



## PLANNING COMMISSION

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**Wednesday, January 15, 2020**

**7:00 PM**

**Rockville City Hall**

**Mayor and Council Chambers**

**Meeting No. 02-2020**

### AGENDA

Charles Littlefield, Chair

Don Hadley  
Suzan Pitman  
Sarah Miller

Anne Goodman  
John Tyner, II  
Rev. Jane E. Wood

Jim Wasilak, Staff Liaison

Nicholas Dumais, Assistant City Attorney

**1. Worksession**

- A. Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update, Volume II - Planning Areas, Initial Staff Draft: Review of Planning Areas 10 (Montrose and North Farm), 12 (Tower Oaks), 14 (Rockshire and Fallsmead), 15 (Fallsgrove and Research Boulevard), and 16 (King Farm)**

**2. Commission Items**

**A. Staff Liaison Report**

**B. Old Business**

**C. New Business**

**D. FYI/Correspondence**

**3. Adjourn**

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**HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND APPLICANTS**

**I. GENERAL ORDER OF SESSION FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS**

1. Staff presentation
2. City Board or Commission comment
3. Applicant presentation (10 min.)
4. Public comment (3 min, or 5 min for the representative of an association)
5. Planning Commission Discussion and Deliberation
6. Decision or recommendation by vote

The Commission may ask questions of any party at any time during the proceedings.

**II. PLANNING COMMISSION BROADCAST**

- Watch LIVE on Comcast Cable Rockville Channel 11 and online at: [www.rockvillemd.gov](http://www.rockvillemd.gov)
- Replay on Comcast Cable Channel 11:
  - Wednesdays at 7:00 pm (if no live meeting)
  - Sundays at 7:00 pm
  - Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 1:00 pm
  - Saturdays and Sundays at 12:00 am (midnight)
- Video on Demand (within 48 hours of meeting) at: [www.rockvillemd.gov/VideoOnDemand](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/VideoOnDemand).

**III. NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS**

- For a complete list of all applications on file, visit: [www.rockvillemd.gov/DevelopmentWatch](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/DevelopmentWatch).

**VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RESOURCES**

- Additional resources are available to anyone who would like more information about the planning and development review process on the City’s web site at: [www.rockvillemd.gov/cpds](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/cpds).

Maryland law and the Planning Commission's Rules of Procedure regarding ex parte (extra-record) communications require all discussion, review, and consideration of the Commission's business take place only during the Commission's consideration of the item at a scheduled meeting. Telephone calls and meetings with Commission members in advance of the meeting are not permitted. Written communications will be directed to appropriate staff members for response and included in briefing materials for all members of the Commission.



Agenda Item #:	A
Meeting Date:	January 15, 2020
Responsible Staff:	Clark Larson

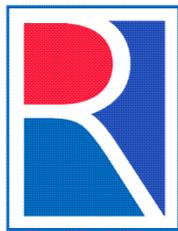
**SUBJECT:**

Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update, Volume II - Planning Areas, Initial Staff Draft: Review of Planning Areas 10 (Montrose and North Farm), 12 (Tower Oaks), 14 (Rockshire and Fallsmead), 15 (Fallsgrove and Research Boulevard), and 16 (King Farm)

**RECOMMENDATION**

(Include change in law or Policy if appropriate in this section):

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission continue review of, with instructions on modifications to, the Initial Staff Draft of the Comprehensive Plan, Volume II - Planning Areas. Staff recommends starting with Planning Area 10 (Montrose and North Farm), followed by 12 (Tower Oaks), 14 (Rockshire and Fallsmead), 15 (Fallsgrove and Research Boulevard), and 16 (King Farm), as time allows. If all Planning Areas intended for review at the Planning Commission's January 8th meeting were not completed, staff recommends starting the January 15th meeting by completing review of the remaining Planning Areas from that agenda.



City of  
**Rockville**  
Get Into It

## Planning Commission Staff Report

**MEETING DATE:** January 15, 2020

**REPORT DATE:** January 8, 2020

**RESPONSIBLE STAFF:** Clark Larson, AICP, Senior Planner  
Comprehensive Planning, Planning and Development Services  
240.314.8225      CLarson@rockvillemd.gov

**SUBJECT:** Rockville 2040: Review of Initial Staff Draft of the Comprehensive Plan, Volume II - Planning Areas 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16.

### DISCUSSION

This memorandum presents a portion of the Initial Staff Draft for Volume II, Planning Areas, of the Comprehensive Plan update and is a continuation of the review of Volume II from the Planning Commission meetings on December 11 and January 8. Volume II is written as a supplement to Volume I, which is the broader citywide policy document comprised of the Plan elements. The entire Volume II draft is available for review as an attachment to the December 11, 2019 Planning Commission meeting agenda (available online as Agenda Item 3.A at <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/12112019-5763>).

The purpose of this review is for the Planning Commission to reach a level of confidence that Volume II is ready to be released for oral and written public testimony. The Commission's direction for changes to this Initial Staff Draft will result in a revised document, the Planning

Commission Public Hearing Draft; the version for which the Commission will seek public testimony.

As with Volume I of the Comprehensive Plan draft, Volume II is the result of extensive community input that was gathered over a multi-year period, through the Rockville 2040 public engagement effort. Hundreds of residents, business owners, employees and others participated in the effort and helped to generate the policies and recommendations in Volume II. Rockville 2040 included 35 listening sessions that were held throughout the city (including at least one in every planning area), citywide meetings that brought more refinement to the plan, and many follow-up meetings with various neighborhoods, residents, property owners and other stakeholders. The public engagement process is discussed in more detail in the Introduction to Volume I and briefly described below for each planning area scheduled for discussion at this meeting.

### **Staff Recommendation**

As the Planning Commission did with its review of the draft Comprehensive Plan elements in Volume I, staff recommends that the Commission continue its review of the planning areas in Volume II in a series of meetings due to the large amount of content.

Staff recommends that, at the January 15 meeting, the Planning Commission review the draft Comprehensive Plan, Volume II, for Planning Areas 10 (Montrose and North Farm), 12 (Tower Oaks), 14 (Rockshire and Fallsmead), 15 (Falls Grove and Research Boulevard), and 16 (King Farm), as time allows, providing direction on any modifications to staff. A brief discussion for each area is provided below.

This report has been completed before the January 8 Planning Commission has taken place. If the planning areas intended for review on January 8 were not completed at that meeting, staff recommends completing those planning areas before continuing to the planning areas recommended for the January 15 meeting.

During review of the Initial Staff Draft of Volume II, the Planning Commission may direct staff to make any changes it deems necessary prior to its public release. Commissioners are asked to bring their copies of the Volume II Initial Staff Draft to the meeting on January 15.

### **Planning Areas to be Discussed on January 15**

In addition to the listening sessions and other neighborhood-specific meetings discussed under Public Engagement for each planning area below, stakeholders in all planning areas were invited to participate in other Rockville 2040 community engagement opportunities, including citywide forums, open houses, and information sessions. Recommendations and policies for each planning area were informed by many public discussions as well as staff research and analysis.

As mentioned in the prior reports, the Planning Commission approved, on May 23, 2018, changes to the boundaries of some planning areas. Those changes are reflected in the Initial

Staff Draft and in this report. Attachment A in the report for the January 8 discussion was a side-by-side comparison of the 2002 and updated planning areas.

### Montrose and North Farm (Planning Area 10)

The residential neighborhoods of Montrose and North Farm are combined into one planning area for the draft Comprehensive Plan update due to their shared land use character and proximity. There is no existing neighborhood plan for this newly formed planning area, which is a combination of Montrose (PA 10) and the residential portion of North Farm (PA 11) from the 2002 Comprehensive Master Plan. Most of the Woodmont Country Club property, which in 2002 was part of Planning Area 11, has not been included in this new Planning Area 10 but instead has become its own redefined Planning Area 11.

#### *Public Engagement for this Planning Area*

A listening session was held for the North Farm neighborhood on October 6, 2015 and for the Montrose neighborhood on October 13, 2015 to obtain input on the draft Comprehensive Plan update.

The North Farm neighborhood discussion focused on concerns over the planned residential development in Tower Oaks, The Preserve, with some participants seeking a limitation on building heights and protection of the neighborhood's quality of life. North Farm residents also expressed an affinity with the Montrose neighborhood, seeking greater connectivity with it, the shopping areas of the South Pike, and the Twinbrook Metro Station.

Discussions with the Montrose neighborhood focused on the need to improve pedestrian safety and access and to Rockville Pike and its shopping areas; balancing convenient vehicular access with traffic calming measures throughout the Montrose neighborhood; safe pedestrian access to Montrose Park; and the need for expanded amenities at the park and the community center.

#### *Policies Superseded by the Draft Comprehensive Plan*

Recommendations and policies of the draft Comprehensive Plan (Vols. I and II) for Planning Area 10 will supersede those in the respective planning area chapters from the 2002 Plan.

### Tower Oaks (Planning Area 12)

The Tower Oaks planning area is primarily composed of properties in the Tower Oaks Planned Development area, with the remaining properties built as office and light industrial uses. The I-270/North of Montrose Road Neighborhood Plan was adopted in 1985 to lay out recommendations for a development agreement and master plan with the land owner, and to amend the 1970 Master Plan land use map for the area. The neighborhood plan included a list of public improvements to be carried out by the city, as well as improvements to be completed by the developer as the project progressed. All required improvements to city infrastructure are now complete, while the approved private development plan has yet to be fully realized.

*Public Engagement for this Planning Area*

A listening session was held at Rockville City Hall on October 8, 2015 to obtain community input on the Tower Oaks planning area. Most of the attendees represented business tenant and real estate interests in the planning area. The discussion and comments focused on a desire for greater flexibility of development regulations and the need to bolster the retail and office market in the area. Limited transportation options and a lack of walkable destinations were cited as hinderances to attracting office employees, as well.

*Policies Superseded by the Draft Comprehensive Plan*

Recommendations and policies in the Comprehensive Plan (Vols. I and II), once adopted, will supersede those in the 1985 neighborhood plan and the respective planning area chapter from the 2002 Comprehensive Master Plan, but will not alter the approved Tower Oaks Planned Development (PD) and its subsequent amendments or related development agreement.

Rockshire and Fallsmead (Planning Area 14)

Much of Planning Area 14 is developed as detached residential homes, with several residential townhouse communities, stream valley parks, public schools, and a large private country club and golf course making up the remaining area. There is no existing neighborhood plan for this planning area, which retains its geographical boundary from the 2002 Comprehensive Master Plan.

*Public Engagement for this Planning Area*

Several listening sessions and public meetings were held for Planning Area 14 to gather input for the draft Comprehensive Plan. An initial listening session with the Rockshire/Fallsmead community was held on October 21, 2015. Discussion topics focused on the future of the Rockshire Village Shopping Center, located at the corner of Wootton Parkway and Hurley Avenue, and concern over Wootton Parkway as an often-congested road that is difficult for pedestrians to cross safely, especially for students of Robert Frost Middle School and Thomas S. Wootton High School.

This first listening session was followed up by a second meeting on March 8, 2016, which, due to a contentious development proposal under consideration for the Rockshire Village Center at the time, saw a record listening session attendance of 75 participants. The conversation focused largely on the future of the shopping center, though participants also expressed interest in water quality protection for area streams, concern about previous attempts to expand Wootton Parkway to two lanes each way, and a desire for more park and open space amenities and bike infrastructure.

Planning and Development Services staff met several times in 2018-2019 with a small group of Rockshire and Fallsmead residents to discuss the Rockshire Village Center site and other issues relevant to the community. The pastor of the Korean Presbyterian Church of Rockville (the church adjacent to the shopping center) was included in some of these discussions. The church had a parking arrangement with Giant Food when Giant controlled the site and was the anchor

tenant. The property owners have continued that parking arrangement, as well as another separate arrangement with Wootton High School, since Giant and the other retailers vacated the site.

