

Riverdale Portion of the
Middle River-Bird River Area Plan

As Adopted by the Baltimore County Council
July 2, 2001

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2001, Legislative Day No. 12

Resolution No. 69-01

Councilmembers Gardina, Bartenfelder and Olszewski

By the County Council, June 4, 2001

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council to adopt the Riverdale Portion of the Middle River - Bird River Area Plan as part of the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010.

WHEREAS, the Baltimore County Council adopted the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010 on February 22, 2000; and

WHEREAS, Council Resolutions 101-99 and 94-00 asked the Planning Board to prepare a Middle River - Bird River Area Plan; and

WHEREAS, in order to enable the timely redevelopment of a portion of the Middle River - Bird River area, the Office of Planning was requested to prepare a plan for the Riverdale Portion of the Middle River - Bird River area; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Economic Development and the Office of Planning prepared a draft plan for the Riverdale Portion of the Middle River - Bird River Area for submission to the Planning Board; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the proposed plan on May 3, 2001 and adopted the Plan on May 17, 2001; and

WHEREAS, the plan was submitted to the County Council on May 18, 2001 for review; and

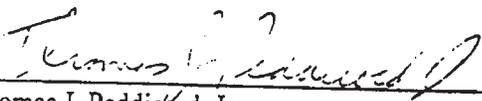
WHEREAS, the County Council held a public hearing on the proposed Riverdale Portion

of the Middle River - Bird River Area Plan on June 4, 2001; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Riverdale Portion of the Middle River - Bird River Area Plan, a copy of which plan is attached hereto and made a part hereof, be and it is hereby adopted and incorporated into the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010 to be a guide for the development of the Riverdale Portion of the Middle River - Bird River area, subject to such further modifications deemed advisable by the County Council.

READ AND PASSED this *2nd* day of *July*, 2001.

BY ORDER



Thomas J. Peddicord, Jr.
Secretary

Riverdale Portion of the Middle River-Bird River Area Plan

July 2001

Published by the
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development
and the
Baltimore County Office of Planning
Towson, Maryland

INTRODUCTION

In order to enable the timely redevelopment of a specific area in Middle River, the Middle River-Bird River Area Plan was expanded by the Baltimore County Council to include the former Riverdale apartment complex and the adjacent Riverdale Village Shopping Center (see Attachment 1). The Riverdale apartments were constructed in the 1940s and had so seriously declined over the past decade that Baltimore County and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) relocated all of the tenants, acquired the properties, and demolished all of the buildings. The Riverdale Village Shopping Center, which was also owned by the same landlord, suffered a similar lack of reinvestment and was recently acquired by the D'Anna family that also owns Mars Super Markets, Inc. with the intent of redeveloping the grocery store. In 1998, HUD conveyed its section of the complex to Baltimore County for potential redevelopment.

In August 2000, Baltimore County issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to redevelop these sites into a single-family residential neighborhood with a community commercial center and localized amenities. After an extensive review process, a development proposal and team were selected. To implement the recommended plan, the sites must be rezoned and the development plan approved in accordance with the County's zoning and development regulations.

The most efficient means of changing the existing zoning and thus enabling the redevelopment to occur is through the Middle River-Bird River Area Plan. The following sections briefly describe the background of the project, the planning process, and the selected proposal and related zoning issues.

BACKGROUND

Riverdale was a 63.5-acre, 1140-unit apartment complex built in 1943 specifically to house wartime workers that were primarily employed at the Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Company. It was one of a handful of projects constructed by large, out-of-state developers that were drawn to the area by a relaxation of wartime restrictions on housing materials and significant increases in financing by the Federal Housing Administration. These developments, which included Riverdale, the Village of Tall Trees, and Kingsley Park, were extensive garden apartment communities featuring two-story brick apartment buildings set in wooded, park-like surroundings. Riverdale was developed by Julius Gutterman and Joseph Mascioli of Queens, New York and constructed by Ralph DeChiaro, a Long Island building contractor who later moved to Baltimore.

In the late 1970s, the economy of southeastern Baltimore County began to seriously decline. This change rippled through the local communities and among other things, resulted in a downturn in the local housing market. Rental communities, particularly the larger apartment complexes such as Riverdale, were especially hard hit. Conditions in the complex deteriorated so badly that the US Department of Housing and Urban Development foreclosed on the mortgage it held on a 25-acre section, demolished the buildings, and conveyed title to Baltimore County. Using the threat of condemnation, Baltimore County acquired the remaining land and with a State grant, also demolished the buildings.

Adjacent to the apartment site is the Riverdale Village Shopping Center. This site is approximately 3.8 acres and is located at the intersection of Eastern Boulevard and Orville Road. The 42,000 square foot center is anchored by a 13,719 square foot Mars grocery store, a CVS drug store, and several vacant retail spaces. The site also includes the long vacant Highway Theater. The grocery store is of a substandard size and only minimal improvements have been made over the past decade. In the summer of 2000, the D'Anna family that also owns Mars Super Markets, Inc. purchased the site and expressed a willingness to work with the County to comprehensively redevelop both sites.

PLANNING PROCESS

In 1996, the County Council rezoned the apartment site to DR 1 to preclude high-density redevelopment. At that time, it was recognized that the zoning could be changed again to accommodate an acceptable development proposal. On August 21, 1997, Baltimore County held its first design charette with architects, landscape architects, local developers, County staff from several departments, and community representatives. The purpose was to develop conceptual plans to help guide the possible redevelopment of the Riverdale site. Three general concepts were developed for a new neighborhood of single-family detached houses with a community commercial center and local park and recreational uses.

These plans were presented for discussion purposes at several local community and business meetings. Local developers also reviewed the proposals and provided insight to development difficulties and opportunities. These public comments were used to develop a collective vision for the area that included redevelopment of both the Riverdale apartment site and the Riverdale Village Shopping Center.

In August 2000, Baltimore County issued a RFP for the redevelopment of the former Riverdale apartment complex and surrounding properties, including the Riverdale Village Shopping Center. The non-economic objectives of the RFP were:

- Creation of a distinctive and high quality community in terms of superior site planning, architectural design, and construction materials;
- Creation of a neighborhood of predominantly single-family detached housing that is of a quality and value that will quickly attract middle income family homeowners;
- Creation of a community commercial center that is part of the overall neighborhood design and serves both the new development and the nearby communities;
- Assemblage of adjacent commercial properties incorporated into overall design and proposal;
- Reinforcement of the County's efforts to capitalize on the nearby waterfront by maximizing visual and physical connections to Middle River;
- Enhancement of the stability and viability of the surrounding communities by providing accessible amenities and complementary designs; and
- Enhancement of water quality in Middle River.

Five proposals were received and evaluated by a committee composed of County staff and

representatives of the Middlesex Civic Association, Essex-Middle River-White Marsh Chamber of Commerce, and the American Society of Landscape Architects, Maryland Chapter. A "short list" of three was selected and each development team presented its proposal at a well-attended community informational meeting held at Kenwood High School. Comments from the public were incorporated into subsequent interviews of each team. After several review meetings, the evaluation committee unanimously recommended the development team headed by the Mark Building Company.

The proposal calls for a neo-traditional neighborhood of 175 single-family detached houses, a community commercial center between the new community and the existing community of Middlesex, a large community park, and several smaller neighborhood parks.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS

The zoning map amendments needed to implement the selected plan are presented in Attachments 2 and 3. In general, it is recommended that most of the site be rezoned to DR 3.5 to permit lower density single-family detached houses. Business local zoning (BL) is recommended for about 15 acres in the southwestern corner of the site near the intersection of Orville Road and Eastern Boulevard. Uses in the BL zone shall be restricted to those most compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods. This will be accomplished through the contract of sale and deed restrictions.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2000, Legislative Day No. 20

Resolution No. 94-00

Mr. Vincent J. Gardina, Councilman

By the County Council, November 6, 2000

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council to expand the Middle River/Bird River Area Plan.

WHEREAS, on December 20, 1999, the County Council adopted Resolution 101-99 which asked the Baltimore County Planning Board to prepare a Middle River/Bird River Area Plan; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 101-99 recognized that this area of the County is unique, and that a plan is needed in order to ensure the reasonable development of unimproved, residentially-zoned properties in the Middle River/Bird River area; and

WHEREAS, the County Council adopted the Eastern Baltimore County Revitalization Strategy in July, 1996; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to that Strategy, the former Riverdale apartment complex was identified for redevelopment opportunities, and proposals for redevelopment of this land are now being accepted by the County; and

WHEREAS, a plan for the Middle River/Bird River Area is an appropriate vehicle for the consideration of the redevelopment of the former Riverdale housing complex, consisting of approximately 77 acres of residentially-zoned land and a contiguous commercial parcel; and

WHEREAS, the County Council is desirous of amending its request to the Planning Board in order to include within the study area the land formerly included in the Riverdale complex for which the County is now accepting development proposals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND that the area encompassed by the Middle River/Bird River Area Plan is hereby expanded to include the area depicted on the attached map which is identified in the County's 2000 Comprehensive Zoning Map Process as Issue 5-108.

READ AND PASSED this *6th* day of *November*, 2000.

BY ORDER

Thomas J. Peddicord, Jr.

