

IN REPLY REFER TO:
File No. 6942

June 25, 2009

Clerk of the Council
County Administration Building, Room 2198
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Upper Marlboro, MD 20772



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RE: Public Hearing Comments for Preliminary New Carrollton Transit District Development Plan and Proposed Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment

To the Clerk of the Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Preliminary New Carrollton Transit District Development Plan and Proposed Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment (TDDP/TDOZ). The comments provided below focus on the National Capital Planning Commission's (NCPC) role as the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region (NCR). NCPC coordinates all federal planning activities in the region, and has several planning functions: comprehensive planning; project planning; federal project and master plan reviews; and multi-year federal capital improvements planning. Among its major responsibilities are preparing long-range plans and special studies to ensure the effective functioning of the federal government in the NCR; preparing jointly with the District of Columbia government the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*; approving federal master plans and construction proposals in the District of Columbia, as well as reviewing master plans and area plans proposed by state, regional and local agencies for their effect on the federal establishment. We invite you to visit our website, www.ncpc.gov, for additional information.

Overall, we find the recommendations in the TDDP/TDOZ to be consistent with the planning principles and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan of the National Capital: Federal Elements* (Comprehensive Plan). Specifically, one of the overarching principles in the Comprehensive Plan states: "Reinforce 'Smart Growth' and Sustainable Development Planning Principles." As noted in the draft plan, New Carrollton is envisioned to become the region's second major multi-modal transit hub. Many of the recommendations in the New Carrollton TDDP/TDOZ are consistent with "Smart Growth" principles and advance regional and federal interests including:

- planning mixed-use neighborhoods within walking distance of multi-modal transit facilities,
- development of pedestrian-oriented design standards,
- the provision of affordable and workforce housing,
- creation of new parks and open spaces, and
- development of a sustainable stormwater management system.

The area in and around the Metro station is currently developed with structured and surface parking areas and functions as an end-of-the-line commuter destination. Such single-use auto-oriented land uses fail to maximize the economic and transportation efficiencies afforded by the availability of various public transportation investments, including the Amtrak, MARC

commuter rail, the WMATA Metro rail, and local bus transit. We strongly support the plan's proposal to optimize the significant transportation investments by transforming this area into a mixed-use, high-density, transit-oriented neighborhood. Not only will the realization of the TDDP/TDOZ provide direct benefit to the surrounding neighborhoods, but will also enhance the regional transportation system that the federal government relies upon to provide high quality, reliable transportation for its employees and customers.

Primary Federal Interest: IRS Facility

We identified the New Carrollton Federal Building, which houses the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), at 5000 Ellin Road, along with the pedestrian bridge over the heavy rail tracks that links the site to the Metro train station and the escalator connecting to the bridge as a primary federal interest. The TDDP/TDOZ identified the Metro Core (north side), which includes the IRS site, as the sub-area for the first phase of development activity and infrastructure investments. We informed the General Services Administration, which owns the property, regarding this preliminary TDDP/TDOZ Map Amendment draft and encouraged them to provide additional review comments to the Planning Board and the County Commission as they see fit.

Federal properties are not subject to local land-use changes or zoning regulations. For this reason, please revise the draft land use and zoning district maps to accurately show the New Carrollton Federal Building without a TDDP/TDOZ land use and zoning district designation. Nevertheless, the recommendations of the TDDP/TDOZ for the immediate surroundings of the New Carrollton Federal Building will still have an effect on federal interests. NCPC finds that many of the recommendations in the Metro Station Core neighborhood will enhance the work environment of federal employees and improve their commuting and housing choices, thus improving their quality of life. The federal government recognizes the value of ensuring the quality of life of its employees as it strives to attract and retain the most qualified employees. Below are additional comments we wish to provide that are pertinent to the recommendations for the Metro Station Core neighborhood.

