

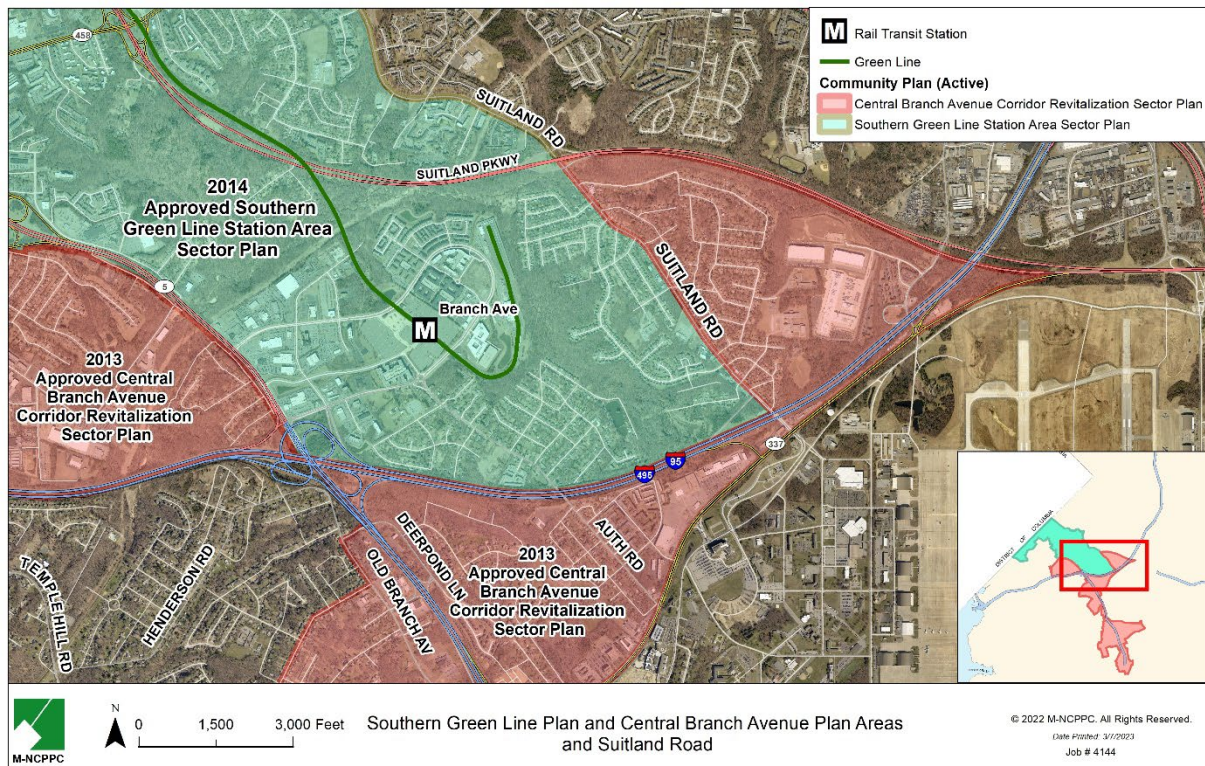
MINOR PLAN AMENDMENT TO THE 2014 SOUTHERN GREEN LINE STATION AREA SECTOR PLAN AND SECTIONAL MAP AMENDMENT (CR-026-2023) TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

The District Council, by Council Resolution CR-026-2023, adopted on April 25, 2023, initiated a Minor Plan Amendment to the 2014 *Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*, pursuant to the procedures described in Section 27-3502(i) of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance, which provides for the minor amendment of an Area Master Plan or Sector Plan, or Functional Master Plan. CR-026-2023 proposes the inclusion of recommendations from the 2013 *Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan* that are specific to the Suitland Road Corridor, which serves as a shared boundary between both plan areas.

