

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND  
SITTING AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
2007 Legislative Session**

Resolution No. CR-11-2007  
Proposed by The Chairman (by request – Planning Board)  
Introduced by Council Members Bland, Dernoga, Exum, Dean, Harrington and Knotts  
Co-Sponsors \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Introduction March 6, 2007

**RESOLUTION**

1 A RESOLUTION concerning  
2 Preparation of a New Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) and approval of Goals,  
3 Concepts, Guidelines, and Public Participation Program for the Branch Avenue Corridor  
4 (Portions of Planning Area 76A)

5 For the purpose of initiating an amendment to the 2000 Approved Master Plan and Sectional  
6 Map Amendment for the Heights and Vicinity (Planning Area 76A), and approving the Goals,  
7 Concepts, Guidelines, and Public Participation Program in order to develop a comprehensive  
8 approach to implement the recommendations of the 2002 General Plan, to ensure that future  
9 development is consistent with County policies.

10 WHEREAS, the current Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) for the  
11 Heights and Vicinity (Planning Area 76A), was approved in November 2000; and

12 WHEREAS, Sections 27-225.01.05 and 27-641 of the Zoning Ordinance of Prince  
13 George’s County establish procedures whereby the Prince George’s County Planning Board may  
14 initiate a Master Plan amendment and a concurrent SMA with the approval of the District  
15 Council; and

16 WHEREAS, the approved Fiscal Year 2007 Planning Department Work Program includes  
17 the preparation of the Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan and SMA to evaluate the land uses,  
18 other plan elements, and recommendations contained in the 2000 Approved Master Plan and  
19 Sectional Map Amendment for the Heights and Vicinity (Planning Area 76A), and to implement  
20 the 2002 General Plan’s recommendations for tiers, growth centers, and designated corridor  
21 nodes within these planning areas and the 2003 Strategic Framework for Transit-Oriented

1 Development in Prince George's County; and

2 WHEREAS, the Sector Plan area primarily focuses on the Branch Avenue Corridor from  
3 the District of Columbia line to St. Barnabas Road, including Iverson Mall, Marlow Heights  
4 Shopping Center, Naylor Road Metro Station, Old Silver Hill Road, and St. Barnabas Road  
5 corridor to the Capital Beltway (I-95/495) as shown in the attached Sector Plan boundary map;  
6 and

7 WHEREAS, the Goals, Concepts, Guidelines, and Public Participation Program  
8 (Attachment A) establish the purpose, the issues to be addressed during the plan preparation, and  
9 methodology for ensuring adequate community involvement in the planning process; and

10 WHEREAS, the Sector Plan will set development policy and guidelines to provide a mix of  
11 uses at an intensity appropriate for the Naylor Road Community Center, Iverson-Suitland  
12 Regional Center, and the Branch Avenue Corridor within the Developed Tier, as articulated in  
13 the 2002 Approved Prince George's County General Plan; and

14 WHEREAS, it is the desire of the District Council to process the Sector Plan and Sectional  
15 Map Amendment concurrently, in accordance with Section 27-225.01.05 of the Zoning  
16 Ordinance, to shorten the process and provide a strong interrelationship between the Sector Plan  
17 and zoning of land as a tool to implement land use recommendations.

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Prince George's  
19 County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for that part of the Maryland-Washington  
20 Regional District in Prince George's County, Maryland, that The Maryland-National Capital  
21 Park and Planning Commission is hereby directed to prepare a Sector Plan and concurrent  
22 Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) for the Branch Avenue Corridor in accordance with the  
23 requirements of Parts 3 and 13 of the Zoning Ordinance for Prince George's County, Maryland.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the District Council has considered and hereby  
25 approves the Goals, Concepts, Guidelines, and Public Participation Program (Attachment A).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect upon its adoption.

