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

November 13, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief
Vision Division

Bill Barron, Team Leader, South Central Transit Corridor
Vision Division

FROM: Piera Weiss, Planner Coordinator (301.495.4728)
South Central Transit Corridor
Vision Division

N'kosi Yearwood, Senior Planner (301.495.1332)
South Central Transit Corridor
Vision Division

SUBJECT: Draft White Flint I Sector Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Item 1: Approve the Draft White Flint I Sector Plan as the Public Hearing Draft Plan and set a Public Hearing for January 12, 2009

Item 2: Disband the Advisory Committee and appoint a smaller Steering Committee

Item 1: Approve the Draft Plan as the Public Hearing Draft

In June 2006, staff began an update of the White Flint portion of the 1992 North Bethesda/ Garrett Park Master Plan. In the fall of 2008, staff presented preliminary recommendations in a series of discussions with the Planning Board.

September 11, 2008	Preliminary recommendations
October 2, 2008	White Flint Advisory Committee presentation
October 16, 2008	Density, building height and staging
October 30, 2008	Financing and administration

Vision Division, 301-495-4555, Fax: 301-495-1304
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
www.MontgomeryPlanning.org

At the conclusion of the October 30 session, The Planning Board directed staff to prepare a Draft Plan. Attachment 1 is the Draft Plan.

The Draft Plan builds on the objectives of the 1992 Plan:

- Develop White Flint as the main urban center of North Bethesda
- Capitalize on the public investment in the Metro System and encourage its use rather than continued reliance on the automobile
- Promote mixed use development near the Metro station to ensure the 24 hour vitality of the area
- Include a significant transit serviceable residential component with the Sector Plan area
- Develop policies to ensure a lively pedestrian environment

The Draft Plan focuses on two aspects of the area: (1) expanding the 1992 boundaries to include an area within ¾ of a mile of the Metro station and (2) the desired urban form including elements needed to create a viable urban center, such as a finer textured local street grid, open space, and pedestrian connectivity. Expanding the 1992 boundary enhances the possibilities for transit, extending the road network, creating a more walkable environment and transitioning to the surrounding communities.

The dominant visual experience in White Flint is Rockville Pike, the major conveyor of through and local traffic and with very little "curb" appeal. The Draft Plan recommends the reconstruction of the Rockville Pike including expanding the right-of-way to provide a landscaped median, wider sidewalks and streetscape, and bus transit lanes. It also recommends an expanded street grid to provide for more local vehicular movements and better pedestrian access throughout the Sector Plan area. The Plan recommends mixed use throughout the Sector Plan area with an emphasis on residential development in order to create the population to support the urban center concept and to take advantage of the transit system. A comprehensive system of public spaces, including a Civic Green, is recommended to support the new residents and workers.

The Draft Plan recommends the use of the Transit Mixed-Use Zone (TMX), a Euclidean zone, with a maximum FAR of 4.0. The TMX zone has many of the desirable features of the CBD zones, such as standard and optional methods, public use space and public facilities and amenities requirements. The TMX zone is unique in that it also requires preservation of the Agricultural Reserve in conjunction with non-residential development under the optional method. The Plan proposes a density concept consistent with the intent of the TMX zone. The Plan recommends highest density at the Metro station and decreasing density with distance from transit. The Plan recommends building heights that reflect the same tenting pattern.

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommends that the Planning Board accept the Draft Plan as the Public Hearing Draft and set a Public Hearing date of January 12, 2009.

Item 2: Disband the White Flint Advisory Committee/Appoint a Steering Committee

The Planning Board approved the creation of the White Flint Advisory Committee in November 2006. The 45-member committee is comprised of property owners and residents from in and around the planning area. On October 2, 2008, the Advisory Committee, represented by eight members of the Committee presented their comments on the preliminary recommendations in-progress to the Planning Board. At the end of the session, the committee requested that the Planning Board appoint a Steering Committee, from the Advisory Committee, to participate in the Planning Board's deliberations on the White Flint Sector Plan.

On October 30, the Planning Board directed staff to prepare nominees for the Steering Committee. Staff sent out an e-mail request to the Advisory Committee on October 31 asking for nominations or letters of interest. The closing date for the nomination was November 10. The Chairman's office received fifteen letters of interest.

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommends that all be appointed to the Steering Committee. The group is balanced, six reside in the surrounding communities, four are property owners or developers, two have businesses in White Flint, two represent the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce and one is the Director of the Transportation Action Partnership, a publicly sponsored private/public organization.

Six representatives from residential communities

- Recommended by the Garrett Park Estates-White Flint Park Citizens Association:
    1. Natalie Goldberg
    2. Suzanne Hudson
- Daniel Hoffman, Randolph Civic Association
- Paula Bienenfeld, Luxmanor Citizens Association
- Ken Hurdle, Luxmanor resident
- Edward J. Rich, Old Farm Civic Association

Eight representatives from the business community (*indicates property owners)

- *Michael J. Smith, LCOR Inc., North Bethesda Town Center
- *Robert J. Stoddard, Washington Real Estate Investment Trust, Randolph and Montrose Shopping Centers
- *Arnold J. Kohn, The Tower Companies, White Flint Mall
- *Evan Goldman, Federal Realty Investment Trust, Mid-Pike Plaza
- Recommended by the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
    1. Andy Shulman, McShea & Co.
    2. David D. Freishtat, Shulman, Rogers, Gandal, Pordy & Ecker law offices
- Barnaby Zall, Weinberg & Jacobs, LLP
- Richard S. Cohen, WILLCO Companies

One representative from the public-private sector

- Peggy Schwartz, Transportation Action Partnership

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Attachment 1:	Draft Master Plan
Attachment 2:	Letters of Interest for the Steering Committee
Attachment 3:	White Flint Advisory Committee Members