcouncil@rockvillemd.gov and sending them by mail to: City Clerk, City of Rockville, 111 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850.

The documents are available online the city's Web site at www.rockvillemd.gov/

[masterplan/elements/index](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/masterplan/elements/index)