



City of Rockville

## MEMORANDUM

July 30, 2010

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: *AK for AW*  
Ann Wallas, Planner III, Long Range Planning

VIA: *DL*  
David B. Levy, Chief of Long Range Planning and Redevelopment

SUBJECT: **Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) – Discussion of Critical Sites**

### **Background**

At the request of the Planning Commission, the March 10, 2010 meeting included a brief overview by David B. Levy, Chief of Long Range Planning and Redevelopment, of the Critical Sites identified in the 2002 CMP and also gave an overview of the geographical areas that may be of concern in the future. As you recall, Chapter Two of the 2002 CMP includes a section on Critical Issues (beginning on p.2-12), which includes a sub-section entitled Critical Parcel/Area Analysis. As a result, any changes made to this portion of the CMP would need to follow the State-regulated process of amendments to a local Master Plan.

At the April 14 Planning Commission meeting, Ann Wallas, Planner III, gave a more detailed update on the status of the Critical Parcels, Areas and Sites identified in the 2002 CMP as well as topics of concern in this regard that had been raised by staff, members of various Boards and Commissions, the public and Planning Commissioners during the Review of the 2002 CMP that was conducted in 2008-9. The briefing memo for the April 14 meeting can be found at Attachment A.

The Planning Commission returned to this topic on July 14, 2010 and indicated its wish to continue the discussion. The Planning Commission directed staff to bring forward a draft definition and/or suggested criteria for Critical Sites. It further directed that a "site" not be restricted to only one parcel, but that it not be expanded to the extent of an entire City planning area.

Staff suggests the following criteria that can serve in building a definition:

## **Potential Criteria for Critical Sites**

- “Critical” refers to the importance of the site to the city. There are many reasons why a site might be critical, including its impact on the surrounding parcels and neighborhood, the financial/fiscal impact on the City, the size of the parcel, etc. When identifying a site as critical, the reason that it is considered critical should be specified.
- A “site” or “sites” can be a single property, or it can be a series of properties that are adjacent or that have similar characteristics.
- A site that has neighborhood or citywide importance and where a change in use is likely may be critical.
- Sites that neighborhoods identify as critical through their planning processes have the presumption of being critical to the city.
- Sites where the zoning is potentially not compatible with surrounding land uses or with the desired approach for that site, as identified during a planning process, may be “critical” in that a change in law or policy may need to be made to implement the community vision. This component was an important part of the discussion in the 2002 CMP (p.2-14), as quoted below.
- Sites located in broader areas that are experiencing changes in use or conditions may qualify as critical because of the imminence of potential change at the sites.
- Sites that are underutilized or deteriorating may qualify as critical, even though the zoning may appear to be appropriate.
- A site may be critical because it needs special attention by the City, such as an implementation strategy, to bring about success. Before redevelopment, Rockville Town Square may have qualified as a critical site under this definition.

## **Language from the 2002 CMP**

For your reference, here is some of the language that was used to introduce the Critical Parcel/Area Analysis in the 2002 CMP, on p. 2-14. It provides the criteria used to select the sites that are discussed in the plan.

“This section addresses only sites where an alternate land use or zoning category would provide greater compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood or where there are other land use or zoning alternatives to achieve either smart growth initiatives or environmental protection....In general, only sites above five acres are included in this analysis. If sites with development potential are not mentioned, the zoning and land use recommendations on those sites are not recommended for change with the exception of a few small sites that are discussed separated under potential zoning changes or text amendments.”

## **Next Steps**

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Staff looks forward to this discussion, while recommending that final decisions about critical sites be made in the context of the comprehensive master plan process, which will include substantial public input. Staff is planning to bring forward to the Planning Commission meeting on September 29 a draft approach for the master plan.




City of Rockville

**M E M O R A N D U M**

April 2, 2010

TO: Planning Commission

FROM:  Amy Wallas, Planner III, Long Range Planning

SUBJECT: **Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) – Review of Critical Sites**

At the Planning Commission meeting on March 10 David B. Levy, Chief of Long Range Planning and Redevelopment, gave a brief overview of the Critical Sites identified in the 2002 CMP and also gave an overview of the areas that may be of concern in the future.

**State Criteria/City Criteria**

The State of Maryland defines “critical areas” as areas that are of importance to the State, either because they are owned by the State, or because they are of an environmentally sensitive nature. However, the City has used the term more broadly, and in previous plans has sought to identify particular sites where an alternate land use may be more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Some sites were also identified because they are currently underutilized and/or there was concern about their future development.