Adopted this 6th day of March, 2007.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S  
COUNTY, MARYLAND, SITTING AS THE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PART OF  
THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL  
DISTRICT IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,  
MARYLAND

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Camille A. Exum  
Chair

ATTEST:

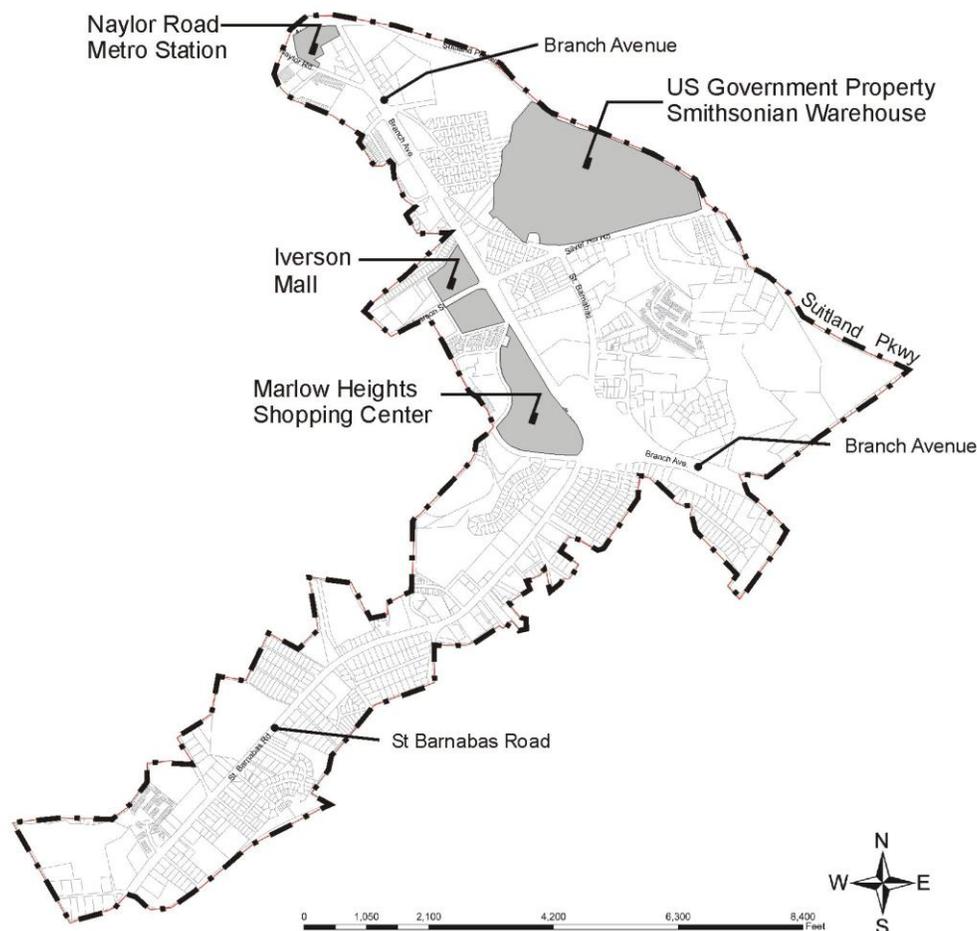
\_\_\_\_\_  
Redis C. Floyd  
Clerk of the Council

**PRELIMINARY GOALS, CONCEPTS, GUIDELINES AND PROPOSED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FOR THE BRANCH AVENUE CORRIDOR SECTOR PLAN AND SECTIONAL MAP AMENDMENT (SMA)**

## INTRODUCTION

This document contains the preliminary Goals, Concepts and Guidelines, Public Participation Program, and the schedule for a sector plan and sectional map amendment (SMA) for the Branch Avenue Corridor. The sector plan and SMA will update the 2000 *Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Heights and Vicinity Planning Area 76A* for the area within the sector plan boundary, implement the 2002 *Approved Prince George's County General Plan* and the 2003 *Strategic Framework for Transit Oriented Development in Prince George's County*, and address current planning and development issues.

The sector plan area primarily focuses on the Branch Avenue Corridor from the District of Columbia boundary line to St Barnabas Road, including Iverson Mall and Marlow Heights Shopping Center, Naylor Road Metro Station, Old Silver Hill Road and St Barnabas Road corridor to the Capital Beltway (I-95/495). The delineation is shown on Map 1 below:



**Map 1**

## GOALS

The primary goal of the sector plan is to implement the 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*. The sector plan area is located within the Developed Tier. The vision for the Developed Tier is a network of sustainable, transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, medium- to high-density neighborhoods. Branch Avenue is a designated Corridor; Naylor Road Metro Station is a Community Center; and Iverson-Suitland (the Silver Hill Road Corridor from Iverson Mall to the Suitland Parkway), a Regional Center. The vision for Centers and Corridors is a mixed residential and nonresidential uses at moderate to high densities and intensities, with a strong emphasis on transit-oriented development. The goals of each type of designation are outlined below.