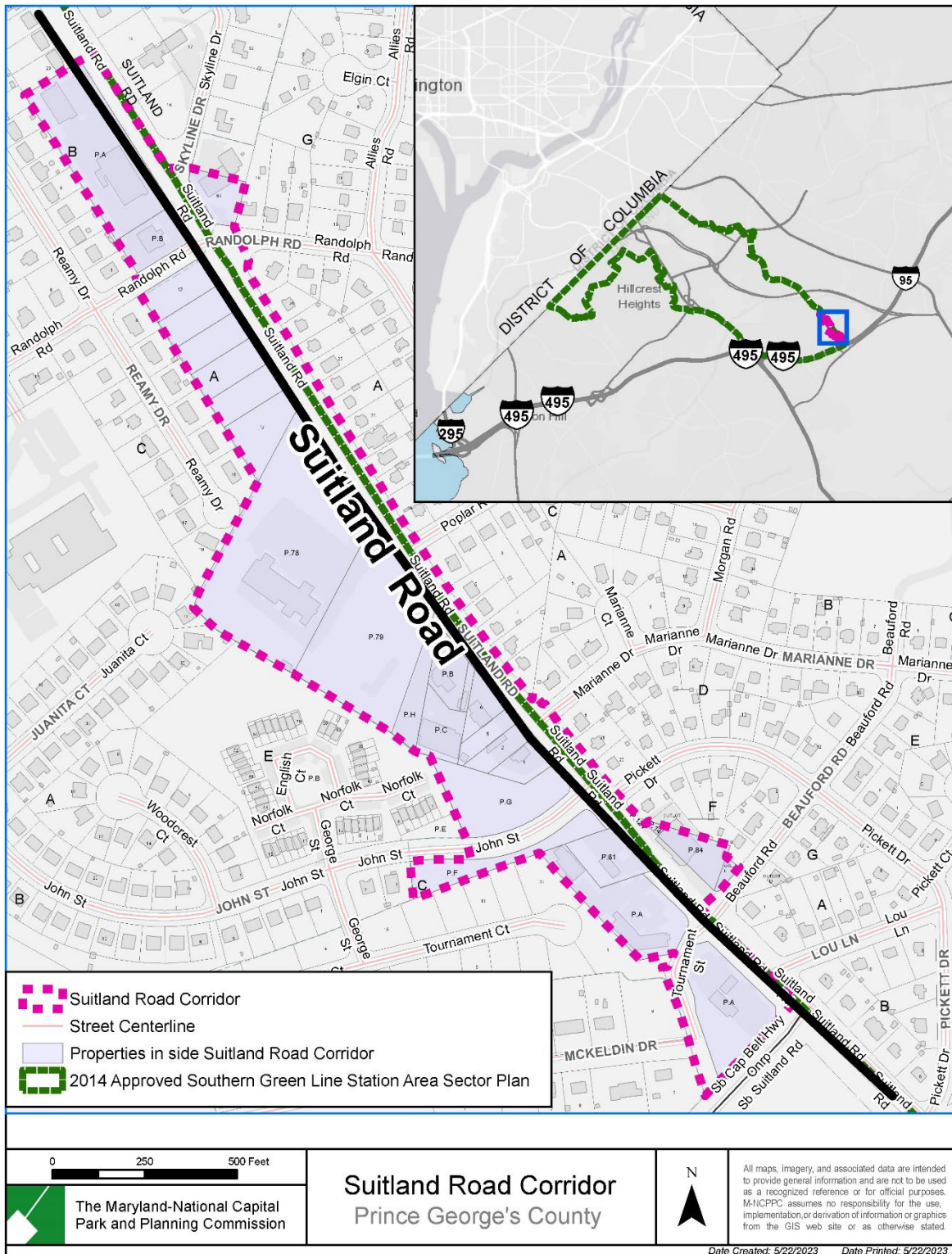
BACKGROUND

Location: The Suitland Road Corridor covers 25.37 acres of land in southwestern Prince George's County. The area boundary partially encompasses the Town of Morningside. The Corridor is located in Planning Area 76A (The Heights), within Councilmanic Districts 7 and 8. The Corridor is a shared boundary between the 2014 *Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* and the 2013 *Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan*. (Map 1.) The Suitland Road Corridor is part of the Allentown Road-Suitland Road Corridor, identified as one of six focus areas in the 2013 *Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan*. (Map 2.)