**Update on 2002 CMP Critical Sites**

Critical Site #1: Chestnut Lodge, 500 West Montgomery Avenue

In 2006 approval was given under Exploratory Application PRU2005-00022, for the construction of 44 residential dwelling units on the site consisting of 36 new single family detached homes with detached garages, the rehabilitation and reuse of the Little Lodge as a single family dwelling unit and the rehabilitation and conversion of the Main Lodge into seven multi-family units, with the reconstruction of the existing Icehouse as an accessory structure. The Barn and/Creamery were also rehabilitated for use as an accessory structure to one of the new single-family detached houses. The approval placed an 8-acre open space within the West Montgomery Historic District in a conservation and maintenance easement. Frieda’s Cottage was also approved for use as a single-family dwelling unit.

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Subsequent Amendments to the Exploratory Application included:

- Detailed Application PRU2006-0022A, was approved on October 25, 2006, approving the site plan for the development.
- Detailed Application PRU2006-0022B was approved on August 9, 2006, by the Planning Commission, for the demolition portion of the Construction Phasing Plan.
- Detailed Application PRU2006-0022C was approved on November 10, 2008 for the revision to the entrance at Bullard Circle from 36 feet to 38 feet pavement.

The centerpiece of the site, the historic Chestnut Lodge (the Main Lodge), burnt down in 2009 and to date the owner has not approached the City about rebuilding.

To date only 5 single- family homes have been built. Due to the economy the remaining 31 homes have not been built. Recently the City has had discussions with potential builders (who will be working with the original developer) regarding build out of the remaining single-family homes.

#### Critical Site #2 Buckingham Property, 522 West Montgomery Avenue

The single-family home at 522 West Montgomery Avenue was demolished and the site has been subdivided and developed into 13 single-family homes on West Montgomery Avenue and Henson Oaks Lane. The one-half acre Thirty Oaks Park, which is owned and maintained by the City, is located on Henson Oaks Lane.

#### Critical Site #3, Carver Educational Service Centers, corner Mannakee Street and Hungerford Drive

There is currently no activity scheduled for this site.

#### Critical Site #4, Twinbrook Metro Station

Properties on the east side of the Twinbrook metro station were annexed into the city in 2005 as part of the Twinbrook Station (formerly known as "Twinbrook Commons") development and as suggested by the Master plan.

The Twinbrook Station development was approved as a Preliminary Development Plan in 2005. It is a mixed-use project with multi-family residential as the major component. To date the development has Use Permit approvals for 52,716 square feet of retail, 485 Residential units, 325,000 square feet of Office and associated parking, which include a three parking structure. Phase 1A on the east side of the metro tracks have been constructed and are being occupied. This phase consists of two residential buildings with

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ground floor and a 6 level parking structure with 336 parking spaces. Building A on the east side has 146 residential units with 5,121 square feet of retail and Building B, on the west side, has 133 residential units with 10,502 square feet of retail and 84 underground parking spaces.

The following is a list of approvals related to this project:

- Preliminary Plan (1-04054) – Montgomery County Planning Board approved on May 6, 2004, for the portion of the project then located within County jurisdiction.
- Site Plan (8-05011) – Montgomery County Planning Board approved on December 9, 2004, for the project within the County jurisdiction.
- Preliminary Development Plan PDP2004-00009 – Mayor and Council approved by adopting a resolution (Resolution No. 9-05) on April 4, 2005, for 1,595 multiple-family residential units, 220,000 square feet of retail space and 325,000 square feet of office space with related parking.
- Annexation ANX2004-00136 – Mayor and Council approved annexation on April 4, 2005, of 16.95 acres of land, more or less, known as the eastern portion of the Twinbrook Metro Station site, owned by Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA), including 6,336 square feet of property known as Parts of Lots 13 and 14, Block 8 of the Spring Lake Park subdivision, and a portion of Ardennes Avenue right-of-way.
- Text Amendment TXT2004-00213 – Mayor and Council adopted on April 4, 2005, a text amendment to amend Article XIV, creating a new section (25-710.28) to provide for a Preliminary Development Plan Optional Method of Development in the RPC Metro Performance District Zone.

Mayor and Council adopted a resolution to enlarge corporate boundaries to include 16.95 acres that were situated in Montgomery County on May 9, 2005.

#### Critical Site #5, Lewis Avenue/Halpine Road

This area was also noted as a critical parcel in the 1993 plan. It was considered in depth as part of the Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan process and has been rezoned from I-2 to the I-L zone. The I-L zone retains the industrial uses – which were found to be of value to the neighborhood – while allowing limited residential uses.

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#### Critical Site #6, Seven Locks Detention Center/Montgomery County

This site continues to function as a Detention Center. However, the County has plans to redevelop the site as a new Criminal Justice Complex. The following information was

received from Ronnie Warner, Capital Projects Manager for Montgomery County on March 18:

“The County Council has included in their FY11-16 Capital Improvement Program funds for the design of a new Criminal Justice Complex (CJC). This project, to be located at 1451 Seven Locks Road in Rockville, provides for the design of an approximately 103,000 gross square foot CJC with underground structured parking. New construction is proposed because renovation of the existing Montgomery County Detention Center facility was determined not to be cost effective due to the need for significant capital expenditures, life cycle costs and continued maintenance of aging building systems.

