

Worksession

Agenda Item #	8
Meeting Date	June 15, 2009
Prepared By	Ilona Blanchard Community Development Coordinator
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

Discussion Item	Takoma/Langley Crossroads Preliminary Sector Plan (Prince George's County)
Background	<p>In 2007, Prince George's County and Montgomery County began working with the City of Takoma Park to study, conduct outreach, and plan for the area within the Takoma/Langley Sector Plan. A multi-jurisdictional effort, the planning process included design consultants, economic advisors, a traffic study, and a variety of public outreach methods ranging from on the street booths to a mini-charrette with key stakeholders and agencies.</p> <p>The City's participation in this process has been a key element of efforts to redevelop New Hampshire Avenue, as the Takoma/Langley Crossroads has the largest area of opportunity and market potential.</p> <p>Both Counties have now completed their outreach process and Prince George's County has issued a Preliminary Sector Plan (the "Preliminary Plan"). The Montgomery County draft Sector Plan is expected to be available June 22. Both plans can be viewed online (See Attachments Section for link.)</p> <p>A joint Prince George's County Council and Prince George's County Planning Board hearing on the Preliminary Plan for the Takoma/Langley Crossroads will be held on Tuesday, June 23, in Upper Marlboro. After the hearing, the Planning Board will discuss the plan and may recommend changes to the text. The Planning Board, at the time of writing, is scheduled to adopt the plan on September 10 and transmit it to the County Council for discussion on October 10.</p> <p>City staff has reviewed the Preliminary Plan and found that it is generally in alignment with the City's policy interests and with the expected Montgomery County Sector Plan which will address that portion of the study area that lies within the incorporated boundaries of Takoma Park. Both plans support a similar redevelopment pattern for commercial properties within the Takoma/Langley Crossroads commercial district. Their transportation recommendations are generally harmonious and each promotes practices that support economic growth and sustainability while protecting affordability. The plans are especially strong in the area of the environment and urban design.</p> <p>There were several issues included in the Preliminary Plan developed by Prince George's County however that merit testimony. A draft resolution has been prepared for Council review that includes the following recommendations:</p>

1. Amend the 2002 Prince George's County General Plan.

The General Plan designates the area as a Community Center. When considered with Takoma Park and Riggs Road, it should have the status of a Regional Center. This designation influences future density and transportation decisions. In addition, New Hampshire Avenue is not recognized as a Corridor which influences the ability of property owners to rezone areas north and south of the Sector Plan area for mixed use redevelopment.

2. Clearly recommend a buffered bike lane along University Boulevard.

The language used to refer to the buffered bike land in the Preliminary Plan is inconsistent. The Montgomery County plan will also recommend that buffered bike lanes be implemented with the Purple Line reconstruction of University Boulevard so that the curb is not rebuilt twice. This recommendation is not included in the Prince George's County Preliminary Plan.

3. Complete the feasibility study of study for right-right-right turns at the University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue intersection prior to initiation of construction of the Purple Line project.

The recommended feasibility study would ensure that the Purple Line design is consistent with Sector Plan recommendations. If this option is determined to be feasible and is included in the construction of the Purple Line, it may reduce the amount of right-of-way taken in the area of the transit stop on University Boulevard, improve pedestrian safety, and increase economic viability of commercial properties.

4. Delete the Park and Ride recommendation from the plan.

Park and Rides are a hallmark of suburban transit centers where there is insufficient local population to take advantage of the transit stop. That is not the case here, and the stop has never been envisioned as having parking associated with it as it is well served by buses. Additional parking would also increase traffic congestion.

5. Use stronger and more consistent language to support multi-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation on streetscape elements, economic development strategizing, branding, and marketing of the International Corridor.

The current language mentions the community and business associations, but in many sections does not mention resources in Montgomery County or the City specifically, or that the effort be coordinated across jurisdictions.

6. Establish a Landlord –Tenant Office.

The City receives many calls from individuals renting in Prince George's County who have no resources available to them.

	Staff has noted other discrepancies in the preliminary plan that are of a more technical nature which will be forwarded to the Planning Board for consideration.
Policy	<p>Coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions to foster and promote comprehensive, environmentally sound development and redevelopment in the community and throughout the region; support higher density retail, commercial, and residential development near transportation routes and hubs, that is environmentally sensitive and of a design and scale appropriate to surrounding neighborhoods and their historic nature</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>City of Takoma Park Strategic Plan</i></p>
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution Recommending Adoption of the Takoma/Langley Sector Plan (Prince George’s County) • Letter from the Takoma X-Roads Commercial Property Owners and the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority, Inc. • Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan PRELIMINARY (Prince George’s) http://www.pgplanning.org/Resources/Publications.htm • Prince George’s County General Plan http://www.pgplanning.org/Resources/Publications/General_Plan_Publication.htm • Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan – DRAFT (Montgomery County) http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/takoma_langley_crossroads/index.shtm
Recommendation	Provide comment on the proposed resolution.
Special Consideration	<p>The Council will be asked to vote on the proposed Resolution on June 22.</p> <p>The City will testify at the Joint Public Hearing before the Prince George’s County Planning Board and Prince George’s County Council on June 23, 2009.</p>