The goals of the Developed Tier are to:

- Strengthen existing neighborhoods
- Encourage appropriate infill
- Encourage more intense, high-quality housing and economic development in Centers and Corridors
- Preserve, restore and enhance sensitive features and provide open space
- Expand tree cover through the increased planting of trees and landscaping
- Capitalize on investments in transportation and other infrastructure
- Maintain/renovate existing public infrastructure
- Promote transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods
- Renew/redevelop commercial strips
- Enhance industrial employment areas
- Design and site public facilities in accordance with appropriate development patterns

The goals of the Centers and Corridors are to:

- Capitalize on public investment in the existing transportation system
- Promote compact, mixed-use development at moderate to high densities
- Ensure transit-supportive and transit-serviceable development
- Require pedestrian-oriented and transit-oriented design
- Ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods

## PROJECT MISSION

The project mission is to identify appropriate future land uses and zoning, with strong public participation, for the Branch Avenue Corridor including the Iverson Mall and Marlow Heights Shopping Center, Silver Hill Road, Old Silver Hill Road, St Barnabas Road commercial areas, and the Naylor Road Metro station area, and to facilitate revitalization and redevelopment in a manner that will encourage quality economic development, improve safety and enhance the quality and character of the area and its surrounding communities. The plan will encourage quality economic development and urban design; identify needed transportation and pedestrian improvements; and protect valuable resources. In doing so, the plan will fulfill the 2002 General Plan vision for Centers and Corridors in the Developed Tier as a network of sustainable, transit-supporting mixed-use, pedestrian oriented medium to high density neighborhoods. The goal of the final product will be to establish the framework for viable community change that is

**ATTACHMENT A**

economically sustainable, supports community activities and results in an improved corridor performance and image.

**GUIDELINES (ISSUES)**

The sector plan/SMA guidelines are the issues to be addressed in the major elements of the plan. The major elements are: land use, environmental infrastructure, transportation systems, public facilities, urban design, housing, revitalization, historic preservation and implementation. The planning process, in collaboration and partnership with the community and other stakeholders, will examine local planning issues, research and strategize possible solutions to the identified issues. The following outlines some of the issues to be addressed during the planning process; however, other issues will be identified during public involvement in the planned series of workshops and charrette and interactions with residents, shoppers, business and property owners throughout the process:

**Land Use and Development Pattern**

**Goal:** To ensure that the land-use designations in the sector plan area are adequate, realistic, and flexible to achieve the vision of the General Plan for the Naylor Road Metro Station, Iverson-Suitland Regional Center, and the Branch Avenue Corridor.

**Issues:**

1. Appropriate mix and intensity of land uses within and in the vicinity of Naylor Road Metro Station to capitalize on the presence of rail transit facility.
2. Feasibility, appropriateness, character and intensity of development within and in the vicinity of Suitland-Iverson Area to transform it to a Regional Center.
3. Appropriate infill development/redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties within the sector plan boundary.
4. Opportunities for higher density residential development within the existing shopping areas.

**Environmental Infrastructure**

**Goal:** To protect, preserve, enhance and where appropriate restore environmentally sensitive features.

**Issues:**

1. Opportunities for implementing the 2005 *Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan*.
2. Promotion of “green building” and Low-Impact Development Design techniques for new development and redevelopment.

**Transportation Systems**

**Goal:** To create a safe and efficient transportation system that will reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and improve pedestrian and vehicular mobility.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Issues:**

1. Appropriate mitigation measures for congested intersections such as Branch Avenue at Naylor Road and Silver Hill Road, St. Barnabas Road at Silver Hill Road, and the problematic intersection of Old Silver Hill Road into Branch Avenue.
2. How to capitalize on the three Metro stations (Naylor Road, Suitland and Branch Avenue) serving to reduce peak hour vehicular traffic on Branch Avenue and St. Barnabas Road.
3. Appropriate pedestrian safety features such as traffic-calming techniques to slow traffic and facilitate pedestrian use across vehicular roadways.
4. Access management and consolidation of access along St Barnabas commercial corridor.
5. Adequate and safe pedestrian walkways and dedicated bike lanes between Iverson Mall, Marlow Heights Shopping Center, Metro stations, schools, parks, and recreation facilities in the area.
6. Better pedestrian linkages between the adjacent residential neighborhoods and the Naylor Road Metro Station and the Iverson Mall/Marlow Heights Shopping Center.
7. Improved pedestrian crossings along Branch Avenue, Silver Hill Road and St Barnabas Road.
8. Provision of a comprehensive sidewalk network and pedestrian amenities within the corridor.
9. Provision of park trails in the existing and planned parkland and open space corridors.