The CJC will be constructed on the site of the existing District One Police Station located at the north end of Seven Locks Road. Demolition of the District One Police Station and construction of the CJC would start after police station functions are relocated to become part of the Smart Growth Initiative Program, a component of the new Public Safety Headquarters. The primary function at the CJC will be the Intake Unit, providing initial care, custody and security for inmates for up to 72 hours prior to transfer to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility in Clarksburg. The maximum number of beds at the CJC will be approximately 200. If approved by County Council, the design phase would commence during Spring 2011 and is estimated to last 18 months, followed by approximately 12 months for permitting and bidding, with a construction period of approximately 30 months.

The County Council approved the CIP funding recommendations for the Department of Corrections projects, including the Criminal Justice Center. The next step would be for the Council to approve the overall budget, which includes the CIP. Budget approval should occur on June 15. Until that is approved, there can be changes to the CIP.”

#### Critical Site #7, Woodmont County Club

A portion of this property will be discussed as part of the forthcoming Rockville’s Pike plan.

Woodmont County Club is one of the largest properties along the Rockville Pike corridor capturing a total of 459.08 acres. The main entrance and the front portion of the Club’s golf course lie on the Pike’s western side and it is bounded by residential neighborhoods (North Farm, Montrose and Rollins Park). It is zoned R-400, which limits development to residential at one house per 40,000 sq. ft.

The surrounding properties along Rockville Pike have been zoned MXCD, which allows for medium density development of retail, office, and residential uses. The Draft “Rockville’s Pike” Plan has recommended that the portion of the property that fronts onto Rockville Pike should have a zone and streetscape that is compatible with the adjacent sites. Last Spring representatives of the Club advised the City that they are considering

the future use of the 9-acre area that fronts onto Rockville Pike and expressed interest in rezoning that portion of the Club to MXCD.

#### Critical Site #8, Lakewood County Club

The property is 213-acres in size and has been a country club for many years. Like the Woodmont County Club it is zoned R-400. During the last ten years renovations to the property have included extensive renovations to the golf course, relocation of parking spaces and the entrance drive, a new equipment room, restroom facility and enclosure of the existing patio.

#### **Potential new “Critical Areas/Parcels”**

As part of the review of the 2002 CMP Planning staff conducted reviews of each of the eighteen geographically defined Planning Areas, and the chapters related to land use. Two land use workshops were conducted: at the first planners shared information on each of the Planning Areas and at the second staff identified places that they believed are potential critical sites, critical areas and critical issues. In addition input was received from members of the various Boards and Commissions and also members of the public.

The following areas and/or topics were identified as part of the process. A brief overview of issues surrounding each area is given below. These are intended to be descriptive, rather than prescriptive, will be helpful as we begin to frame the issues to be researched and discussed as part of the CMP revision, and to plan our work for the coming years.

#### Shady Grove area.

This Shady Grove area will be discussed as part of forthcoming Municipal Growth Element (MGE).

The area lies outside the City boundary but within the maximum expansion limits. There appear to be opportunities to expand the current limits, which will be discussed as part of the MGE.

Montgomery County adopted the Shady Grove Sector Plan, which covers the area, in March 2006.

#### Rockville Pike Corridor

##### South of Town Center to the City’s southern border:

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The Rockville Pike corridor area south of Town Center contains approximately 410 acres surrounding a 2.2-mile long portion of Rockville Pike (Route MD 355). It is being fully studied as part of the Rockville’s Pike plan process.

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### South of the City limits

This area lies outside the City limits but within the maximum expansion area. The City will discuss the area as part of the Rockville's Pike plan process. MNCPPC plan to examine the area as part of their "White Flint II" process, which will begin in 2011 or 2012.

### North Of Town Center Area (Hungerford Drive/Frederick Road)

This area features a combination of shallow lots on the east side, adjacent to the Metrorail right of way, and larger lots on the western side. Among these larger sites are the Carver Center, Montgomery College and the College Plaza shopping center. The western side of the street lies within City limits and the majority of the eastern side lies in the County, but within the maximum expansion limits.

### Industrial areas and East Gude Drive (including former WINX site)

Part of this area lies within the City and part within the County. The County portion lies within the existing municipal growth area. The City portion was rezoned to I-L as part of the new Zoning Ordinance and a new I-H zone, that allows heavy industrial uses, was adopted. No City properties currently bear the I-H zone but several properties in the County are used for heavy industry and the new zone could help facilitate future annexation, should their owners desire it.