Map 1. Plan Areas of Southern Green Line and Central Branch Avenue Plans



Map 2. Suitland Road Corridor, County Context, and Location in Southern Green Line Plan Area



Joint Public Hearing and Analysis of Testimony: On June 6, 2023, the Prince George's County Council (sitting as the District Council) and the Prince George's County Planning Board held a duly advertised Joint Public Hearing of at the Wayne K. Curry Administration Building in Room 2027 to hear stakeholder testimony on the Minor Plan Amendment. During the hearing neither verbal nor written testimony was submitted into the legal record. The legal record to submit written testimony to the Office of the Clerk of the County Council closed 15 days after the public hearing on June 21, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. The Clerk of the County Council received no written testimony by the close of the legal record. Due to the absence of public testimony or exhibits either in support of or in opposition to the Minor Plan Amendment, there is no analysis of testimony.

D-D-O Zone Elimination: CR-136-2021, the Approved Countywide Sectional Map Amendment (CMA), eliminated the Development District Overlay Zone (D-D-O-Z), which was intended to ensure that development in a designated district met the goals established in a Master Plan, Master Plan Amendment, or Sector Plan. The whole of the Southern Green Line Sector Plan area was covered by a D-D-O-Z. Once the D-D-O-Z was eliminated, the subject area for this Minor Plan Amendment, the Suitland Road Corridor, was left with no active growth policies or strategies. The carrying over of recommendations from the 2013 *Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan* to the 2014 *Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* will provide guidance to development along the Suitland Road Corridor.

1. Section 27-3502(i) of the County Zoning Ordinance, "Minor Plan Amendment," governs the minor amendment process and reads as follows:

(1) Minor amendments of an Area Master Plan or Sector Plan, or Functional Master Plan may be initiated by the District Council upon adoption of a written resolution, or by the Planning Board with District Council approval by written resolution. At the time of initiation of a minor amendment process, a joint public hearing date shall be scheduled to occur within sixty (60) days. The same requirements in Section 27-3407, Scheduling of Hearings and Public Notice, that applied to the review and adoption of the plan shall apply to a minor amendment of the plan.

(2) A minor plan amendment may be utilized to advance defined public objectives, and shall be limited to:

- (A) A geographic area which is not more than fifty (50) percent of the applicable plan area, and not limited to a single parcel of land or landowner; and*
- (B) Specific issues regarding public planning objectives; or*
- (C) An action to correct errors in the text or maps in the applicable plan.*

(3) In no instance, however, shall a minor amendment process be used to:

- (A) Rezone any land;*
- (B) Change a General Plan center designation;*
- (C) Make any amendment that would require major transportation or public facilities analysis or revised water and sewer classification; or*
- (D) Amend the County's growth boundary.*

(4) The Resolution initiating a minor amendment shall set forth the objectives required in paragraph 27-3502(i)(3) above, and specify the purpose and scope of the proposed amendment, and identify the date of the joint public hearing on the amendment.

(5) Following the joint public hearing, the Board shall take action on the proposed minor plan amendment to adopt, adopt with amendments, remand, or disapprove the minor plan amendment.

(6) The Planning Board shall transmit the adopted minor plan amendment and a Technical Staff Report analyzing the minor plan amendment within one hundred twenty (120) days of the date of the joint public hearing.

(7) The District Council shall, within ninety (90) days of the Planning Board's transmittal, at a public meeting, approve, approve with revisions based solely on testimony received at the joint public hearing, or disapprove the minor plan amendment, and adopt a resolution.

(8) Failure of the District Council to approve or disapprove the minor plan amendment within ninety (90) days of receipt of the Planning Board's recommendation shall constitute disapproval of the minor plan amendment.

(i) After approval of a minor amendment by the District Council, the Planning Board shall publish the revisions to the plan made in the minor amendment, along with the minor amendment, and make it available to the public. In addition, an attested copy of the minor amendment shall be certified by the Planning Board and filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County.

2. Suitland Road Focus Area Vision, from the 2013 *Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan*: “[...Suitland Road corridor is a safe, attractive, and welcoming gateway to Joint Base Andrews with upgraded pedestrian facilities and a vibrant shopping and living environment that provides quality housing and neighborhood retail and services for the adjacent residential neighborhoods and includes a civic use possibly tied to the base. The area is inviting to base personnel and base related contractors as well as residents and visitors for lodging, shopping, working, and dining. Interesting, local-serving retail and new restaurants create both a daytime and evening buzz of activity.”

EVALUATION

Staff reviewed and evaluated the minor amendment for conformance to the following criteria:

1. The requirements of Section 27-3502(i) of the Zoning Ordinance for minor amendments of an Area Master Plan or sector Plan, or Functional Master Plan.

