



March 21, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief, Area 2 Division *HK*
Khalid Afzal, Team Leader, East County Team, Area 2 Division *KA*

FROM: Sandy Tallant, Planner Coordinator (301-495-1329)
East County Team, Area 2 Division *ST*

SUBJECT: Planning Board Review of the draft Planning Board Draft of the Wheaton Central Business District (CBD) and Vicinity Sector Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval to transmit the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Executive and County Council.

INTRODUCTION

This is the Planning Board's seventh worksession on the proposed Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan (Draft Plan). The Board held a public hearing on the Public Hearing Draft of the Draft Plan on Thursday, July 29, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the MRO Auditorium. The public can find copies of the submitted testimony on the Wheaton Sector Plan website at: www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/wheaton/index.shtm.

The Planning Board held worksessions to discuss and revise the draft Sector Plan. The Draft Planning Board Draft of the Wheaton Sector Plan has been revised per the Planning Board's direction. In response to the Planning Board's discussion on urban design at the February 24 worksession, a new urban design section has been added to the Plan. Although the new text was not in the Public Hearing Draft Plan, the urban design concepts represented in this section have been presented to the community and the Planning Board throughout the course of the planning process. The Planning Board will need to decide at the March 31 Planning Board meeting whether this section should be added to the Plan before transmitting it to the Executive and County Council.

Staff also seeks the Board's comments on the Plan so that it can be formatted and transmitted to the County Executive and County Council. The County Council has requested that the Planning Board Draft be delivered by April 15, 2011. The Urban Design Guidelines will be transmitted to the County Council in May following the County Executive's review of the Plan per the Planning Board's direction.

ST:ha: M:\Wheaton (Sandy)\Planning Board Packets\PB Worksessions\Worksession #7\Wheaton Approval to transmit to CE and CC.doc



March 2011

wheaton cbd and vicinity sector plan

Planning Board Draft



 Montgomery County Planning Department
M-NCPPC
MontgomeryPlanning.org

Planning Board Draft
Wheaton Sector Plan

March 24, 2011

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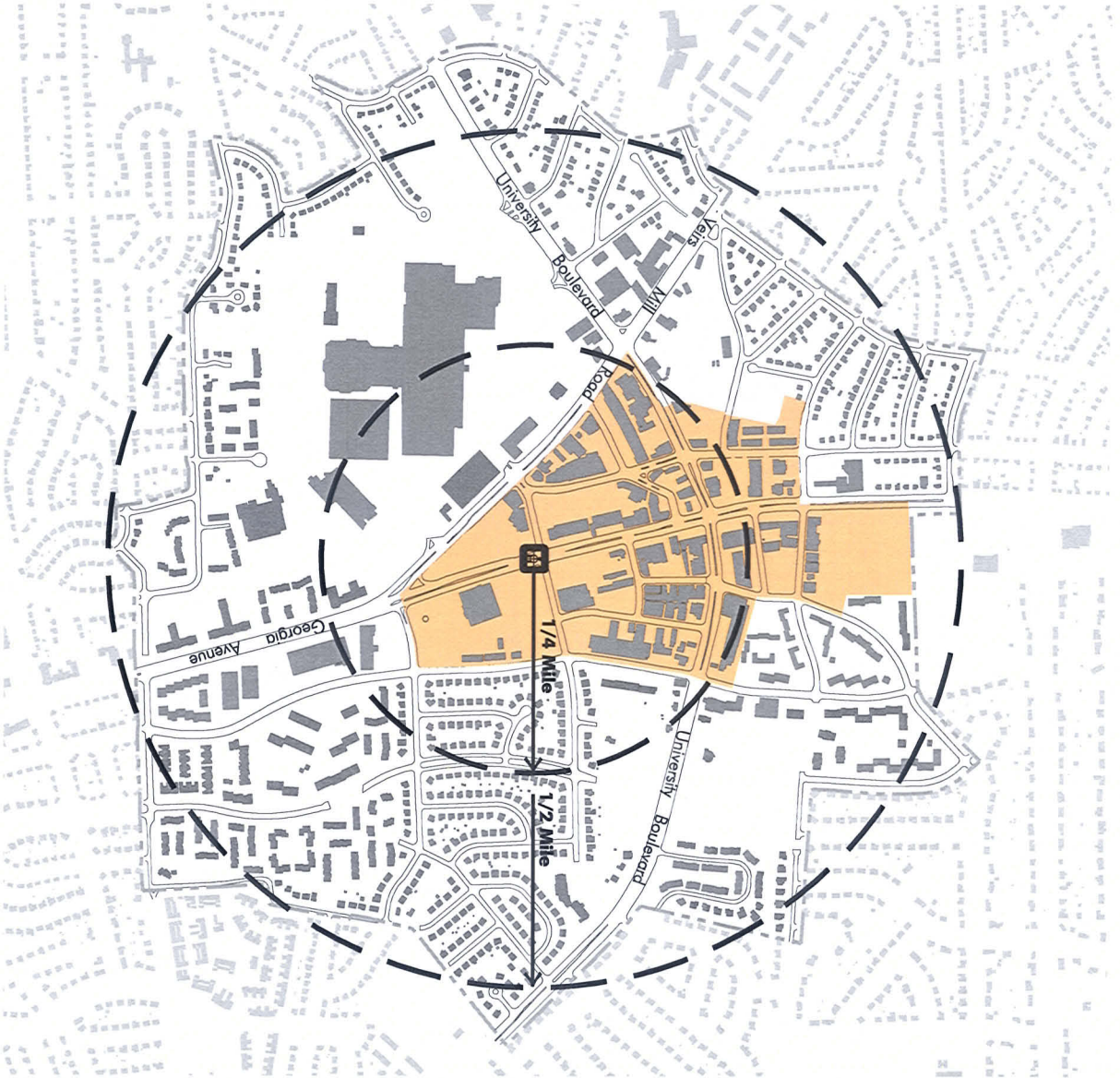
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Sector Plan Area



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
-  Central Business District



Wheaton's Future

Wheaton is envisioned as a major mixed-use center for the Georgia Avenue corridor and eastern Montgomery County. It will have regional shopping, culturally diverse retail and entertainment, business and government services, and transit-oriented residential and office uses that serve a population with a broad range of incomes.

This Plan's task is to build on Wheaton's strengths and encourage investment while maintaining its special character. The Plan's recommendations capitalize on the role of Metro and Wheaton as a regional transit hub to promote high-density, high-quality growth and redevelopment in the business core. Wheaton will emerge as a mixed-use Central Business District (CBD) with new development that blends with existing small and family-owned businesses.

Another redevelopment goal should be to reduce energy consumption and make Wheaton a more green and sustainable place. For example, providing transportation alternatives can reduce vehicle miles traveled and the community's carbon footprint.

Wheaton's Role in the County

Wheaton has:

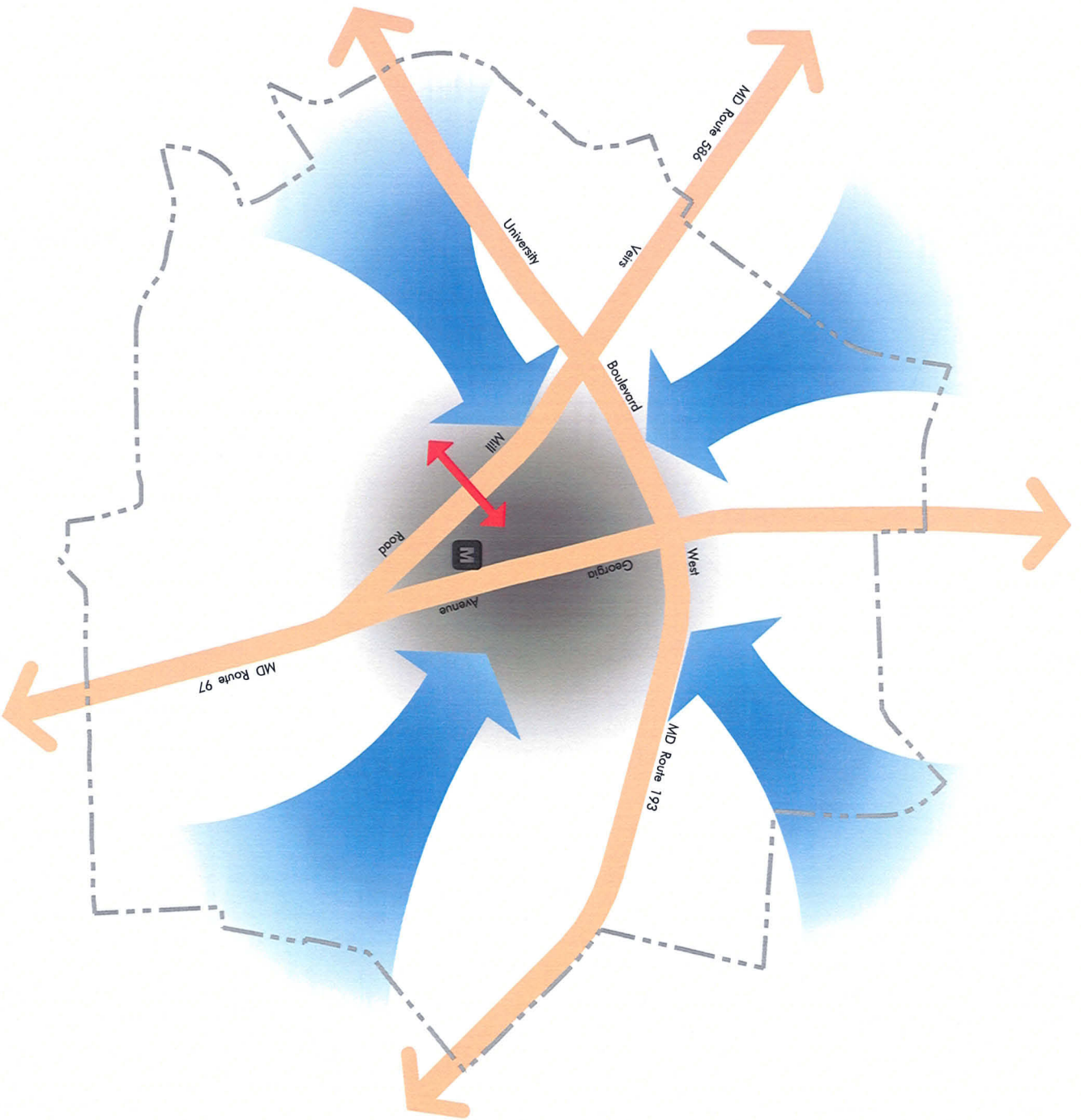
- varied local and specialty retail uses
- a regional mall
- proximity to Metro
- access to I-495 and the District of Columbia
- broad housing choices






Wheaton is a specialized urban center, serving local and regional retail demand. Its small, post-World War II housing makes it a draw for newcomers to the community. It is a transit hub and crossroads.

Wheaton is located along University Boulevard, a major east-west road. A significant amount of traffic moves west through Wheaton to I-270, one of the County's employment corridors. Wheaton can capture work trips by providing more employment opportunities east of I-270. When Wheaton develops more fully it will provide, in conjunction with Silver Spring and future development along the Route 29 Corridor, a full set of services, employment, and housing opportunities for the eastern half of the County.

By creating a more diverse local economy and building on the existing diverse uses, Wheaton can enhance its role as a shopping destination that includes independent and national retailers, ethnic restaurants, and unique local small business offerings. By providing opportunities for increased density and expanding the connections between the CBD, the regional mall and surrounding residential communities, Wheaton is positioned to become a future growth area for the County.

Connectivity Concepts



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
-  Downtown Activity Focus
-  Regional Connectivity
-  Local Access to Downtown Core
-  Mall/Core Connection



This Plan makes recommendations based on four overarching principles.

- Wheaton’s **diversity** is unique among County business centers. Its housing stock, businesses, and people reflect diverse incomes and cultures. The Plan seeks to capitalize on this diversity by zoning for mixed-use development that will provide new customers to support the retail and service sector, the current mainstay of Wheaton’s economy.
- Improving **connectivity** within and beyond the Plan area with expanded pedestrian connections, a better street grid, and a bikeway network will allow Wheaton to maximize its potential as a downtown. They will link the Plan’s proposed network of flexible “activity-generating-people-places,” created in the short-term on publicly owned land and in the longer term through the development process. Better links will also connect the CBD with adjoining neighborhoods and the larger market area.
- **Design** is critical to create active and safe public spaces, including streets, to enhance Wheaton’s sense of place while adding value to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- The natural and built **environments** can be improved through development that reduces energy consumption, and that provides better stormwater management, greater tree canopy, and walkable streets.

Redevelopment Potential

Table 1 Estimated Development and Jobs-Housing Ratio

	Existing (2008)	Existing plus Pipeline	1990 Plan estimate	Total estimated for the 2011 Draft Plan
Jobs	10,200	10,210	13,490	13,200
Housing	2,000	2,588	3,165	6,600
J-H Ratio	5.1:1	3.9:1	4.2:1	2.0:1

The Plan’s estimated jobs-housing ratio of 2.0:1 is lower than the 1990 Plan’s estimate of 4.2:1. This change can be attributed in part to a higher expectation for residential development in the current Plan and that some sites estimated for office development in the 1990 Plan have been developed as residential uses. In addition, the remaining developable sites are considered less likely to be office development.

The most critical constraint on new office development in Wheaton is the lack of an established local office market. A limited supply of appropriately sized properties that can attract Class A office space, as well as competition from other County and regional locations, also limit the development of an office market in Wheaton (see Appendix 8).

The 10,200 existing jobs and 2,000 housing units in Wheaton demonstrate that the 1990 Plan was overly optimistic about both jobs and housing. This Plan's estimates reflect the market's view of Wheaton's potential to attract new development. The estimates do not limit the potential for additional jobs if conditions change and public or private property owners find more Class A office development to be feasible.

The proposed mixed-use zoning is flexible enough to respond to market demands and may yield a significantly different mix, with more or less jobs or housing than estimated. It does not restrict commercial development in the short or long term, and the transportation network can accommodate a significant amount of development beyond the estimated plan yield based on the high scenario modeled for transportation purposes.

Insert sidebar:

Planning History

1940s

- Post-war suburban housing boom

1950s

- Wheaton Plaza opens
- 1959 Kensington-Wheaton Sector Plan envisions "more than merely a shopping district...a well-rounded Central Business District"

1960s

- Parking Lot District created

1970s

- Metro Station sited
- 1978 Sector Plan evaluates land use at Metro station
- Central Business District (CBD) zoning applied

1980s

- County sponsors revitalization efforts
- New residential development at CBD edges

1990s

- The 1990 Sector Plan examines Metro station impacts
- Preservation Overlay Zone applied to part of the CBD

2000s

- County and M-NCPPC sponsor community charrette
- Wheaton Plaza (Westfield) adds stores and parking
- Overlay Zone amended
- Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee develops mixed-use concept for Parking Lot 13
- 723 housing units built
- Pembridge Square Apartments renovated
- 500 planned housing units and a new Safeway grocery store added to approved Pipeline development
- County's Request for Qualifications seeks public/private development

Background

Thumbnail History

Wheaton, a rural community until after World War II, became a suburban community when new neighborhoods, such as Monterey Village, Wheaton Hills, Wheaton Crest, and Wheaton Forest, offered affordable houses on curving, tree-lined streets to post-war families. The opening of Montgomery County's first shopping mall, Wheaton Plaza, in 1957 was evidence that Wheaton had fully flowered as a 20th century suburban community.

The population soared tenfold, from 29,000 in the 1940s to more than 200,000 by 1970. After the 1970s, however, this explosive growth slowed and buildings, constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, began to show their age. The 1978 Sector Plan, undertaken to evaluate the impact of a new Metro station, recommended CBD zoning to spur growth. The 1990 Sector Plan recommended a Retail Preservation Overlay Zone on a portion of the CBD to manage the effects of potential growth on the small retail businesses that are so central to Wheaton's character.

The Wheaton Community

Wheaton's diversity is reflected in its people and businesses. Over one third of Wheaton's population is foreign born. Wheaton's most prominent race and ethnic groups are African American (25 percent), Hispanic (14 percent), and Asian (12 percent). These groups combined make up 52 percent of Wheaton's population. Foreign-born residents have come from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, China, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Mexico, El Salvador, Peru, Brazil, and the West Indies, among others. Asian and Latino restaurants and grocery stores stand alongside long-standing businesses, such as Marchone's Italian Deli and Little Bitts, a baking supply store.

Many residents of Wheaton's multifamily buildings are young and educated. Almost 70 percent of the population has at least a bachelor's degree, which is a higher concentration than found Countywide. A substantial block (45 percent) of adult Generations X and Y (aged 18-44), who are typically single or young families without children, live in Wheaton. They spend more of their disposable income on shopping, eating out, and entertainment than families with children. At the same time, the area's senior population is declining. Wheaton has a higher proportion of low-income residents than the County as a whole, and a much higher proportion that use transit rather than drive.

Insert graphics: Age Group, Race Household Population, Educational Attainment, and Household Income Distribution

What Wheaton Has to Offer

Affordability

- Land prices lower than other CBDs
- Retail rents lower than other CBDs

Regional Retail Draws

- Westfield Wheaton Mall
- Specialty retail such as Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center

Strong Niche Market

- Mix of ethnic restaurants and retail
- Space for small businesses

Key private properties for large-scale redevelopment

Public/Private Revitalization Potential

- 11 acres of publicly owned properties that can be used to leverage private residential and commercial development

Transportation Capacity

- Multi-modal transportation capacity
- Excellent access to public transit

On-going Public Sector Revitalization Programs

- Wheaton Redevelopment Program
- Wheaton Urban District
- Small business assistance through the County's Department of Economic Development
- Arts and Entertainment District
- State Enterprise Zone

The Issues

Local and regional economic forces have kept Wheaton relatively stagnant even through periods of economic growth. These forces include:

- a weak local office market
- property ownership patterns that discourage assemblage
- regional competition at other Metro stations in the region

Usefulness of the Overlay Zone

- Should the Retail Preservation Overlay Zone be removed
- Will the underlying CBD zones spur revitalization

Inadequate Pedestrian Connectivity

- Wheaton's auto-oriented layout promotes even short trips by auto
- Westfield Wheaton Mall lacks connections to the rest of Wheaton. Its site is not designed for pedestrian access, even though it's adjacent to Metro and connected by a bridge to the Metro parking garage

No Marketing Identity for Promoting Retail or Office Uses

- Local merchants organizations should focus on Wheaton's small businesses
- Marketing campaigns have been limited in Wheaton
- Wheaton's office market lacks signature buildings and large tenants

Lack of Community Focal Points

- No well-designed, centrally located public spaces
- Wheaton Veterans Memorial Urban Park is at the edge of the Plan area

Parking

- Short-term public parking is not conducive to one-stop shopping
- Lack of conveniently located parking garages

Physical Environment and Perception Problems

- Poor quality public realm (streets, sidewalks, open space, and architecture)
- Gaps in the street edge and buildings fronting sidewalks
- Many buildings in Wheaton need upgrading such as façade treatments
- Perception that Wheaton is unsafe

Revitalization Strategy

Wheaton has much to offer but short- and long-term public strategies will be needed to reawaken interest in redevelopment and pave the way for private investment.

The County and WMATA own a significant amount of land in the Wheaton CBD. In the short term, publicly owned land should be used to create public spaces and activity that complement existing uses. In the long term, when the market is ready, publicly owned land should be used for public/private partnerships that incorporate permanent public spaces as the County has begun to plan for a few properties near the Metro station. Finally, the programs that already exist in Wheaton should be used to create self-sustaining community interaction through active and safe streets and around-the-clock activities.