Two sites within the area pose annexation issues: the first is a 3.5-acre retail/office site at 1300 East Gude Drive that is partially in the City and partially in the County, and the second is the 10.5 acre near enclave comprising 14495, 14500, 14616, 14630 and 14640 Southlawn Lane, 210 Mason Drive and 501 Dover Road that is almost surrounded on all sides by the City. Staff will be addressing these, and other annexation issues, in the near future.

The former WINX Property at 1000 Westmore Avenue has not been annexed into the City. In January 2010, an application was filed with the Montgomery County Planning Board for a 15,000 square foot warehouse building. The City will be sending comments to the Planning Board indicating what our CMP proposes for the site.

### Stonestreet Avenue and the Rockville Metro Station

The area was considered as part of the Town Center Master Plan, and again as part of the East Rockville and Lincoln Park neighborhood plans.

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In early 2004, the City of Rockville solicited proposals to conduct a complete assessment and to create an implementation plan for the redevelopment of the Stonestreet Avenue

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Corridor. The goal of the implementation plan was to identify ways for the area to make a successful transition from the existing uses towards the visions set out in the plans. The City convened the Stonestreet Avenue Corridor Task Force in June 2004 to provide input and feedback on the draft plan and guide its progress as it moved forward. A final draft was presented to the Task Force in January 2006. The Task Force did not accept the draft. City staff continued to work with the Task Force to refine zoning and street alignment recommendations. The last meeting of the Task Force was held in September 2006.

Many of the ideas generated by the Task Force were used in the development of the new MXB zone, which was applied to the area with the adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance.

Outstanding issues include:

- Whether or not to realign North and South Stonestreet Avenue.
- Possible future redevelopment of the WMATA property at Rockville Station.

#### Town Center north of Beall Avenue

The area has not yet redeveloped. It is zoned MXCD, which allows a maximum height of 75 feet. There are a number of topics for discussion:

- DPW staff worked with a consultant on a Maryland Avenue Extended Alignment Study: the document is a technical study which identifies utilities and engineering issues, and can be used in future discussions with site owners on the optimum alignment of Maryland Avenue north of Beall.
- KSI approved June 14, 2004 for residential/retail on the “pink” Bank of America site.
- Owners associated with the JBG companies have gained ownership of a number of sites in the area.

#### Town Center north of Beall Avenue – western side of North Washington Street.

The area has not yet redeveloped. It is zoned MXNC, which allows a maximum height of 45 feet, with a maximum height of 65 feet if specified in the master plan. There are a number of topics for discussion, among them are:

- The Post Office parking lot
  - The former Bobs Shabu Shabu restaurant
  - Bealls Grant and Bealls Grant II
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### The “Apollo” block – 12 North Washington Street

This site has not redeveloped. It is owned by Federal Realty Partners and is leased to a variety of restaurants and services. Community Ministries have recently opened a clinic in the basement space that was used by CVS as a holding store. Parking is sometimes an issue, especially during the day. The site is zoned MXNC, which allows for a maximum height of 45 feet, with a maximum height of 65 feet if specified in the master plan. The owners have expressed interest in exploring this option.

### “Mixing Bowl” area

The “mixing bowl” is the area surrounding the intersections of Rockville Pike with East Jefferson Street/Veirs Mill Road. The historic St. Mary’s Church is situated on the northwestern corner. The pedestrian bridge across the train tracks was recently closed because of structural problems.

Further south, the Archstone Westchester at Town Center development has been completed and leased. Improvements are currently underway at the intersection of Veirs Mill Road and First Street that should help pedestrian access in that area. However, the “mixing bowl” area is not regarded as pedestrian friendly, and despite its close proximity to Rockville Metro, access is not easy.

### West Montgomery historic district and Gude interchange.

Review of the West Montgomery historic district, including the impact of heavy traffic on the historic area, and whether an interchange at Gude Drive/I-270 would provide relief.

### Abandoned MCPS sites.

Conduct inventory of sites and examine issues surrounding them. For example:

- Former schools now used by MCPS, Montgomery County and others for alternate uses, e.g. - the MCPS FY 2011-2016 CIP recommends FY 2016 expenditures for the reopening of Broome JHS on Twinbrook Parkway as a holding facility.
- Former school sites, such as the Oakridge site near Don Mills Court in the Tower Oaks/New Mark Commons area.

### Neighborhood centers accommodating mixed uses and greater density, including residential.

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~~Review of neighborhood shopping centers and possible issues surrounding them, although there was considerable discussion of this issue during the Zoning Ordinance process.~~

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### Annexation Issues

Staff will be bringing forward more detailed information on this topic in the near future.

In addition to the issues in the Gude Drive area that were discussed above, there are several areas on the west side that might be annexed into the City in the future, including residential properties at Hectic Hill, and the neighborhood surrounding HiWood Drive and Dav Road. Residential properties on the east side in the Pier Drive/Halpine Road area will also be discussed.