Staff met with the Rockshire Homeowners Association Board on January 9, 2019. Staff presented to the Board an idea for the city to hire a consultant to facilitate a community process that would explore future land use options for the site and attempt to find solutions that would be acceptable to both the community and the property owners. The Board members supported hiring a consultant.

Planning and Development Services staff attended the annual Fallsmead Homeowners Association meeting on March 27, 2019 to inform attendees about the upcoming public hearings for the Comprehensive Master Plan, Volume I, and to discuss the city's intention to hire a consultant to facilitate meetings regarding the Rockshire Village Center site. The Fallsmead Board members were also in favor of the city hiring a consultant.

As part of an effort to gather broader community input on potential development options for the shopping center, two meetings were held in the Rockshire/Fallmead community on May 9 and May 30, 2019. The meetings were facilitated by the consulting firm, Rhodeside & Harwell, in partnership with city planning staff. The combined 203 participants provided comments and suggestions for the kind of development they wished to see at the former shopping center site. The consultants also met with the shopping center property owners in May 2019 to gain their perspective on the feasibility of potential development options.

The consultants produced a summary report on their findings and recommendations in August 2019. The report can be found at <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/2293/Rockshire-Village-Center-Study>. Staff's recommendations and policies for the site that are contained in the draft Plan were informed by the report and all of the community interaction.

#### *Policies Superseded by the Draft Comprehensive Plan*

Recommendations and policies of the draft Comprehensive Plan (Vols. I and II) will supersede those in the Planning Area 14 chapter of the 2002 Plan.

#### Fallsgrove and Research Boulevard (Planning Area 15)

Planning Area 15 is defined by the New Urbanist residential neighborhood of Fallsgrove and the research and technology office corridor of Research Boulevard. It is a combination of Planning Areas 18 (Fallsgrove) and 15 (the portion west of I-270) from the 2002 Comprehensive Master Plan. While there is no existing neighborhood plan for either area, the Fallsgrove neighborhood continues to be regulated by the Fallsgrove Planned Development.

#### *Public Engagement for this Planning Area*

Staff held listening sessions with residents of the Fallsgrove neighborhood on July 7, 2015 and with property owners and commercial tenants of the Research Boulevard corridor on July 9, 2015.

Comments received from the Fallsgrove neighborhood listening session included a desire for better public transit options from Fallsgrove to the Rockville and Shady Grove Metro Stations and nearby commercial centers, and a need for greater attention to traffic congestion and ingress/egress constraints at the Fallsgrove Village Center.

The Research Boulevard corridor listening session discussion focused on the need for more public amenities (parks, shopping, services, etc.) to serve office employees and infrastructure improvements along Research Boulevard. Desire for more affordable housing and alternative transportation options other than cars (e.g., transit, bike, walking, etc.) were also expressed by meeting participants.

Additional input was received through the City's contracting, in March of 2017, for an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) for the Research Boulevard corridor. The focus of the TAP was to provide ideas in response to the weakened market for suburban office space. The TAP's work included interviews of businesses and other property owners in the corridor, thereby providing additional input for the Comprehensive Plan. Some of the recommendations from the ULI TAP report, *Research Boulevard – It's Not an Office Park!*, are included in the draft plan and a complete set of recommendations and background information can be found in the full report, available online at <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36631/>.

#### *Policies Superseded by the Draft Comprehensive Plan*

Recommendations and policies of the draft Comprehensive Plan (Vols. I and II) will supersede those in their respective planning area chapters from the 2002 Plan.

#### King Farm (Planning Area 16)

The King Farm planning area includes the master planned neighborhood of King Farm and other office and mixed-use developments along Shady Grove Road and Piccard Drive. It is a combination of Planning Areas 17 (King Farm) and the portion of 15 east of I-270, from the 2002 Comprehensive Master Plan. While there is no existing neighborhood plan for the area, the King Farm neighborhood continues to be regulated by the King Farm Planned Development.

#### *Public Engagement for this Planning Area*

Listening sessions were held in the King Farm community on September 8, 2015 and for property owners and commercial tenants of the Piccard Drive and Shady Grove areas on July 9, 2015.