Short Term

Public Use Space as a Catalyst

An important element in creating the perception of desirability, which is essential to expand an office or residential market, is to have active public use spaces in the right locations. Wheaton is fortunate to have parking lots and other publicly owned land that can provide short-term, low-cost space for outdoor community activity. In the short term, inexpensive improvements could establish interim open spaces on publically owned land, to enliven Wheaton for public gatherings and other active uses until large and small permanent open spaces are created through redevelopment and public/private partnerships.

Recommendation

- Jump start redevelopment by using public properties in the Core, Blueridge, and Price Districts (Parking Lots 13, 14, and 17) to create temporary spaces for festivals, art exhibitions, outdoor movie theaters, outdoor cafes and eating areas, dances, and musical performance space.

Map 3 Urban District

Urban District

Wheaton is an Urban District. This special taxing district enables the County to provide services including security, streetscape maintenance, tree maintenance, sidewalk repairs, marketing, and event programming. The Urban District maintains Wheaton in a clean, safe and attractive manner to promote a vibrant social and business environment and long-term economic viability and vitality. It is a mechanism already in place to maintain the Plan's recommended improvements.

Map 4 Parking Lot District

Parking Lot District

Wheaton's Parking Lot District (PLD) provides public surface, on-street, and structured parking throughout downtown Wheaton. Property owners who can't or choose not to provide required parking instead pay an ad valorem tax (rates based on property value) to the PLD. The existence of the PLD facilitates the Plan's recommendation for reduced or shared parking in new development.




Map 5 Arts and Entertainment District

Arts and Entertainment District

Wheaton's State-designated Arts and Entertainment District offers a ten-year tax credit that reduces the increase in County property tax when properties are reassessed after building construction or renovation. The credit applies to manufacturing, commercial, or industrial buildings built or renovated for a qualifying residency artist, or for an arts and entertainment business including live-work space for artists.

Arts and Entertainment District



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
-  Arts and Entertainment District

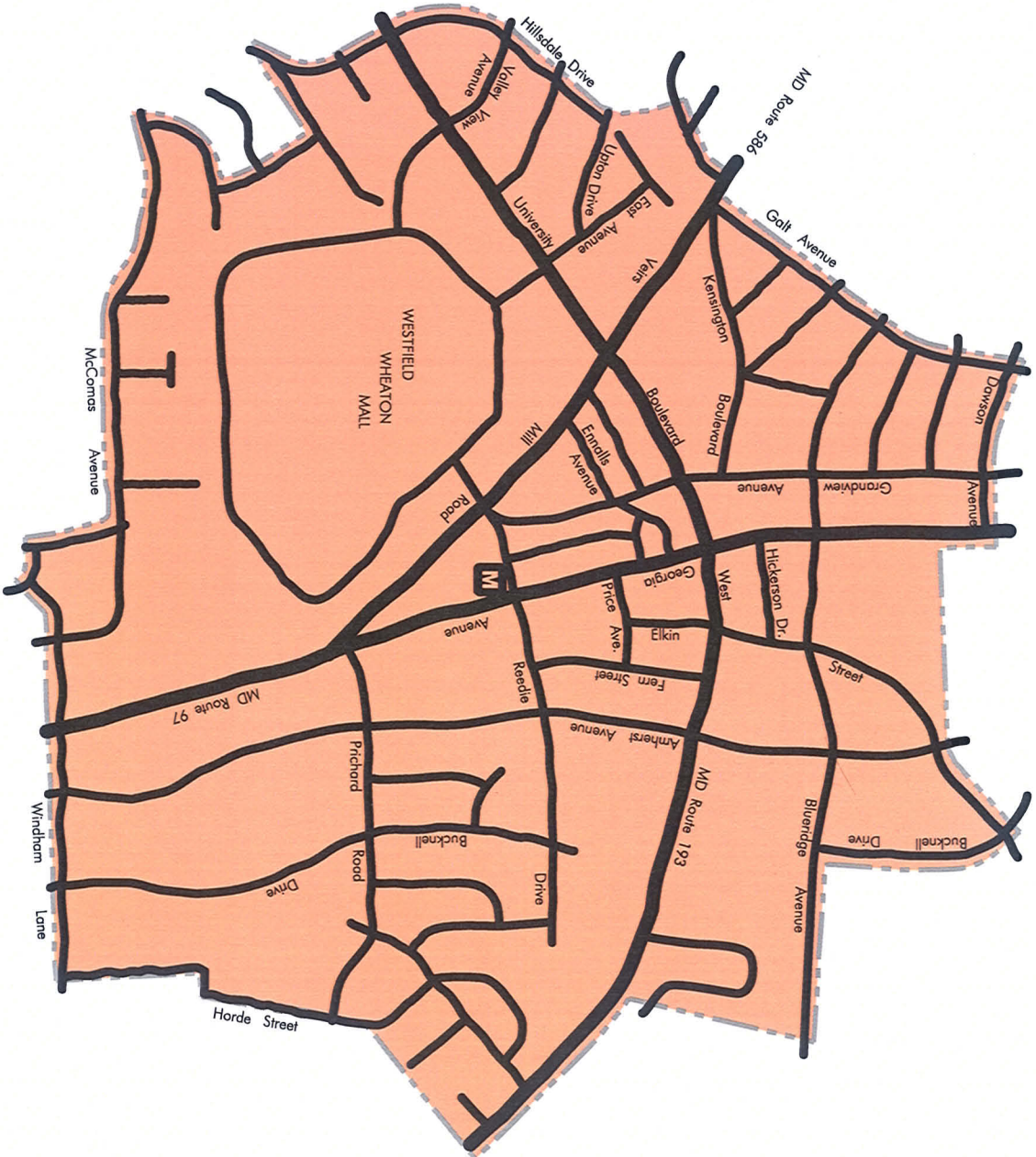


Map 6 Enterprise Zone

Enterprise Zone

The entire Plan area is an Enterprise Zone, a State economic development program that provides tax incentives to eligible businesses locating or expanding in designated zones. Program benefits include school and transportation impact tax waivers, real estate property tax credits, income tax credits for new job creation, and an exemption from Washington Sanitary Sewer Commission (WSSC) systems development charges.

Enterprise Zone



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
-  Enterprise Zone



Map 7 Priority Retail Streets

Encouraging Street Level Activity

Street level retail activates sidewalks and promotes community interaction. The Plan recommends that if new mixed-use development occurs along designated Priority Retail Streets, the street level uses should be a variety of retail types to create active streets. The County's Wheaton Redevelopment Office and Office of Economic Development should work with property owners to attract retailers to the CBD and the Westfield Wheaton Mall that create a retail environment with a variety of shopping opportunities.

Priority Retail Streets



Because retail is dynamic, the Wheaton Redevelopment Office should review and refresh County policies and incentives for small retailers in Wheaton to stay current.

Existing programs should consider:

- initiating an action plan, with property and business owners, that provides strategies and recommendations to attract and retain retail businesses
- forming a Wheaton merchants, small business, and property owners association to implement the retail action plan
- launching an advertising campaign developed jointly by the County, small businesses, Westfield Wheaton Mall, and the Kensington-Wheaton Chamber of Commerce
- working with landlords on guidelines for the upkeep and appearance of retail storefronts and restaurants
- extending streetscaping through the development review process and the County's Capital Improvements Program
- creating a community development corporation to help implement revitalization strategies, including a small retail business incubator, such as a covered food market.

Developing a Nighttime Economy







A well-managed nighttime economy is critical to revitalization. Popular restaurants and nightlife can lead revitalization and create the initial foot traffic that will support expanded shopping hours and reduce crime. Nighttime venues also create jobs and enhance quality of life. The development community has identified housing near transit for young professionals and empty-nesters, and urban amenities such as ethnic restaurants and entertainment, as assets. Expanding these aspects of downtown Wheaton requires cooperation between businesses, the residential community, and County government to ensure a lively and safe atmosphere.

Recommendations

- Expand the Urban District's program to include coordinating music and entertainment in downtown Wheaton:
 - improve communication and cooperation between musicians, venues, residents, and the County
 - promote public services, public safety and policies, and efficiency in regulatory, licensing, and permitting procedures
 - enhance promotion for performances and culturally-themed events
 - locate funding sources for local, independent, non-profit organizations, and other groups that support music interests
 - develop a "good neighbor agreement" that establishes standards and expectations for late-night establishments, to maintain a high quality of life for nearby residents and businesses
 - mediate conflicts between the operators of nighttime establishments and those affected by them
 - support marketing efforts that bring residents and visitors to the Wheaton CBD for culture and food.
- Evaluate and amend County codes and regulations to ensure that eating and drinking establishments can serve on sidewalks in the public right-of-way.
- Use the Urban District to provide maintenance and other services.
- Support community policing to maintain public safety.

Proposed Public/Private Partnership Properties



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
-  County-Owned Parcels
 - 1. Mid-County Regional Services Center
 - 2. Parking Lot 13
 - 3. Parking Lot 34
 - 4. Parking Lot 33
 - 5. Parking Lot 14
 - 6. Parking Lot 17
 - 7. Parking Garage 45
-  M-NCPPC-Owned Parcel
-  Wheaton Veterans Urban Park
-  WMAATA-Owned Parcels
 - 9. Bus Boys
 - 10. WMAATA Garage and Pedestrian Bridge



Long Term

County Redevelopment Program and Private Investment

The Wheaton Redevelopment Office is the lead public entity tasked with revitalizing the Wheaton CBD. Wheaton has 10 publicly owned properties with development potential held by Montgomery County, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The sites total 11.70 acres and are all within a 1,200-foot radius of the Metro station.

In January, 2010 the County issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking a development partner for the design, construction, and financing of transit-oriented development on these properties. The County and WMATA have selected a partner for the WMATA Triangle (bounded by Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and Reedie Drive) and for Parking Lot 13, and has signed a letter of intent. No formal contract has been signed to date.

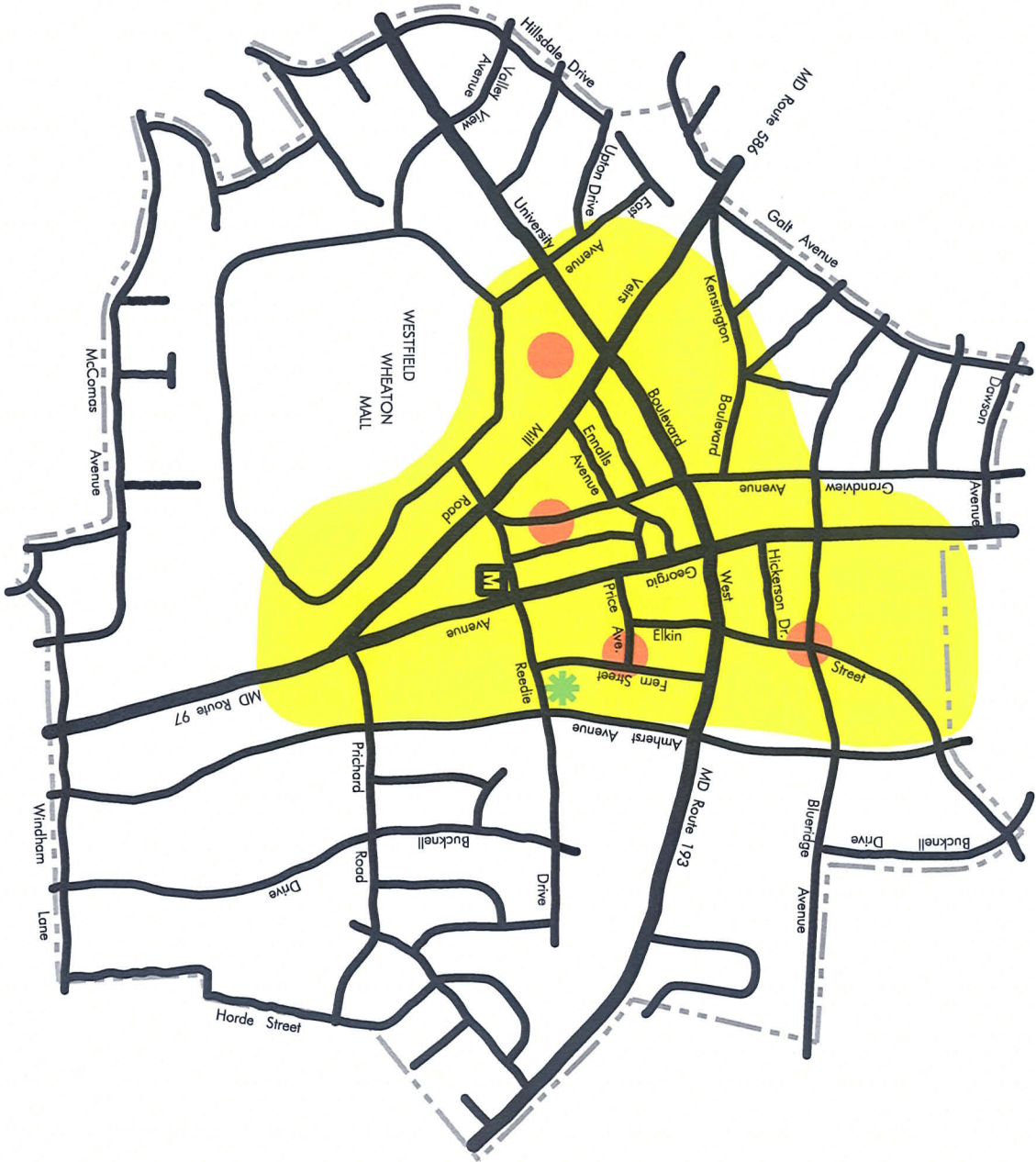
The County plans to reissue the RFQ for the remaining properties. Public/private development projects on Parking Lots 13, 14, and 17 should include permanent public use space somewhere within the projects. The exact location of open space will be determined during the development review process.

If the public parking lots are redeveloped, the County must be reimbursed for the land value, and current and future parking needs must be met. Land value could be captured through a variety of mechanisms including equity in a public/private partnership, bond reimbursement, or selling air rights. Structured parking anticipated as part of any redevelopment will meet parking needs.

New development resulting from the RFQ should be consistent with Plan objectives and should:

- contribute to the overall economic and environmental sustainability of Wheaton
- create mixed-use development to achieve a better balance of residential and commercial uses in the CBD
- in the Core District, include a mix of office, retail, and some residential uses
- significantly improve the CBD's public realm
- provide better pedestrian connectivity and support safe, secure, and appealing street level activity
- allow required open space and amenities to be combined, to ensure quality space benefiting the whole community
- integrate and connect Westfield Wheaton Mall with the center of the CBD
- provide a housing mix that includes moderate-income housing, workforce housing, and live-work units such as artist studios
- create opportunities to help retain and grow local small businesses
- encourage new businesses including nighttime entertainment, restaurants, and a variety of boutique retail establishments
- employ smart growth principles and construct LEED-certified buildings.

Public Use Space Concept



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
-  Area of likely redevelopment where public use space will be provided through the redevelopment process
-  Proposed open space in each district, location will be determined through the redevelopment process
-  Existing Wheaton Veterans Urban Park



Establishing Public Use Spaces

The recommended CR Zones allow contributions for public parks and public use space projects in lieu of on-site provisions (see Implementation). In Wheaton, contributions should be used to help provide public use spaces that will generate the most public benefit, consolidating smaller spaces into larger ones in the most desirable locations.

Redevelopment of Parking Lots 13, 14, and 17 offers opportunities to create public use spaces with locations to be determined during the development review process. In addition to the Plan's recommended parks and public use spaces (see map 9) other public use spaces will be required to meet zoning standards.

- Create a major civic space for community-wide events in the vicinity of Parking Lot 13.
 - Responsibility for owning, managing, and operating the Parking Lot 13 space should be determined during the development review process. Ownership by the Department of Parks should be considered. If the Department of Parks owns the space, it should be acquired as a capital improvement project or dedicated through a turn-key arrangement, as part of a public/private partnership.
 - Consider relocating Wheaton Veterans Urban Park from its current location at the corner of Reddie Drive and Amherst Avenue to Lot 13 as part of a redevelopment project.
- Create a public use space in the vicinity of Parking Lot 14 in the Blueridge District.
- Create a public use space in the vicinity of Parking Lot 17 in the Price District.

Urban Design

Success in Wheaton relies not only on economic vitality and a strong residential presence, but on the quality of the public realm. Redevelopment will take many years and will occur property by property. It is essential that urban design principles guide how the parts fit together as redevelopment occurs. The Wheaton Urban Design Guidelines, which will be prepared to complement this Plan, provide additional detail.

Wheaton's character will be the combination of qualities and features that make it different from the other centers in the region. Wheaton will also reflect a local character that sets it apart in the Washington area. Key features that will reflect the region are plant materials, brick made from local red clay, local stone, the topography, street furnishings and building materials.

Insert sidebar:

Identity: the depiction of Wheaton as a whole encompassing its many aspects

Character: the combined qualities or features that make Wheaton different from the other centers in the region

Public Realm: spaces used day-to-day by the general public such as streets, plazas, and parks

Urban Design Principles

Center

Wheaton's center, on the triangle of land surrounding the Metro station, will be identifiable by the intensity of uses, a signature streetscape style, and visible, attractive landmarks.

Connectivity

Wheaton's walkable street system will be enhanced. Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and University Boulevard will be treated as boulevards that visually tie Wheaton together. A network of sidewalks, bikeways, trails, and paths will make it easy for people to move about without cars. The Westfield Wheaton Mall will be integrated with the CBD through pedestrian connections and street-oriented uses along its edges. The bridge across Viers Mill Road and the tunnel under Georgia Avenue will be enhanced, as will many at-grade pedestrian crossings. The urban design guidelines will address visual connectivity, landmarks, and focal points.

Buildings

Wheaton's buildings will continue to be an eclectic mix, and infill redevelopment will create an increasingly compact and street-oriented pattern. A mixture of heights and scales will ensure compatible height transitions with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Open Space








Within a compact development pattern, Wheaton will have a system of large and small, connected open spaces, where people can gather, enjoy the outdoors, and conduct business.

Sustainability

Redevelopment will incorporate environmentally sensitive design to conserve and generate energy and to manage stormwater. Building and street design will respond to climate, seasons, sun and shade, and topography, and will make maximum use of renewable resources with minimal disruption of the natural environment.

