



September 29, 2010

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief, Vision Division *GK*  
Khalid Afzal, Team Leader, East Transit Corridor Team *KA*  
Vision Division

**FROM:** Sandy Tallant, Planner Coordinator (301-495-1329) *ST*  
East Transit Corridor Team, Vision Division

**SUBJECT:** Worksession #1 – Wheaton Central Business District (CBD) and Vicinity Sector Plan: Summary of public testimony, identification of issues, and detailed discussion and review of overarching issues.

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Resolve the overarching, area-wide issues for the Sector Plan as summarized below.

**INTRODUCTION**

This is the Planning Board's first worksession on the proposed Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan. The Board held a public hearing on the Public Hearing Draft of the Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan on Thursday, July 29, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the MRO Auditorium. Twenty-seven people presented testimony and the hearing record was left open until the close of business on Friday, August 13, 2010. Following the close of the record, the State Highway Administration (SHA), Westfield Wheaton Mall, and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) sent comments, which have been included in the record. A table summarizing all of the oral and written testimony received during and after the hearing is provided as Attachment 1. The community can find copies of the submitted testimony on the Wheaton Sector Plan website at: [www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/wheaton/index.shtm](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/wheaton/index.shtm).

This report is designed to get the Board's input and recommendations on the overarching issues while the more detailed issues on individual parcels and neighborhoods will be discussed in later worksessions. The Board members should bring their copies of the Public Hearing Draft. This report is organized into four parts:

- a. A brief summary of the public hearing testimony and comments received since the public hearing on July 29;
- b. A list of all the issues raised by the testimony;
- c. A discussion of the general, overarching issues (issues #1-8) and staff recommendations for the Planning Board's consideration and action; and
- d. A schedule of future worksessions to address the more specific issues in the Plan.

## **A. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

A large majority of those who testified or submitted written comments supported the Plan's goals of creating a high density, mixed-use Metro center with a variety of building heights and open spaces in the core; protecting the surrounding single-family residential communities through appropriate transitions; supporting small businesses and retaining the ethnic character of Wheaton; and creating a sustainable community through open spaces, best environmental management practices, and adequate infrastructure to support and encourage the future growth of Wheaton.

A majority of the stakeholders also agreed with the Plan's proposed mechanism to achieve these goals. They agreed that the CR Zone was the right mechanism to provide a balance of incentives and requirements to encourage more sustainable development, and they supported the proposed removal of the current Retail Preservation Overlay Zone.

Although most people agreed with the Plan's recommendation of replacing the current CBD and other non-residential zones with a variety of CR Zones, some community members were concerned that CR Zone was not the right zone for properties next to the existing single-family neighborhoods. Some thought that the proposed CR Zones would be detrimental to the goal of revitalizing Wheaton and that the CBD Zones should be retained in the core. The owners of the Westfield Mall asked for an overlay zone on their property to have greater flexibility in the site plan requirements for that property.

Stakeholders generally supported retention of the Crossways Community site for a possible elementary school in the future, and a proposed network of pedestrian, vehicular and bike linkages to provide a variety of mobility choices and encourage walkability.

A majority agreed with the Plan's assessment that Wheaton has suffered from a lack of market demand, especially in Class A office space. However, some were concerned that there was not enough emphasis in the proposed Plan on creating more jobs in the Wheaton CBD through office development, in order to promote and transform Wheaton into a major employment center. Some believed that the Plan's jobs/housing balance should be similar to other Metro CBDs like Bethesda and Silver Spring with a much higher jobs component than is projected in the Draft Plan. Some also asked whether there was enough Metrorail capacity to serve the needs of a town center that will have more housing than jobs, and therefore recommended that there should be more jobs in Wheaton than estimated in the Plan.

Some of the testimony questioned the 30 percent non-auto share mode split assumed in the Plan for future development and used in the transportation modeling of the development scenarios. Some thought it was too high while others thought it was too low.

There was testimony that the Plan did not place enough emphasis on creating a sustainable community and a "green economy" in Wheaton, and some questioned the adequacy of existing schools to absorb the additional student population projected in the Plan.

Some of the other more specific issues concerned the increased height and density proposed on specific properties; recommendations for retention or deletion of some smaller street connections; a lack of recommendation for retention of the existing green buffer on the Wheaton Mall property next to the single-family houses; any possible elimination of the Wheaton Veterans Park; opposition to some of the proposed street and bikeway connections and retention of the unbuilt portions of existing paper streets; and stormwater management (SWM) issues on the Wheaton Mall property. There were also comments concerning the report's organization, graphics, and typographical errors presented mostly by the Executive Branch, which will be addressed by staff during the preparation of the Planning Board Draft Plan.

## **B. ISSUES RAISED BY THE TESTIMONY**

### **Overarching Issues (discussed in detail in this report)**

1. The Plan should promote more office growth in Wheaton. The proposed jobs/housing balance should be significantly revised to emphasize Wheaton as a major employment center instead of a bedroom community.
2. The goal of 30 percent non-auto driver mode share seems low compared to Silver Spring and Bethesda (other Metro-served CBDs in the County).
3. The Plan's jobs/housing ratio will result in Wheaton residents boarding an already over-crowded Metro Red Line at peak hours in Wheaton instead of coming to jobs in Wheaton.
4. Existing school facilities in the area may not be adequate for the projected student population generated by new development in Wheaton.
5. The proposed CR Zone may be a disincentive to redevelop properties in Wheaton.
6. Existing single-family detached homes within one mile of the Metro station should be rezoned for townhouses, multifamily units, and accessory units to achieve revitalization in Wheaton.
7. The Plan's vision should include the concept of sustainability. It should include economic development tools to promote "green businesses" in Wheaton.
8. The Plan should provide more east-west bike connections in Wheaton.

## **District and Parcel Specific Issues (will be discussed in later worksessions)**

9. The proposed building height and density on the Wheaton Mall property: the adjoining community thought it was too high but the County staff thought it was too restrictive. Also, the adjoining community raised concerns about existing stormwater management (SWM) issues on the property. Wheaton Mall owners raised issues regarding the existing LATR approvals and agreement, site plan review requirement under the proposed CR Zones, the creation of a Wheaton Mall overlay zone, and related edits to the Draft Plan text.
10. Retain the existing green buffer along the ring road on the Wheaton Mall property to reduce the impact of future Mall redevelopment on adjacent residential areas.
11. Should Parking Lot 13 be specifically designated as the location for a major public space? Should the proposed public space on Parking Lot 13 be owned by the Department of Parks?
12. Should Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard (west of Veirs Mill Road) be designated as Priority Retail Streets?
13. Is the CR zone appropriate for properties in the Kensington View neighborhood, and on Amherst Avenue near the Wheaton Forest neighborhood, that serve as transitional areas between commercial and single-family residential uses?
14. Provide a pedestrian and bikeway only connection with no vehicular access for the unbuilt portion of Kensington Boulevard between East Avenue and Veirs Mill Road.
15. Retain the CBD-2 zoning on the Wheaton Crossing Shopping Center properties (Draft Plan page 36, Blocks N and O).
16. Increase the residential and commercial densities on the Weinberg property from 3.5 to 4.0 FAR (proposed CR 4: C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100, pages 35-36, Block L).
17. Allow Hickerson Drive to be closed permanently to vehicular traffic to achieve a vibrant retail corridor and pedestrian circulation within the Blueridge District.
18. Increase the proposed height on the Standard Properties parcel to emphasize Wheaton's southern gateway and encourage a signature landmark building (page 34, Block A).
19. Rezone the WTOP site on University Boulevard from the existing R-90 to higher mixed-use densities.
20. Should Wheaton have a Transportation Management District (TMD) to encourage more people to take transit?
21. The proposed Veirs Mill Road right-of-way would negatively impact the redevelopment potential of the Lindsay Ford property.