Comments from the King Farm listening session focused on the preservation of the historically designated King Farm farmstead and its buildings; ensuring commercial success for the King

Farm Village Center; pedestrian safety, with a focus on the ability to walk safely to the Shady Grove Metro station; and concerns over school boundaries and school overcrowding.

The Piccard Drive listening session yielded comments on how to boost the desirability of office properties through utility and transportation improvements, and suggestions to better connect Piccard Drive with the retail and transportation amenities in the King Farm community.

*Policies Superseded by the Draft Comprehensive Plan*

Recommendations and policies of the draft Comprehensive Plan (Vols. I and II) will supersede those in their respective planning area chapters from the 2002 Plan.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The Initial Staff Draft of the Comprehensive Plan, Volume II: Planning Areas is the result of extensive community input that was gathered over a multi-year period, through Rockville 2040. This overall public engagement process has been described more thoroughly in previous staff reports on the Volume I draft.

As noted previously, many of the recommendations and policies for these planning areas stem from listening sessions held in each of the city's planning areas, as well as with specific stakeholder groups (e.g., high school students, Montgomery College, seniors, etc.). They also came from citywide meetings and follow-up neighborhood and stakeholder meetings. More detailed information on public outreach and the planning process is available at <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/203/>. The public engagement process for each of the planning areas to be reviewed at the January 15 meeting are described above, in the Discussion section of this report.

Outreach and public engagement will continue through the end of this process. It will include visits to community and neighborhood associations and electronic outreach in advance of public hearings. When the Planning Commission has completed its review of Volume II, staff will recommend that the Commission set a public hearing date (or dates), which will provide the community its next formal opportunity to provide input, this time directly to the Planning Commission.

## **BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

City boards and commissions participated in many of the meetings held during the Rockville 2040 process; and city staff have attended various meetings of boards, commissions and other organizations (e.g., Rockville Housing Enterprises, Rockville Chamber of Commerce, Rockville Asian Pacific Task Force, Rockville Senior Citizen Commission, Rockville Environment Commission, Rockville Economic Development, Inc., etc.) to share plan update progress and obtain input. The Planning Commission also invited Chairs of boards and commissions to work sessions during the review of Volume I, to participate in discussions of relevant elements. The Planning Commission may again choose to include relevant boards and commissions in work sessions on Volume II.

## NEXT STEPS

Additional meetings will be held in January and February to complete a review of the remaining draft planning areas of Volume II. Based on discussion with the Commission on December 11, 2019, the remaining dates were chosen for this review, though are subject to change at the Planning Commission's discretion.

- Wednesday, January 22, 2020 (Regular Planning Commission Meeting)
- Wednesday, February 5, 2020 (Special Meeting, if needed)
- Wednesday, February 12, 2020 (Regular Planning Commission Meeting)

Staff anticipates that the outcome of the Planning Commission's review of Volume II, including the direction for revisions, will be the Planning Commission's Draft Volume II for Public Hearing. Consistent with State law, the Commission will set public hearing dates to take place at least 60 days after release of the document, and submission of a draft to the State of Maryland and surrounding jurisdictions and invite both oral and written testimony from the community.

After the Planning Commission has considered the testimony received on the public hearing draft and directed staff to make any desired changes, the planning areas of Volume II will be joined with the citywide elements of Volume I for a complete Planning Commission Recommended Draft Comprehensive Plan and then transmitted to the Mayor and Council for review and action.

The anticipated schedule following the release of the Draft Volume II for Planning Commission Public Hearing is outlined below:

- **February to April 2020** – 60-day state-mandated review period. Meetings with community and neighborhood associations and electronic outreach in advance of public hearings.
- **April to May 2020** – Public comment period and public hearings.
- **Early Summer 2020** – Planning Commission work sessions to review public testimony.
- **Summer 2020** – Staff finalizes edits to Volumes I and II based on Planning Commission direction; Planning Commission transmits its recommended Comprehensive Plan, Volumes I and II, to the Mayor and Council for its review and final action.