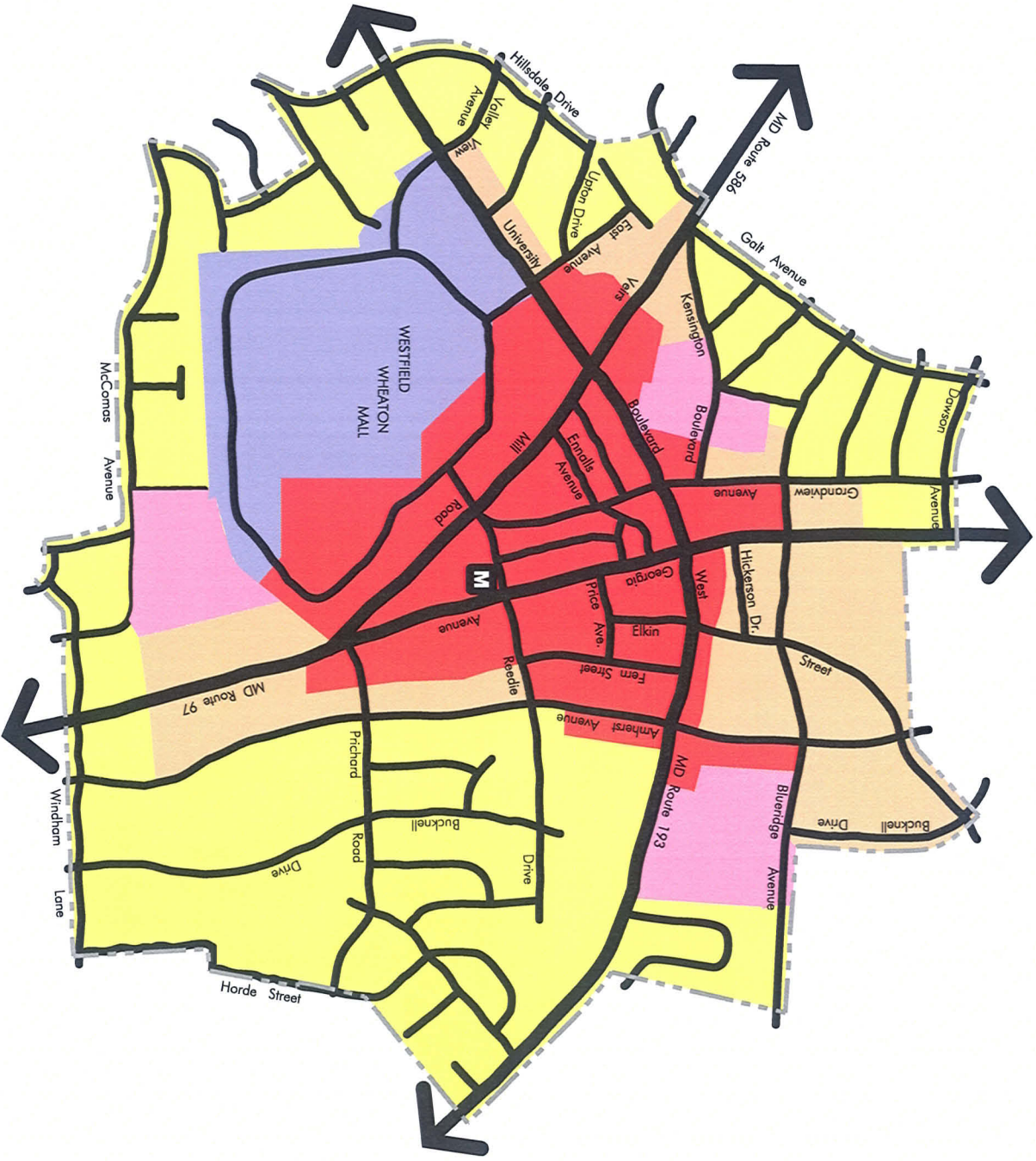
Urban Design Concept



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
-  Boulevards
-  Major Nodes
-  Civic Green
(Locations to be determined during development review process)
-  Neighborhood Open Space
(Locations to be determined during development review process)
-  Landmark Building



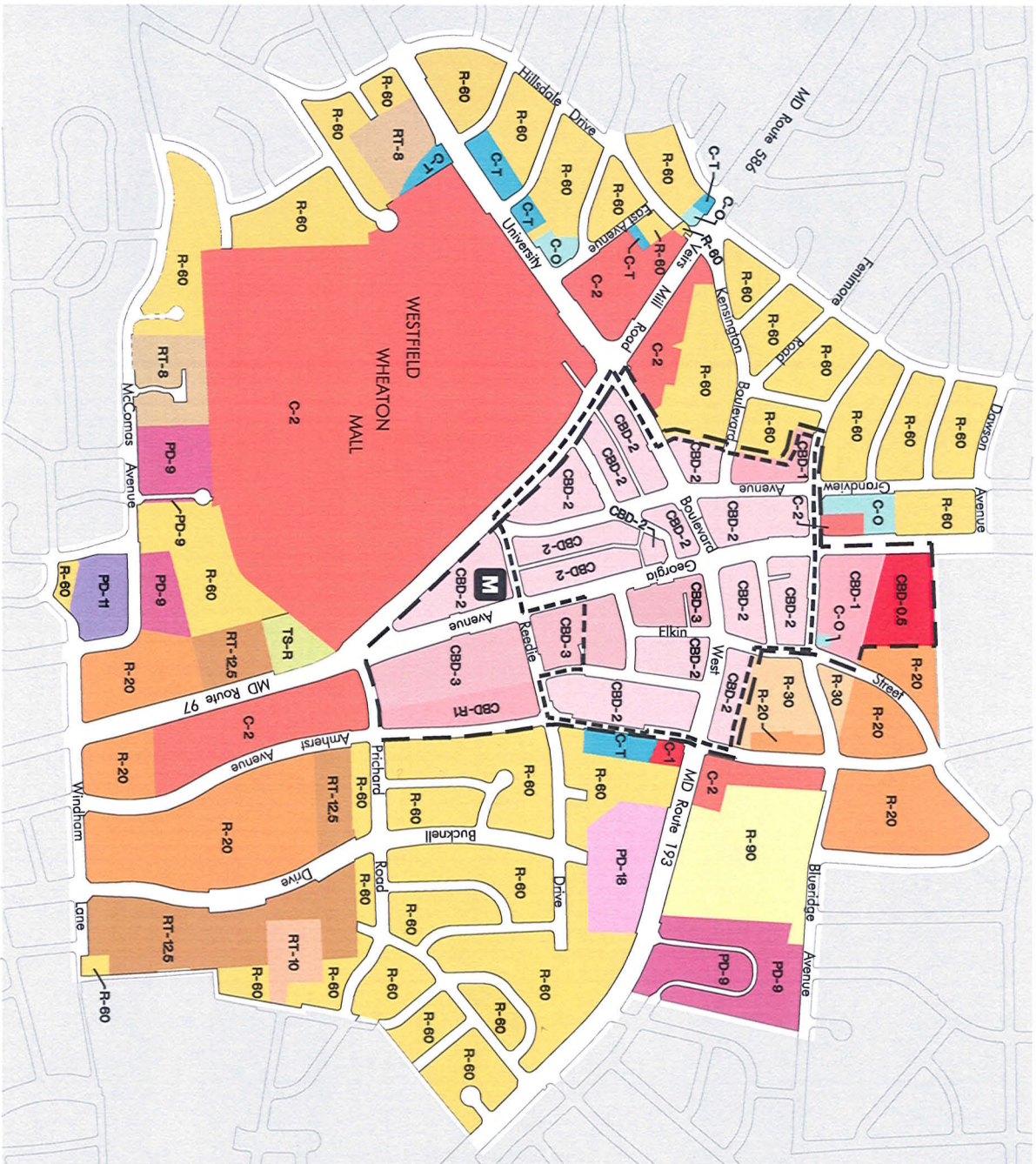
Land Use Concept



- M** Wheaton Metro Station
- Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
- Major Boulevards
- Mixed-Use - Commercial Emphasis
 - Office
 - Retail
 - Culture
 - Government
 - Residential
 - Open Spaces
- Mixed-Use - Residential Emphasis
 - Residential
 - Retail
 - Services
 - Office
 - Open Spaces
- Regional Shopping
- Existing Residential Neighborhoods
- Public Services, Utilities



Existing Zoning



- M Wheaton Metro Station
- CBD Boundary
- - - Wheaton Retail Preservation Overlay Zone



Land Use and Zoning

Wheaton has both regional and local functions. The proposed land uses and zoning, along with the recommended heights and densities will create a sustainable downtown economy.

To ensure a sustainable economy in Wheaton, new land uses must be balanced with the existing, predominantly retail uses to increase daytime population. New office space would attract different kinds of businesses and jobs. More employees and more residential development will provide customers for local services and businesses. Redevelopment may displace some specialty retail, particularly the smaller businesses. To retain Wheaton's uniqueness, it is important that the zoning encourages preservation of space for small businesses.

Zoning recommendations are based on four goals.

- Encourage Class A office development at the Metro station.
- Allow for concentrated specialty retail in the center of the CBD and along the three main roads.
- Increase housing mixed with some retail surrounding the center of the CBD.
- Place highest densities and building heights in the center of the CBD.

Zoning History

Wheaton was designated as a CBD before the location of the Metro station. The 1978 Plan, which followed the Metro opening in 1976, recommended rezoning the Wheaton CBD to the CBD-0.5, CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-R1, and CBD-3 Zones. The CBD Zones were intended to provide a hierarchy of density and heights with the tallest buildings are in the center and tent downward to the surrounding, lower-scale neighborhoods.

The 1990 Plan recommended a Retail Preservation Overlay Zone for a 35-acre portion of the CBD to prohibit optional method, large-scale redevelopment that might have a negative impact on smaller businesses. The Overlay Zone applies to CBD-1, CBD-2, and CBD-3 zoned properties, which are effectively limited to 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 FAR. Twenty-three acres of CBD-zoned land are not subject to the Overlay Zone, including many of the prime office locations closest to Metro. The Overlay Zone, as originally approved, permitted only standard method development, and required site plan approval for any new buildings and additions, regardless of size.

The CBD Zones require a minimum land area of 18,000 square feet (except in the Wheaton Overlay Zone) and a lengthy approval process for optional method development (Project Plan and Site Plan review). Optional method development is costly and time-consuming for a small property owner. For a developer to be interested in assembling properties, there has to be enough market potential to justify the risk.

In 2006, the Overlay Zone was amended to eliminate the requirement for assemblage and to allow optional method development with some limits, among other changes.

Since the 1990 Plan, only 21,000 square feet of commercial space has been developed under the standard method in the Overlay Zone. Since the 2006 overlay zone amendment, no plans have been approved using optional method within the Overlay Zone. Wheaton's only proposed optional method project is the 2010 mixed-use development on the existing Safeway site, which is outside the Overlay Zone.

In 2009, a limited sector plan amendment expanded the CBD boundaries and rezoned properties on the east side of Georgia Avenue north of Blueridge Avenue to CBD-0.5 and CBD-1. It also removed the Overlay Zone from the frontage of the same block along Georgia Avenue, and Blueridge Avenue.

Proposed Zoning

A sector plan can't make development happen, but it can provide new tools that create redevelopment options. The Plan recommends two context-sensitive mixed-use zones (CRN and CR) that permit a mix of residential and nonresidential uses with varying densities and heights. The zones promote economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable development patterns where people can live, work, play, and have access to services and amenities while minimizing the need for automobiles.

The CR Zones provide many of the same controls and public benefits as the CBD Zones and include incentives for providing on-site space for small, neighborhood-oriented businesses. The CR Zones do not require assemblage and can enable revitalization of small properties and businesses. The CR Zones can also customize height and density requirements and provide the tenting effect essential to focusing a downtown.

The CR Zones are easier for small properties (less than 10,000 square feet or 10 units) to use, because there is no minimum lot size required for the optional method. For this reason, the Plan recommends removing the Overlay Zone and rezoning all the CBD Zones to CR Zones. The Plan also recommends rezoning non-residentially zoned properties and some sites with multifamily zoning to CR Zones.

The CR Zones also allow a broad range of uses, similar to the CBD Zones and other commercial zones. They require the designation of four elements on the zoning map: a total allowed floor area ratio (FAR), a maximum nonresidential (C) FAR, a maximum residential (R) FAR, and a maximum building height (H). The Plan recommends applying the CR Zones in Wheaton through a sectional map amendment consistent with the Plan's recommendations.

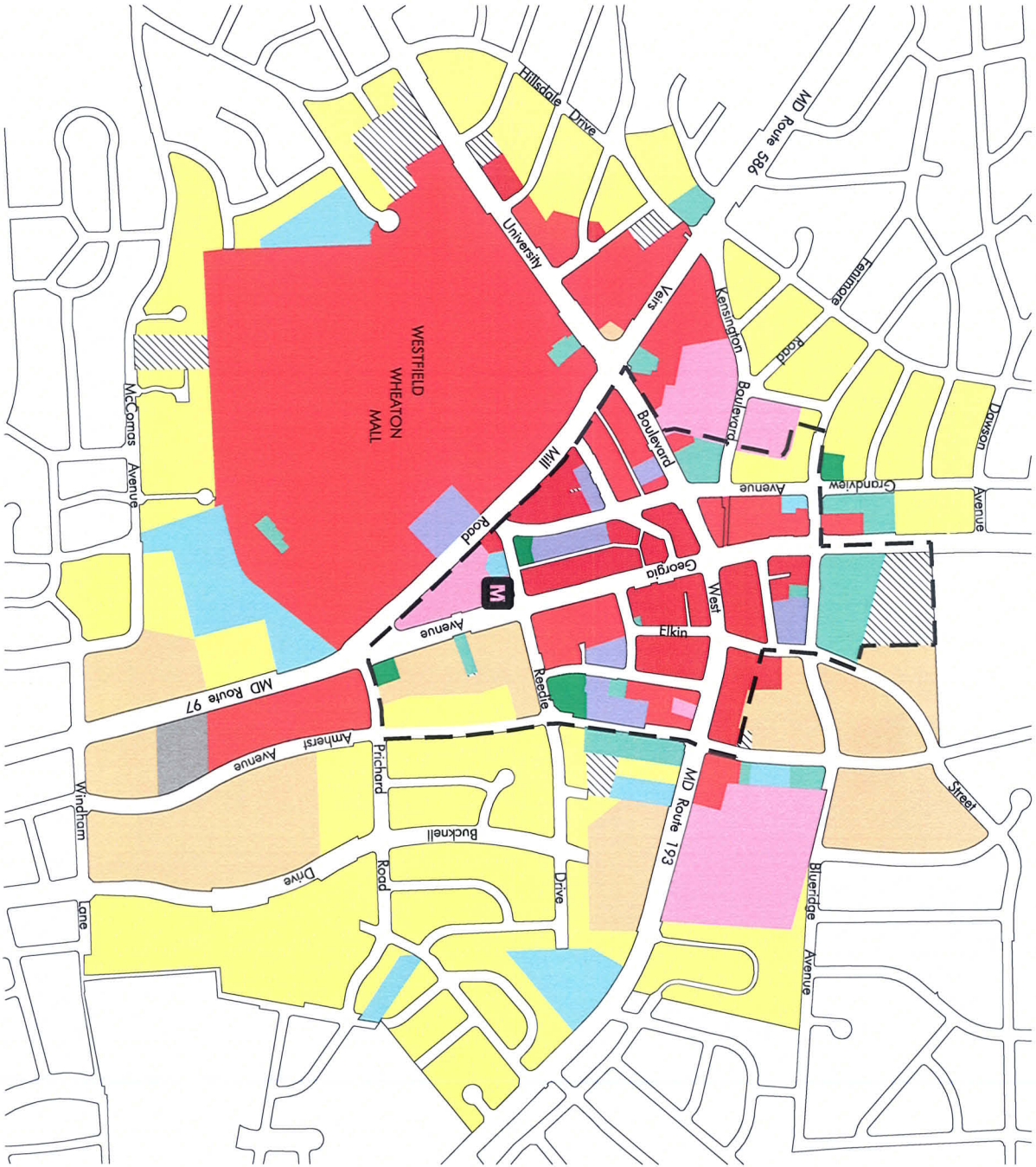
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As with other Montgomery County zones, the CR Zones include standard and optional method development. The standard method requires compliance with a specific set of standards. It requires less review, but also offers less density. The optional method allows for greater density and height when supported by additional public benefits approved in a review process.

In the CR Zones, the additional density may be achieved through incentive bonuses that can be bundled to earn the maximum allowable density.

The CRN Zone is a transitional zone between a high intensity development and residential uses. The CRN Zone permits a more limited mix of uses and less intense development where transitions must be provided to nearby neighborhoods. It allows development only under the standard method. The CRN Zone requires site plan review for limited uses including development adjacent to a property in an applicable residential zone; development on a property separated only by the right-of-way of a primary, secondary, or tertiary street; development of a gross floor area greater than 10,000 square feet or a height greater than 40 feet; or development of 10 or more dwelling units. One of the chief benefits of site plan review in both the CRN Zone and the CR Zone is to ensure that development conforms to plan recommendations.

Existing Land Use





- Wheaton Metro Station
- Central Business District
- Single-Family Residential
- Multifamily Residential
- Office with Parking
- Retail Services with Parking
- Institutional/Civic/Government/Religious
- Public Parking
- Open Space
- Utilities/Transportation
- Storage
- Vacant



29

Proposed Density/Maximum FAR



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary

-  FAR 6
-  FAR 5
-  FAR 4
-  FAR 3
-  FAR 2
-  FAR 1.5



Proposed Maximum Building Heights



Recommendation

- Remove the Overlay Zone and replace the CBD Zones and some commercial zones with CR Zones. Where existing residential development has been built under the CBD zoning, the proposed CR Zones will approximate the existing zoning and allow an appropriate amount of mixed-use redevelopment.

Density and Building Height

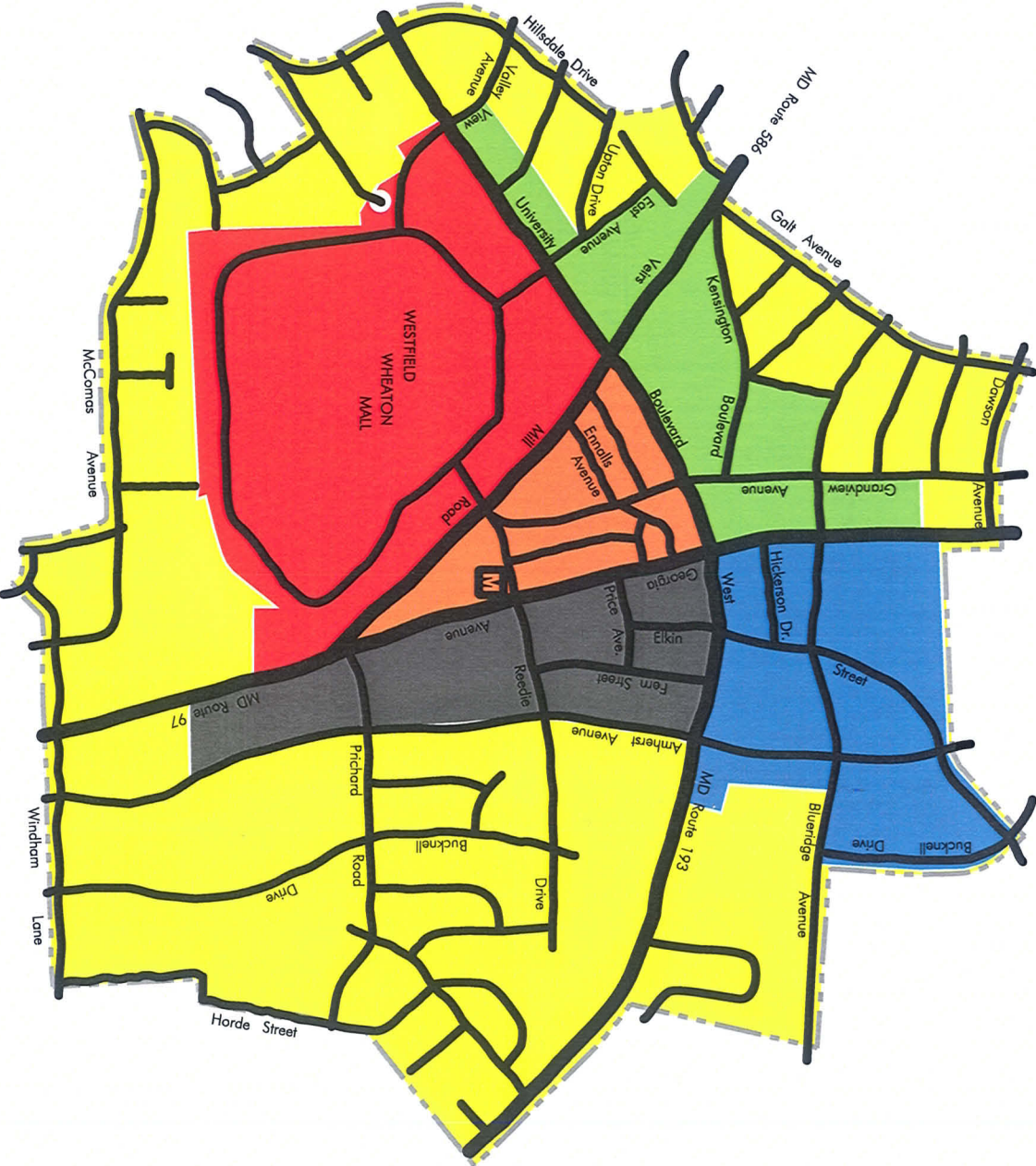
The density and height of buildings shape the built environment and define the skyline. The Plan places the greatest densities and heights at and near the Metro station in the center of downtown, along Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road. The tallest development is recommended on the WMATA Triangle site at the convergence of Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Avenue, to encourage the development of an iconic building at the southern gateway to Wheaton. Taller buildings are also allowed at the two other important nodes in Wheaton: the intersections of University Boulevard and Georgia Avenue, and of University Boulevard and Veirs Mill Road, which serve as the northeast and northwest gateways to the downtown.