Consistent with policies in the Federal Workplaces chapter of the Comprehensive Plan that focus on federal facilities location criteria in the region (see Attachment 1), NCPC supports the plan to increase the retail and commercial services available within walking distance of employment places such as the IRS facility. The Preferred Land Use Plan on page 68 of the TDDP/TDOZ shows all properties adjacent to the IRS facility (except for the open space northwest of the federal site) to be intended for mixed-use medium density and high-density development. A clustering of retail and commercial uses within walking distance of the IRS office buildings will not only provide a variety of eating and shopping places for federal employees, but will also activate the streets and enhance the pedestrian linkages to transit stops, thus making mass transit more convenient, safe and accessible. NCPC also supports the provision of additional housing stock of various types and affordability in the Metro Core (north side). IRS employees will have increased opportunities to live within walking and biking distance of their place of work. The land use recommendations in the TDDP/TDOZ, specifically in the Metro Core neighborhood, are consistent with federal workplace policies that encourage federal agencies to consider the availability of improved public transportation, housing choices, and employee services to ensure federal employees' productivity and long-term workforce retention.

Consistent with several policies in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan that focus on promoting mass transit and multi-modal transportation systems for the region, NCPC supports the creation of an intermodal transit center at the Metro Station Core neighborhood, the development of bicycle parking standards, the provision of bikeways within public streets right-of-way, and enhancing the functionality of the New Carrollton Metro Station for improved ridership. These recommendations, if adopted, will not only enhance the effectiveness of the Transit Management Plan and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that are already in place at the IRS facility, but will also enhance the commuting experience of federal employees in the region.

These transit and multi-modal transportation strategies are also consistent with the Air Quality policies found in the Federal Environment chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Federal policies to reverse the high level of ozone in the region include reducing mobile sources of air pollutants through transportation strategies such as adopting TDMs in federal workplace operations, incentivizing mass transit use by federal employees, and locating federal workplaces where mass transit is available.

NCPC supports the proposal to incorporate low-impact stormwater management strategies to open spaces and the creation of two transit plazas at the north side of the Metro Core neighborhood. The various types of urban and natural open spaces within walking distance of the IRS facility are amenities that federal employees can enjoy during their lunch breaks and enhance their pedestrian experience to and from work. The use of low-impact stormwater facilities is also compatible with the federal government's policies encouraging green development practices for its own sites. Among the policies for Water Quality in the Federal Environment chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, two address the use of environmentally-friendly "Best Management Practices" in federal project sites and building design and construction practice, including the use of green roofs, rain gardens, and retention ponds to reduce stormwater runoff on off-site water quality.

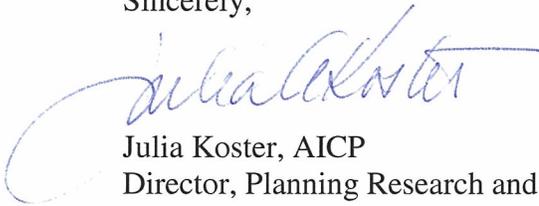
Outside of the Metro Core neighborhood, similar proposals to develop mixed-income housing in several of the neighborhoods in the study area; expand several pedestrian/bike trail systems; enhance the synergy among various public transportation options including AMTRAK, MARC, Metro, local bus services and the Purple Line; and use parking management strategies such as shared parking, all support the policies of the Comprehensive Plan Federal Workplace Element.

Other Federal Interests

The TDDP/TDOZ Development Strategy noted that the current configuration of the New Carrollton Metro Station will need to be upgraded to improve connectivity between the north and south entrances of the station. NCPC supports this recommendation conceptually but will need to evaluate the specific plans when they become available. Any proposed changes to the existing WMATA Metrorail station will require NCPC review as authorized by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact on December 22, 1960, as amended March 29, 1963 [Public Law 774, 80 Stat. 1324, Article IV 14 (c) (3)]. Should the Planning Board and the Prince George's County Commission proceed with the renovation of the New Carrollton Metro Station, we encourage you to meet with the staff of our Urban Design and Plan Review Division for early consultation during the concept design development stage.

As you seek to implement the TDDP/TDOZ recommendations we encourage you to coordinate your future efforts with other interested federal government representatives, especially with the General Services Administration and the Internal Revenue Service. We look forward to future coordination with the Prince George's County Planning Department. Please contact Amy Tarce at (202) 482-7241 or amy.tarce@ncpc.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Julia Koster, AICP
Director, Planning Research and Policy Division

Attachment

cc: Mike McGill, General Services Administration
Rodney Moulden, General Services Administration
Denise Green, General Services Administration
Samuel J. Parker, Jr., Chairman, Prince George's County Planning Board
Dr. Fern Piret, Planning Director, MNCPPC
William Washburn, Community Planning North Division, MNCPPC
Nat Bottigheimer, Dept. of Planning and Joint Development, WMATA
Edward J. Riley, WMATA

Development of Workplaces with Communities *Policies*

Building and Development Codes

The federal government should:

1. Develop sites and buildings consistent with local agencies' zoning and land use policies and development, redevelopment, or conservation objectives, to the maximum extent feasible.
2. Engage the public throughout the planning process. Federal agencies should seek technical assistance to develop and maintain this public planning process if they do not have the expertise.

Energy Efficiency

The federal government should:

1. Use innovative energy conserving techniques in the design and construction, operation, location, and orientation of federal workplaces.
2. Implement methods to reduce consumption of nonrenewable energy resources and to reduce the consumption of energy through energy efficient techniques as soon as practicable at all federal workplaces or when planning these facilities.

Excess Property

The federal government should:

1. Dispose of excess federal property in a manner that ensures its future use is coordinated with surrounding development patterns and land uses and contributes effectively to existing community development goals.
 - Use by, or shared use between, new federal activities and civilian public activities should be explored before the property or facility is determined to be excess.

Working Environment

The federal government should:

1. Site federal employment in areas that would contribute to the health, safety, welfare, and productivity of federal employees.
2. Ensure that safe and healthy working conditions continue to be provided and maintained at all sites and in all buildings occupied by the federal government.
3. Provide a variety of services for employees or have these services available within a reasonable travel time or walking distance. Services should include restaurants, retail outlets, financial services (including ATMs), day-care centers, and health and fitness centers.
 - Where these services cannot be accommodated within a federal workplace, preference should be given to locations where these services are within walking distance from the facility.

4. Ensure, in the relocation of federal employees, similar or improved availability of public transportation, employee services, and affordable housing for the employees and their families within a convenient commuting distance.
 - Preference should be given to new locations where opportunities for employees to use public transportation, walk or bike on their home/work commute are increased.
5. Strive to create federal workplaces that engender a sense of pride, purpose, and dedication for employees.
6. Encourage federal employees to rideshare, including the use of carpools, vanpools, privately leased buses, public transportation, and other multi-occupant modes of travel.
7. Permit and encourage telework by federal employees where it will benefit the federal government and the public.
8. Permit and encourage variable work schedules for federal employees where it will benefit the federal government and the public.
9. Consider locating federal workplaces near a variety of housing options to benefit employees. Priority should be given to locations that are easily accessible for employees to walk, bike, or take public transportation to commute between home and work.
10. Support local agency efforts to create new housing options where federal workplaces are located or are planned to be located or expanded.
11. Promote housing initiatives for a variety of housing options close to public transit or federal facilities. These initiatives should provide housing that makes the commute of the federal employees more convenient.

Security

When a federal agency is implementing workplace security, whether for an existing structure or a newly constructed building, the agency should consider the impact of the security infrastructure on the operations and visual character of the community.

Guided by *The National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan*, federal agencies should integrate building perimeter security in a manner that enhances and beautifies the public realm. Security elements should not be separate or redundant systems that unnecessarily clutter or impede access to public spaces. Rather, consistent, coherent, and welcoming streetscapes that are worthy of the nation’s capital should be developed or maintained as investments in security elements are made. Whenever security needs can be addressed by alternative measures that have less

adverse impact, or no adverse impact, on vehicular traffic in the roadway, and that minimize disruption to pedestrian access or circulation on the sidewalk, such alternatives are strongly recommended over measures that have more adverse impacts upon traffic, parking, circulation, or access.

Neighboring federal agencies should coordinate the planning and design of security infrastructure to ensure consistent, coherent, and welcoming streetscapes. Consolidated operations improve the efficiency and effectiveness of security features.

For sensitive federal workplaces and their occupants, security needs should be weighed against the viability of the urban area. Security measures should not impede a community’s commerce and vitality, excessively restrict or impede use of public space or streets, or impact the health of existing landscapes.