

2010 COUNTY AND STATE ELECTIONS: Why Care?

Ever wonder who starts the ball rolling when building or transit changes occur next to our community?

Consider these developments approved or under consideration:

- A 95-foot building on Pearl Street, across the trail from homes in the Town
- Nearly 250,000 square-feet in retail and offices approved to replace the Chevy Chase Supermarket and T.W. Perry shopping area, with higher density expected if the Purple Line is funded
- More traffic on Connecticut Avenue from an expanded Kensington business district and new Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan, now being studied to encompass a two-mile radius bordered by East-West Highway and Jones Bridge Rd. The plan is expected to be completed by 2012.
- Increased class size and school population, allowing a building development moratorium in Bethesda-Chevy Chase to be lifted
- Less open space and fewer traffic lanes in downtown Bethesda, when two high rises get underway at Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues

Answer: Development and transit recommendations originate with the Montgomery County Planning Board.

Its five members are appointed by the County Council. In the next month, the Council will appoint a new Planning Board chair, setting the tone for growth in the County for decades to come. The Planning Board's charter is "to maintain and improve quality of life in the community. Acting upon such issues as growth, transportation, environmental protection, agriculture, historical preservation and forest conservation, the Planning Board affects your everyday life."

And who makes the final decisions?

Answer: The Montgomery County Council legislates whether and how planning proceeds.

The County Council both appoints the Planning Board and votes on its recommendations. The County is divided into five districts; ours is District 1. Each district elects one council member. In addition, residents vote for four at-large members, who represent the entire county.

Over the next four years, the County Council will determine the amount and pace of development, transportation, and infrastructure. This will happen in a new era of tax hikes and budget cutting, projected at nearly \$1 billion for the next fiscal year.

It's clear, then, why you should care.

Don't let the election happen without your informed vote.

Decisions made by those elected to County office will affect your pocketbook, your family and your quality of life.

For more information on the Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan:
www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/chevy Chase/index.shtm

To comment about it to the Planning Board: MCP-CCLake@mncppc-mc.org