The heights and densities decrease closer to the single-family residential communities surrounding Wheaton's commercial areas.

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Density is measured as Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The greater the FAR, the more development is possible. But density doesn't always create taller buildings. A shorter, wider building may have more FAR than a taller, narrower building.

Districts



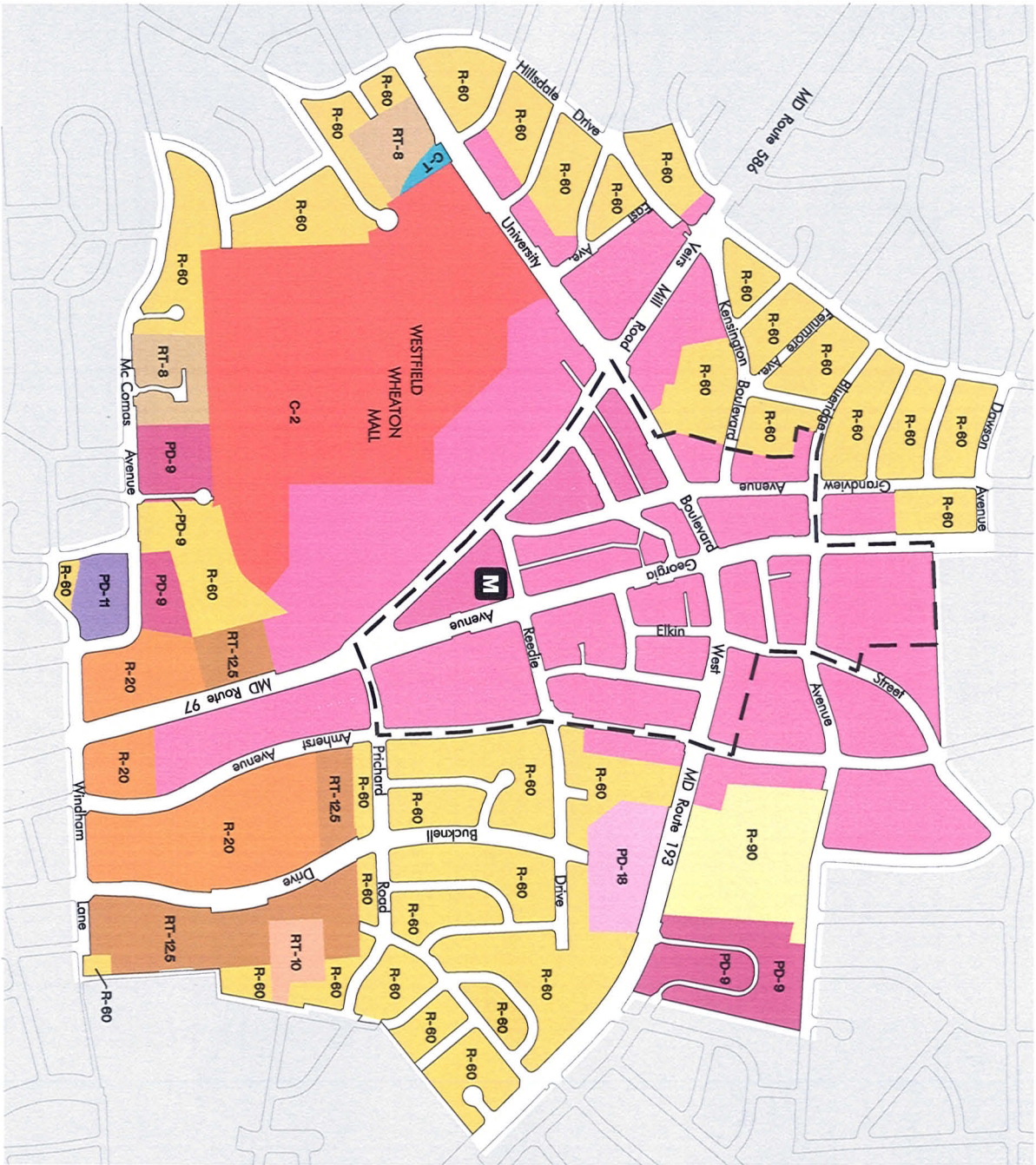
- Wheaton Metro Station
- Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
- The Core
- Price
- Blueridge
- Westfield
- Kensington View/Wheaton Hills
- Existing Neighborhoods



The Districts

The Plan area is organized into five districts, each with its own distinct character. The Core should contain a defined civic presence and new office uses. The Westfield District has the potential to evolve into a mixed-use district that enhances the mall as a retail destination. The three other districts—Price, Blueridge, and Kensington View/Wheaton Hills—have existing residential neighborhoods with potential to add residential units and small-scale, nonresidential uses. The rest of the Plan area consists of established residential neighborhoods where few properties are available for infill development and mixed uses are not appropriate.

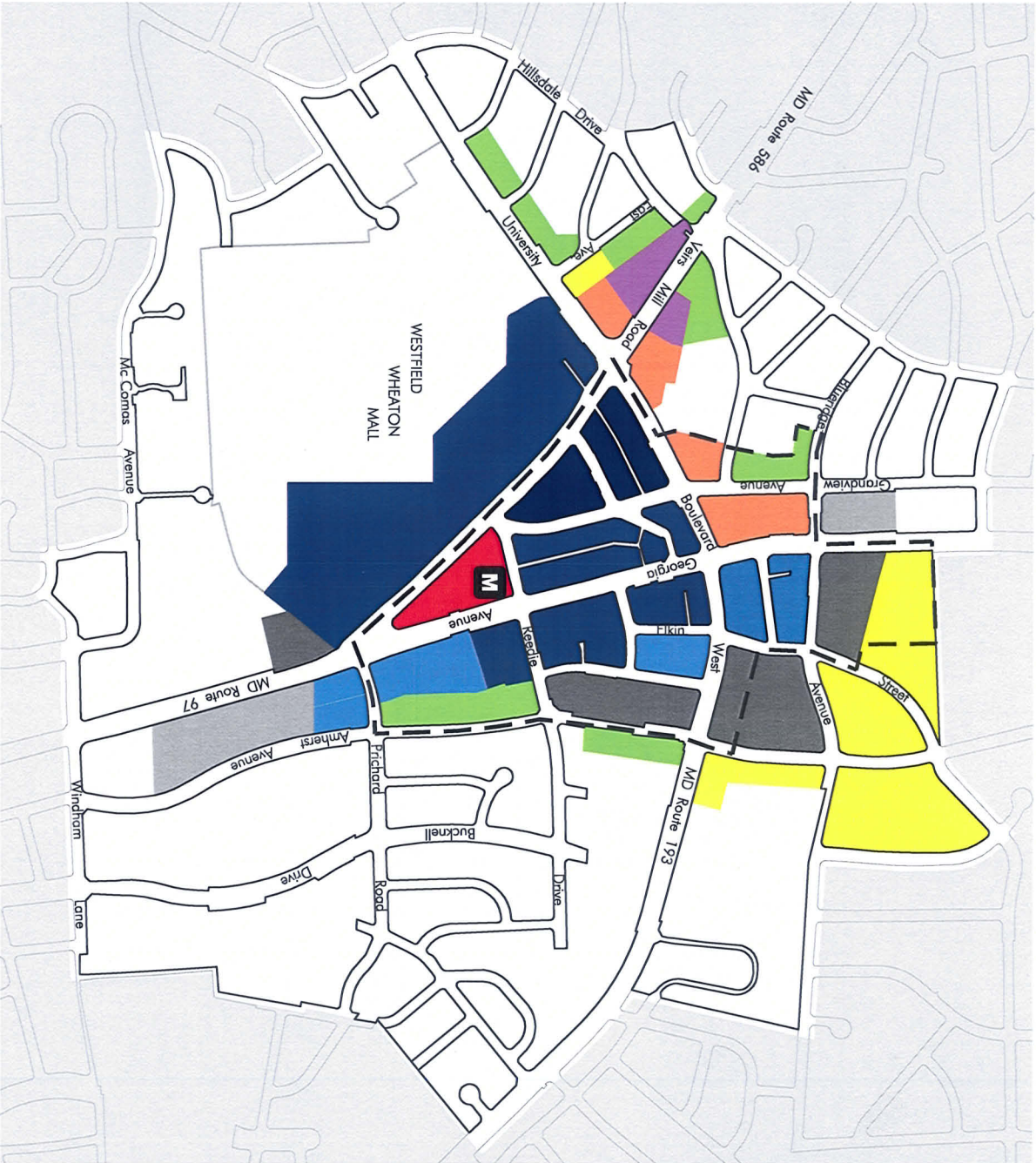
Proposed Zoning



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  CBD Boundary
-  CR Zones (Refer to Proposed CR Zoning map for details)



Proposed CR Zoning



M Wheaton Metro Station

--- CBD Boundary

CR 6: C 6.0, R 3.0, H 250

CR 6: C 5.5, R 5.5, H 200

CR 5: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 150

CR 5: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 130

CR 4: C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100

CR 3: C 2.5, R 2.5, H 100

CR 3: C 2.5, R 2.5, H 75

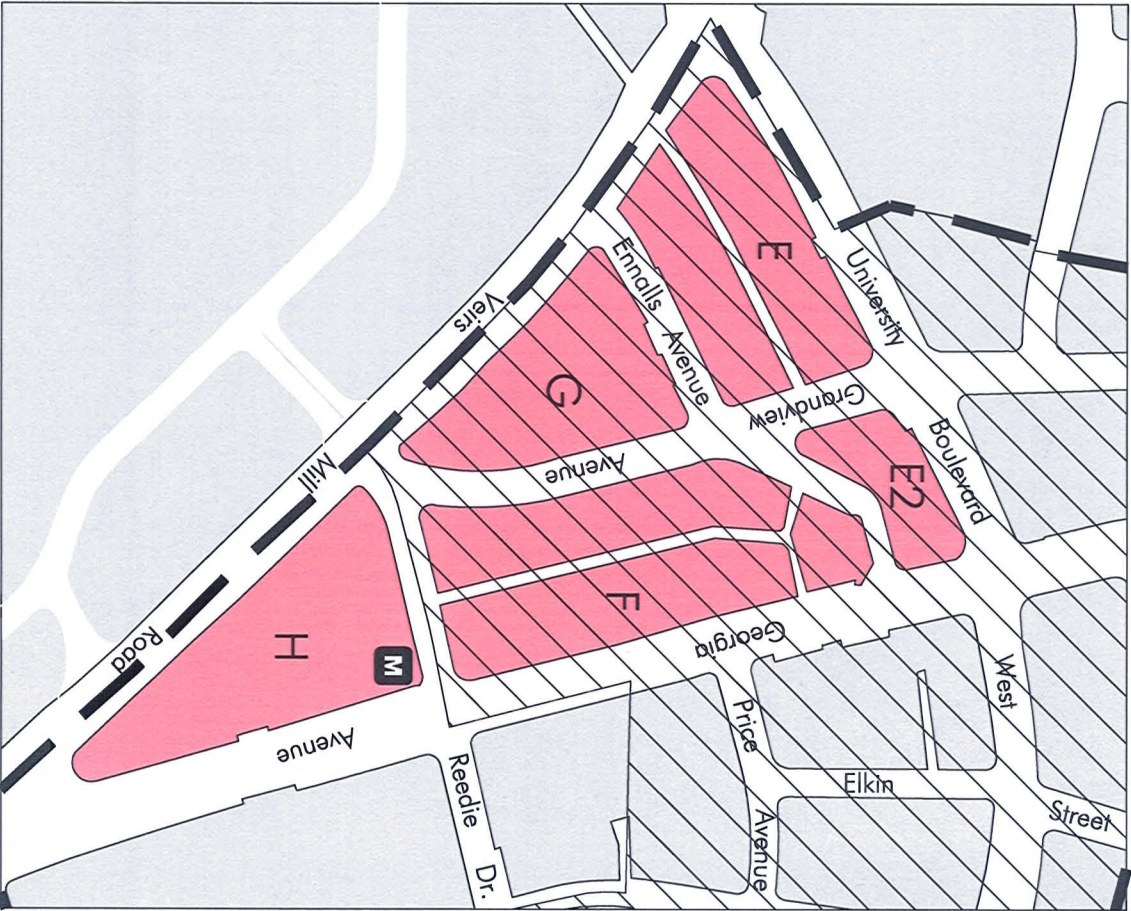
CR 2: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 75

CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45

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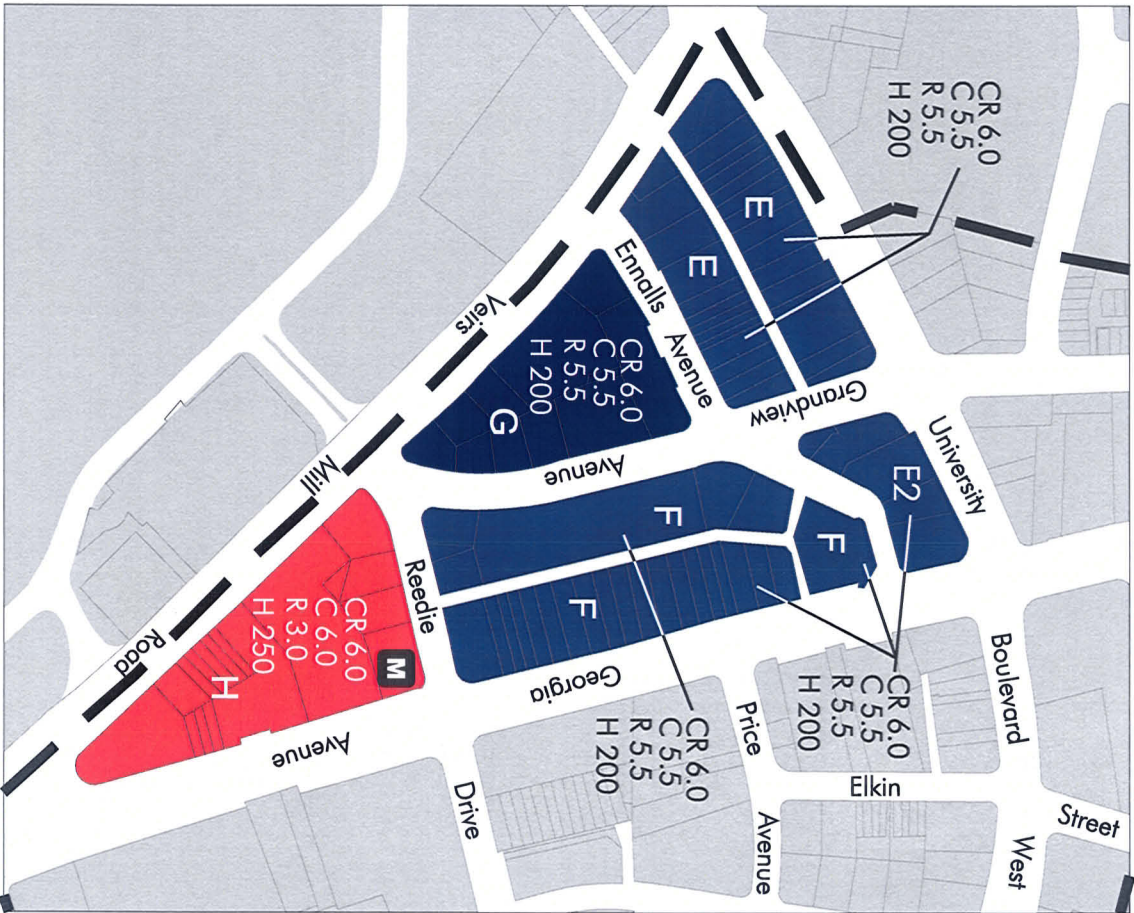


The Core District - Existing Zoning



- Wheaton Metro Station
- CBD Boundary
- Wheaton Retail Preservation Overlay Zone
- CBD-2 (maximum FAR of 5.0, maximum building height 200 feet)

The Core District - Proposed Zoning



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  CBD Boundary

The Core District

The Core is the approximately 40-acre triangle bounded by Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and University Boulevard. The area is a hub in the regional transit system and includes the Metro station. There are five blocks in the district. Block E, E2 and the eastern part of F are primarily small business operations. Blocks G, H, and western part of F have the most potential to provide the mixed-uses envisioned in this Plan. The proposed re-alignment of Ennalls Avenue (see Map 19) will create greater connectivity throughout the downtown and an opportunity for possible assemblage of the small parcels north of the proposed alignment.

Blocks G, H, E, E2 and the western part of F

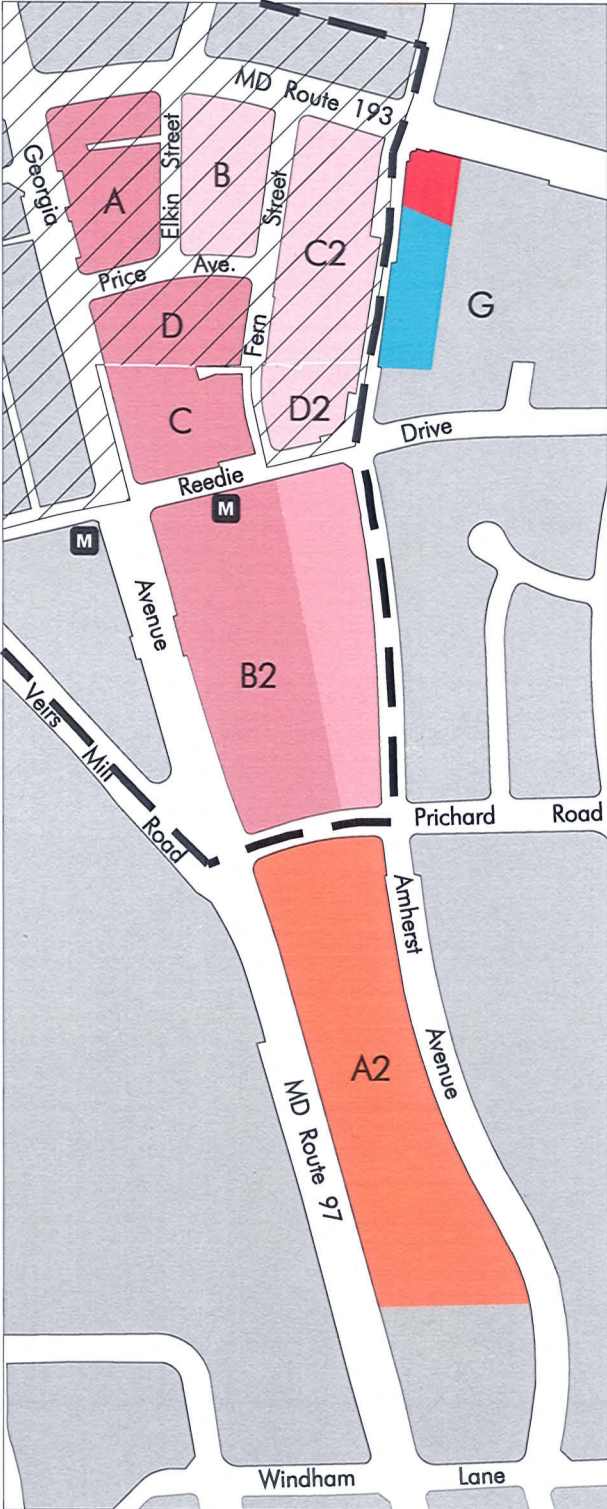
These blocks have some of the largest and most important redevelopment parcels in Wheaton, located on and near the Metro station. Block G has a significant portion under single ownership. Block H is owned by WMATA and contains the bus bays and a pedestrian bridge across Veirs Mill Road to Westfield Mall. Its location, size, and public ownership create the best potential of any property in Wheaton to redevelop with a major office component.

