

GERMANTOWN MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT:

# Removal of Proposed MD 117

---

AND

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# Great Seneca Highway Interchange

APPROVED AND ADOPTED

*April 1996*

*published by*

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION  
8787 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

**Approved and Adopted**

April 1996

# *Germantown*

MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

*Removal of Proposed MD 117 and Great Seneca  
Highway Interchange*

*prepared by*

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
Montgomery County Department of Park & Planning  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

*approved by*

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
February 27, 1996

*adopted by*

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
April 10, 1996

# Abstract

**TITLE**

Approved and Adopted Germantown Master Plan Amendment

**AUTHOR**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

**SUBJECT**

Removal of Proposed MD 117 and  
Great Seneca Highway Interchange

**DATE**

April 1996

**PLANNING AGENCY**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

**SOURCE OF COPIES**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

**NUMBER OF PAGES**

11

**ABSTRACT**

This Plan amends the 1989 Germantown Master Plan.

# The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority covers most of Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The Commission's planning jurisdiction, the Maryland-Washington Regional District, comprises 1,001 square miles; its park jurisdiction, the Metropolitan District, comprises 919 square miles.

## **The Commission has three major functions:**

1. The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District Within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.*
2. The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system.
3. In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the county government. The Planning Boards are responsible for preparation of local master plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the involvement and participation of individuals with disabilities, and its facilities are accessible. For assistance with special needs (e.g., large print materials, listening devices, sign language interpretation, etc.), please contact the Community Relations Office, 301-495-4600 or TTY 301-495-1331.

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## Notice to Readers

An area master plan, after approval by the County Council and adoption by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, constitutes an amendment to The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for Montgomery County. As such, it provides a set of comprehensive recommendations and guidelines for the use of publicly and privately owned land within its planning area. Each area master plan reflects a vision of future development that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a County-wide perspective.

Area master plans are intended to provide a point of reference with regard to public policy. Together with relevant County-wide functional master plans, they should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when decisions are made that affect the use of land within the plan boundaries.

Master plans generally look ahead about 20 years from the date of adoption, although they are intended to be updated and revised about every 10 years. It is recognized that circumstances will change following adoption of a plan and that the specifics of a master plan may become less relevant over time. Any sketches or drawings in an adopted master plan are for illustrative purposes only and are intended to convey a general sense of desirable future character rather than a specific commitment to a particular detailed design.

# The Master Plan Process

**STAFF DRAFT PLAN** — This document is prepared by the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning for presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Planning Board reviews the Staff Draft Plan, makes preliminary changes as appropriate, and approves the Plan for public hearing. When the Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan.

**PUBLIC HEARING (PRELIMINARY) DRAFT PLAN** — This document is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan or sector plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public hearing testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony on the Draft Plan. After the public hearing record is closed, the Planning Board holds public worksessions to review the testimony and to revise the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan.

**PLANNING BOARD (FINAL) DRAFT PLAN** — This document is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and it reflects the revisions made by the Board in its worksessions on the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit the Plan directly to the County Council with copies to the County Executive. The Regional District Act then requires the County Executive, within sixty days, to prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the Council other comments and recommendations regarding the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan within the sixty-day period.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council may hold a public hearing to receive public testimony on the Plan. After the record of this public hearing is closed, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee holds public worksessions to review the testimony and then makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan, as revised.

**ADOPTED PLAN** — The Master Plan approved by the County Council is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the Plan officially amends the various master or sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

## Montgomery County Master Plan Development Process

Planning Board submits and County Council approves:

### Annual Work Program

Park and Planning staff initiates community participation and prepares:

### Issues Report

Park and Planning staff reviews Issues Report with Planning Board and then prepares:

### Staff Draft Plan

Planning Board reviews Staff Draft and, with modifications as necessary, approves plan as suitable for public hearing.

### Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan

Planning Board reviews public hearing testimony, receives County Executive comments at Board worksessions, and adjusts Public Hearing Draft to become:

### Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan

County Executive reviews Planning Board Draft and forwards fiscal impact analysis and comments to County Council.

### Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan Transmitted to County Council

County Council holds public hearing and worksessions and approves, disapproves, or amends Planning Board Draft, which is forwarded to M-NCPPC to become:

### Approved and Adopted Master Plan

# Table of Contents

I.	Background .....	1
II.	Summary of Key Issues and Draft Plan Responses .....	3
III.	Summary of Planning Board Draft Plan Recommendations .....	3

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Proposed Interchange to be Removed from Master Plan .....	4
2.	Clopper Village: Analysis Areas .....	5
3.	Existing Zoning in Vicinity of MD 117 and Great Seneca Highway .....	6
4.	Germantown Master Plan Language Relating to Intersection Improvements ...	7

## LIST OF TABLES

1.	Land Use Differences Between Clarksburg and Germantown Master Plan Assumptions .....	2
2.	Selected Key Clarksburg/Germantown Master Plan Transportation Network elements .....	2

## APPENDICES

A.	M-NCPPC Resolution of Adoption .....	9
B.	County Council Resolution of Approval .....	11



## I. Background

The 1989 Plan for Germantown recommends a grade separated interchange at MD 117 (Clopper Road) and Great Seneca Highway (see Figure 1).

This Master Plan Amendment removes the proposed interchange. Land use and transportation network studies done as part of the 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan process indicate that a grade separated interchange at this location will not be needed for two key reasons.

- The 1994 Clarksburg Plan recommends land use densities and patterns -- particularly west of I-270 -- which are significantly different than those assumed for the Clarksburg Study Area in the context of the analysis conducted in support of the 1989 Germantown Master Plan.
- Key elements of the Clarksburg Plan background transportation network differ from those assumed for the 1989 Germantown Plan. These differences are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

The Clarksburg Plan land use and transportation recommendations summarized in Tables 1 and 2 result in **significantly different trip distribution patterns** relative to those resulting from the 1989 Germantown Master Plan analysis. In particular, MD 121 traffic which would be destined to Germantown via Clopper Road is substantially reduced in the Clarksburg Master Plan analysis for several reasons, including:

- A significant change in the mix of development west of I-270 relative to the Germantown Plan (substantially more employment and considerably less residential development is recommended in the Clarksburg Plan than assumed in the 1989 Germantown Plan analysis);
- Clarksburg Road (MD 121) is constrained to two lanes versus six lanes assumed in the Germantown Plan and;
- The interchange proposed in the Clarksburg Master Plan at I-270/Newcut Road Extended provides access to I-270 (this facility was not assumed in the context of the Germantown Master Plan analysis).

These factors result in less traffic forecasted to be traveling through the master-planned recommended interchange at MD 117 (Clopper Road) and Great Seneca Highway. For these reasons, a grade separated interchange at MD 117 (Clopper Road) and Great Seneca Highway is no longer necessary.

## Land Use Differences Between Clarksburg and Germantown Master Plan Assumptions:

Table 1

	Clarksburg West of I-270		Clarksburg East of I-270	
	Jobs	Households	Jobs	Households
<b>Germantown Plan</b>	3,200	19,400	31,800	10,600
<b>Clarksburg Plan</b>	13,700	3,500	16,400	11,500

## Selected Key Clarksburg/Germantown Master Plan Transportation Network Elements:

Table 2

Roadway	1989 Germantown Plan	1994 Clarksburg Plan
I-270 (north of MD 121)	6 Lanes	6 Lanes
I-270 (south of MD 121 to Germantown)	8 Lanes	8 Lanes
I-270 (through Germantown)	8 Lanes	8 Lanes
I-270 Interchange at Newcut Road Extended	No	Yes
MD 121 (between West Old Baltimore Road & MD 117)	6 Lanes	2 Lanes

## II. Land Use and Zoning Issues

*Will the removal of this proposed interchange from the Germantown Master Plan have any zoning or land use implications?*

The relation of the proposed interchange to analysis areas in Clopper Village is shown as Fig. 2. Three Clopper Village Analysis Areas (CL-3, CL-4 and CL-6) are affected by the proposed amendment. The land use and zoning patterns recommended by the Germantown Master Plan for adjoining properties are shown in Fig. 3.

Analysis Area CL-3 is located on the northwest quadrant and is zoned R-200/TDR. The Master Plan recommends a density limit of six (6) units per acre for most of the Analysis Area. The six (6) acre parcel at the intersection of Clopper Road and Great Seneca Highway is recommended as appropriate for 100 percent multi-family units under TDR development at a density of 11 units per acre. It is not in reservation for the interchange.

Analysis Area CL-4 is located on the north east quadrant and is zoned R-90 with the exception of the 14-acre parcel at the intersection, which is zoned R-60. The Master Plan recommends residential development at five (5) units per acre in this vicinity.

Approximately nine (9.16) acres of the R-90 zoned land is in reservation with an expiration date of June 1995, while 13.34 acres zoned R-60 is in reservation with an expiration date of June 1997.

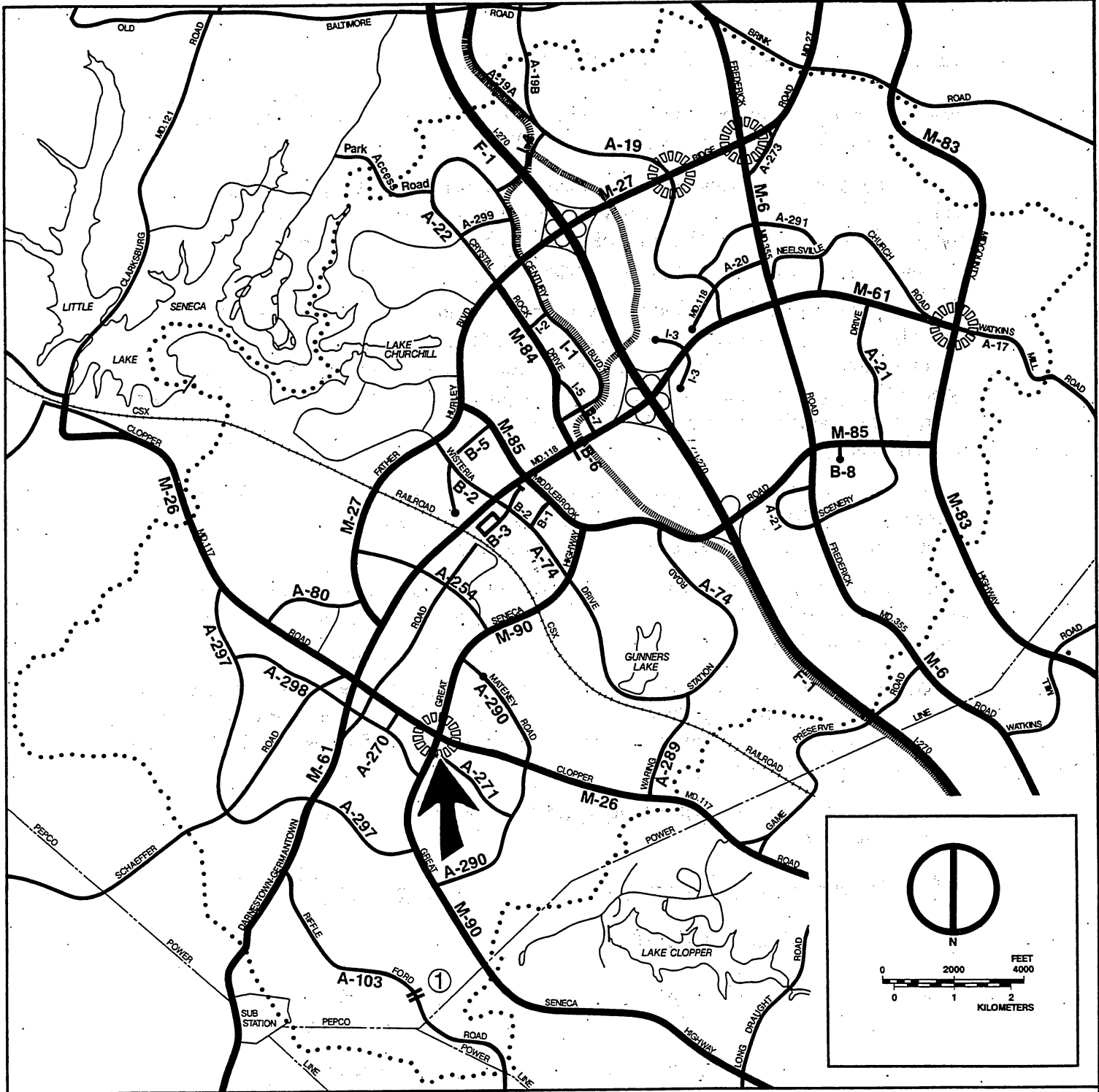
Analysis Area CL-6 is located on the southwest quadrant and is zoned PD-11. At the time of development plan approval, a decision regarding dedication of right-of-way was deferred until preliminary plan of subdivision. Approximately 1.5 acres would be required for the proposed interchange.