22. Retain the Veterans Park at its current location.
23. Consider preserving the four-acre Montgomery County Art and Design College (MCAD) property as green space to offset CBD redevelopment.
24. Clarify the purpose of extending Price Avenue to Amherst Avenue through private properties and the County garage.
25. Road designation should be in conformity with community context.
26. Reevaluate the minimum Sector Plan right-of-way widths including all major highway segments given their bikeway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) potentials.
27. Should the Urban Design Guidelines be in the Sector Plan as they used to be in the past?

### **C. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS—OVERARCHING ISSUES #1-8**

**Issue 1: The Plan should promote more office growth in Wheaton. The proposed jobs/housing balance should be significantly revised to emphasize Wheaton as a major employment center instead of a bedroom community.**

#### **Discussion:**

The Montgomery County Department of General Services supported the Plan's recommendations for high density mixed-use zoning. It stated that the Plan "provides the framework upon which redevelopment can occur. While Wheaton is not currently an office market, having sufficient zoning in place sets the stage for such development as environmental and transportation concerns make smart growth more attractive."

Other testimony stated that the Plan does not promote Wheaton's potential as an office and employment cluster, and that it is essential to expand Wheaton's supply of office space to attract a large employer(s) to enhance Wheaton's daytime economy. Wheaton should become a business and job center, not a bedroom community. The testimony stated that the Georgia Avenue corridor (Wheaton and Silver Spring CBDs) on the eastern leg of the Red Line has a low jobs/housing ratio compared to the I-270 Corridor, and it is projected to decline further by 2030 according to the Round 7.2 forecast. This set of testimony recommended that the proposed jobs/housing ratio be significantly increased to make Wheaton a bigger employment center than the Plan currently estimates.

The Planning staff believes that the jobs/housing data shown on page 9 of the Plan should be revised to show the correct jobs/housing ratios. However, the numbers should not be revised further for several reasons. First, the Plan's jobs/housing numbers are only estimates of what the likely development could be within the proposed maximum permitted zoning capacity for future development. The estimated number of jobs is not a proposed maximum, and it is not limited by the Plan's land use, zoning or

other implementation mechanisms. It does not have any real impact on the actual outcome of the Plan's land use and zoning recommendations. Wheaton has the infrastructure to evolve into a successful mixed-use CBD, and the proposed mixed-use zoning is flexible enough to respond to market demands and may yield a significantly different number of jobs than projected in the Plan. It does not restrict commercial development in either the short or long term, and can accommodate a significant amount of development beyond the estimated plan yield and the high scenario modeled for transportation purposes.

Even if the Plan's jobs/housing projections are on the low side, a higher than expected number of jobs in Wheaton would not invalidate the Plan's goals and estimated needs for infrastructure to support such growth. For example, the future school facility needs are based on the high scenario, not on the projected jobs/housing numbers.

The staff believes that the Plan's jobs/housing balance is a reasonable estimate. It is based on a number of factors including the history of development in Wheaton since the adoption of the 1990 Plan. The opening of the new Metro station was expected to bring lots of new development including Class A office to Wheaton; this development never occurred despite the County's best efforts to revitalize the CBD over the past 20 years. Constraints on new office development in Wheaton include: lack of an established office market in Wheaton; a limited supply of appropriately sized properties whose owners are willing and have the ability to attract Class A office space; and the growing competition from other locations in the County and the region. The most critical of these constraints--lack of an established office market--was also confirmed by a ULI Technical Assistance Panel and a consultant study, both of which looked at Wheaton's potential for redevelopment in the future.

Staff developed two alternative scenarios, primarily for transportation modeling purposes: a high scenario (approximately 19.5 million square feet), which was an extremely aggressive estimate with very few constraints, whose main purpose was to test the limits of the current transportation infrastructure; and a low scenario (approximately 12.6 million square feet), which was an aggressive outlook on future economic and development conditions but was constrained by numerous factors such as the availability of redevelopment sites; likely assemblages of properties into common ownership; the location, configuration, and maximum size of the potential assemblages, which may impact whether a particular site is suitable for office or residential development; general economic conditions for the real estate industry as a whole; and the amount of development that can be absorbed in the Wheaton CBD in the next 15-20 years based on economic studies for Wheaton.

Staff also identified seventeen sites/assemblages in Wheaton with varying likelihood of development in the next 15-20 years. Ten of these had a slightly higher possibility of redevelopment than the rest because they are large parcels in single ownership, some are vacant, and the owners are currently pursuing redevelopment or have expressed interest in redeveloping their properties. Together, they could add approximately 4.0 million square feet to the existing 7.3 million square feet for a total maximum of approximately 11.3 million square feet of development capacity. However, not all of these properties are suitable for office development.

One of these properties is the WMATA block (page 33, Block E), which has the best potential to bring new Class A office tenants to Wheaton and could accommodate up to one million square feet (about 4,000 jobs), some of which would likely be devoted to bus bays and other non-office uses. The Draft Plan recommends highest commercial density and building height for this block, which is also the centerpiece of the County's recent initiative to jump start Wheaton's revitalization through a public/private partnership with WMATA and a private development entity.

Three other properties, the Avalon Bay site on Blueridge Avenue, the Safeway site at Georgia Avenue and Reddie Drive, and the Washington Properties site at Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road, are being planned for residential development. Some of the remaining developable properties would require assembling large parcels free of existing leases, and even then only a few of them would be suitable for office development due to their size and location constraints. Once these sites are developed, as office or residential, the Wheaton Mall property will be the only one suitable for Class A office development. Owners of the Mall have indicated that they have no plans for new Class A office development in the foreseeable future.

The Draft Plan's estimated jobs/housing ratio of 2.0:1 is lower than the 1990 Plan (4.2:1) because the Draft Plan's jobs estimate is slightly lower than the 1990 Plan while the residential estimate is higher as shown in the revised table below. This difference in numbers between the 1990 Plan and the Draft Plan reflects the fact that a couple of the sites estimated for significant office development in the 1990 Plan have been developed as residential, and the remaining developable sites are considered less likely to be office developments (with lower development capacity as discussed in the analysis of the ten most likely developable sites resulting in a lower jobs estimate).

The current estimate of 10,200 jobs in Wheaton (which has further declined to approximately 9,000 jobs since it was first estimated for this analysis in 2008) demonstrates that the 1990 Plan was overly optimistic about job creation in Wheaton. As noted above, zoning properties to higher density uses may not necessarily have an impact on the actual market demand for such uses. Staff believes the Draft Plan's estimated jobs/housing is appropriate for Wheaton.

**Estimated Development and Jobs/Housing Ratio (revised)**

	<b>Existing (2008 estimate)</b>	<b>Existing plus Pipeline</b>	<b>1990 Plan estimate*</b>	<b>Total estimated for the Draft Plan**</b>
<b>Jobs</b>	10,200	10,210	13,490	13,200
<b>Housing</b>	2,000	2,588	3,165	6,600
<b>J/H Ratio</b>	5.1:1	3.9:1	4.2:1	2.0:1

\*Reflects about 9.3M total square feet of development

\*\*Reflects about 12.6M total square feet of development (i.e., the low scenario)

**Staff Recommendation:**

Replace the table on page 9 of the Draft Plan with the revised table.

**Issue 2: The goal of 30 percent non-auto driver mode share goal seems low compared to Silver Spring and Bethesda (other Metro served CBDs in the County).**

**Discussion:**

Some public testimony indicated support for a non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) goal greater than the 30 percent proposed in the Draft Plan, while other testimony questioned the ability of Wheaton to attain a 30 percent figure given its predominant retail-based employment sector, the lack of a transportation management district, and the presence of a regional mall.