Introduced By:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION NO. 2009-

**RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE TAKOMA/LANGLEY SECTOR PLAN
(PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY)**

WHEREAS, the Takoma/Langley Sector Plan is a bi-county plan developed by Montgomery and Prince George's Counties' Planning Departments, to enhance the community character and provide for transit-oriented development around planned transit facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma/ Langley Sector Plan contains policies, objectives and recommendations that will guide future growth and development around proposed transit facilities in both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma/Langley Crossroads and portions of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor, though not included within boundaries of Prince George's County's preliminary Sector Plan, would be influenced and affected by the recommendations included within the plan; and

WHEREAS, Prince George's County's General Plan (2002), which makes comprehensive recommendations for guiding future development within Prince George's County, Maryland, does not recognize the New Hampshire Avenue corridor and the Takoma Langley Crossroads as a regional center; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council supports the development of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor and the Takoma/Langley Crossroads as an urbanized regional center which is environmentally and financially sustainable and enhances the quality of life of area residents; and

WHEREAS, buffered bike lanes have been identified by both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties' Planning Departments as a means of improving the sustainability and livability of communities such as the Takoma/Langley Crossroads, providing modal parity, improving health of local residents and providing access to transit, while reducing congestion, energy consumption and air pollution; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations included in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Preliminary Sector Plan developed by Prince George's County do not include the installation of a buffered bike lane as part of the proposed Purple Line construction; and

WHEREAS, preliminary plans for the proposed Purple Line will result in the widening of University Boulevard and the taking of land from adjacent property owners, making

it more difficult for pedestrians to cross to the transit station and to access local businesses, and also reducing redevelopment opportunities at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, proposed changes to the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue may reduce the amount of right-of-way needed for the construction of the Purple Line, improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the transit station, create more economically viable commercial corners, and increase capacity for redevelopment of the University Avenue/New Hampshire Avenue intersection; and

WHEREAS, the transit station has been modeled to serve riders arriving on foot, bicycle or bus, and has not been envisioned as a park and ride location which would aggravate existing congestion conditions and adversely affect air quality in the area; and

WHEREAS, each commercial district along New Hampshire Avenue, including the Takoma/Langley Crossroads, is considered by the community to be one commercial district with no distinction between jurisdictional boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the City has long worked to plan for, coordinate, implement and support improvements to these districts, regardless of their jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, coordinated streetscape elements, branding, and marketing of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads by all jurisdictions will visually unite the commercial districts, increase the impact of each individual jurisdiction's investment, improve opportunities for success, and improve the profile within the region; and

WHEREAS, Prince George's County currently does not provide landlord tenant services to the Takoma/Langley Crossroads population, despite a need for these services as evidenced by the quantity of calls received by the City of Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant office staff; and

WHEREAS, by providing these services, both tenants and landlords will become more knowledgeable about their rights, which will lead to better communication and resolution of tenant-landlord conflicts; and

WHEREAS, the Prince George's County Planning Board and the Prince George's County Council are holding a joint hearing on June 23, 2009 to consider the recommendations included in the Takoma/Langley Preliminary Sector Plan and to hear testimony on the recommendations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park supports the adoption of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan by Prince George's County Planning Board and Prince George's County Council, conditioned upon the following changes to the strategies and recommendations included in the Preliminary Sector Plan:

1. Amendment of the 2002 Prince George's County General Plan to designate Langley Park as a Regional Center and New Hampshire Avenue as a Corridor.
2. Specific inclusion of a buffered bike lane along University Boulevard and its implementation in coordination with the Purple Line.
3. Completion of a feasibility study for right-right-right turns at the University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue intersection prior to initiation of construction of the Purple Line project.
4. Deletion of the recommended strategy to provide park-and-ride lots or structures in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads area.
5. Incorporation of stronger and more consistent language in support of multi-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation on streetscape elements, economic development efforts, branding, and marketing of the International Corridor.
6. Establishment of a landlord tenant office to assist residents and multi-family property owners in resolving issues.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park expresses its appreciation to the Prince George's County Council and Planning Board for its strong support of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan, the Purple Line, transit-oriented-development, concern for the environment, and sensitivity to the needs of the residents and international character of the area.

Adopted this _____ day of June 2009.

ATTEST:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk