

Shady Grove plan passes

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The Montgomery County Council finally passed the highly anticipated and heavily debated Shady Grove Sector Plan after nearly half a decade of setbacks. The plan passed with an 8-1 vote on Tuesday evening despite opposing arguments concerning additional traffic congestion and uncertainties in the plan's need to relocate existing facilities.

Council member Steven Silverman (D-3rd) called the plan "a shining example of smart growth in Montgomery County." The 20-year plan will construct approximately 10,000 houses around the new Shady Grove Metro Station. It is the largest project ever undertaken by the county. The plan will provide the housing and development needed to get the station built on its schedule, as supported by its surrounding communities. The plan will build a new library and also new elementary school to support the population increase.

Council member Phil Andrews (D-2nd) said it was the only dissenting vote, but an amount of relief. "I don't think it's a 'no,'" said Andrews, saying that the original plan was "presumably" a "no" and that the decision on the size of the plan should be based on the amount of additional housing and jobs that the area can support. The Park & Planning board's duty is to build as much housing as they possibly can that the area can support.

Council member Marilyn Praeger (D-2nd) voted in favor of the plan but warned that the difficult times had not ended. "The devil is in the details," said Praeger looking ahead to the integration of the plan into the existing community. After the Clarksburg mess, Praeger wants the surrounding communities to be involved in the plan's integration process in order to prevent any foreseeable problem that would disrupt their quality of life. The council recommended the creation of a Shady Grove Advisory Committee to monitor the implementation plan and report any potential problems to the planning and development board.



The area around the Shady Grove Metro will be heavily developed according to a plan passed by the county council this week.

County passes Shady Grove plan

*But councilmembers still don't know
where to place uprooted county services*

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One dilemma councilmembers couldn't resolve before the vote was determining the relocation site for the County Service Park. The CSP stores 100 county school buses, serves 100 county school buses, stores up to 100 buses, and will have to be relocated in order to build the plan.

The plan Councilmembers discussed moving the facility to potential sites throughout the county but could not finalize a new location. Proposed relocation sites include the Gude Landfill site, the Public Service Training Academy, and the Bellfield Depot.

Michael J. Jones, County Public School Director, of Transportation John Matthews said, "MCPS would benefit from decentralizing the large

CSP facility into smaller depots throughout the county, ideally with 225 buses at each depot. "It doesn't do any good to house buses in one mass," said Matthews. "It really works better for us to divide that up." Matthews said this decentralization will save travel time for

buses and provide greater efficiency in their maintenance. The council will arrive at a conclusion regarding CSP's relocation after they finish reviewing their analysis of the alternative sites.

Another area of concern the council addressed before they approved the plan was providing adequate recreational facilities in order

to develop as communities. Blueberry Hill Park, an area that was considered a possible site for the new elementary school, is currently set to remain a park, according to Council Spokesperson Patrick Jacefield. Jacefield said nothing is certain about the site the council is looking elsewhere for a potential school site.

Based on existing Department of Recreation

standards, a full size recreation center is not needed for the plan, but councilmembers advocated adding smaller recreational facilities like a children's game room and other similar projects that will provide gathering places throughout the community.

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