NADMS is the percentage of employees within the Plan boundary that are estimated to arrive at work during a typical weekday morning peak period via transit, bike, walking, as an auto passenger, etc. – anything other than driving a single occupant automobile. The Transportation section of the Draft Appendix (page 6) contains discussion related to this issue. The methodology used here is consistent with the approach and methodology used in recent plans where there is existing or planned fixed guideway transit.

NADMS is a critical assumption of the transportation modeling analysis that is both aspirational and practical. It is aspirational in that this is what we want to achieve in order to realize our vision. But it has to be realistic, because if the mode share is too aspirational, the transportation model could understate levels of congestion if the projected development takes place resulting in a perceived failure of the Plan.

Proposed travel demand mode share targets for employees working in Wheaton are based on analysis of observed travel behaviors in similar Montgomery County activity centers. Master Plan recommendations for non auto driver mode share (NADMS) goals are based on a gradient of NADMS which is highest in the urban down-county planning areas, and lower farther from the region's urban core. High NADMS numbers typically correspond to a diverse set of factors typical of urban areas including parking lot districts, urban districts and/or transportation management districts.

Wheaton's commuter survey data reveals a low (13 percent) NADMS based in part on its location near the eastern end of the Metrorail Red Line and the edge of the County's urban ring communities. However, its Metrorail station, proximity to Silver Spring, and the plan for BRT service along Veirs Mill Road suggest that a goal of 30 percent is attainable. One possible constraint for Wheaton is its diverse employment base with a high percentage of retail jobs and lower office employment relative to other urban centers such as Bethesda and Silver Spring. Current commuter survey data does not accurately reflect the travel behavior of retail employees in Wheaton, which could be influenced by non-peak work hours when transit service may not operate at frequencies suitable for routine use.

Conversely, transit use by residents in the Plan area for journey-to-work is estimated at 52 percent, nearly three times the Countywide average. As Wheaton becomes a more vibrant mixed-use center, one objective will be to ensure that transit, bicycling, and



walking remain viable options for future residents who also choose to work in Wheaton. With more jobs expected in Wheaton, the transit mode share might be expected to decrease somewhat but it would be balanced by a higher walk and bike mode share.

A March 2009 WMATA report (Transit Ridership Trends and Markets) estimates the rail mode share (excluding bus and other non single occupant auto modes) for trips within ½ mile of the Wheaton Metrorail Station is 22.4 percent. The same report notes the average annual ridership growth at the Wheaton Station in the period 2002 to 2007 is 8 percent - one of the top ten stations in the entire system in terms of average annual growth rate in ridership.

The staff believes the goal of 30 percent non-auto driver mode share is the correct assumption for Wheaton and is attainable over the life of the Plan.

**Staff Recommendation:**

No change to the proposed Draft Plan.

**Issue 3: The Plan's jobs/housing ratio will result in Wheaton residents boarding an already over-crowded Metro Red Line at peak hours in Wheaton instead of coming to jobs in Wheaton.**

**Discussion:**

There have been concerns raised about peak loads in downtown Washington and WMATA has established a Capital Improvement Program to address this issue.

The long range travel forecasts and WMATA's Station Access and Capacity Study indicate that there will be sufficient capacity on the Red Line to accommodate the planned growth. This finding, however, assumes funding is available for rail car replacement and fleet expansion, as well as the elimination of the turn back at Silver Spring – a service improvement that requires more train "sets" during peak periods. While funding the improvements is not necessarily an issue for Wheaton specifically, it is important for the Metrorail system.

Metrorail trains serving Wheaton run every five minutes in the peak period. Each train has either six or eight cars and each car holds about 120 passengers (including standees) comfortably. The current "line capacity" (number of trains times number of cars times passengers per car) therefore ranges from 8,640 to 11,520 per hour during peak periods. There is plenty of line capacity on Metrorail to accommodate additional growth around the Wheaton Station.

**Staff Recommendation:**

No change to the Draft Plan.

**Issue 4: Existing school facilities in the area may not be adequate for the projected student population generated by new development in Wheaton.**

**Discussion:**

Although the Plan recommends a new elementary school in the area, if needed, public testimony suggested that the development estimated in this Plan would not be adequately served by the existing middle and high schools in the area.

The MCPS staff has reviewed the student population projections in the Draft Plan and found that they were incorrect; MCPS has lowered the projected student population estimates. The revised student population estimates for a low scenario (the Draft Plan's estimated level of development) and a high scenario (the basis for assessing the adequacy of infrastructure such as school facilities) are as follows:

	Revised Low scenario	Revised High scenario
Elementary school students	240	386
Middle school students	189	310
High school students	186	300

MCPS general rule is that a new elementary school would be needed if the projected development would generate at least half the number of students typically housed in a new elementary school (600 to 700 students). These figures show that the low scenario would not require a new elementary school site but the high scenario, if fully realized, would require a new elementary school. Since the Draft Plan has used the high scenario as the bench mark for determining future school needs in the area, staff recommends retaining the current elementary school site recommendation and correcting the text on page 58 of the Draft Plan to reflect the revised student population projections.

The middle schools in the area have capacity to absorb the amount of development proposed for Wheaton. The yields are not enough to justify a new middle school in the area. At the high school level, the students have the ability to attend five high schools belonging to the Downcounty Consortium. Any additional student population can be absorbed with future high school expansions/modernizations, if needed.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Change the text on page 58 of the Draft Plan as follows:

The Plan's proposed residential development ~~would~~ could yield up to 520 386 elementary school students, ~~350 310~~ middle school students, and ~~400 300~~ high school students. There are no capacity issues for middle and high schools, but an additional elementary school site may be needed if actual development is higher than the development estimated envisioned in this Plan ~~is built~~.

**Issue 5: The proposed CR Zone may be a disincentive to redevelop properties in Wheaton.**

**Discussion:**

This testimony assumes that a majority of the future development in Wheaton would occur under the standard method of development (at least in the foreseeable future). Properties developed under the proposed CR Zone get only 0.5 FAR under the standard method while they can get up to 2 FAR under standard method of development in the CBD-2 Zone (which covers most of the core in the Wheaton CBD).

It is technically correct that the CR Zone allows a maximum of 0.5 FAR while the same properties can achieve up to 2.0 FAR under the existing CBD-2 Zone under standard method without a site plan requirement. However, a more detailed analysis of optional method development under the proposed CR Zone shows that a majority of small properties can achieve significantly higher FARs under optional method without incurring significant additional cost primarily due to the fact that many of these properties are close to Metro and neighborhood services, which entitles them to automatic incentive FARs of 30 percent and 15 percent respectively. There are other incentive density options for achieving the proposed FAR without significant additional costs.

Staff believes that the proposed CR Zone is the right zone for Wheaton's core which has a combination of small, medium and larger size parcels and a variety of building types. It encourages the revitalization of small properties by allowing higher densities on smaller parcels compared to the existing CBD zones, which require a minimum of 18,000 square feet for optional method development. Currently, the optional method development option is not available to properties in the Overlay Zone, which covers a large part of the CBD and prohibits optional method development; the proposed Plan recommends removal of the overlay zone. The CR Zone also reduces the minimum parking requirements, which would reduce development costs for smaller properties, and its incentive density mechanism includes provisions for small retail spaces which could possibly be occupied by small businesses.

**Staff Recommendation:**

No change in the Draft Plan.

**Issue 6: Existing single-family detached homes within one mile of the Metro station should be rezoned for townhouses, multifamily units, and accessory units to achieve revitalization in Wheaton.**

**Discussion:**

The testimony submitted on this issue said that revitalization of Wheaton can be expedited by providing incentives for redevelopment of existing single-family homes adjacent to the core and by recommending townhouses and multi-family zoning within one mile of the Metro entrance. Small single-family detached homes in the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown should be allowed to retrofit and expand enhancing their desirability for future generations. Wheaton's small lot sizes (roughly 6,000-9,000 square feet) are similar to lots sizes in new urbanist developments such as King Farm and Kentlands, but support smaller WWII era homes (900-1,800 square feet) rather than the more spacious units (2,400 square feet) found in these developments. It also suggests making it legal to convert a basement to an accessory dwelling unit for a mother-in-law, home office, or returning post college graduate children without the current special exception process.