The western part of F is owned by the County and used for surface parking (Parking Lot 13). The County's parking lot and the WMATA property are currently the focus of a public/private partnership to create a major mixed-use project. This project should include a major public use space in the general vicinity of Parking Lot 13. A landmark building should be located at the confluence of Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Avenue because of its suitability and prominent location. A maximum height of 250 feet is recommended for the WMATA block for a landmark building. Signature buildings should be located at the three intersections that define the Core: Georgia Avenue and University Boulevard, Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road, and University Boulevard and Veirs Mill Road.

Recommendations

- Rezone Block G from CBD-2 to CR 6.0: C 5.5, R 5.5, H 200.
- Rezone Block H from CBD-2 to CR 6.0: C 6.0, R 3.0, H 250.
- Rezone Block F from CBD-2 to CR 6.0: C 5.5, R 5.5, H 200.
- Rezone Blocks E and E2 from CBD-2 to CR 6.0: C 5.5, R 5.5, H 200.

Price District - Existing Zoning



- M** Wheaton Metro Station
- CBD Boundary
- ▨** Wheaton Retail Preservation Overlay Zone
- Blue** C-T (Maximum FAR of 0.5, maximum building height 35 feet)
- Red** C-1 (No FAR limit, maximum building height 45-60 feet)
- Orange** C-2 (Maximum FAR of 2.5, maximum building height 75 feet)
- Light Pink** CBD-R1 (Maximum FAR of 3.0, maximum building height 143 feet)
- Medium Pink** CBD-2 (Maximum FAR of 5.0, maximum building height 200 feet)
- Dark Pink** CBD-3 (Maximum FAR of 8.0, maximum building height 200 feet)

Price District

The Price District contains housing, neighborhood restaurants, and entertainment venues clustered around County Parking Lot 17. It has potential for a public use space through public/private redevelopment. This district could have high-density housing and some office along Georgia Avenue. Redevelopment with expanded neighborhood-serving businesses will serve those who live in the new mid-rise and highrise housing and in the surrounding neighborhoods. A Safeway grocery store and 500 residential units are currently proposed at the northeast corner of Georgia Avenue and Reddie Drive, adjacent to the Metro station entrance. Pedestrian connections will link the Price District to the rest of the Plan area. The interior of the district will likely remain low-scale development.

Block A and Block C/D west of Fern Street

These blocks contain a variety of small businesses including a laundromat, car wash, restaurants, bakery, and Parking Lot 17. Block C contains the proposed Safeway project. The ownership pattern and small parcel sizes make it unlikely that blocks D and A will assemble for large projects.

- Rezone Block A and Block C/D west of Fern Street from CBD-3 to CR 6.0: C 5.5, R 5.5, H 200. The height and density of new development should reinforce the importance of Georgia Avenue as Wheaton’s main boulevard and allow taller signature buildings at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and University Boulevard.

Block B

This block on the south side of University Boulevard between Elkin and Fern Streets contains small businesses, mostly restaurants, office space, and car repair. Because of the land ownership and small parcel sizes, it is unlikely that the area will assemble.

- Rezone Block B from CBD-2 to CR 5.0: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 150 to encourage mixed-use development and to transition between the proposed 6 FAR site to the west of the block and the proposed 4 FAR site to the east. An FAR of 5 is also consistent with the existing CBD-2 Zone, which allows 5 FAR.

Block C2/D2 (east of Fern Street)

This block contains restaurants, small offices, Wheaton Veterans Park, and a County parking garage. Assemblage of the entire block is unlikely. However, the parking garage and Wheaton Veterans Urban Park are included in the County’s RFQ and could be assembled.

If the Wheaton Veterans Park site is incorporated into a redevelopment project, the Veteran’s memorial should be relocated elsewhere in downtown. A green transition should be provided (identified through development review) along Amherst Avenue on the Veterans Park site to compensate for the loss of transition and green space that the existing park provides.

- Rezone Block C2/D2 from CBD-2 to CR 4.0: C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100 to encourage reinvestment on small-scale parcels and on publicly owned land.

Block G

Block G has office, residential, and retail uses in small, one- to three-story buildings. It is primarily a transition area between high-density development to the west and single-family residences to the east. The existing zoning is C-T and C-1.

- Rezone parcels N224, N225, and 10, and lots 1, 2, and 3 on Block G to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45 to encourage transitional mixed-use development with residential as a major component.

- Confirm existing zoning on the rest of Block G.

Block B2

This block was developed in the early 2000s with new housing at less than the maximum allowed density. One existing parcel remains along Georgia Avenue as office use. Higher densities are more appropriate closer to the Metro station along Reddie Drive, and heights should transition from 150 feet along Georgia Avenue to 45 feet at the residential edge along Amherst Avenue.

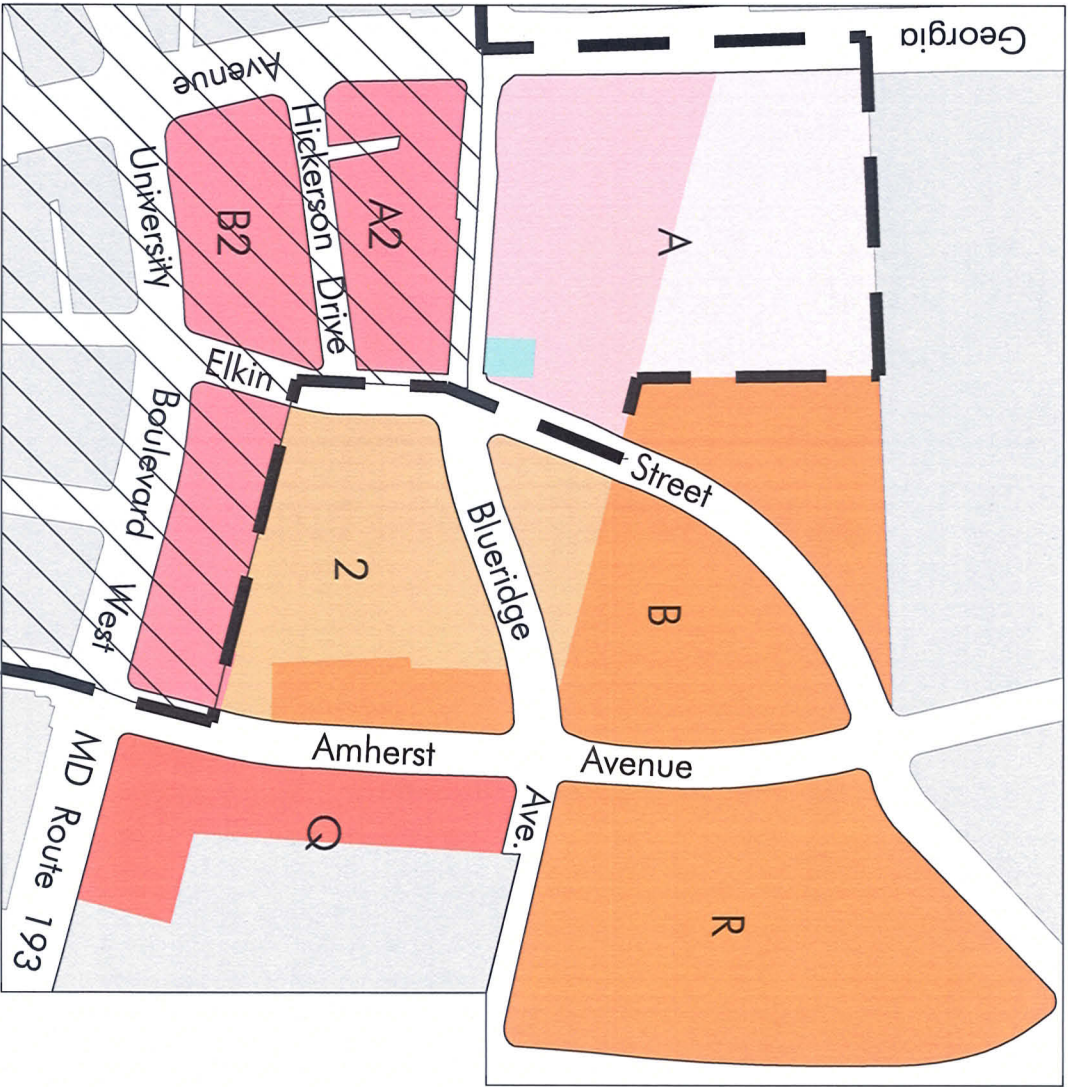
- Rezone the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) apartments on the northern portion of the block from CBD-3 to CR 6.0: C5.5, R 5.5, H 200 to be consistent with the recommended rezoning on other blocks surrounding the WMATA Triangle, which has a proposed maximum permitted building height of 250 feet.
- Rezone the townhouses on the eastern side of the block from CBD-R1 to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45, to provide an appropriate transition to the single-family houses across the street.
- Rezone the offices and apartments on the southern portion of the block along Georgia Avenue (Parcels 4, 5, and 1) from CBD-3 to CR 5.0: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 150.











Block A2

Block A2 contains a car dealership, big box retail, self storage units, and multifamily housing. The existing zoning is R-20 and C-2. Rezone the C-2 portion of the block to support mixed-use development.

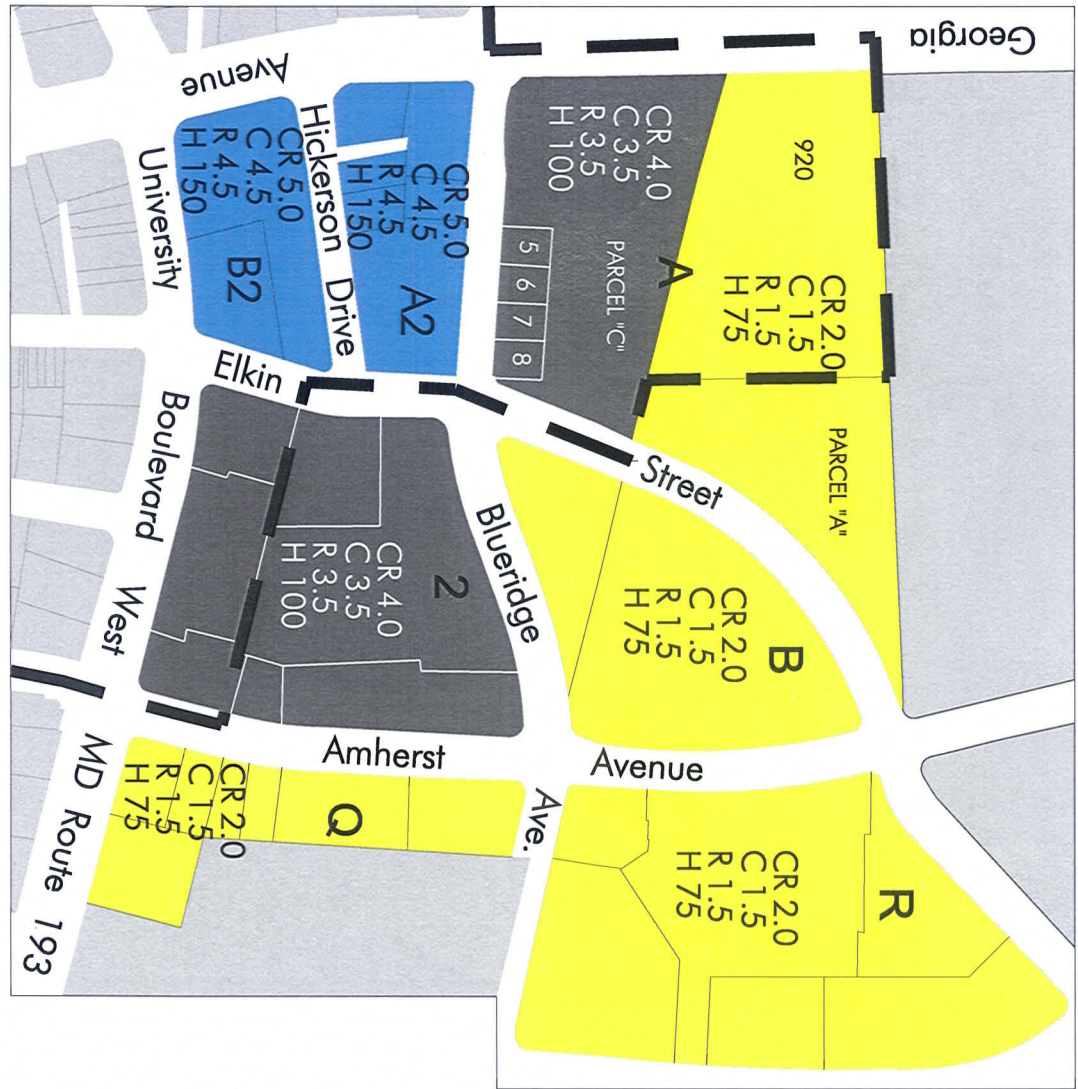
- Confirm R-20 zoning on Parcel N46 on the southern end of the block along Wyndham Lane.
- Rezone the northern portion of the block from C-2 to CR 5.0: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 150. Any new development on these parcels should be no more than 45 feet high along the Amherst Avenue frontage to be compatible with single-family houses across the street.
- Rezone parcels N804 and N910 in the middle of the block from C-2 to CR 3.0: C 2.5, R 2.5, H 75. Provide appropriate transition in building heights to existing development across Amherst Avenue.

Blueridge District - Existing Zoning



-  CBD Boundary
-  Wheaton Retail Preservation
-  Overlay Zone
-  R-30 (17.69 units per acre, maximum building height 35 feet)
-  R-20 (26.47 units per acre, maximum building height 80 feet)
-  C-2 (Maximum FAR of 3.0, maximum building height 97 feet)
-  C-O (Maximum FAR of 2.5, maximum building height 75 feet)
-  CBD-0.5 (Maximum FAR of 1.5, maximum building height 90 feet)
-  CBD-1 (Maximum FAR of 3.0, maximum building height 143 feet)
-  CBD-2 (Maximum FAR of 5.0, maximum building height 200 feet)

Blueridge District - Proposed Zoning Changes



— CBD Boundary

Blueridge District

The Blueridge District is the northern gateway to downtown Wheaton and is within walking distance of the Core, Wheaton Regional Park, and nearby neighborhoods. It is evolving into a residential neighborhood with small neighborhood-serving retail on the ground floor and some office uses. Future development should include street-oriented businesses along Georgia Avenue and University Boulevard, along with housing, professional offices, and neighborhood retail centered on a public space in the vicinity of Parking Lot 14.

Block A

Block A contains a surface parking lot and commercial buildings; the largest of them, the BB&T Bank building, is vacant. Parcel 920, owned by WMATA, is undeveloped, and the garden apartments on Parcel "A" are owned by the Montgomery Housing Partnership. Parcels "C", 5, 6, and 7 are owned by Avalon Bay. Parcel 8 has a small office building. Parcel 920 was rezoned to CBD-0.5 in 2009 pursuant to the 2008 Limited Wheaton Sector Plan Amendment, and Parcels "C", 5, 6, 7, and 8 were rezoned to CBD-1 (SMA G-845).

- Rezone Parcel 920 from CBD-0.5 and C-0 to CR 2.0: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 75 to encourage mixed-use residential development. Rezone Parcel "A" from R-20 to CR 2.0: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 75, to encourage mixed-use residential development. Provide appropriate transition in building heights along the northern edge of Parcel 920 and Parcel "A" to be compatible with existing townhomes on the adjoining property to the north. Rezone Parcels "C", 5, 6, and 7 from CBD-1 to CR 4.0: C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100.
- Rezone Parcel 8 from C-O to CR 4.0: C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100.

Block B north of Blueridge Avenue

Block B contains garden apartments with R-20 zoning to the north and R-30 zoning to the south.

- Rezone the entire block from R-20 and R-30 to CR 2.0: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 75 to encourage mixed-use residential development.

Blocks A2 and B2 south of Blueridge Avenue

About one third of Block A2 and all of Block B2 are under single ownership. A portion of Block A2 is County-owned Parking Lot 14. Block A2 supports retail, restaurant, and offices uses.

- Rezone Blocks A2 and B2 from CBD-2 to CR 5.0: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 150 to encourage a large mixed-use development with street level retail along University Boulevard and Georgia Avenue.

Block 2

Block 2 contains garden apartments and small retail and restaurant uses along University Boulevard. There is one vacant parcel currently used for private parking. Block 2 is zoned R-30 and R-20 to the north and CBD-2 to the south.

- Rezone the entire block to CR 4.0: C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100 to encourage mixed-use residential development with street level retail along University Boulevard.

Block Q

Block Q contains small-scale retail and the WTOP Radio Station transmitter.