**Public Facilities**

**Goal:** To ensure adequate public facilities in locations that efficiently serve the residents of the area.

**Issues:**

1. Addressing the impact of additional land uses on the existing public facilities in the area.

**Parks and Recreation**

**Goal:** To provide facilities and acreage based on the needs and interests of the community, in a manner that is functional, safe and sensitive to the surrounding environment.

**Issues:**

1. Ensuring that residents in the sector plan area have adequate park and recreation acreage based on the population.
2. Evaluating visual and functional linkages between existing park facilities and the Branch Avenue corridor.
3. Expansion of Henson Creek Hiker/Biker/Equestrian Trail from Temple Hill Road to Branch Avenue Metro Station.
4. Acquisition of land associated with stream valleys to extend the open space system and provide more public access to the stream valley networks.

## **Economic Development**

**Goal:** To encourage quality economic development in the area by increasing employment opportunities, income and the tax base.

### **Issues:**

1. Opportunities to incorporate quality economic development to the existing Naylor Road Metro Station – Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).
2. Strategies to attract high-quality retailers and employers to the area and the retention and maintenance of quality businesses.
3. Retention of existing businesses and opportunities to improve business operation and appearance.

## **Housing**

**Goal:** To enhance the quality and character of existing residential neighborhoods and the provision of high quality mix of residential development that provides a choice of housing types.

### **Issues:**

1. Appropriate quantities of higher-density townhouse and multifamily dwellings in the vicinity of the Naylor Road Metro Station and Suitland-Iverson Area designated by the General Plan as Community and Regional Centers respectively.
2. Evaluations of the existing housing stock in the sector plan area for maintenance and code compliance.
3. Opportunities for redevelopment/renovations of deteriorated residential structures in the area.

## **Revitalization**

**Goal:** To ensure a healthy climate for private sector investment and improved quality of life of the area residents.

### **Issues:**

1. Strategies to revive the deteriorating Branch Avenue commercial corridor and implement physical and aesthetic improvements to the St. Barnabas Road commercial corridor.
2. Opportunities to replace or renovate obsolete commercial and deteriorated residential structures.
3. Identifying blighted and declining residential and commercial areas, of no larger than ten acres, for consideration as revitalization overlay areas and working with various County agencies to create and implement programs and policies for these areas.
4. Identifying financial assistance and other public investments for revitalization projects in the sector plan area

## **Urban Design**

**Goal:** To use urban design to achieve quality development and redevelopment, and improved public safety throughout the sector plan area.

**ATTACHMENT A****Issues:**

1. Lack of strong identity and sense of place along Branch Avenue.
2. Addressing public safety in the area and reducing opportunities for crime by creating a safe and inviting environment.
3. The poor image of commercial areas throughout the sector plan area, but particularly along the Branch Avenue and St. Barnabas Road Corridor, and inadequate pedestrian networks to serve abutting residential areas, and the overall lack of a unified and attractive streetscape.
4. The need to establish necessary physical design improvements at Iverson Mall and Marlow Heights Shopping Center to improve safety, aesthetics and pedestrian mobility.
5. Strategies to encourage quality pedestrian-oriented development at the Naylor Road Metro Station and vicinity and the Suitland-Iverson Center.
6. Placing utility lines underground to improve the visual experience of the roadway.
7. Strategies to encourage low-impact stormwater management.

**Historic Preservation**

**Goal:** To identify and evaluate all historic resources for designation as historic sites to help preserve these sites.

**Issues:**

1. Identifying new historic properties to be added to the approved list of designated historic sites and addressing obstacles to their preservation.
2. The need to encourage the implementation of public/private preservation activities in order to promote understanding, appreciation and pride in the area's assets and heritage.