Staff does not support this recommendation since increasing density on the edge instead of the center of the downtown may reduce the incentive to build in the core resulting in an underdeveloped core. There is considerable capacity within the existing and proposed zoning framework for adding density to Wheaton's underdeveloped downtown - albeit on a limited number of properties. Some increase in density has been applied to multifamily sites on the edge of the downtown to increase density as the testimony suggests, but this does not extend into the neighborhoods of predominantly single-family houses.

We do not believe that rezoning existing single-family houses would result in assemblages and redevelopment into denser residential development any time soon even if it was a desirable option. Assemblage of single-family detached houses is the most difficult and unpredictable scenario. At best it is a long term planning goal, not a revitalization strategy, which is what is needed for Wheaton now. A rezoning recommendation at this time may also destabilize these established neighborhoods.

The Draft Plan recommends preserving existing stable neighborhoods to create a diversity of housing options and ownership in Wheaton. Renovation and expansion of old, smaller houses is permitted under the existing residential zoning and many homes have been upgraded to meet today's living needs. Allowing accessory apartments by right in single-family neighborhoods, instead of requiring a special exception, has implications beyond the scope of this Sector Plan amendment and should be considered as part of the comprehensive change to the Zoning Ordinance.

**Staff Recommendation:**

No change to the Draft Plan.

**Issue 7: The Plan’s vision should include the concept of sustainability. It should include economic development tools to promote “green businesses” in Wheaton.**

**Discussion:**

Some of the individuals and environmental groups would like to see more emphasis on environmental protection and sustainability. They would like the Plan to present a stronger vision, one based on Wheaton being unique and evolving into a center of green economy in Montgomery County. They have stressed that Wheaton should be the first green district in the County that markets and attracts green businesses and implements “going green.” They asked that urban green features be an integral part of revitalization because it will increase property values and business profitability.

Staff believes that the Draft Plan emphasizes sustainability and green developments to the extent that the Plan can influence the sustainability of future development beyond the applicable regulatory controls. However, the staff will look at the Draft Plan language and propose modifications in the Planning Board Draft to address these comments. The County’s Department of Economic Development (DED) is coordinating implementation of the recommendations from the County Executive’s Green Economy Task Force. The March 2010 Task Force report ([http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/ded/pdf/Green\\_Economy\\_Report.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/ded/pdf/Green_Economy_Report.pdf)) includes a number of ideas for how the County can foster the growth of green businesses, including the creation of a ‘green enterprise zone.’ DED is currently exploring this concept, and how it could be integrated with the County’s existing enterprise zones (one of which is in Wheaton), along with a number of other mechanisms to promote a green economy in Montgomery County.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Include modified language in the Planning Board Draft to add emphasis on sustainable development, green infrastructure and environmental best management practices.

**Issue 8: The Plan should provide more east-west bike connections in Wheaton.**

**Discussion:**

The testimony asked for more east-west bike connections. Staff has looked at the suggested routes and has identified additional bike connections that should be included in the Draft Plan. We do not support 1) a shared bike path along the proposed Price Avenue/Ennalls Avenue connection across Georgia Avenue; and 2) an extension of the proposed SR-20 (Reedie Drive portion) east to University Boulevard. Staff believes that a bikeway along Price Avenue/Ennalls Avenue connection is not needed, and staff does not support an extension of the proposed Reedie Drive bikeway to University Boulevard since it would cross the property owned by Har Tzeon Synagogue. The property owner does not support this proposal.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Modify the proposed Draft Plan (text and graphics, pages 44-45) to include the following streets as shared roadway bikeways:

- a. Blueridge Avenue (B-15) - From Galt Avenue to Amherst Avenue
- b. Entire mall ring road (B-25) around Wheaton Mall, not just the north and east portions.
- c. Bike route parallel to University Boulevard on north side (B-8, etc.) – Along Geiger Avenue to West Avenue to Oak Drive to Hillsdale Drive. Then take the most expedient route to the best crossing of Veirs Mill Road, ideally at Kensington Boulevard.
- d. Pritchard Road (B-27, P-33) – from Amherst Avenue to Horde Street – this will provide a better connection between the park facilities on the eastern edge of the Sector Plan area and the CBD.
- e. Galt Avenue – Extend the bikeway designation southward to University Boulevard to connect to other routes.

**D. SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE WORKSESSIONS**

In the next worksession, the Board and staff will discuss the remaining, parcel-specific issues #9 through #27 listed at the beginning of this report. As indicated in the following schedule of worksessions, the third worksession will be dedicated to urban design guidelines.

Worksession #2	October 28, 2010	Neighborhood Specific Issues including site specific zoning, local transportation issues, and compatibility with adjacent uses.
Worksession #3	November 18	Continued Neighborhood Specific Issues and Urban Design.
Worksession #4	December 9	Remaining issues, if needed.

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Attachment 1: Summary of public hearing testimony

Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan July 29, 2010 Public Hearing Testimony Digest and Correspondence Received After the August 13, 2010 Closing of the Public Hearing, September 2010

ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
<p><b>Issue 1: The Plan should promote more office growth in Wheaton. The proposed jobs/housing balance should be significantly revised to emphasize Wheaton as a major employment center instead of a bedroom community. (Pages 7-9, 23)</b></p> <p><b>Montgomery County Sierra Club, Pamela Lindstrom</b> – The plan does not inspire growth; it describes the un-dynamic place the growth forecast sees. Should envision the Georgia Avenue corridor becoming a “complete community” and not just a bedroom community for the I-270 Corridor. Wheaton’s residents should not be expected to commute to the I-270 Corridor if they want to better their lot. The need for balanced land use among the corridors was a major conclusion of the 2001 Transportation Policy Report (TPR).</p> <p>The goal should be growth in professional jobs in downtown Wheaton near transit access for the workforce. Such jobs would be the foundation for better incomes in the area, more demand for new urban housing and more prosperous retail.</p> <p><b>Upper Sligo Civic Association, Kathleen Michels</b> – Wheaton could be a 24/7 destination with more jobs and entertainment opportunities in the evening then a bedroom community. Would like Wheaton to be a unique model of urban greening. Could be more innovative at the mall, including re-purposing. Current model with anchor stores is very 20<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p><b>Housing Opportunities Commission, Maryann Dillon</b> – Emphasize the need for additional commercial development in Wheaton’s core.</p> <p><b>Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Jonathan Fink</b> – The Plan must promote Wheaton’s potential as an office and employment hub. It is essential to Wheaton’s future that the office real estate market be expanded to ensure Wheaton can attract a large employer(s) to enhance Wheaton’s daytime economy.</p> <p><b>Audubon Naturalist Society, Diane Cameron</b> – Wheaton should become a green business and job center, not a bedroom community. The jobs/housing balance in the draft should be flipped so that Wheaton will grow many more jobs and fewer new residential units. Grow enough jobs in Wheaton that more people are commuting “in the opposite flow path” (north in the morning and south in the evening) on the Red Line.</p> <p><b>Sligo Headwaters Civic Association, Leah Haygood</b> – Concerned that not enough is done to encourage and develop jobs in Wheaton. Value diversity of small businesses in Wheaton and it’s not clear how the Plan helps preserve them and encourage new ones to locate in</p>	<p>No change in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>The estimated jobs/housing ratio in the Draft Plan is adequate. See staff report for detailed discussion.</p> <p>The small businesses will be supported by a combination of the proposed CR Zone’s incentives for on-site space for small stores, a possible retail action plan, expanding the streetscape program, and creating a community development corporation to help implement revitalization strategies along with the small business help programs by the County’s Department of Economic Development and Wheaton Redevelopment Office.</p>	<p>revised to emphasize</p>