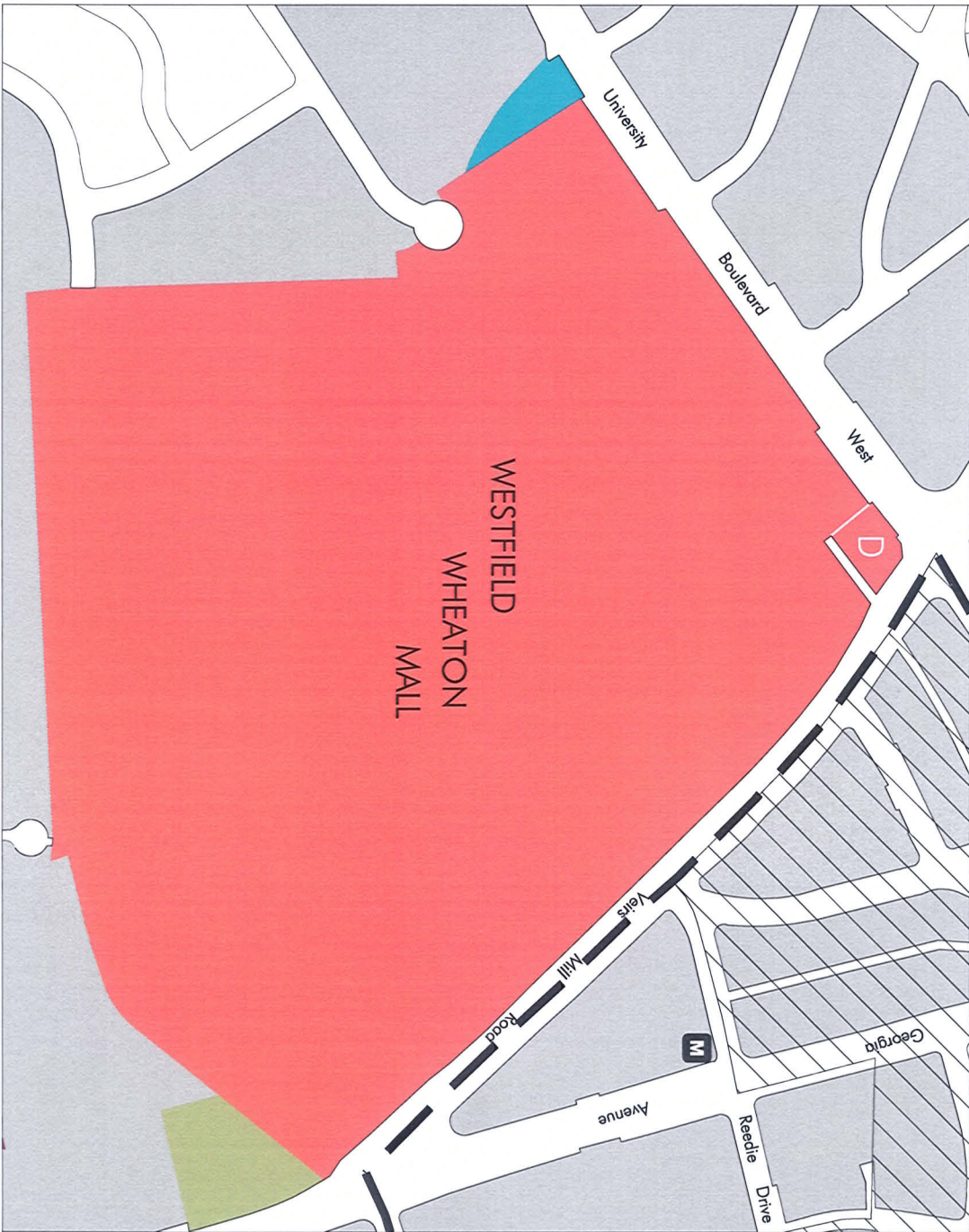
- Rezone the small-scale retail uses on the C-2 zoned portion along Amherst Avenue to CR 2.0: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 75 to encourage mixed-use development.
- Confirm the R-90 zoning on the WTOP site. Rezoning to permit townhouses or mixed-use development would be appropriate if the site is redeveloped in the future.

Block R

Block R is currently zoned R-20 and contains garden apartments.

- Rezone Block R from R-20 to CR 2.0: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 75 to encourage mixed-use residential development in the future. Redevelopment should transition to 45 feet at the edge next to the single-family houses.

Westfield District - Existing Zoning



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  CBD Boundary
-  Wheaton Retail Preservation Overlay Zone
-  TS-R
-  C-T (Maximum FAR of 0.5, maximum building height 35 feet)
-  C-2 (Maximum FAR of 2.5, maximum building height 75 feet)

45A

Westfield District - Proposed Zoning Changes



-  Wheaton Metro Station
-  CBD Boundary

45 B

Westfield District

The 76-acre Westfield Wheaton Mall is the eastern County's regional shopping mall. The main mall building is located in the center of Westfield's property and is surrounded with surface parking, some office uses, a grocery store, and other retail uses on pad sites.

The owners currently have no plans to develop this C-2 zoned property for uses other than retail. The C-2 zoning does not require site plan review, except under certain conditions, and has a maximum 1.5 of FAR. The Mall is currently built to a 0.4 FAR (excluding the office buildings along Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard). However, the frontage along Veirs Mill Road, closest to the Metro station, is an appropriate location for high-rise office, residential, hotel, and additional retail.

This district also includes the First Baptist Church of Wheaton property, at the southeast intersection of Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road. It was rezoned in January 2011 from R-60 to TS-R to build multifamily apartments. Properties adjacent to the church site are zoned commercial (C-2), residential townhouses (RT-12.5), and residential on the Stephen Knolls School Site (R-60).

A new, transit-oriented Westfield community of mid-rise office, housing, and neighborhood serving retail, with public use space and recreational facilities along the Veirs Mill Road frontage, could be integrated into Westfield's property to be compatible with nearby uses. The main mall portion of the property could be rezoned for mixed-use development as part of the zoning rewrite. Over the long term, a portion of the Westfield property along Veirs Mill Road could include residential development, which is not possible in the C-2 Zone except at a very low density. CR zoning would allow a mix of uses and requires site plan review, allowing for detailed plan review by the Planning Board

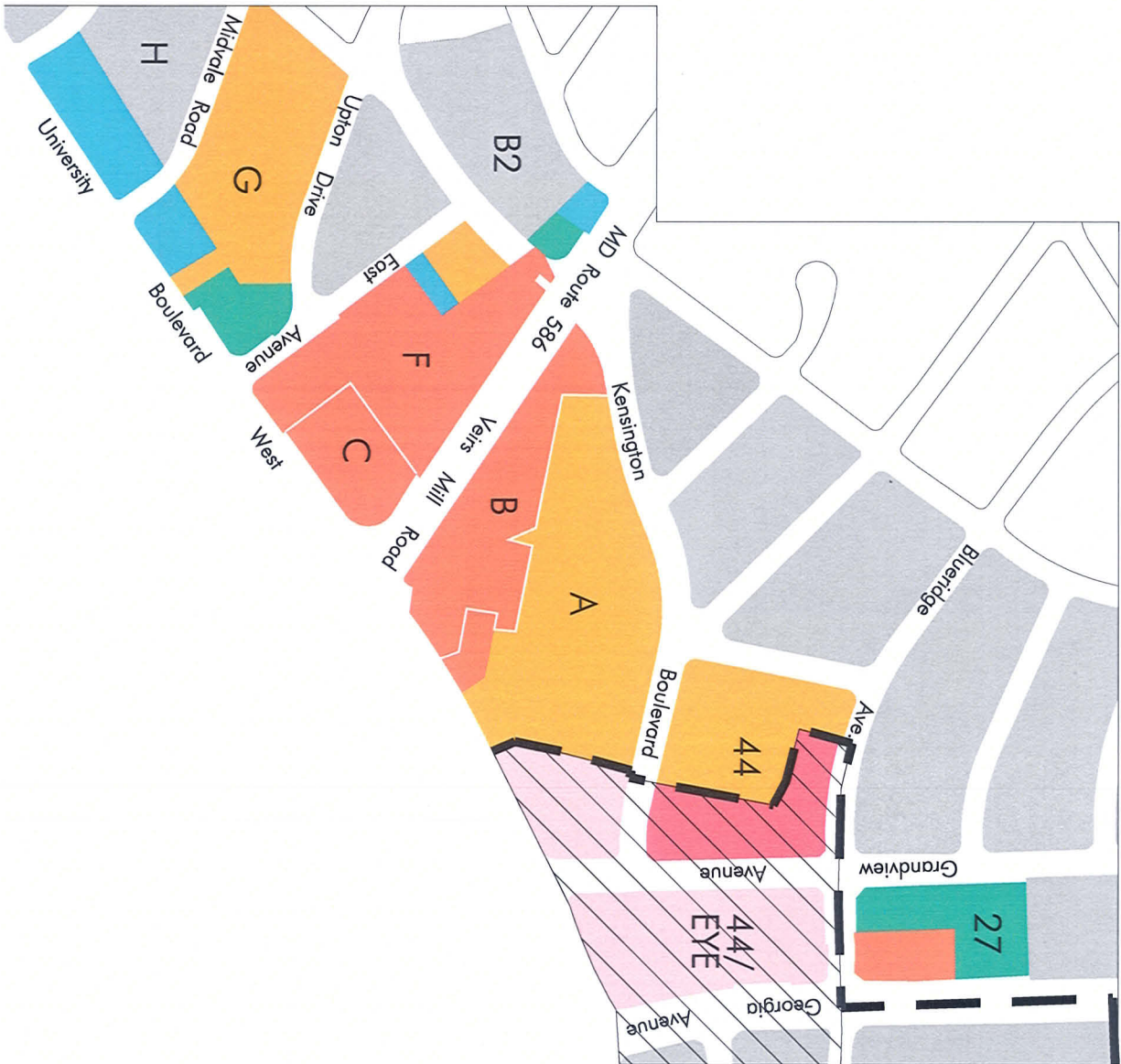
Westfield Wheaton Mall site and Block D









- Rezone the portion of the property shown on Figure 4 (parcels 8, 7, 5, 6, part of parcel 4, and a portion of parcel 10), along Veirs Mill Road, to CR 6.0: C 5.5, R 5.5, H 200, transitioning the maximum building height to 75 feet. This zoning encourages mixed-use residential and office development at the same density and height as the Core. Increased height and density in this location will encourage office and residential development and allow the Mall to be integrated into the center of the downtown.

Retain the existing green buffer along the property's southern edge between the residential community and the Mall ring road to reduce the impact of new development on adjacent residential areas and the nearby school. Provide a building height maximum of 45 feet for a depth of 200 feet from the southern property line along the ring road, to create a compatible building height transition. Confirm the existing C-2 zoning on the remainder of the site (parcels 3 and 10). Buildings of appropriate heights should also be located along University Boulevard to be compatible with surrounding uses.

- Rezone the First Baptist Church of Wheaton from TS-R to CR 4.0: C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100.

Kensington View/ Wheaton Hills District - Existing Zoning



-  CBD Boundary
-  Wheaton Retail Preservation Overlay Zone
-  R-60
-  C-T (Maximum FAR of 0.5, maximum building height 35 feet)
-  C-O (Maximum FAR of 3.0, maximum building height 97 feet)
-  C-2 (Maximum FAR of 2.5, maximum building height 75 feet)
-  CBD-1 (Maximum FAR of 3.0, maximum building height 143 feet)
-  CBD-2 (Maximum FAR of 5.0, maximum building height 200 feet)

Kensington View/ Wheaton Hills District - Proposed Zoning Changes



— CBD Boundary

Kensington View/Wheaton Hills District

This district consists of low-scale residential neighborhoods composed of post-war houses. These neighborhoods are edged with some professional offices, retail, and service uses along University Boulevard and Veirs Mill Road. The district will continue to be primarily residential with office and retail along the two major roads.

The Plan envisions two new, low to moderately scaled mixed-use developments along Veirs Mill Road on Lindsay Ford properties, flanking the western entrance to the CBD. Pedestrian connections will link these areas to the Core District and to existing neighborhoods. Developments along University Boulevard will continue to be a mix of old and new in a variety of building types and heights. The Plan encourages higher buildings at the University Boulevard intersections with Veirs Mill Road, Grandview Avenue, and Georgia Avenue. Redevelopment edging these R-60 zoned neighborhoods should be compatible with the existing low-scale character of these residential areas.

Block F

Block F contains a car dealership, retail, and residential uses. Lots 12 and 13 are currently zoned R-60, lot 11 is zoned C-T and the rest of the block is zoned C-2. The Plan recommends rezoning the property to create higher and denser mixed-use development (office or residential) near the corner of Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard.

- Rezone lots 7, 9, and 10 from C-2 to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45. Residential or professional townhouses would be more compatible with the single-family houses across East Avenue than commercial uses.
- Rezone lot 11 from C-T to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45. Residential or professional townhouses would be more compatible with the single-family houses across East Avenue than commercial uses.
- Rezone lots 12 and 13 from R-60 to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45. Residential or professional townhouse development would be more compatible with the single-family houses across East Avenue than commercial uses.
- Rezone Parcel 14 and Lot 16 from C-2 to CR 2.0: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 75.
- Rezone the Lindsay Ford dealership property, parcel 282, from C-2 to CR 3.0: C 2.5, R 2.5, H 100 to encourage mixed-use residential development.
- The 100-foot maximum building height along Lindsay Ford's Veirs Mill Road parcel should transition to the maximum permitted building height of 45 feet for the proposed CRN Zone along East Avenue. If the Lindsey Ford properties are developed as one development under the optional method, low-scale residential uses should be placed along East Avenue, with larger commercial uses and mixed-use development along Veirs Mill Road.

Block C

- Rezone the Ambassador Building site (lot 2) and Parcel 1 from C-2 to CR 5.0: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 130 to provide a better transition and relationship to the Core District's 6 FAR and maximum building height of 250 feet. This maximum height will allow a landmark structure at the intersection.

Block B

Block B contains surface parking, office, and retail uses. The western edge of the block is owned by Lindsay Ford and used to park cars.

- Rezone parcels 3, 4, 5, and 6 mid-block along Veirs Mill Road from C-2 to CR 3.0: C 2.5, R 2.5, H 100 to encourage assemblage for a mixed-use residential development.
- Rezone parcel 1 from C-2 to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45 as a transition to the single-family residential neighborhood to the north.
- Rezone parcels C, E, 10 and 13, lot 14, and outlot B from C-2 to CR 5.0: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 130. These lots are located across Veirs Mill Road from the Ambassador Building site at the intersection of Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard and across from Core District Block E. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the zoning on the Ambassador Building site at this important location and encourages assemblage for an office or residential mixed-use development with ground floor retail.

Block A

- The eastern edge of the block along Grandview Avenue contains a single property with a three-story office building and surface parking. Rezone parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 21, 22, and 23, from CBD-2 to CR 5.0: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 130 to encourage assemblage for mixed-use residential or office development. The proposed 130-foot building height makes this site consistent with the recommended building height along the northern side of University Boulevard between Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road.
- Rezone parcel N203, located along Kensington Boulevard, from R-60 to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45.
- Rezone lot 24 along Veirs Mill Road from C-2 to CR 5: C 4.5 R 4.5 H 130. This lot is part of a group of lots located across Veirs Mill Road from the Ambassador Building site at the intersection of Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard and Core District Block E. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the proposed rezoning of adjoining parcels (C, E, 10, and 13, lot 14, and lot b) in Block B described above.
- Rezone parcel 11 from R-60 to CR 3.0: C 2.5, R 2.5, H 100 for a mixed-use residential development as part of a potential assemblage of Parcels 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Block B described above.

Block 44

This block contains a WSSC water tank and the Grandview townhouse development. The townhouses are currently zoned CBD-1. The Plan does not propose any changes to the R-60 zoned WSSC property.

- Rezone the CBD-1 zoned properties in Block 44 to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45 to reflect the current residential use and preserve compatibility with surrounding residential uses.

Block 44/EYE

Block 44/EYE is zoned CBD-2 and contains retail and restaurant uses and a volunteer fire and rescue station that is scheduled for relocation to the southeast corner of Georgia and Arcola Avenues.

- Rezone the block from the CBD-2 to CR 5.0: C 4.5, R 4.5, H 130. The highest buildings on this block should be located along Georgia Avenue and University Boulevard. Any new development along Grandview Avenue should transition in height to be compatible with townhouses across the street.

Block 27

The northern portion of the block is zoned R-60; the southern portion is zoned C-O and C-2. An office building is on the C-O zoned lot, and a tire store and auto repair workshop are on the C-2 lot.

- Confirm the R-60 zoning on the northern portion of Block 27.
- Rezone the C-O and C-2 parcels to CR 3.0: C 2.5, R 2.5, H 75, to encourage mixed-use development. Any new development on the CR zoned property should transition in height to the existing single-family houses to the north and across Grandview Avenue.

Blocks H, G, and B2

These blocks contain mostly single-family houses. Blocks H and G have frontage along University Boulevard while Block B2 has a small frontage on Veirs Mill Road. The University Boulevard frontage of Blocks H and G is zoned C-T, except one property on Block G zoned R-60 and the corner lots on Block G zoned C-O. Some of the existing structures along University Boulevard contain commercial uses. Three of the lots next to Valley View Avenue are vacant. All of these are small lots and back onto houses in the adjacent single-family neighborhood.

While some of the existing houses are large enough for office conversion, a number of properties would be better redeveloped as new low-intensity office development. Residential or professional office townhouses would be more compatible with the adjoining single-family properties on all of these transitional sites. Where appropriate, new, low-intensity development is encouraged to buffer existing single-family residences from adverse effects associated with major traffic arteries.

- Rezone parcels 1 and 7, and lots 23 and 22, on Block H and lots 6, 7, and 8 on Block G from C-T to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45.
- Rezone parcel 5 on Block G from R-60 to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45.
- Rezone lots 29 and 28, and parcels 3 and 4 on Block G from C-O to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45.
- Rezone lots 2 and 9 on Block B2 from C-O and C-T to CRN 1.5: C 0.5, R 1.5, H 45.

Existing Neighborhoods Surrounding the Districts

Wheaton has a substantial and varied residential base outside of its commercial areas, including townhouses and garden apartments. Most of the single-family neighborhoods are small, post-war houses, placing them among the older and smaller stock in the County. Some infill townhouses have been added over the last 20 years (856 units).

The 1990 Plan recommended PD and RT zones, and most of the properties have developed accordingly, with the exception of the Stephen Knolls School site. Redevelopment in these neighborhoods under existing zoning should blend with existing conditions and should not introduce mixed-use zoning.

- Confirm the existing R-60, R-20, and all RT and PD Zones.

- Single-family houses along Georgia Avenue north of Blueridge Avenue are suitable for offices by special exception, but driveways and parking should not be enlarged and the structures should retain a residential character.
- Houses located within the existing residential neighborhoods surrounding Wheaton's downtown should be considered for accessory apartments.

Mobility

Wheaton's strong transportation network will continue to serve it well through this Plan's horizon. The present urban street system is a modified grid crossed by three major State highways: Georgia Avenue (MD 97), University Boulevard (MD 193), and Veirs Mill Road (MD 586).

Each of these major highways has a substantial multi-modal function connecting Wheaton to other activity centers in the County and the region. The Metrorail Red Line runs along the Georgia Avenue corridor, providing heavy rail service south to Silver Spring and the District of Columbia. The Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard corridors form one of the County's most heavily used east-west transit routes between Rockville and Takoma/Langley Crossroads and the University of Maryland – College Park.

This Plan will make slight modifications to the significant transportation infrastructure investment already existing in Wheaton to improve local connectivity and the pedestrian environment.

Within Wheaton, the three major highways should be treated as urban boulevards that will serve as lively arteries for the Plan area. The balance of Wheaton's street network will comprise Business Streets and Primary Residential Streets as designated in Table 2, supported by local streets and alleys. Bicycles will be accommodated on all streets with a network of on-road lanes and routes that connect adjacent neighborhoods to transit and the CBD. Off-road shared use paths will connect to the Rock Creek and Sligo Creek stream valley park trail systems.

The road and pedestrian/bike networks will need to be modified to provide a mobility level that will both support and complement planned development. These improvements will increase connections within and between the Plan area and adjacent neighborhoods.

Approach and Network Integrity

The Plan recommends increasing connectivity for all users of the road and pedestrian/bike network. Carefully layering networks of auto, transit, bike, and pedestrian facilities will improve mobility and access in the CBD, where design, environmental, and community objectives require a multifaceted approach to placemaking.

In Wheaton, land use and transportation infrastructure is forecasted to be in balance as measured by the Subdivision Staging Policy's Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR) test. PAMR forecasts the Relative Arterial Mobility (RAM) in the Kensington/Wheaton Policy Area to be 0.42, if the development under this Plan reaches the level of development described in the Transportation Appendix. This RAM measure is better than the minimum 0.40 standard for the Kensington/Wheaton Policy Area. Forecasted Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) standards can also be achieved within the Plan's horizon.