**Implementation**

The sector plan will become the land use policy for the area within the project boundary. The land use and design recommendations contained within the plan will be implemented most directly through the application of zoning in the SMA. The SMA is an amendment to the county zoning map for the purpose of implementing the sector plan recommendations. In addition, collaborative efforts between county and state agencies, community organizations, and property owners will be required to implement some of the recommendations of the plan.

**Issues:**

1. Determining the appropriate zoning for the SMA to encourage mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented development at appropriate places.
2. Determining an effective phasing plan for implementation that includes the feasible and practical short-range actions as well as the necessary longer-range actions necessary to realize the plan's recommendations.
3. Appropriate roles of other governmental and quasi-governmental agencies in the implementation of the plan.
4. Assessment of the cost and the financing plan to implement any recommended infrastructure improvement.

**ATTACHMENT A****THE COMMUNITY'S ROLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM**

Community involvement will be an essential element in the preparation of this sector plan. The proposed program is intended to facilitate broad continued community involvement by citizens, community organizations, business owners, public agencies, and elected officials.

The public participation process has already begun during the pre-planning (Market Analysis) phase of this project. During that period, a series of interviews of key property owners were conducted to inform them of the upcoming sector plan and solicit their concerns and future visions for the area. During the pre-planning phase, planning staff attended civic association meetings to educate residents on the planning process and administered opinion surveys. Some of the responses were included in the issues section of this report. A series of briefings of key elected officials, governmental agencies and community organizations have been planned throughout the plan preparation phase of this project. In addition, prior to formal public hearings on the preliminary sector plan, a number of different ways of involving stakeholders, disseminating information and receiving feedback in developing the sector plan recommendations will be undertaken, including newsletters, website, display posters that include the opportunity to submit written comments, interviews, small area/focus area group meetings, three pre-charrette workshops, a planning charrette and a post charrette workshop. The following outlines the major components of the proposed public participation program:

- **Display Poster** – Posters will be placed at key locations in the sector plan area, such as libraries and community centers, to publicize the master plan goals and major community meetings. The poster will be accompanied by opinion surveys and comment sheets that can be filled out and dropped in a box provided
- **Group Meetings/Interviews** – Series of group meetings will be conducted with stakeholders including land owners/developers, public officials, business and civic associations to educate and to solicit input on specific land use, zoning or other issues pertaining to the elements of the plan
- **On-going Outreach and Interaction** – The project team will establish and maintain one-on-one interactions with key community leaders, business owners, property owners and shoppers in the area through regular site visits and one-on-one conversations on the street
- **Outreach to Teens** – Local high school students will be encouraged to participate in the process through an agreement with the principals to receive Community Service credit hours.
- **Charrette Process** – A three-part planning and design charrette process is proposed as a primary vehicle for community involvement on physical improvement issues
  1. Three focus area workshops are proposed in March 2007 to review background information pertaining to the identified issues and establish sector plan and focus area visions.
  2. A two-day planning and design charrette in the community is proposed in April 2007 to determine alternatives for addressing identified planning issues with multiple feedback loops. Preferred concepts will be identified including strategies for the implementation of the preferred concepts.

**ATTACHMENT A**

3. A post-charrette workshop is proposed in May 2007 to present refined concepts and recommendations for citizens' comment.
  - **Project Website** – The project website will be updated regularly and will include current status of the project and chronological events through the duration of the project. It will also feature comment forms for feedback
  - **Local Newspapers/Newsletter** – Staff will prepare articles for publication in local newspapers before major events including workshops and charrettes as well as the public hearing to invite the community to attend. Staff will provide a summary of the results of the events on the project web site
  - **On-going Presentations to State Legislators, Area Council Members and County Executive Representatives** – Staff will periodically brief elected officials with jurisdictional authority on the status of the sector plan and get their input
  - **Property Owner Notification:** Staff will notify all property owners by mail at the beginning of the planning process of the initiation of this plan and at the completion of the plan. Copies of the preliminary sector plan will also be available on the website and at designated locations in the sector plan area for the public along with information about the scheduled joint public hearings.

# BRANCH AVENUE CORRIDOR SECTOR PLAN AND SECTIONAL MAP AMENDMENT (SMA) 18-MONTH PLAN PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