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Wheaton.		
<b>Issue 2: The goal of 30 percent non-auto driver mode share seems low compared to Silver Spring and Bethesda (other Metro-served CBDs in the County). (Pages 40-49)</b>	No change in the Draft Plan. The proposed 30 percent mode share is an appropriate goal for Wheaton. See the staff report for a detailed discussion.	
<b>County Executive</b> – The 30 percent non-auto driver mode share goal seems low compared to other Metro-served CBDs (Silver Spring, Bethesda).		
<b>Issue 3: The Plan's jobs/housing ratio will result in Wheaton residents boarding an already over-crowded Metro Red Line at peak hours in Wheaton instead of coming to jobs in Wheaton. (Pages 40-49)</b>	No change in the Draft Plan. The proposed jobs/housing ratio is an appropriate goal for Wheaton as discussed in the staff report.	
<b>Sligo Headwaters Civic Association, Leah Haygood</b> – Plan's current J/H ratio will result in Wheaton residents boarding an already over-crowded Red Line at peak hours instead of working in Wheaton.		
<b>Issue 4: Existing school facilities in the area may not be adequate for the projected student population generated by new development in Wheaton. (Page 58)</b>		
<b>Kensington Heights Citizens Association, William Houston</b> – Can the projected additional elementary students generated by new development in Wheaton be absorbed down the road into middle school and high schools when the time comes?	The estimated number of students in the Plan is in error. Change the incorrect number of projected elementary school students as revised by the MCPS staff.	
<b>Kensington Heights, Jane Folsom</b> – An increased number of residents associated with infill development has affected the schools which has caused overcrowding at Oakland Terrace Elementary School.	The middle and high schools in the area have capacity to absorb the amount of development proposed for Wheaton. See discussion in the staff report.	
<b>Issue 5: The proposed CR Zone may be a disincentive to redevelop properties in Wheaton. (Pages 33-39)</b>	No change in the Draft Plan.	
<b>Aaronson Family, Jody Kiine, Miller, Miller &amp; Canby, commercial property owners</b> – The CR Zone will be a disincentive for redevelopment because the zone is complicated and costly for standard method of development, the likely development for most properties. This Plan may actually stifle interest in redevelopment, by reducing the standard method of development threshold from 2.0 to .5 FAR, in effect, a down zoning that requires buying back that density and going through the sketch plan review process.  The Use Table in the CR Zone is confusing, some uses specifically designated in the CBD zones are not permitted in the CR zone. Owners of commercial retail properties may not be "grandfathered" for existing uses and may have less flexibility to re-lease their property to fill vacancies. The lack of consistency may cause questions about nonconformity of uses.	See discussion in the staff report.	



ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
<p>Virginia Sheard, <i>residential property owner</i> – The CR Zone may not be the most appropriate for small properties due to a burden to provide public space and the like.</p>		
<p>Thomas Martin, <i>residential property owner</i> – supports the CR zones recommended in the Plan.</p>		
<p>Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee, <i>Jeannette Feldner</i> – Supports the use of the new CR zones and the removal of the Overlay Zone. Should place more emphasis on including small retail in new construction along the arterials to create street level activity and long-time identity as a “small retail” downtown at the same time attracting some office development with the creation of a signature building.</p>	<p>No change in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>Street level activity is encouraged in the core and even required on some streets.</p>	
<p>Chris Lindsay, <i>commercial property owner</i> – Transfer of density within the Sector Plan area should be permitted for all properties in order to foment a more cohesive implementation to the Sector Plan’s proposals.</p>	<p>No change in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>Transfer of density can only occur on abutting and adjacent properties within the CR zone.</p> <p>Existing uses are grandfathered in the CR zone.</p>	
<p>Existing permitted and special exception uses should continue to remain permitted under the zone and the Plan without the stranglehold that can be brought about by nonconforming or similar designations.</p>		
<p><b>Issue 6: Rezone existing single-family detached homes within one mile of the Metro station to higher densities (pages 16-23).</b></p>		
<p>Leonard Greenberg, <i>CBD property owner/developer</i> – Incentivizing the redevelopment of existing single-family homes adjacent to the Core by recommending townhouses and multi-family zoning within one mile of the Metro entrance.</p>	<p>No change in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>See discussion in the staff report.</p>	
<p>Elizabeth Chaisson, <i>Wheaton resident</i> – Increase density within walking distance of the Wheaton Metro Station. Retrofit small single-family detached homes in the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown thus enhancing their desirability for future generations. Allow by-right conversion of homes to include accessory dwelling unit or home office.</p>		
<p><b>Issue 7: The Plan’s vision should include the concept of sustainability. It should include economic development tools to promote “green businesses” in Wheaton. (Pages 7-9, 16, 23, 49-51)</b></p>		
<p>Audubon Naturalist Society, <i>Diane Cameron</i> – Green infrastructure should be an integral part of revitalization because it will increase property values and business profitability.</p>	<p>Add language to the Draft Plan to better highlight the sustainable aspects of the Plan.</p>	
<p>Elizabeth Chaisson, <i>Wheaton resident</i> – Wheaton should be the first green district in the County that markets and attracts green businesses and implements going green.</p>		
<p>Sligo Headwaters Civic Association, <i>Leah Haygood</i> –The Plan needs a stronger vision-one based on Wheaton being unique and evolving into a green economy center of Montgomery County. Create a “sustainable district,” like the arts and entertainment district. Provide incentives for green businesses, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, residences and public amenities.</p>		



ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
<p>Kensington Heights Citizens Association, <i>William Houston</i> – Supports the plan’s recommendations on environment.</p>	<p><b>Issue 8: The Plan should provide more east-west bike connections in Wheaton. (Pages 40-49)</b>            Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee, <i>Jonathan Fink</i> – supports the proposed Bikeway Network, however, the design of any future pedestrian and bicycle path network should not impede the redevelopment of large lots, or interfere with the assemblage of smaller lots.</p> <p><b>Washington Area Bicycle Association, Casey Anderson</b> – Support the plan’s bikeway network and explicit commitment to make all the streets bikeable. Would like a couple more east-west connections.</p> <p><b>Montgomery Bicycle Advocates, Jack Cochran</b> – A number of business district streets need to be identified as shared roadway bikeways or having bike lanes: Blueridge Avenue (B-15), Realigned Ennalls Avenue and Price Avenue (B-19 and B-20), entire Mall ring road (B-25), bike route parallel to University Blvd. on north side (B-8, etc.), Reedy Drive (B-22), Galt Avenue, Pritchard, Horde Street (P-34), Alberti Drive, and at least one (two would be better) bike-friendly mall entry at Ennalls (B-19) and the existing mall entry (B-22) would be useful for bikes.</p> <p><b>State Highway Administration</b> – Prefer Wheaton be designated as a Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area rather than a requirement for development.</p>	<p><b>Issue 9: The proposed building height and density on the Wheaton Mall property: the adjoining community thought it was too high but the County staff thought it was too restrictive. Also, the adjoining community raised concerns about existing stormwater management (SWM) issues on the property. Wheaton Mall owners raised issues regarding the existing LATR approvals and agreement, site plan review requirement under the proposed CR Zones, the creation of a Wheaton Mall overlay zone, and related edits to the Draft Plan text.</b></p> <p><b>Executive Branch</b> – Encourage the transformation of the mall to an urban town center with strong synergies to the rest of Wheaton. Consider increasing both height and density on the Westfield property while stepping down beyond the ¼ mile station boundary towards the existing communities. The proposed height of 75 feet and FAR could be too restrictive.</p> <p><b>Westfield Corporation, Inc., Jim Agliata and Furey, Doolan, &amp; Abell</b> – Seek assurances that a new Sector Plan for Westfield will have no effect on contractual rights per a July 2001 LATR agreement. Mixed use zoning requirements should be optional and should be implemented gradually to accommodate the existing structures and uses in the mall. Requests consideration of an overlay zone for the Mall property to provide greater flexibility of site plan review. Recognize its unique characteristics such as the ring road configuration, surface parking requirements, and existing structures and parking.</p>

