

Montgomery County Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

June 17th, 2009

Chairman and Commissioners:

The Randolph Hills Civic Association (RCA) would like to express its overall approval of the White Flint Sector Plan draft that was released earlier this week. Although we have a list of comments and suggestions to strengthen the document, provided as an attachment to this letter, we feel that the Plan stays true to the vision of the Advisory Group and Steering Committee. We understand that there will be pockets of concern among residents and developers within the boundaries and in the surrounding community, but the plan as a whole provides a strong blueprint for a redeveloped White Flint. Our civic association, representing over 1300 homes, will support this plan, but are seeking some minor clarifications.

The positives in the plan include the improved network of streets and MARC station on Nicholson Court. If developed properly, with a safe pedestrian crossing over the railroad tracks, these improvements will help to better integrate our community with the sector. We also support the expansion of White Flint Neighborhood Park. Our community is fortunate to have ample parkland, and we seek this for our neighbors to the south as well.

One basic community need we do not currently have is ample classroom space. On May 4th, 2009, Commissioner Joe Alfandre voted along with Commissioners Pressley and Cryor to recommend the 18 acres of Rocking Horse Center as the ideal site for a new elementary school. Although this new version of the plan does finally acknowledge Rocking Horse as a possibility, it does not accurately reflect the decision reached by the Planning Board. Our suggested language is provided in the attachment to this document.

A general sentiment among our community is that we too often are forgotten on the east side of the railroad tracks. Regardless of whether or not this is true, our perception is our reality. Undoubtedly unintentional, some sections of the Plan reinforce this perception. We agree that individually they are minor, but in aggregate we feel they convey the wrong message. We respectfully ask that you honor the time and commitment we have shown during the development of this Plan and will continue to demonstrate as partners in the successful transformation of White Flint.

Sincerely,

Daniel Hoffman
Randolph Civic Association
White Flint Sector Plan Steering Committee

Randolph Civic Association Suggestions for the White Flint Planning Board Draft

Page 15, Figure 5 - Please center this map to accurately depict the surrounding communities. The Sector does not face west. The communities to the east are not shown, but are equidistant from the White Flint core. These communities have just as much at stake. You could then also show the largest park in the area, Rock Creek Park.

Pages 26 and 27, Figures 13 and 14 - We ask not to be cut from maps that we feel are relevant to our community. We are the largest single collection of workforce housing in the form of single family homes adjacent to White Flint. Although we have a narrow industrial buffer, we have an equal, if not greater, impact on the sector due to our size. In the case of Figure 13, we feel it might be helpful to point out the 40 acres of park space approximately one mile to the east of the sector, Randolph Hills local park.

Page 29, Subsection titled "Industrial" - We assume this refers primarily to the swath of land between the sector boundary and Randolph Hills. We question the assumption that redevelopment in this area is "questionable", especially given the proposed MARC station. We feel the station will also have a positive impact on the property on the east side of the tracks owned by Kronstadt Realty. Chairman Hanson has referred to a "White Flint Phase II" that would include this area. We encourage this and look forward to participating.

Page 59, Figure 29 - Similar to previous suggestions, please properly center White Flint on this map. By doing this you could include Randolph Hills local park as we previously suggested. Also, we feel it very important to label the landmarks in our neighborhood as you do others. With that in mind, please label the school site recommended by the Planning Board. The school site is also not listed in the legend under, "Proposed Facilities." Please do this and assign the proper icon to the site.

Page 62, Public Schools section - Please strike this section beginning with the second paragraph and replace with this alternative language that we feel is more accurate:

There is no site large enough for a typical 10-12 acre elementary school within the Plan area. As a result of this, it is recommended that MCPS consider utilizing Rocking Horse Center, a closed elementary school on 18 acres of land located approximately .5 miles from center of the sector on Macon Road.

Currently the center is used as an international student admission office and for other administrative functions. Personnel could be relocated to transit-accessible office space within the sector plan. Providing these services closer to a Metro station would benefit the people using these services and the staff by giving them the option to use mass transit. It would also alleviate current capacity problems at Viers Mill Elementary by providing a neighborhood adjacent to the sector with a neighborhood school. MCPS staff has voiced the possibility of using this site as a middle

school in the future; however, there is sufficient space on the property for both uses.

This revised section is preferred because:

- It corrects and clarifies several items such as the location and name of the school.
- It removes irrelevant locations that MCPS dismissed in their testimony and are not endorsed by the Planning Board.
- It accurately describes the decision of the Planning Board.

Page 65, Amenity Fund subsection - It may be appropriate to include school modernization here as part of the CIP in support of the sector.

Page 71, Phase 2b - Given the current capacity of surrounding elementary schools, we strongly encourage evaluations to begin immediately. An evaluation in Phase 1 will allow for better planning in later phases and will set the stage for new school construction/modernization sooner if the need is identified. Also, the bullet regarding a new school should strike "within the cluster." This not only goes against the Planning Board decision, but we feel it has been established that this is not part of the criteria planning staff should be using. The White Flint sector impacts more than one cluster and boundary decisions should be left to the School Board.

Page 71, Phase Three - The RCA would like to see infrastructure precede development, not the other way around. We feel it is better to have a new Rockville Pike, MARC station, and new Metro entrance well before the later stages.