Transit-Oriented Mixed Use Zoning in Montgomery County, Maryland

Nkosi Yearwood
Community-Based Planning Division
Montgomery County Planning Department

Rail Volution 2007
Miami, Florida
The General Plan
Wedges and Corridors
Adopted 1964, Approved 1969, and Refined 1993
Metro Rail System

Comprehensive Plans
- Shady Grove Sector Plan (completed)
- White Flint Sector Plan
- Twinbrook Sector Plan
- Germantown Master Plan
- Gaithersburg West

MD 355/I-270 Corridor
Central Business District Zones

- Silver Spring, Wheaton, Friendship Heights and Bethesda are the four Central Business Districts (CBDs) in the County.
- Developed in the late 1970s as Metro was underway.
- Central Business Districts have specific zones (CBD-0.5, CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3 and CBD-R1 and CBD-R2) with densities from 0.5 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to 6 FAR with 35 to 200 dwelling units per acre (dus/acre). Building heights within CBDs vary from 45 to 200 feet.
- These zones provide standard and optional method forms of development where greater densities are provided in exchange for public use spaces and public amenities and facilities.
- Supported with streetscape standards, arts and entertainment district designation and master and sector plans.
- Multitude of text amendments for development standards and uses.
Transit Station-Residential (TS-R) and Transit Station-Mixed (TS-M) are “floating” zones that have been used for White Flint, Bethesda, and Twinbrook transit stations areas.

These zones require County Council approval.

Issues with these zone include public use requirements, length of time associated with rezoning, land uses, design elements and limited association to master or sector plan.

Projects approved under TSR and TSM include: Twinbrook Commons at Twinbrook Metro Station; North Bethesda Town Center and White Flint Crossing at White Flint Metro.
Overview of Transit-Oriented Mixed Use Zones

- Euclidean zones with Standard and Optional Method procedures.
- A range of uses including residential, office, retail, commercial, advanced technology and biotechnology, and institutional.
- An efficient review process with Project Plan, Preliminary Plan, and Site Plan for Optional Method projects and Site Plan review for all development.
- A range of densities from .35 FAR to 3.0 FAR with appropriate densities for transitional and Metro core areas.
- Standards for public use space, site plan standards for optional and standard method of development, and transfer of public use space.
- Incentives for additional public use space, affordable housing, and opportunities for Transferable Development Rights (TDRs)
## Transit-Oriented Mixed Use Zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOMX-1</th>
<th>TOMX-2</th>
<th>TOMX-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum net lot area</td>
<td>18,000 sq.ft</td>
<td>18,000 sq.ft</td>
<td>18,000 sq.ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum density</td>
<td>.35 FAR</td>
<td>1.0 FAR</td>
<td>0.5 FAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum building coverage (%)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum building heights</td>
<td>42 feet</td>
<td>MP/SP and project plan</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum setbacks</td>
<td>From an adjacent TOMX zone</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From public r-o-w</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From adjacent single-family residential zone</td>
<td>25 feet</td>
<td>25 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From adjacent commercial or industrial zone</td>
<td>20 feet</td>
<td>20 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum public use space (%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public use space may be reduced to 5% to accommodate the construction of MPDUs onsite.

Public use space may be reduced/eliminated for MPDUs, if an equivalent amount of public use space is provided off-site.

The building height must be determined during project plan review and must be consistent with the recommendations in the applicable master and sector plan.
Transit-Oriented Mixed Use Zones

Elements

Building Form:
- Orient all buildings to streets
- Create a continuous building line with varied façade setbacks
- Blank building facades should be avoided
- Increase public safety and activity at street level with activating uses

Streetscape:
- Provide a canopy of closely spaced street trees along each street
- Street furniture such as benches, trash receptacles and planters
- Enhance crosswalk areas with accessible curb ramps

Transferable Development Rights:
- Transit-Oriented Mixed Use/Transferable Development Rights (TOMX/TDR)
- Transferable Development Rights allows for the preservation of land in the Agricultural Reserve
- Applies to both methods of development
- Developing a commercial TDR that applies to non-residential development
Existing Metro Station Areas

White Flint Metro Area

Shady Grove Metro Area
The Purple Line

The Purple Line, a proposed 16-mile light rail or rapid bus transit line, would run from Bethesda to New Carrollton and provide direct connections to Metrorail, local and inter-city bus and the MARC train. Considered an east-west route and connector for Montgomery and Prince George's counties, the Purple Line has been under study since 1992. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), which heads the Purple Line project, has set a two-year schedule to research and seek funding for the line.
Corridor Cities Transitway

- The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) is a future 13.5 mile transit corridor originally established in Montgomery County master plans in the early 1970s. Segments of the right-of-way have been reserved through the development process.

- The transitway runs generally northwest from the Shady Grove Metro Station through King Farm (a neo-traditional development), Gaithersburg and Clarksburg where it terminates at the COMSAT facility.

- The Maryland State Department of Transportation has not determined the mode for the transitway.
Associate Transit Oriented Development (TOD) with a comprehensive plan.

Zones for transit oriented development must support transit use with increase intensity and provide new amenities for the existing community that surrounds the transit station.

Form-based codes provide a partial solution; however, flexibility is critical as well as land use.

Provide affordable and workforce housing; integrate standards for streetscape, open space, arts and civic elements.

Transportation management that includes reduce parking requirements for all uses, improvements to bus shelters and other transportation facilities and requirements for bicycle lanes.

Provide incentives to development at transit through efficient review procedures.
CONTACT INFORMATION:

Nkosi O. Yearwood
Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Nkosi.yearwood@mnccppc-mc.org
301-495-1332
www.mc-mnccppc.org

Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance