

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ARCHIVES

Guide to the Records of the

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY CITIZENS
PLANNING ASSOCIATION
1954-1975**

Record Group 18: Civic Organizations

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ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

After five years of intermittent activity, the Citizens Committee to Unify Montgomery County changed its name in May 1955 to the Montgomery County Planning Association and merged with the Association for Good Planning in Upper Montgomery County later that year. In January 1958 the Board of Governors voted to change its name again to the Montgomery County Citizens Planning Association (MCCPA). The mission of the Association was “to support and encourage sound planning activities in this area...by holding public meetings, by studying and reporting on major planning issues, by participating in public hearings and appearing before official bodies.”

The MCCPA supported planned growth, the development of communities and the preservation of existing ones, rapid transit, and the expansion of the park system. It decried the lack of a comprehensive plan for growth, and closely scrutinized every proposed sewer, highway, and rezoning project. Although its membership was small, both individual members and committees closely followed proposed County projects, testified before planning commissions, and explained their positions in the press. The MCCPA envisioned a series of “garden city” communities throughout the county which would consist of employment centers of business, shopping, schools and other support facilities surrounded by homes and apartments of various sizes and bounded by a “greenbelt.” These communities would be connected by rapid transit, parkways, and highways which would eventually feed into Washington, D.C.

In December 1961, Planning Commission consultant Harland Bartholomew submitted a General Plan for Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties which proposed a “Wedges and Corridors” approach for future development. This plan, which was supported by the MCCPA, was passed in 1962, but later amended and weakened by the pro-growth County Council. In 1965, the MCCPA sought increased funding from its members and other civic groups and brought a suit contesting the WSSC decision to extend the sewer system to Olney. However, the Court of Appeals ruled that the MCCPA had no standing in the case. The MCCPA also supported legislation to preserve farmland through special taxation categories and to eliminate conflicts-of-interest between elected and appointed officials and business interests.

By 1969, the organization had grown to 200 members with ten participating organizations. In the early years of its existence, few Montgomery County citizens had been interested in planning, but during the 1960s uncontrolled growth combined with a growing awareness of environmental issues led to increased influence and support for the MCCPA. In 1970, one of its former presidents, Neal Potter, was elected to the Montgomery County Council.

EXTENT

One cubic foot: 1 records box.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The records of the Montgomery County Citizens Planning Association include material dating from 1954 to 1975. They include correspondence, agenda, minutes, reports, resolutions,

statements, maps, membership lists, and newsletters. The Chronological Files series ends in 1971 with the election of a new president, but the newsletters continue on to 1975. There is a one year gap in the Chronological Files, from August 1968 to August 1969. Significant topics include the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, highway development, the Residential Land Use Plan of 1960, the Wedges and Corridors Plan, master plans for various Montgomery County communities, protection of watersheds, low and moderate income housing, farmland tax assessments, sewer and waste treatment plans and projects, rapid transit, the park system, and conflict-of-interest legislation. The records have been arranged in three series, chronologically within each series:

Series I: Chronological Files

Series II: Newsletters

Series III: Reports

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I: Chronological Files, 1954-1971

(0.75 cubic feet)

This series contains correspondence, agendas, minutes, reports, resolutions, statements, membership lists, maps, and newsletters. It also includes several reports from the MCCPA's predecessor organization, the Citizens Committee to Unify Montgomery County. It contains minutes of both general meetings and meetings of the Board of Directors, as well as correspondence and notices relating to the establishment of the Vinton Lectureship in 1969. Included are studies, petitions, and correspondence documenting the MCCPA's opposition to a plant proposed for construction by Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) in Loudon County, Virginia in 1956, and its successful support of an alternate site near Dickerson in northwestern Montgomery County.

Other materials of significance include: MCCPA's statements, reports and lobbying efforts regarding its legislative agenda; rezoning applications; rapid transit; protection of the Rock Creek, Northwest Branch and Patuxent watersheds; highway developments, particularly plans for the 70-S, North-Central Freeway, and outer circumferential freeway projects; park system expansion; the Residential Land Use Plan of 1960; the Wedges and Corridors Plan; farmland tax assessments; conflict-of-interest legislation and situations; master plans for various communities including Garrett Park, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Olney, Bethesda/Chevy Chase and Silver Spring; housing; and the extension of sewer lines and building of wastewater and solid waste treatment plants. The MCCPA's opposition to the policies and projects of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, and the pro-growth County Councils of the 1950s and early- to mid-1960s is also documented.

Series II: Newsletters, 1959-1975

(0.25 cubic feet)

Each newsletter details the activities of the organization and includes reports and studies

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compiled by MCCPA members on any activity in the county relating to growth and planning. The newsletters also document the changes in officers and the Board of Directors. The series also contains "Information Bulletin No. 1" from 1957.

Series III: Reports, 1962
(2 folders)

This series contains two reports drafted by Mary Vinton, created for the purpose of "bring[ing] together the material which will summarize the history of planning in Montgomery County" and to form a "condensed statement of immediate planning issues in Montgomery County" to be brought before the community prior to the 1962 elections.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS

This collection is open for research.

LANGUAGE

English.

PROVENANCE

Unknown.

RELATED MATERIAL

For additional material regarding mid-century planning in Montgomery County, see the following collections:

- Record Group 15: Boards and Commissions. Records Title: Printed Material of the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission.
- Record Group 2: County Council. Records Title: The Records of Neal Potter. Series XXV: Planning

USING THESE RECORDS

To request records listed in this finding aid, the following information should be given to the archivist:

Record Group 18, **Records of the Montgomery County Citizens Planning Association**, Series Number and Name, Box Number and Folder Title(s).

The preferred citation for materials from these records is:

Montgomery County Archives; Gaithersburg, Maryland. Record Group 18: Civic Organizations. Records Title: The Records of the Montgomery County Citizens Planning Association. Series number and series name. Box number and folder title, if appropriate.

PROCESSING PROCEDURES

Preservation copying of newspaper clippings was performed whenever feasible. Records in folders were arranged, unless otherwise indicated, in forward chronological order, with undated records appearing at the end of the folder.

PROCESSING STAFF/FINDING AID AUTHOR(S)

Sarah Hedlund

MCA Staff

BOX INVENTORY

Series I: Chronological Files, 1955-1971

Box 1

Nov. 22, 1954-Dec. 29, 1955

Jan. 16, 1956-Dec. 20, 1956

Jan. 21, 1957-Nov. 1957

Jan. 9, 1958-Dec. 11, 1959

Jan. 16, 1960-Dec. 14, 1960

Jan. 10, 1961-Dec. 1, 1961

Jan. 9, 1962-Dec. 27, 1962

Jan. 2, 1963-Dec. 12, 1963

Jan. 2, 1964-Dec. 23, 1964

Jan. 7, 1965-Aug. 18, 1968

Aug. 1, 1969-Dec. 18, 1969

Jan. 20, 1969-July 21, 1969

Jan. 6, 1970-Dec. 28, 1970

Jan. 6, 1971-Sept. 7, 1971

Series II: Newsletters, 1957-1975

(Box 1, Cont.)

Information Bulletin No. 1, 1957

June 1959-Oct. 1966

May 1968-Nov. 1971

Feb. 1972-Summer 1975

Series III: Reports, 1962

(Box 1, Cont.)

Background of Montgomery County Planning Problems, 1962

Report on Issues, 1962