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<p>commitments. The Plan must recognize the place and function of regional malls and of Westfield Wheaton in particular as a key to the success of Wheaton.</p>		
<p><b>Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee</b> – Future office space along Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Avenue should include small retail establishments located on the ground floor to encourage street level activity.</p>	<p>The proposed CR zones encourage small business on the ground floor.</p>	
<p>Supports the greater integration of Westfield Mall with the downtown core by improving zoning incentives for higher density mixed-use residential and office development along Veirs Mill Road.</p>		
<p><b>Kensington Heights Citizens Association</b> – There are continued drainage problems suffered by houses in the vicinity of the Mall at the current level of development. Further development on Mall property requires full compliance with the principles of Environmental Site Design and should include planning for 100-year stormwater management requirements.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.</p>	
<p><b>Kensington Heights, Jane Folsom</b> – Infill development is a problem for stormwater control. There is excessive runoff from Westfield into our neighborhood and into Silver Creek. This needs to be addressed at the source, not by culverts downstream.</p>		
<p><b>Issue 10: Retain the existing green buffer along the ring road on the Wheaton Mall property to reduce the impact of future Mall redevelopment on adjacent residential areas.</b></p>		
<p><b>Kensington Heights Citizens Association</b> – Retain a green buffer between the neighborhood and the ring road surrounding the Mall to reduce the impact of new development on Mall property adjacent residential areas. Reduce the allowable height of buildings along the edge of the Mall property to 35 feet stepping up to 45 feet, then to 75 feet to reduce the issues of scale, privacy, and access to natural light and air on residential properties.</p>	<p>Revise the Draft Plan text to include recommendations for retaining the existing green buffer.</p> <p>Building height transition will be addressed at the Planning Board Worksessions.</p>	
<p><b>Danila Sheveiko, residential property owner</b> – Include a green buffer zone between the Westfield Mall ring road and their property line abutting residential uses.</p>		
<p><b>Issue 11: Should Parking Lot 13 be specifically designated as the location for a major public space on Parking Lot 13 be owned by the Department of Parks? (Pages 16-23)</b></p>		
<p><b>Executive Branch</b> – Support the recommendation of a civic urban park, but are concerned about the recommendation that the current Parking Lot 13 be the designated location for this public use space. The County needs to assess whether this would be in the best interest of an overall strategy for redevelopment. Rather than focusing specifically on Parking Lot 13, the Plan should recognize the need for an urban park to be included as a part of the redevelopment plan, without reference to how it is done.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.</p>	

ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
<p><b>Department of Economic Development</b> – Suggest eliminating/modifying recommendation that the Department of Parks should own and operate the major civic space recommended for the Core District as part of a public private partnership to better maintain flexibility and consider alternate management options as appropriate.</p>		
<p><b>Audubon Naturalist Society, Diane Cameron</b> – Applauds creation of parkland out of some of the existing surface parking lots; would like to see a proposed park in the core (triangle park) to include a beautiful public plaza and amphitheater.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p><b>Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Jonathan Fink</b> – Believe that creating active use public open spaces will be vital in promoting Wheaton’s potential as a lively and safe urban center. The use of County owned land must be used to spur development of “activity generating people places.” Endorse the Plan’s emphasis on redeveloping land currently used for surface parking. Agree that Parking Lots 13, 14, and 17 could be transformed to include active use public spaces. In particular, Parking Lot 17 holds potential as an inexpensive interim open space for dramatic and musical performances.</p>		
<p>Fully endorse the use of public properties for festivals, art exhibitions, outdoor movie theaters, outdoor cafes and eating areas, dances, and musical performances.</p>		
<p><b>Elizabeth Chaisson, Wheaton resident</b> – Supports five or six public or private 1 acre sites scattered within a mile of the Metro, each with its own iconic green 12 plus story elevator building fronting a small half acre public park or space. This would allow the old in the older one and two story commercial buildings in Wheaton to remain affordable to the smaller businesses while providing room for middle to upscale businesses, housing and retail in the newer high rent towers.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p><b>Issue 12: Should Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard (west of Veirs Mill Road) be designated as Priority Retail Streets? (Pages 16-23)</b></p>		
<p><b>Executive Branch</b> – Extend Priority Retail Streets to include Veirs Mill Road from Georgia Avenue to just northwest of University Boulevard and along University Boulevard to just west of Veirs Mill Road. The Plan should foster flex office and rental residential space at street level that can be converted to retail space when the market allows.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p><b>Shawna Morris, resident</b> – Wheaton’s “downtown” could be dramatically improved through a concerted and coordinated approach to create a “critical mass” of nice shops and restaurants to attract people like Silver Spring.</p>		
<p><b>Issue 13: Is the CR zone appropriate for transitional properties in the Kensington View neighborhood, and on Amherst Avenue near the Wheaton Forest Neighborhood, that serve as transitional areas between commercial and single-family residential uses? (Pages 34-36, 38-39)</b></p>		
<p><b>Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Jonathan Fink</b> – Agrees that certain lots at the edges of residential neighborhoods have the potential to sustain small-scale, non-residential uses but need to ensure that adjacent residential neighborhoods are not adversely impacted.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	

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<p><b>Judy Higgins, Eleanor Duckett, Stephanie Savolaine – Kensington View</b>            Strengthen language to protect the neighborhood from retail development on transition sites along East Avenue, and on University Boulevard (Block S –East Avenue between Kensington Blvd. and University Blvd.). A far more compatible and limiting zone should be assigned to these properties instead of the proposed CR Zone on the properties currently zoned R-60, C-0, and C-2.</p> <p><b>Virginia Sheard, residential property owner –</b> Proposed zoning for edge communities like Kensington View is not adequately addressed. The CR zoning recommendations, particularly on East Avenue and parts of University Blvd. and between Valley View and East Avenue, do not protect the adjacent residents from adverse impacts. Specific language must be written to ensure that only low impact activities can occur within the 45 foot height limits, and only a minimum commercial component should be allowed.</p> <p><b>Wheaton Forest Civic Association, Diane Lynne –</b> The CR Zone adjacent to our residences may be inconsistent with the surrounding residential neighborhood. Oppose the proposed CR designation on these properties.</p>	<p><b>Issue 14: Provide a pedestrian and bikeway only connection with no vehicular access for the unbuilt portion of Kensington Boulevard between East Avenue and Veirs Mill Road.</b></p> <p><b>Stephanie Savolaine, residential property owner, Kensington View –</b> Pedestrians and bicyclists should have a safe network of routes that allow access to key amenities within our increasingly urban neighborhood.</p> <p>The currently un-built ROW of Kensington Boulevard should be developed as a pedestrian and bicycle through-way, made safer and better able to serve all members of the community consistent with the specific staff recommendations. This would retain the ROW in public ownership in the possible future event that the County needs to relieve vehicular traffic at the south-bound intersection of Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard. Strongly believes that the ROW should not be opened to vehicular traffic simply to enhance the development potential of lots 9-13 on the east side of East Avenue.</p> <p><b>Chris Lindsay, commercial property owner –</b> Owner does not support a Kensington Boulevard connection from Veirs Mill Road to the existing Kensington Boulevard. Suggest a properly stepped pedestrian/bike connection in the paper Kensington Boulevard right-of-way at this location if contours allow.</p>	

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ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
Does not support pedestrian connections on Lindsay property located south of Veirs Mill Road and north of University Boulevard due to its encroachment on Lindsay's property making it notably smaller and reducing redevelopment potential. Suggest extending it along East Avenue from Upton Drive westward toward Kensington Boulevard.		
<b>Issue 15: Retain the CBD-2 zoning on the Wheaton Crossing Shopping Center properties (Draft Plan, page 36, Blocks N and O). (Pages 35-36)</b> <b>Aaronson Family property, commercial property owners, Jody Kline</b> – Oppose the proposed CR zoning for their property. The first wave of development could be encouraged by the standard method of development in the existing CBD-2 zone and would probably be discouraged by the CR zone's maximum 0.5 FAR for standard method development.	Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession	
<b>Issue 16: Increase the residential and commercial densities on the Weinberg property from 3.5 to 4.0 FAR (pages 35-36)</b> <b>Weinberg Family property, Michele Rosenfeld, Rosenfeld &amp; Rosenfeld</b> – Supports the CR Zone on the Weinberg property (Block 7, parcel 8) but requests that the recommended commercial and residential density be increased from 3.5 to 4 because it would give additional flexibility to a larger redevelopment project with respect to market-driven demand for residential over commercial space, and vice versa.	Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession	
<b>Issue 17: Allow Hickerson Drive to be closed permanently to vehicular traffic to achieve a vibrant retail corridor and pedestrian circulation within the Blueridge District. (Pages 41-44)</b>		
<b>Jody Kline for the Aaronson Family, commercial property owners</b> – Deemphasize Hickerson Drive as a vehicular right-of-way and emphasize its importance for pedestrian connectivity so that it could become the "spine" or retail corridor of an integrated mixed use development within sight and walking distance of the Wheaton Metro Station.	Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession	
<b>Issue 18: Increase the proposed height on the Standard Properties parcel to emphasize Wheaton's southern gateway and encourage a signature landmark building (page 34, Block A). (Pages 33-35).</b>		
<b>Standard Properties, Inc., Stuart Barr, Learch Early &amp; Brewer, Chtd.</b> – Provide the opportunity for a signature development to complement the "landmark building" envisioned across the street at the WMATA triangle site. Increase maximum density from CR4 to CR5 and an increase in the maximum height from 100 feet to 130 feet. Envision the tallest buildings on the property located along Georgia Avenue with the height tapering down towards Amherst Avenue.	Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession	
<b>Issue 19: Rezone the WTOP site on University Boulevard from the existing R-90 to higher mixed use densities. (Page 60)</b> <b>Executive Branch</b> – Consider increasing zoning for the non-historic portion of the WTOP property.	Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession	
<b>Issue 20: Should Wheaton have a Transportation Management District (TMD) to encourage more people to take transit? (Pages 48-49)</b> <b>The County Department of Transportation</b> – Given the current lack of office employment, and the fact that this Plan states Wheaton "is not envisioned to be a major office hub", the success of a TMD effort in achieving the employee mode share goals is questionable.	Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession	

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**ISSUE (SPEAKER)**

**STAFF RESPONSE**

**BOARD DECISION**

<p><b>Issue 21: The proposed Veirs Mill Road right-of-way would negatively impact the redevelopment potential of the Lindsay Ford property. (Pages 41-46)</b></p>	<p><b>Chris Lindsay, property owner</b> – Oppose pedestrian connections on Lindsay property located south of Veirs Mill Road and north of University Boulevard. Instead, extending it along East Avenue from Upton Drive westward toward Kensington Boulevard. Does not support a Kensington Boulevard connection from Veirs Mill Road to the existing Kensington Boulevard, but suggests a properly stepped pedestrian/bike connection in the unbuilt Kensington Boulevard right-of-way at this location if feasible.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p>Does not support the Master Plan ROW of 120' for Veirs Mill Road or the proposed local street bisecting the subject block, which will reduce the amount of developable land.</p> <p><b>Stephanie Savolaine, residential property owner - Kensington View</b> – The currently un-built ROW of Kensington Boulevard should be developed as a pedestrian and bicycle through-way, retaining the ROW in public ownership in case the County needs to relieve vehicular traffic at the south-bound intersection of Veirs Mill Road and University Blvd.</p>	<p><b>Issue 22: Retain the Veterans Park at its current location. (Page 58)</b></p> <p><b>Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee, Jeannette Feldner</b> - Support the enhancement and better use of Veterans Park.</p> <p><b>Wheaton Forest Civic Association, Diane Lynne</b> – Oppose any plans to develop the Wheaton Veterans Park.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p><b>Issue 23: Consider preserving the four-acre Montgomery County Art and Design College (MDCAD) property as green space to offset CBD redevelopment. (Pages 55-58)</b></p>	<p><b>Beverly Sobel, resident, Payers Mill Crossing in Wheaton</b> – Request consideration of preserving the 4-acre MDCAD property as green space to offset CBD redevelopment. The Parks Department should explore opportunities for large parks outside, but near the Plan area, to meet the standards established in the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p><b>Issue 24: Clarify the purpose of extending Price Avenue to Amherst Avenue through private properties and the County garage. (Pages 41-44)</b></p>	<p><b>Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee, Jeannette Feldner</b> – Supports the proposed extension of Price Avenue across Georgia Avenue creating a more logical grid for the downtown.</p> <p><b>County Executive</b> – The proposed extension of Price Avenue towards east will go through the Garage 45 structure, which was not designed nor constructed to accommodate the extension of Price Avenue. The Plan should include additional text to explain a rationale and justification for this proposal, recognizing that such plans are not always feasible. An alternative should be described in the Plan.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	

**ISSUE (SPEAKER)**

**STAFF RESPONSE**

**BOARD DECISION**

**Issue 25: Road designation should be in conformity with community context. (Pages 40-49)**

**County Executive** – For certain roads, the Plan does not recognize the concept of Context Sensitive Design of roads. Several roads in existing (and planned) single family residential areas are designated as business streets. In other cases road segments within the existing Central Business District are designated as Residential Primary Streets. One of the primary determinants of context is the master planned land use of the properties abutting a street.

Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.

**Issue 26: Re-evaluate the minimum Sector Plan rights-of-way widths including all major highway segments given their bikeway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) potentials. (Pages 40-49)**

**County Department of Transportation** – Reevaluate the minimum master planned right-of-way widths for all Major Highways segments, given their BRT and bikeway potentials.

Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession

**Issue 27: Should the Urban Design Guidelines be in the Sector Plan as they used to be in the past?**

**Montgomery County Civic Federation** – Do not support the idea of master plans and design guideline as separate documents. Design guidelines should be in master plans as they have been in the past.

Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession

**Other Testimony**

**Executive Branch** – The Plan captures the Executive’s stated vision that Wheaton’s future is a major mixed-use market center in the mid-county region. Strongly support the vision of high density, mixed-use town center development with its protection of surrounding neighborhoods and the accompanying grid work.

Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession

Recommends that references to the bus transit includes all the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes under study. Further, we recommended the recently completed WMATA Station Access Study be cited and that the Plan recognize the critical role of the existing and extensive bus network.

**State Highway Administration, Pages 40-49** – Further study is needed regarding the placement of signals, and the lowering of speed limits.

Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession

Supports short-term on-street parking, provided that parking does not generate increased operational and safety concerns along state roadways.

Supports the Plan’s efforts to revitalize the area. Encourage Montgomery County to coordinate developer-improvements in order to properly mitigate traffic and support transportation vision as outlined in the Plan.

The recommendation of BRT on the outside curb lane is too specific.

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ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
<p><b>The County Department of Transportation, Pages 40-49</b> – There is a discrepancy between the total numbers of parking spaces as shown in table 5.</p>	<p>Will be corrected in the Planning Board Draft</p>	
<p><b>County Department of Environmental Protection</b> – The Plan does not mention solid waste and recycling requirements for future development and for retrofits. The Plan should include language to lay the groundwork for adequate solid waste management infrastructure in the CBD.</p> <p>As part of raising awareness of water flow through increased visibility, we recommend including a commitment to daylight streams when possible during the redevelopment process.</p> <p>Clarify how encouraging small properties to redevelop together to facilitate shared use minimizes and mitigates impervious surfaces.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession and language will be added to the Planning Board Draft as needed.</p>	
<p><b>County Fire and Rescue Services, Pages 40-49</b> – Roundabouts slow responding fire-rescue vehicles more than smaller vehicles. If any are to be included in the CBD, they must be designed to accommodate easy traversing by fire-rescue vehicles to minimize delays for essential life and property saving efforts.</p> <p>Reduced traffic speeds, and street closure for events will slow response time of emergency vehicles due to traffic congestion.</p>		
<p><b>Page 49</b>-The newer proposal of planting trees on roof-tops would present a long-term maintenance concern and may require changes to the Life Safety Code in order to be able to provide firefighting water supply directly to rooftops.</p> <p><b>Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Jonathan Fink</b> – Support the draft Plan's vision: the urban density all along Wheaton's three main thoroughfares, the proposed CR Zone, the recommended mix of office, retail, and residential uses, and the overall economic and environmental sustainability of Wheaton.</p> <p>Supports reducing the targeted speeds of Wheaton's main thoroughfares through the use of attractive traffic calming modifications.</p> <p>Supports improving pedestrian access to Westfield Wheaton Mall at every egress.</p> <p>Agrees that redevelopment is friendly to the environment, that incentives are needed to ensure future buildings are built with energy efficient design, building a pedestrian and bicycle network, reduction in impervious services and an increase in tree canopy, and encouraging small properties to redevelop together to facilitate shared use helps achieve goals for a greener Wheaton.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.</p>	

ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
<p>Page 58 – If the County’s property housing the Crossways Community becomes an elementary school, make every effort to relocate the program within Wheaton. Supports the Plan’s proposal for an additional elementary school and agrees that the County-owned former elementary school building used by the Crossways Community is a good option.</p> <p>Supports design modifications to Wheaton’s existing streetscape to increase pedestrian traffic and street level activity.</p> <p>Page 26 – Agrees that the Wheaton Retail Preservation Overlay Zone should be removed.</p>		
<p><b>Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee, Jeannette Feldner</b> – Page 59 – Bring some amenities or recreational facilities such as an indoor pool to the downtown.</p>		
<p><b>Sligo Headwaters Civic Association, Leah Haygood</b> – Pages 49-53 – Wheaton should model how a degraded urban environment can transform into one that improves the environment through green building, environmental site design, etc.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.</p>	
<p><b>Audubon Naturalist Society, Diane Cameron, Pages 49-53</b> – The County’s ability to meet the restoration challenge, contained in the 2010 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit to restore 20% of uncontrolled imperviousness by 2014, depends in part on the direction taken by the Wheaton Plan.</p> <p>Would like to see environmental site design applied through retrofits to parking lots, roofs and yards, and integrated into the County’s considerable economic development resources. Suggest inclusion of the new Environmental Site Design requirements for all projects.</p> <p>Hope that a green direction will be woven throughout the entire Plan including economic development and transportation components.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.</p>	
<p><b>Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee, Michael Smith</b> – Applauds the draft plan’s call to raise awareness of water flow through increased visibility. Asks that the Plan go beyond these aspirations by using the Anacostia Restoration Plan as a kick start to make Wheaton a nationally recognized showcase of Environmental Site Design. The Plan should make explicit mention of both Sligo Creek and the Anacostia Watershed.</p> <p>Supports creating green linkages with plantings and signage along Windham Lane to Sligo Creek Park and along Blueridge Avenue to Wheaton Regional Park.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.</p>	

ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
<p><b>Washington Area Bicycle Association, Casey Anderson</b> – The land use component makes this a place where you'd actually want to ride your bicycle and walk. Additional mixed use, and more density is done in a way that activates the street and makes it more appealing to be out on the street, which in turn will give drivers the idea that this is a place for people and not just for cars.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.</p>	
<p><b>Kensington Heights Citizens Association, William Houston, pages 40-49</b> – Consider redirecting a portion of Veirs Mill Road beneath the current ground level, and creating a vibrant pedestrian-only plaza between the Mall and the CBD.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p>Should consider what responsibility we have for ensuring that the services provided by Crossways Community Center continue if a new elementary school is located to this site.</p>		
<p><b>Jane Folsom resident</b> – Infill development has caused increased traffic on residential streets many of which do not have sidewalks.</p>		
<p>Where would the services provided at Crossways Community go?</p>		
<p><b>Housing Opportunities Commission</b> – The Plan should have a dedicated section on housing. Housing is a fundamental element in any community and deserves a discreet discussion.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession.</p>	
<p><b>Virginia Sheard, Kensington View, pages 40-49</b> – While a 30% mode share goal is desirable, plans must accommodate parking and accessibility, the high number of drivers who converge on Wheaton for bus and transit services, which is likely to increase if the BRT becomes a reality; the number of outside Wheaton patrons and shoppers who will be necessary to sustain the expected new restaurants, services, and events.</p> <p>The proposed town center on part of Parking Lot #13 will have limited visibility from the bounding highways. Development on corners such as Reddie and Veirs Mill and Georgia and Veirs Mill should be set back sufficiently and limited in height to provide a visual connection to the outside world. 150' and 200' buildings to the lot lines will block all invitation to enter the activity area.</p> <p>Guidelines should be available for review concurrently with the Sector Plan.</p> <p>Strongly request that that until a document is approved for final distribution, drafts and associated reports be formatted only as black and white, portrait oriented, documents. Graphics should be made readable with best use of black and gray tints, and variation in line weights.</p>		

ISSUE (SPEAKER)	STAFF RESPONSE	BOARD DECISION
<p>Questions the importance of the information in the Appendices and why they exist, and hopes they go away before transmitted to the Council. Need to use clear simple English to make documents more understandable.</p>		
<p><b>Chris Lindsay, commercial property owner, pages 40-49</b> – Has State Highways Administration vetted the proposed roadways in the context of Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard as State Roads?</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p>How and by whom proposed local streets will be maintained since they are not on the Master Plan of Highways?</p>		
<p><b>Danila Sheveiko, residential property owner, pages 41-42</b> – Plan a path to the Metro across the south and southeast parking lots that has some shade by converting some of the Mall’s surface parking to pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle use with curbing to protect people from cars and trucks.</p>	<p>Will be discussed at a later Planning Board worksession</p>	
<p>The Plan should fully embrace Environmental Site Design (ESD) requiring that ESD be applied to the maximum extent practical on all development projects in accordance with state and local regulations.</p>		
<p><b>Elizabeth Chaisson, Wheaton resident</b> – Plan should show how to retrofit what we have so that it will be sustainable in the years to come such as: Painting roofs white to cool it, improving stormwater runoff with rain barrel and a garden, building living edible walls with fruit trees, composting, converting basements to legal one bedroom accessory dwelling units.</p>		
<p><b>Safeway, Steve Robins, Lerch Early &amp; Brewer, pages 34-35</b> – Staff’s recommendations for the property are entirely consistent with what already has been approved by the Planning Board. Proposed zoning is from CBD-3 to CR6: C 5.5, R 5.5, H 200. The project is consistent with the CR 6 zone.</p>		
<p><b>Washington Properties Company, Heather Dlhopsky, Linowes and Blocher LLP, page 37</b> – Need to ensure that the proposed project at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road (245 multi-family dwelling units on 1.76 acres) adheres to the proposed vision and recommendations in the Draft Sector Plan.</p>		
<p><b>Thomas Martin, residential property owner</b> – Agree with the Draft Sector Plan’s purpose of transforming Wheaton into a beautiful, walkable urban center, with an active streetscape.</p>		
<p><b>Marian Fryer, residential property owner</b>– support the draft Plan.</p>		

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