The Street Network

- Redesign Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard, and Veirs Mill Road as urban boulevards with enhanced medians and crosswalks, street trees, and street-oriented retail where appropriate.

- Designate Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and University Boulevard west of Amherst Avenue as 120-foot rights-of-way with six lanes. These rights-of-ways are intended to accommodate the expected development of a network of express bus routes in designated lanes, an important element of the County's transportation planning.
- Designate University Boulevard east of Amherst Avenue as a 150-foot right-of-way to accommodate express bus routes and the master planned dual bikeway (DB-5).
- Provide on-street parking on as many streets as possible to serve adjacent land uses, separate pedestrians from traffic, and contribute to slower target speeds.
- Reduce target speeds to 30 miles per hour on the major highways and 25 miles per hour for all other Plan area roadways to improve pedestrian safety and enhance walkability in the downtown.
- Consider roundabouts, built to County street standards, to control traffic and serve as entry features on residential streets such as along Amherst Avenue at Prichard Road and Blueridge Avenue.
- Complete missing links in the existing grid of Business and Primary Residential Streets.
 - Retain the right-of-way for the unbuilt portion of Kensington Boulevard between East Avenue and Veirs Mill Road. Use of the right-of-way should be determined during development review for any redevelopment of the adjacent Lindsay property. The right-of-way may be used for a bicycle or pedestrian connection if it is determined that a street is not needed or feasible at this location. Regardless of how the right-of-way is used, the impact on residential properties should be minimized and any additional right-of-way required should be from the east side of East Avenue.
- Implement local street connections consistent with the subdivision regulations and urban design guidelines, with specific alignment and features to be determined during the development review process. These streets could be either public or private and include either service access, local vehicular circulation, or both.
- Realign and extend Ennalls Avenue and extend Price Avenue to create a new east-west street link (Map 19 and Table 2). There are four components of this realignment and extension.
 - Extend Ennalls Avenue west from its current terminus at Veirs Mill Road and connect with the Wheaton Mall Ring Road. This extension should be a private street. The construction of this segment of Ennalls Avenue should not interfere with existing structures and their footprints.
 - Realign Ennalls Avenue between Grandview Avenue and Georgia Avenue to meet Price Avenue at its intersection with Georgia Avenue.
 - Abandon the existing alignment of Ennalls Avenue between Grandview Avenue and Georgia Avenue. This can be done concurrently with the realignment of Ennalls Avenue.
 - Extend Price Avenue east from its current terminus at Fern Street to Amherst Avenue.

These extensions and realignments will enhance circulation within the CBD, provide better access from the neighborhood into the CBD, and minimize the need to travel on State highways to move within the CBD. The alignment of each component of this new street network should be determined during the development review process. Each segment has unique considerations that should be addressed at the time of development.

- The realignment may impact the redevelopment of properties between Grandview Avenue and Georgia Avenue, but will require a complete public process whereby community and property owner concerns can be addressed. Should property owners not be able to obtain a building permit due to the location of this proposed roadway, an appeals process is available for owners to take concerns to the County Board of Appeals.
 - The extension of Price Avenue between Fern Street and Amherst Avenue should be done concurrently with redevelopment of County Parking Garage 45. Currently, there are no plans to redevelop this parking structure, so this portion of the Ennalls-Price road connection may be the last to be developed.
- Upton Drive and East Avenue should be expanded to meet 70-foot street standards when warranted by redevelopment of parcels between Upton Drive/East Avenue and Veirs Mill Road, or by a significant increase in school-related traffic on Upton Drive. Additional right-of-way necessary to support new development on the northeast side of Upton Drive and East Avenue should be acquired while minimizing effects on residential properties. Street design should be flexible enough to support redevelopment of commercial properties along these blocks.

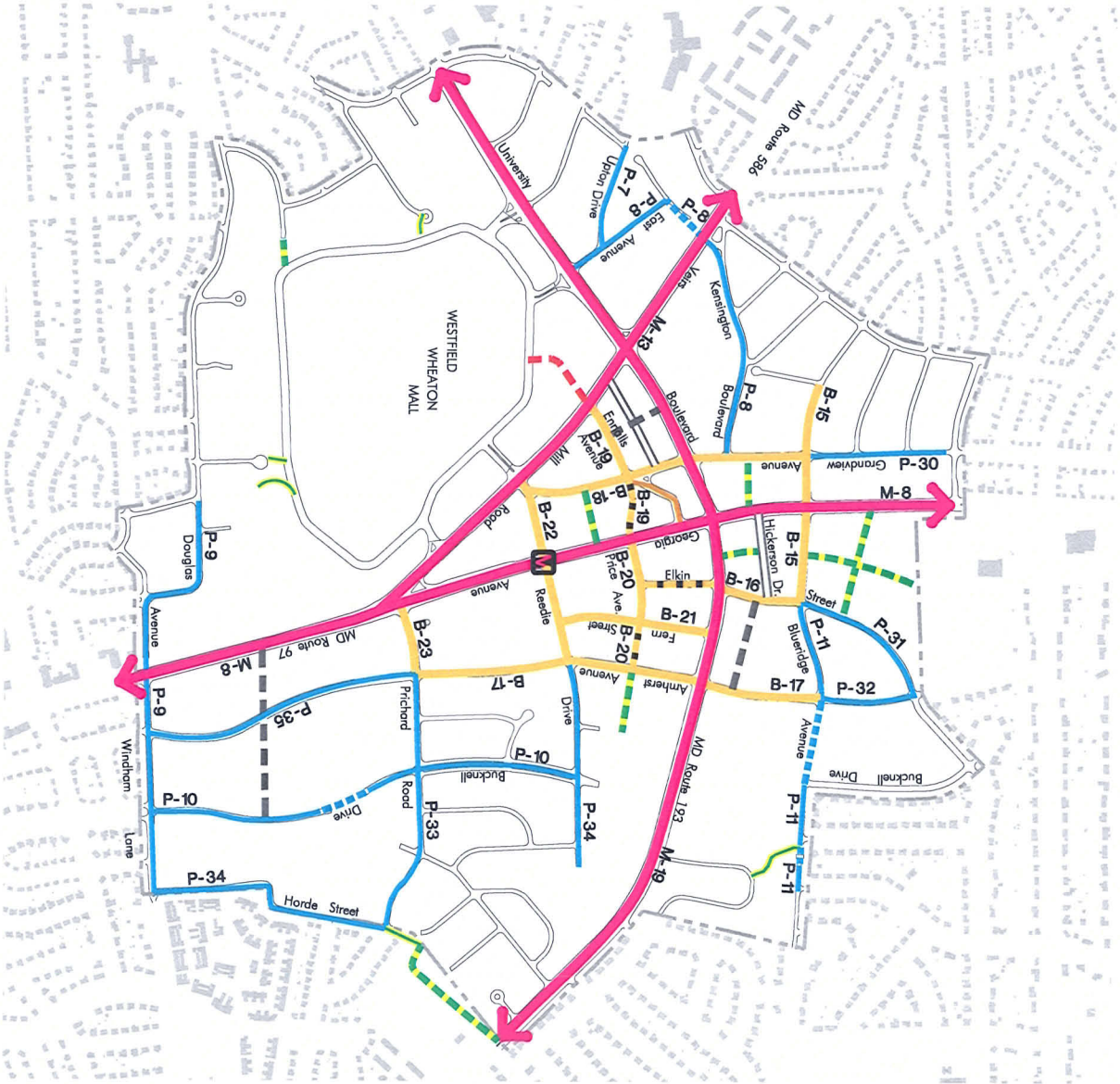
Pedestrian Circulation

The Plan area benefits from a hierarchy of quiet, residential streets, business streets, and larger State highways. Providing improved pedestrian connections within and between the varying land uses aids overall mobility and access while also helping to reinforce the human scale of Wheaton.

- Provide through-block pedestrian connections where feasible. Large blocks are particularly suitable for new pedestrian connections, for example, the block bounded by Veirs Mill Road, East Avenue, and University Boulevard. At the time of redevelopment, projects on these larger blocks should provide for adequate pedestrian circulation, bike connections, and neighborhood compatibility. The alignment and design of pedestrian connections should be determined during the development review process.
- Certain local streets in the CBD are identified for improved connectivity and access and for their place-making potential. These streets should include features that communicate slower vehicle speeds such as special paving, plantings, and flush curbs with bollards. Innovative stormwater management features should also be included in their design. The width of adjacent sidewalks should accommodate outdoor dining and retail activity. The streets should also be designed to be closed to vehicular traffic to accommodate open air markets, outdoor dining, and event space without significantly affecting circulation and traffic flow in the immediate area. These streets include:
 - Hickerson Drive between Georgia Avenue and Elkin Street
 - Elkin Street between Price Avenue and University Boulevard.
- Hickerson Drive may be abandoned if the resulting private street connection provides flexibility in creating a vibrant retail corridor with enhanced pedestrian and vehicular circulation within the Blueridge District. The abandonment of Hickerson Drive should be considered only at the time of development of the blocks to the north and south and between Georgia Avenue and Elkin Street. A through block connection should be maintained during and after redevelopment of the adjacent properties.

- The disconnected street segments that currently serve as bicycle and pedestrian links should be enhanced to minimum eight-foot pavement widths and clearly marked. Segments suitable for modification include:
 - Hillsdale Drive between Midvale Road and Valley View Avenue
 - Blueridge Avenue between Taber Street and Nairn Road
 - Horde Street between Prichard Road and Dayton Street at Wheaton Forest Local Park.

Existing and Proposed Street and Pedestrian Network



M Wheaton Metro Station

Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary

Street Classifications

- Major Highway Existing
- Residential Primary Existing
- Residential Primary Proposed
- Business Existing
- Business Proposed (new designation)
- Business Proposed
- Abandon
- Local Street Existing *
- Local Street Proposed *
- Private Street Proposed *

Pedestrian Connections

- Existing *
- Proposed *

* Local street and pedestrian connections are not designated in the Master Plan of Highways. Proposed local street and pedestrian rights-of-way, and alignment to be determined during the development review process. These connections could be public or private.

0 1000 ft



Table 2 Wheaton Roadways

Master Planned Streets	From	To	Master Plan of Highways No.	Notes	Minimum Right-of-Way (Feet) ¹	Number of Through Travel Lanes ²	Target Speed	Design Standard ³
Major Highways								
Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Windham Ln.	Dawson Ave.	M-8	SW/Inside Lane/Parking	120	6, Divided	30	Mod. 2008.01
University Boulevard (MD 193)	Hillisdale/Drumm Amherst Ave	Amherst Ave. E. Sector Plan Boundary	M-19 M-19	Parking/Ped Realm Bike Path/Buffer	120 150	6, Divided 6, Divided	30 30	Mod. 2008.01 Mod. 2008.02
Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)	College View Dr	Georgia Avenue	M-13	SW/Inside Lane/Parking	120	6, Divided ⁴	30	Mod. 2008.01
Business Streets								
Amherst Avenue	Prichard Rd	Blueridge Ave	B-17	Bike Lanes, SW width	80	2	25	2004.22/2005.02
Blueridge Avenue	Wheaton Hills Dr	Elkin St	B-15		70	2	25	2005.02
Elkin Street	Price Ave	Blueridge Ave	B-16		70	2	25	2005.02
Ennalls Avenue	Mall Ring Rd	Georgia Ave	B-19	(Proposed Road)	70	2	25	2005.02
Grandview Avenue	Reedie Dr	Blueridge Ave	B-18		70	2	25	2005.02
Fern Street	Reedie Dr	University Blvd	B-21		70	2	25	2005.02
Price Avenue	Georgia Ave	Amherst Ave	B-20		70	2	25	2005.02
Prichard Road	Georgia Ave	Amherst Ave	B-23		70	2	25	2005.02
Reedie Drive	Veirs Mill Rd	Georgia Ave	B-22		70	2	25	2005.02
	Georgia Ave	Amherst Ave	B-22	Bike Lanes, SW width	70	3	25	Mod. 2004.23
Residential Primary Streets								
Amherst Avenue	Windham Ln	Prichard Rd	P-35		84	2	25	2003.09
	Blueridge Ave	Elkin St	P-32		84	2	25	2003.09
Blueridge Avenue	Elkin St	Nain Farmhouse Ct	P-11		70	2	25	2003.12
Bucknell Drive	Windham Ln	Prichard Rd	P-10	None	70	2	25	2003.12
	Prichard Rd	Reedie Dr	P-10	Bike Lane ROW as Median	84	2	25	Mod. 2003.09
East Avenue	Kensington Blvd	University Blvd	P-8		50	2	25	Mod. 2003.08
Elkin Street	Blueridge Ave	Amherst Ave	P-31		70	2	25	2003.12
Grandview Avenue	Blueridge Ave	Dawson Ave	P-30		70	2	25	2003.12
Horde Street	Windham Ln	Prichard Rd	P-34	None	60	2	25	2002.02
Kensington Boulevard	East Ave	Grandview Ave	P-8		70	2	25	2003.12
Prichard Road	Amherst Ave	Horde St	P-33	None	70	2	25	2003.12
Reedie Drive	Amherst Ave	Dodson Ln	P-34		70	2	25	2003.12
Upton Drive	Hillisdale Dr	East Ave	P-7		50	2	25	Mod. 2003.08
Windham Lane/Douglas Avenue	St. Margaret's Wy	Horde St	P-9	None	70	2	25	2003.12

February 2011

¹ Reflects minimum right-of-way, may not include turning, parking, acceleration, deceleration, or other auxiliary lanes. Rights-of-way are measured from centerline.
² The recommended number of lanes refers to the number of planned through travel lanes for each segment.
³ Reflects the most representative roadway cross-section.
⁴ The outside lanes of Veirs Mill Road are recommended for use as bus only lanes north of Reedie Drive.

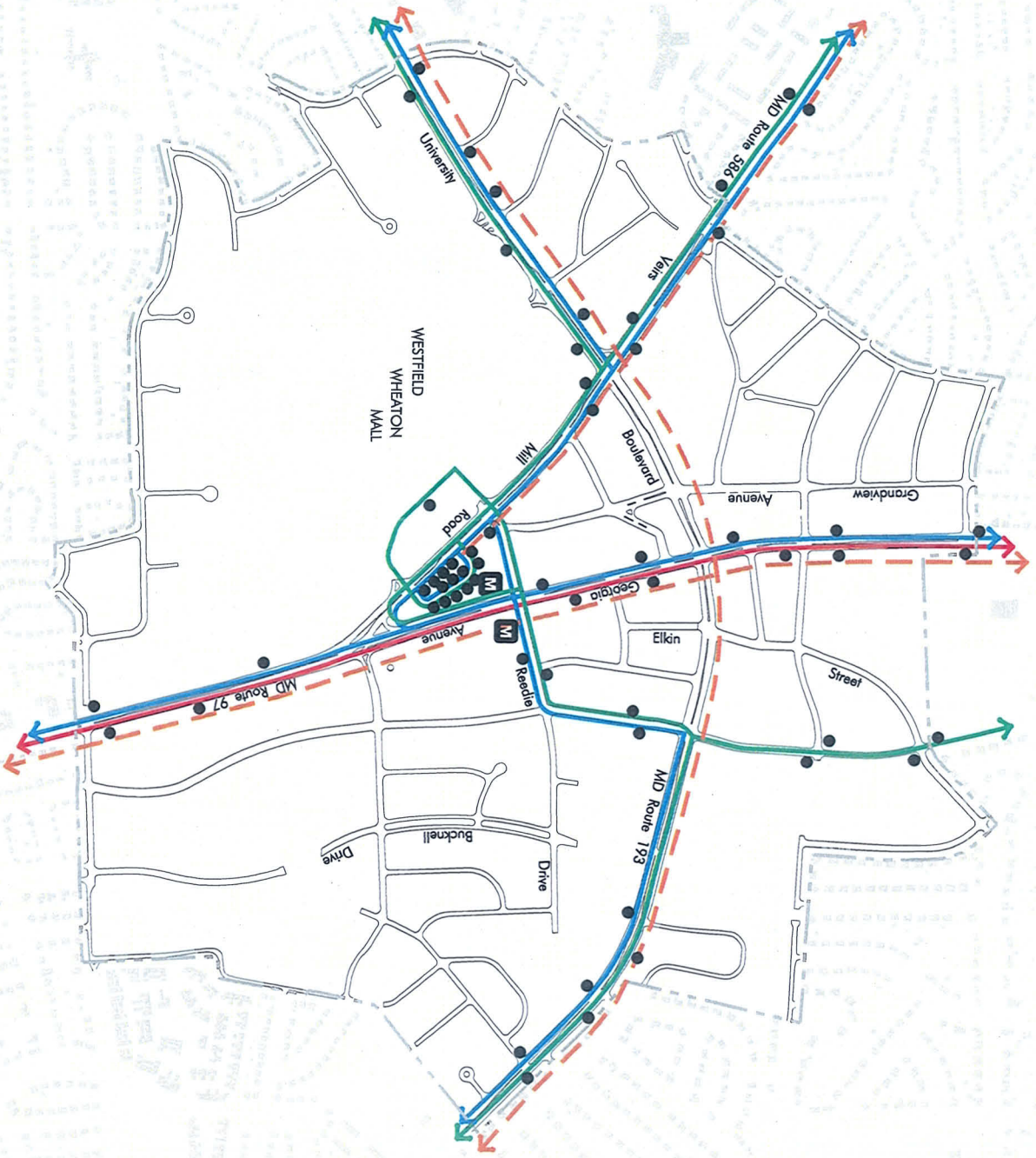
Bikeway Network








- Improve connectivity from the Plan area to Wheaton Regional Park, Rock Creek Park, and Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park and Trail including enhanced signage on streets that lead to trail connectors as well as on the trails themselves. Key connections include:
 - Windham Lane from Amherst Avenue to the Sligo Creek Trail
 - Blueridge Avenue from Amherst Avenue to the Sligo Creek Trail and Wheaton Regional Park
 - Upton and East Avenues to park facilities in western Wheaton.
- Request the State to designate the Plan area as a Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area. This designation will facilitate funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements on State roads.
- Include bicycle lanes along Amherst Avenue and the portion of University Boulevard east of Amherst to improve circulation and accommodate long-distance connections.
- Facilitate on-road bicycle travel for short trips using slower target speeds and bicycle-compatible designs per the County's Road Code.
- Develop a bicycle station with secure bicycle parking and related amenities at the Wheaton Metro Station.