Zoning Ordinance Compliance - Section 27-3502(i)

Compliance with Sec. 27-3502(i)(1)

Minor amendments of an Area Master Plan or Sector Plan, or Functional Master Plan may be initiated by the District Council upon adoption of a written resolution, or by the Planning Board with District Council approval by written resolution. At the time of initiation of a minor amendment process, a joint public hearing date shall be scheduled to occur within sixty (60) days. The same requirements in Section 27-3407, Scheduling of Hearings and Public Notice, that applied to the review and adoption of the plan shall apply to a minor amendment of the plan.

Comments: By Council Resolution CR-026-2023, adopted on April 25, 2023, the District Council directed the Planning Board to initiate the Minor Plan Amendment to the 2014 *Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*. The County Council initiated the Minor Plan Amendment at its regular session on April 25, 2023. A joint public hearing was held on June 6, 2023.

Compliance with Sec. 27-3502(i)(2)

A minor plan amendment may be utilized to advance defined public objectives, and shall be limited to:

- (A) A geographic area which is not more than fifty (50) percent of the applicable plan area, and not limited to a single parcel of land or landowner; and*
- (B) Specific issues regarding public planning objectives; or*
- (C) An action to correct errors in the text or maps in the applicable plan.*

Comments: The Southern Green Line sector plan area encompasses over 3,700 acres of land. The study area of the Minor Plan Amendment encompasses over 25 acres. This minor plan amendment corrects an administrative error in the initiation and subsequent approval of the 2014 *Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*. There are no recommendations for the area outside of a half-mile radius around the Branch Avenue Metro Station. When the Plan was approved, it superseded the 2013 *Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan*, which contains detailed recommendations for portions of the Town of Morningside, replacing substantive, community-driven revitalization policies and strategies with no policies and strategies. See also “D-D-O Zone Elimination” in the Background section above for further analysis.

Compliance with Sec. 27-3502(i)(3)

In no instance, however, shall a minor amendment process be used to:

- (A) Rezone any land;*
- (B) Change a General Plan center designation;*
- (C) Make any amendment that would require major transportation or public facilities analysis or revised water and sewer classification; or*
- (D) Amend the County’s growth boundary.*

Comments: The Minor Plan Amendment does not recommend any zoning changes beyond what was approved in the 2013 *Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan*. The Suitland Road Corridor does not carry the designation of being a General Plan center. There is no analysis of major transportation or public facilities or revision of water and sewer classification. There is no recommendation of an amending of the County’s growth boundary.

Compliance with Sec. 27-3502(i)(4)

The Resolution initiating a minor amendment shall set forth the objectives required in paragraph 27-3502(i)(3) above, and specify the purpose and scope of the proposed amendment, and identify the date of the joint public hearing on the amendment.

Comments: District Council initiated CR-026-2023 to create a Minor Plan Amendment to the 2014 *Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* for the purpose of including recommendations from the 2013 *Central Branch Avenue Corridor Revitalization Sector Plan* that are specific to the Suitland Road Corridor, which serves as a shared boundary between both plan areas. Council Resolution CR-026-2023 set a joint public hearing date for Tuesday, June 6, 2023.

Compliance with Sec. 27-3502(i)(5)

Following the joint public hearing, the Board shall take action on the proposed minor plan amendment to adopt, adopt with amendments, remand, or disapprove the minor plan amendment.

Comments: See comments below for Sec. 27-3502(i)(6).

Compliance with Sec. 27-3502(i)(6)

The Planning Board shall transmit the adopted minor plan amendment and a Technical Staff Report analyzing the minor plan amendment within one hundred twenty (120) days of the date of the joint public hearing.

Comments: A Planning Board work session is scheduled for September 7, 2023, to review and act on the Technical Staff Report and analyze any testimony received at the joint public hearing and prior to the close of the public record. The Planning Board will forward its recommendation to the Council by September 14, 2023. An Analysis of Testimony has been completed by staff and can be viewed in Attachment 2 of the transmittal packet.

FINDINGS

1. The proposed Minor Plan Amendment is consistent with Section 27-3502(i) of the County Zoning Ordinance.
2. The proposed Minor Plan Amendment advances the goals of Plan 2035 by continuing the County's commitment to create choice communities and to connect the County's neighborhoods and significant places.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the proposed Minor Plan Amendment with no amendments.