Removal of the interchange will not require re-examination of these recommendations.

## III. Summary of Approved and Adopted Plan Recommendations





- Remove the interchange symbol at MD 117 (Clopper Road) and Great Seneca Highway from the 1989 Approved and Adopted Germantown Master Plan.
- Remove references to the proposed interchange from the Germantown Master Plan text.
- Recommend wider rights-of-way at the intersection of MD 117 and Great Seneca Highway in lieu of the proposed interchange.
- The Germantown Master Plan includes language relating to intersection improvements which will now apply to the intersection of MD 117 and Great Seneca Highway (see Figure 4).

Figure 1




**Roadway System**

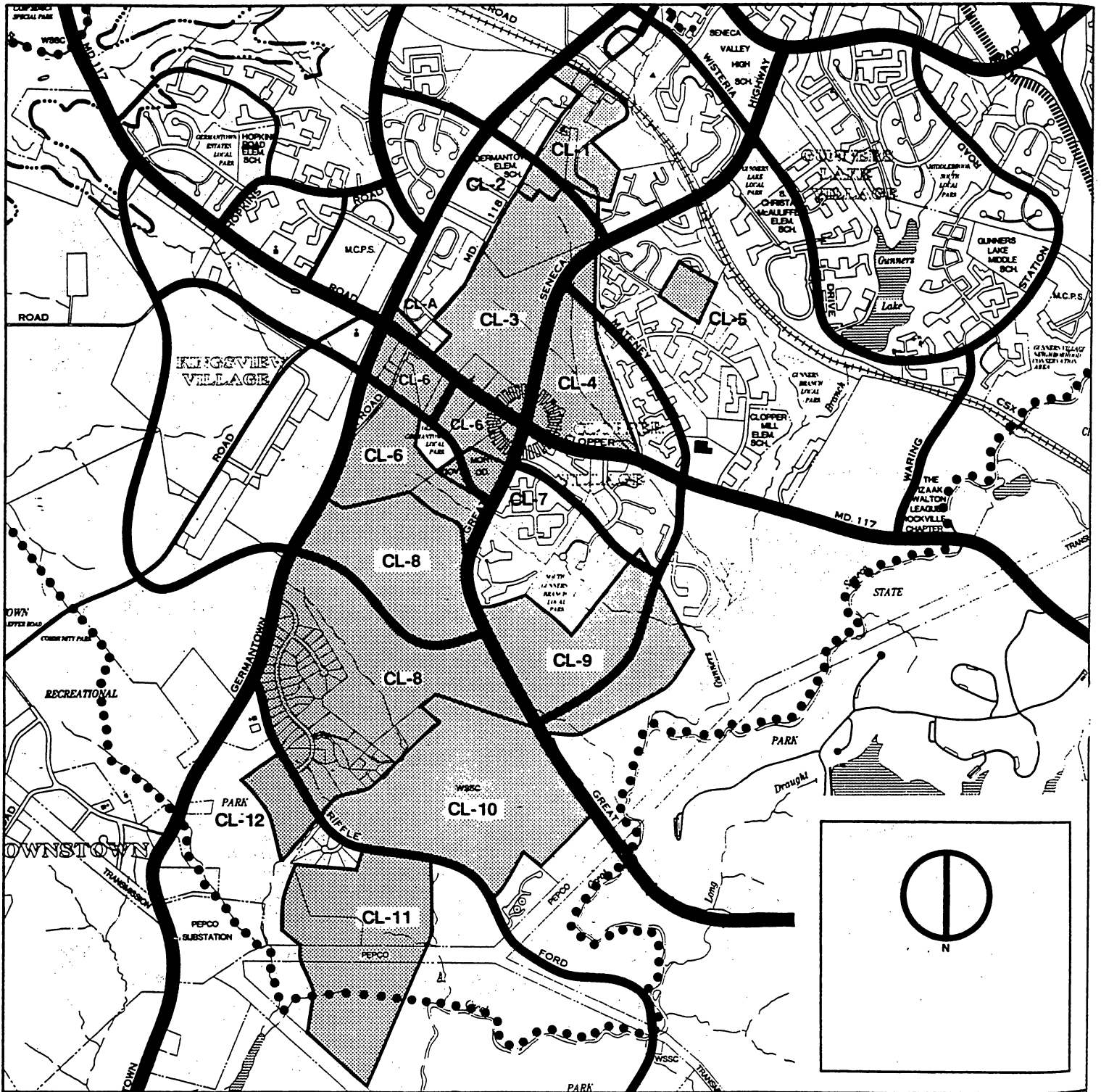
**PROPOSED INTERCHANGE TO BE REMOVED FROM MASTER PLAN**

- Grade-Separated Interchange 
- Freeway 
- Major Highway 
- Arterial(A), Industrial(I), and Business District Roads(B) 

 **Comprehensive Amendment to the Master Plan for Germantown**  
Montgomery County, Maryland

May be closed when Great Seneca Highway is opened to traffic through Great Seneca Park 

 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission



# Clopper Village: Analysis Areas



median even where left-turn lanes are provided.

- Limit the number of recommended lanes on selected major highways in order to enhance visual roadway quality, enhance pedestrian circulation and to discourage through-traffic in residential areas.

Close coordination among the various county and state agencies is necessary in order to assure the implementation of these objectives.

## Character of Roadways

In addition to capacity issues, the physical design of roadways is an important element in this Plan. The Townscape Design chapter recommends the creation of a Streetscape Design Plan that focuses on the character of roadways to further establish a sense of identity. The major roadway design components are: the width of the right-of-way; the number of lanes; the provision of sidewalks and/or bikeways; the landscaping, lighting, street furniture, and signage; the transit amenities such as bus stops and shelters along the road edge; and, if appropriate, the landscaping of the medians.

The recommended roadway classifications and cross-sections are shown in Table 17 and Figure 30. The cross-section for roadways with right-of-way widths of 80 feet or more for each element of the roadway system was selected so that it would not only provide the needed traffic capacity but also provide landscaping and sidewalks/bikeways that would complement the adjacent land uses and improve the visual quality of Germantown. Because of the importance of providing landscaping within the rights-of-way and providing sidewalks and bikeways, the following objectives have been established:

- Providing landscaped medians and street trees.
- Planting all street trees along each roadway at the same time, whenever possible.
- Providing sidewalks and/or bikeways along both sides of roadways, bus stops, and shelters, where appropriate.
- Installing sidewalks, bikeways, and street trees, where lacking, on any major roadway which has been widened to its ultimate paving width.
- Constructing all roadways with curbs and gutters except in areas zoned RE-1.
- Widening rights-of-way at intersections to accommodate free right-turn lanes or double left-turn lanes, sidewalks, and bikeways, and landscaping. (See Figure 31.)

The recommended Montgomery County roadway cross-sections are based on the following accepted practices of MCDOT and MDSHA:

- A minimum 6-foot wide area is needed for planting street trees.
- Sidewalks are 5 feet wide.
- Bikeways are 8 feet wide.
- Street trees are to be planted 45 feet apart for shade trees; 30 feet apart for small flowering trees.

Unless otherwise noted, the above standards apply to all roadways contained in Table 17.

This Plan recommends that the right-of-way of an arterial road or major highway be widened at intersections with arterial and/or major highways. This increased width will provide space for an additional left turn lane and a right turn lane on the approach side of the intersection as well as an adjustment area on the departure side.

The amount of additional right-of-way on the approach side is 24 feet wide for 500 feet from the intersection with a 400-foot taper. On the departure side, the right-of-way is 12 feet wide for 200 feet with a 180-foot taper. (See Figure 31.) Both a divided arterial and a major highway with a 30-foot median can accommodate two left turn lanes; only 12 feet of additional right-of-way is needed in those cases. An undivided arterial road needs an additional eight feet of width to provide a median at the intersection for pedestrian and vehicular safety. The dimensions of intersection rights-of-way are shown on Figure 31.

One of the limiting factors of traffic capacity occurs at the intersections. The wider right-of-way recommended here will enable additional turning movements to be added in the future without negatively affecting adjacent private property or the continuity of pedestrian/bikeway movement.

Also included in Table 17 are recommendations for the "greening" of selected roads in order to create a parkway image. These roads are Midcounty Highway, Great Seneca Highway, and the portion of Clopper Road from Seneca State Park north to Great Seneca Highway. Each of these roads crosses or parallels extensive portions of the greenbelt parks. Goldenrod Lane is also recommended for extensive landscaping as it is the edge between the Employment Corridor and Neelsville Village.

Street trees and landscaped medians, where appropriate, are recommended for major and arterial roads. These landscaped areas reduce the visual impact of multi-lane roadways as they pass through the community. In some instances, sound attenuation devices such as berms will be recommended as a result of a roadway noise study for situations where on-site noise mitigation measures are not practical.



MCPB NO. 96-03  
M-NCPPC NO. 96-09

### RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, by virtue of Article 28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, is authorized and empowered, from time to time, to make and adopt, amend, extend and add to a General Plan for Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, pursuant to said law, held a duly advertised public hearing on June 29, 1995, on the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Germantown Master Plan Amendment: Removal of Proposed MD 117 and Great Seneca Highway Interchange; being also an amendment to the General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District, as amended; and the Master Plan of Highways within the Montgomery County, as amended; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Planning Board, after said public hearing and due deliberation and consideration, on October 23, 1995, approved the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the proposed Plan, and recommended that it be approved by the District Council and forwarded it to the County Executive for recommendations and analysis; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Executive reviewed and made recommendations on the Planning Board (Final) Draft Germantown Master Plan Amendment and forwarded those recommendations with a fiscal analysis to the District Council on January 23, 1996; and

WHEREAS, the District Council, on February 27, 1996, approved the Planning Board (Final) Draft Germantown Master Plan Amendment without modifications or revisions; and

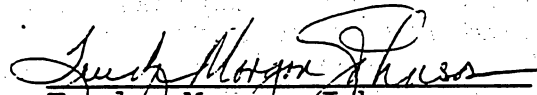
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montgomery County Planning Board and The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission do hereby adopt said Germantown Master Plan Amendment, together with the General Plan, for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District as amended; and Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County as amended; and as approved by the District Council in the attached Resolution No. 13-445; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of said Amendment should be certified by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of each of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, as required by law.

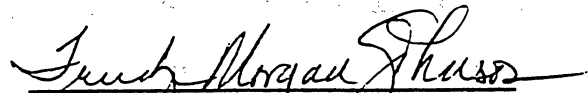
\* \* \* \* \*

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on motion of Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner Baptiste, with Commissioners Hussmann, Baptiste Holmes, and Richardson voting in favor of the motion at its regular meeting held on Thursday, March 28, 1996, in Silver Spring, Maryland.

  
Trudye Morgan Johnson  
Executive Director

\* \* \* \* \*

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on motion of Commissioner McNeill, seconded by Commissioner Holmes, with Commissioners Hewlett, Hussmann, Aron, Brown, Dabney, Holmes, and McNeill voting in favor of the motion, with Commissioner Baptiste, Boone, and Richardson being absent, at its regular meeting held on Wednesday, April 10, 1996, in Riverdale, Maryland.

  
Trudye Morgan Johnson  
Executive Director

\* \* \* \* \*

Resolution No. 13-445  
Introduced: February 13, 1996  
Adopted: Feb. 27, 1996

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
SITTING AS A DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION  
OF THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT  
WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

---

By: District Council

---

Subject: Approval of Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan

Background:

1. On October 31, 1995 the Montgomery County Planning Board transmitted to the County Executive and County Council the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan removing the proposed MD 117 and Great Seneca Highway interchange. This Draft Amendment amends the Approved and Adopted 1989 Master Plan for Germantown.
2. On January 23, 1996 the County Executive transmitted to the District Council comments concerning the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan. The County Executive's Office of Planning Implementation transmitted a fiscal analysis on February 7, 1996.
3. On February 27, 1996 the County Council reviewed the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan.
4. Section 33A-8 of the Montgomery County Code provides that a public hearing is not required if the District Council does not intend to propose any revisions, modifications, or amendments to the Planning Board draft plan.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan, dated October 1995, is approved.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Kathleen A. Freedman, CMC  
Secretary of the Council

# Acknowledgements

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*And special thanks to all the Park & Planning Department staff who contributed to this plan.*

GERMANTOWN MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

Removal of  
Proposed  
Md 117

Great Seneca  
Highway  
Interchange

 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
8787 georgia avenue • silver spring, md 20910

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G BURG VIC MP (1985)