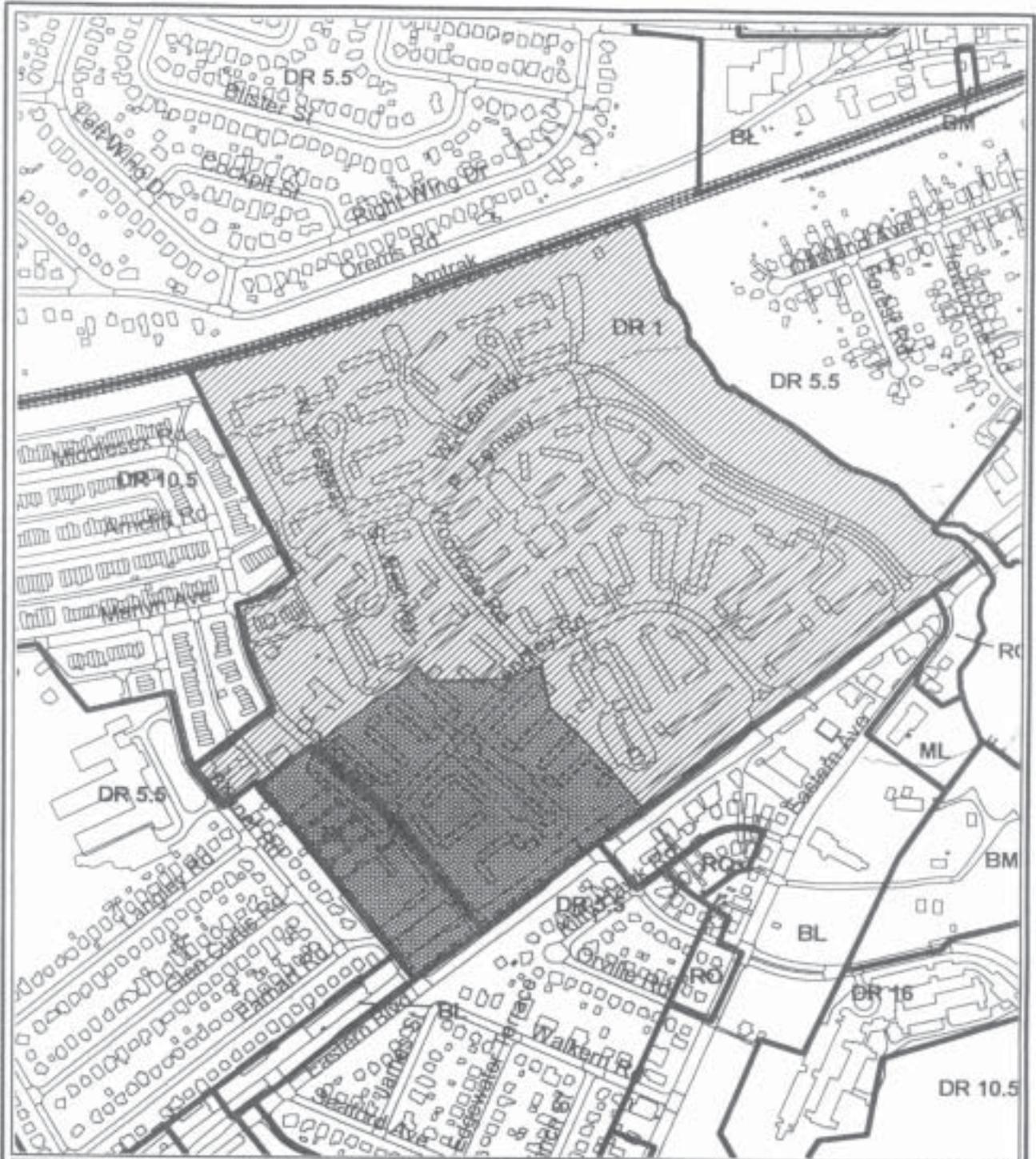
Thomas J. Peddicord, Jr.
Secretary

ITEM: Res. 94-00

Middle River - Bird River - Riverdale Comprehensive Zoning Map Process

Attachment 2

Issue Number	Location	Existing Zoning and Acres		Proposed Zoning and Acres	
MRBR-18	Riverdale-Between Eastern Blvd and the Amtrak rail line, E of Bennet Rd	DR 1	64.6	DR 3.5	54.2
		BL	4.7	BL	15.1
		<u>Total</u>	<u>69.3</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>69.3</u>



Middle River - Bird River Plan (Riverdale)

MRBR - 18



-  Existing Zone Boundary
-  Area to be Zoned DR 3.5
-  Area to be Zoned BL

Item No. 18

DR 1 and BL to
DR 3.5 and BL



Baltimore County
Office of Planning
March, 2001

Data Source:
Planimetrics - Baltimore County OIT (1:2400)
Zoning - Baltimore County Planning Office (1:2400)



Baltimore County
Office of Planning
County Courts Building
401 Bosley Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

<http://www.co.ba.md.us>