

Coalition for Smarter Growth • Action Committee for Transit • Sierra Club • Friends of White Flint • Randolph Civic Association • The Wisconsin Home Owners Association

MEDIA RELEASE

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Residents, Environmental and Transit Groups Urge County to Embrace Walkable, Urban Vision for White Flint

Proposed plan offers environmentally-friendly way to grow and provides surrounding communities with new amenities

Today, a broad spectrum of residents, community and environmental groups called on the Montgomery County Council and County Executive Ike Leggett to support the transformation of White Flint Metro station area into a vibrant downtown. The groups asked that the County commit to supporting the change by implementing the White Flint Sector Plan and ensuring that it guides the area's metamorphosis from an automobile-oriented suburban corridor into a vibrant, mixed use, walkable boulevard and urban downtown.

Speaking on behalf of the Randolph Civic Association, the group's Vice President Dan Hoffman stated: "the White Flint Sector Plan lays out a vision for the next 30 years that acknowledges the reality of White Flint. The reality is that White Flint *will* grow, and we cannot plan for long-term growth with a car-centered paradigm. The six neighborhoods of the Randolph Civic Association support the sector plan because it looks to the future and better integrates us into the White Flint community."

"What we want in White Flint is a neighborhood where we can dine out, walk to our favorite stores safely, take leisurely strolls on the "boulevard," and age in place. That is what we think the new White Flint Plan can bring to our community," said Paul Meyer, representative of the Wisconsin Home Owners Association.

"Over the past three years, residents and developers worked together in unprecedented ways to craft a plan to create a great, sustainable, transit-oriented community. Through the process, we learned what it would take to realize our vision for our community. This plan reflects that. I'm fully behind it," said Ken Hurdle, resident of Luxmanor neighborhood and past president of the neighborhood citizens association. "I think following this plan will make our single family home neighborhoods as desirable as those around Downtown Bethesda," he added.

Advocates emphasized the need to ensure that this plan stays true to the vision – safer, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets, improved road-running transit service, more housing for workers.

"What White Flint needs is not just more density, but a transformation into an attractive, walkable downtown," said Ben Ross, President of Action Committee for Transit.

“To protect the environment and ease people’s commutes, it’s essential we make the most of our Metro stations. Even after decades, acres of underutilized land remain around many of our Metro stations like White Flint. This plan for White Flint charts a sustainable, transit-oriented future. But we need to ensure that the County supports a pedestrian-scaled urban environment rather than a suburban one,” said Cheryl Cort, Coalition for Smarter Growth.

Pamela Lindstrom of Sierra Club Montgomery County Group stated that the non-auto mode share at White Flint should exceed the plan’s targeted 39% with improved transit and good traffic management. “Climate protection is the Sierra Club’s focus, and promoting urbanism and transit-oriented development is our best strategy for achieving that. It’s clear that ‘smartest growth’ places like White Flint are where the County’s growth must be accommodated, rather than in suburban sprawl locations like Gaithersburg West.”

Supporters point out that the White Flint Sector Plan provides a guide for transforming Rockville Pike and the White Flint Metro station into a compact, walkable downtown for North Bethesda.

“We as citizens proposed this plan to the Planning Board. The White Flint Sector Plan is an innovative approach, painstakingly crafted over three years by hundreds of county residents, to create a compact, transit-oriented, sustainable community,” said Barnaby Zall, Co-Chair Friends of White Flint, and nearby neighborhood resident of Old Farm.

National studies and local experience show that transit-oriented, walkable communities can accommodate new jobs and housing while reducing growth in traffic and greenhouse gas emissions. A study from the Transportation Research Board found that transit-oriented housing generates 47 percent less vehicle traffic than predicted by conventional engineering models. Fewer vehicle trips mean reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Arlington County has documented that its Metro-oriented development strategy coupled with encouragement to walk, bicycle and ride transit achieves even higher numbers of people leaving their cars behind. Rosslyn-Ballston and Crystal City Metro corridors report transit, walk and bicycle mode shares of 50 to 70 percent.

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Contacts for Local Supporters of White Flint Sector Plan

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Paul Meyer, The Wisconsin Home Owners Association

Barnaby Zall, Friends of White Flint & Old Farm Resident

Ken Hurdle, Resident of Luxmanor neighborhood,
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