Table 3 Countywide and Local Bikeways

Route Number	Street	From	To	Facility Type
BL-37	Amherst Avenue	Windham Ln	Arcola Ave	Bike Lanes
DB-5	University Boulevard	Amherst Ave	Sector Plan Boundary	Dual Bikeway: Shared Use Path-Bike Lanes
LB-1	East Avenue	Upton Dr	Mall Ring Rd	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-1	Upton Drive	Hillsdale Dr	East Ave	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-2	McComas Ave/Douglas Ave	Peregoy Dr	Amherst Ave	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-3	Wheaton Mall Ring Road	Faulkner Pl	Reedie Dr entrance	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-4	Blueridge Avenue	Galt Ave	Amherst Ave	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-5	Valley View/Mall Ring Road	Hillsdale Dr	SR-25	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-6	Prichard Rd/Horde St	Amherst Ave	Windham Ln	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-7	Hillsdale/Kensington/Galt	Oak Dr	Fenimore Rd/SR-21	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-8	Kensington Boulevard	Veirs Mill Rd	Fenimore Rd/SR-21	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-9	Elkin Street	Amherst Ave	Sector Plan Boundary	Signed Shared Roadway
LB-10	Wheaton Forest Park	Horde Street	University Blvd	Shared Use Path
SP-77	Blueridge Avenue	Amherst Ave	Sector Plan Boundary	Shared Use Path
SR-19	Georgia Avenue	Windham Ln	Reedie Dr	Signed Shared Roadway
SR-20	Grandview Avenue	Reedie Dr	Dawson Ave	Signed Shared Roadway
SR-21	Fenimore Road	Galt Ave	Grandview Ave	Signed Shared Roadway
SR-21	Galt Avenue	Fenimore Rd	Dawson Ave	Signed Shared Roadway
SR-25	Torrance Court	Douglas Ave	Mall Ring Rd	Signed Shared Roadway
SR-26	Wheaton Mall Ring Road	Torrance Ct	Reedie Dr entrance	Signed Shared Roadway
SR-27	Reedie Drive	Mall Ring Rd	Amherst Ave	Signed Shared Roadway
SR-64	Windham Lane	Amherst Ave	Horde St	Signed Shared Roadway
SR-65	Veirs Mill Road	Georgia Ave	Kensington Blvd	Signed Shared Roadway

Existing and Proposed Transit Service



-  Metro Station Entrance
-  Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
-  Ride On
-  WMATA
-  Bus Stops
-  Metro Red Line
-  Bus Rapid Transit (Proposed)



Transit

Transit is an integral component of Wheaton’s mobility system, both today and tomorrow. The Plan’s vision is built on Metrorail, future bus rapid transit (BRT), and local bus service. Wheaton’s crossroads setting requires transit service designed to accommodate trip origins, destinations, and connections among types of service. As a result, the Plan supports development and actions that raise the visibility of transit while also improving the area’s already high level of service.

- High quality (frequent, limited stop, low-floor) bus rapid transit on Veirs Mill Road should be developed as part of a larger BRT network to better connect Wheaton with Rockville and other parts of the County. Improved transit connections to Takoma/Langley Crossroads via University Boulevard are also envisioned beyond the Plan’s eastern boundary. Other BRT corridors may be recommended following the completion of a Countywide Bus Rapid Transit Study underway. The study’s recommendations should be incorporated into the Wheaton transit network as appropriate. These initiatives will improve bus travel times between major activity centers.
- Provide convenient and safe intermodal connections by ensuring that bus bays, enhanced bus stop amenities, crosswalks, and other supporting facilities are well located and sufficient in number, either as stand-alone facilities or as part of redevelopment initiatives. This Plan does not envision new bus transfer facilities outside the existing Metrorail station, but recognizes that the County and WMATA will need to coordinate as redevelopment proposals are considered.
- Project planning should recognize the Metrorail station as the focus of Wheaton’s transportation infrastructure. Providing easy and safe multi-modal access to and from the station, and incorporating features that reinforce the station area as a transit place, are important parts of the Plan vision.

Travel Demand Management

- Establish a 30 percent non-auto driver mode share goal for employees in the Plan area based on the area’s transit service and connectivity opportunities.

Mode Share Goals

Proposed mode share targets for employees working in Wheaton are based on analysis of observed travel behaviors in other County activity centers with a high quality of transit service. The Plan goals for NADMS (Table 4) 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 urban areas that tend to be more walkable, with a higher level of transit service and a mix of uses.

Table 4 NADMS Goals for Selected Planning Areas

Area	Master Plan Goal
Bethesda	37%
Germantown	25%
Silver Spring	50%
Wheaton	30%
White Flint	50%

Wheaton’s location near the edge of the County’s urban ring communities is one constraint that results in an NADMS that is below that of Bethesda and Silver Spring—areas with more density. Another constraint for Wheaton is its employment base, characterized by a high percentage of retail jobs and lower office employment. Higher office employment frequently correlates with a high NADMS because office employees typically commute during peak hours, when transit service is operating at maximum frequency and capacity.

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Transportation planners use Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS) to describe the percent of work trips via transit (bus or rail), walking, biking, or carpooling during the peak travel period of a typical weekday.

High NADMS figures indicate numerous transit options and good accommodations for pedestrians and/or cyclists.

Urban areas typically have a high NADMS while rural areas often have a low NADMS. The Plan’s goal for Wheaton is 30 percent, based on a range of NADMS figures from urban Silver Spring (50 percent) to more suburban Germantown (25 percent).

Transit use by residents (journey-to-work data), as opposed to transit use by employees working in Wheaton, 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. In the long term, transit mode share might decrease somewhat, but be replaced by a higher walk and bike mode share.

Two of the Plan area’s characteristics contribute to reducing single-occupant auto use.

- Wheaton is served by a robust transit system including a Metrorail station and several bus lines. Bus Rapid Transit is under consideration on Veirs Mill Road and University Boulevard within the Plan’s horizon.
- A large portion of the planned growth in Wheaton will likely be residential, which typically has lower trip generation rates than other types of development. Even though Wheaton is expected to expand its current office and commercial base, it is not envisioned to be a major new office hub.

Parking Management

The Plan discourages land dedicated to parking. Development plans should reflect shared parking strategies—preferably using structured parking compatible in size and design with both the associated uses and the adjacent area.

The Plan proposes leveraging the County’s ownership of properties currently used for public parking lots to attract mixed-use development that will include public parking structures. The proposed CR Zones facilitate the provision of publicly available parking, and the County is investigating alternative parking management schemes to promote the most effective use of Parking Lot District resources.

- Encourage a balance of short- and long-term on-street parking within the CBD.

- Retain some convenient parking for the Metro station, but devote primary efforts to increasing the percentage of Metrorail passengers walking, using the bus, or riding bicycles to and from the station.

Environment

Natural Systems

Wheaton will grow greener through redevelopment by creating a sustainable community that conserves energy and uses roofs and green spaces to filter stormwater and purify air. The following recommendations focus on increasing livability by integrating natural features into the built environment, while optimizing land use within the existing development footprint. These techniques will be partially implemented through the environmental incentives in the CR Zones. Sensitive environmental areas are protected through the *Guidelines for Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County*.

- Connect the built and natural environments by:
 - reinforcing relationships to local natural resources through visual and functional connections
 - creating green links, through plantings and signage, along Windham Lane to Sligo Creek Park and along Bluemont Avenue to Wheaton Regional Park
 - using native plants and creating habitat for appropriate urban wildlife in parks and open spaces.
- Increase tree canopy cover by:
 - identifying unused right-of-way and publicly owned land for increased plantings by the County government
 - using advanced planting techniques such as constructed soil and interconnected tree pits to increase the soil area for tree roots along new streets and sidewalks
 - incorporating trees into stormwater management and roof and terrace plantings
 - establishing a minimum of 30 percent tree canopy cover for any new surface parking in the CR Zones during the development review process.
 - retaining the existing green buffer between the Mall Ring Road and adjacent properties to reduce the impact of new development on Mall property.
- Minimize and mitigate impervious surfaces by:
 - using Environmental Site Design to reduce runoff from all impervious surfaces, including roofs, terraces, and paving
 - building new streets and retrofitting existing roads as green streets, with urban stormwater management facilities in the right-of-way
 - encouraging small properties to assemble and redevelop, to facilitate shared parking
 - protecting existing remnant streams.
- Raise awareness of water flow through increased visibility by:
 - referencing the streams that historically flowed through Wheaton in public art and water features
 - creating visible, interactive, and educational stormwater management facilities.

Energy

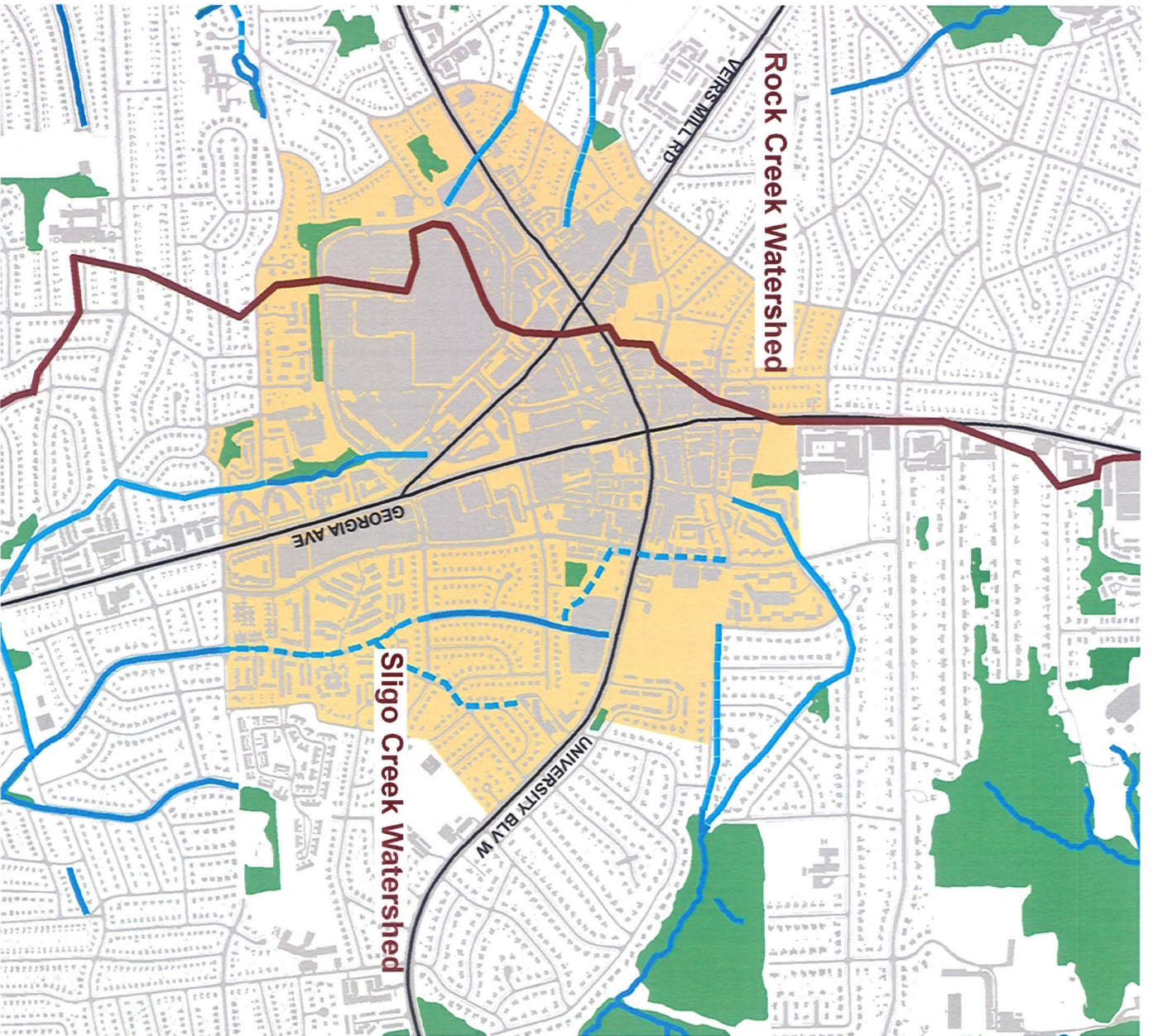
Land use can reduce energy consumption through energy efficient design and multi-modal transportation options. This Plan will minimize per capita energy use through its compact, mixed-use center and with opportunities for infill development. Mixed-use areas reduce vehicle miles travelled by

combining destinations in a walkable area. Infill development increases the efficiency of existing infrastructure, making better use of limited resources. Auto use is further reduced by options to walk, cycle, or use transit. In addition, energy use can be minimized by upgrading older buildings to be more energy efficient and requiring new buildings to meet high efficiency standards.

Carbon emissions are directly related to carbon-based energy production and consumption. Increased carbon emissions have been tied to the human contribution to climate change, thus increasing the importance of minimizing the use of non-renewable energy.

- Reduce energy consumption through site and building design techniques that:
 - meet the minimum energy efficiency standards of 17.5 percent less than the calculated baseline performance, or meet the appropriate American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) advanced energy design guidelines for new buildings
 - allow renovated buildings to meet energy efficiency standards of 10.5 percent less than the calculated baseline performance, or meet the appropriate ASHRAE advanced energy design guidelines.
- Reduce energy use by:
 - channeling sunlight for daytime lighting through building orientation, light shelves, baffles, clerestory windows, and skylights
 - integrating geothermal systems and passive solar to reduce energy consumption.
- Encourage local energy production that could be centrally located and serve many properties in the CBD. Power could be produced by solar or wind energy systems, or other alternative fuels.

Natural Systems



- Streams
- Streams in Storm Drains
- Impervious Surface
- Forests (2008)
- Wheaton Sector Plan Area
- Watershed Boundary

Water and Sewer

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) provides public water and sewer service to the Wheaton Plan area. Wheaton is served by the Rock Creek and Sligo Creek sewer systems. The *Water Resources Functional Plan* demonstrates that water supply and sewer service are generally adequate, although WSSC has identified some weak points.

As Wheaton is a high point in the County, the Plan area includes a four-tower water storage facility, and a pair of large water mains running east-west across the area. Projects here may be asked to set back their development some distance from those mains, with the specific dimension to be determined at development approval. The location of these mains may affect road improvements, and improvements to the mains may need to be included in road projects.

Some structural repair and sewer rehabilitation work will be done as part of WSSC's Sewer Basin Repair Replacement and Rehabilitation plans for Rock Creek and Sligo Creek. These plans are subject to approval by the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the work may include future capacity expansion as required by WSSC.

WSSC's sewer modeling has identified deficient capacity in some sections of the Rock Creek trunk sewer under the design storm or significant wet weather conditions (and with existing and future demographics). The Sligo Creek sewer basin, particularly in the downstream sections in Prince George's County, has deficient capacity with the potential for overflow problems under significant wet weather conditions in the near future, regardless of additional growth. Significant growth in Wheaton and other areas that drain to the Sligo Creek trunk system will require sewer system improvements.

- Require development proposals that generate over 100,000 gallons per day of wastewater (approximately 700 housing units or 3,500 employees) to undergo testing. Applicants would be required to work with WSSC to plan improvements to the conveyance system if the modeling results exceed WSSC's adopted policy.
- Require applicants to construct local sewer system capacity improvements to satisfy capacity issues identified with private development proposals. The larger improvements to the system would be done through the CIP.
- New facilities or other development projects that generate significant new sewer flows in the Anacostia basins (County basins that drain to the Anacostia No. 2 Wastewater Pumping Station and are conveyed to the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority's Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant) will depend on completion of the Anacostia Storage Facility (Project S-89.22) currently in the WSSC CIP and under design. The project has a projected completion date of December 2013.

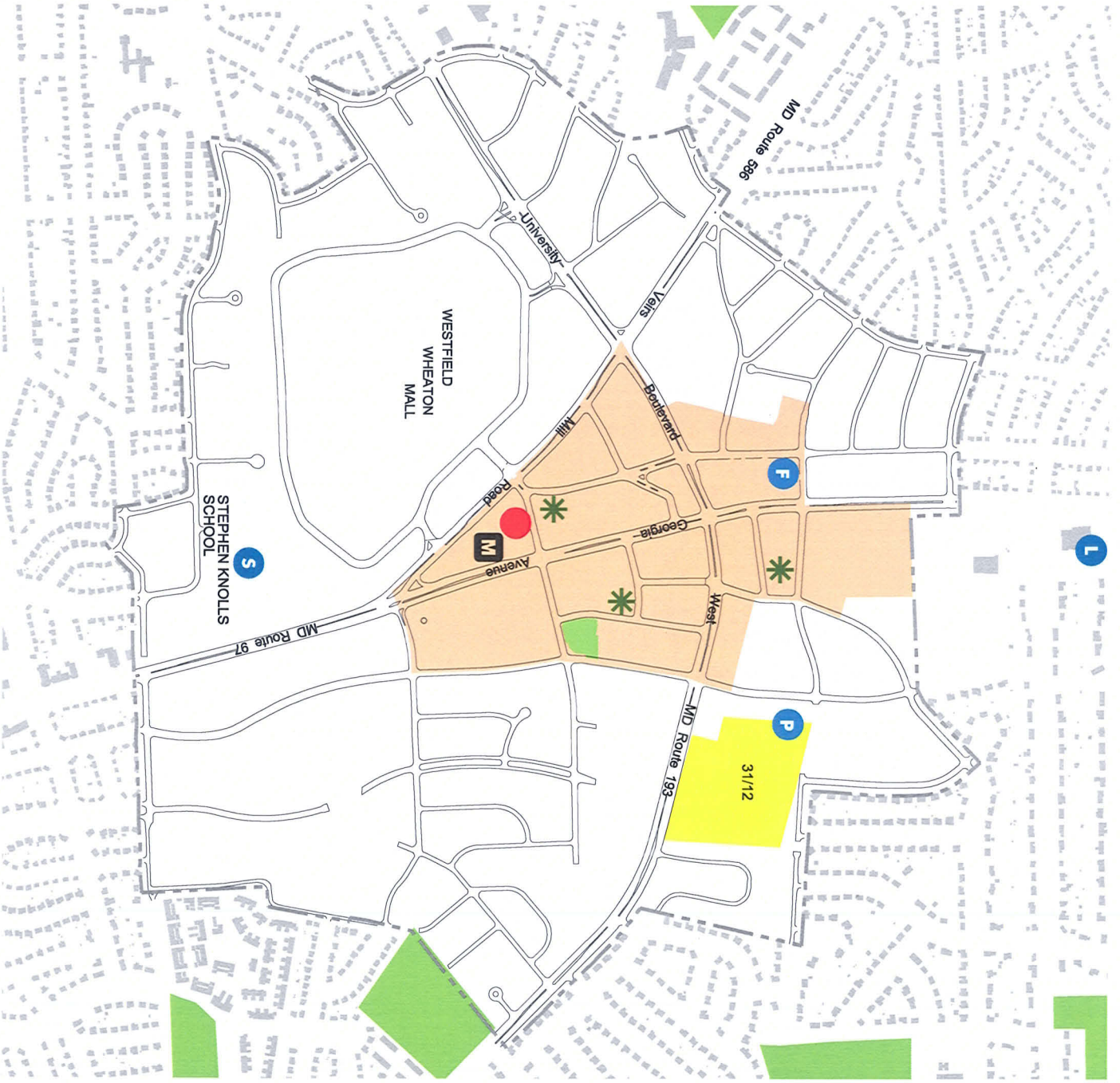
Health

A well-designed community can improve the well-being and health of those who live and work there. Wheaton's redevelopment is an opportunity to build healthful features into the community.

- Provide opportunities for active and passive recreation.
- Integrate the natural environment into the built environment.

- Promote walking and cycling on safe and complete streets.
- Support healthy eating by providing a variety of choices for fresh, local food.
- Support convenient access to healthcare for both preventive and acute care.
- Support the Safe Routes to School program to encourage walking and biking to school.
- Improve pedestrian access to shopping areas, transit, recreation, and community facilities.
- Apply the Road Code's context sensitive designs to improve pedestrian mobility and enhance street connectivity.
- Identify potential community garden and urban farm sites in new development, existing parks, public easements, right-of-ways, and schoolyards.
- Encourage all new building construction to incorporate environmental features such as green roofs, green walls, and innovative urban stormwater management. Encourage retrofits of existing development to maximize environmental features.
- Support community clinics and expanded local health care facilities.
- Develop adequate bicycling and trail amenities with connections to employment and retail centers, community facilities, and open space.

Existing Community Facilities and Proposed Open Spaces



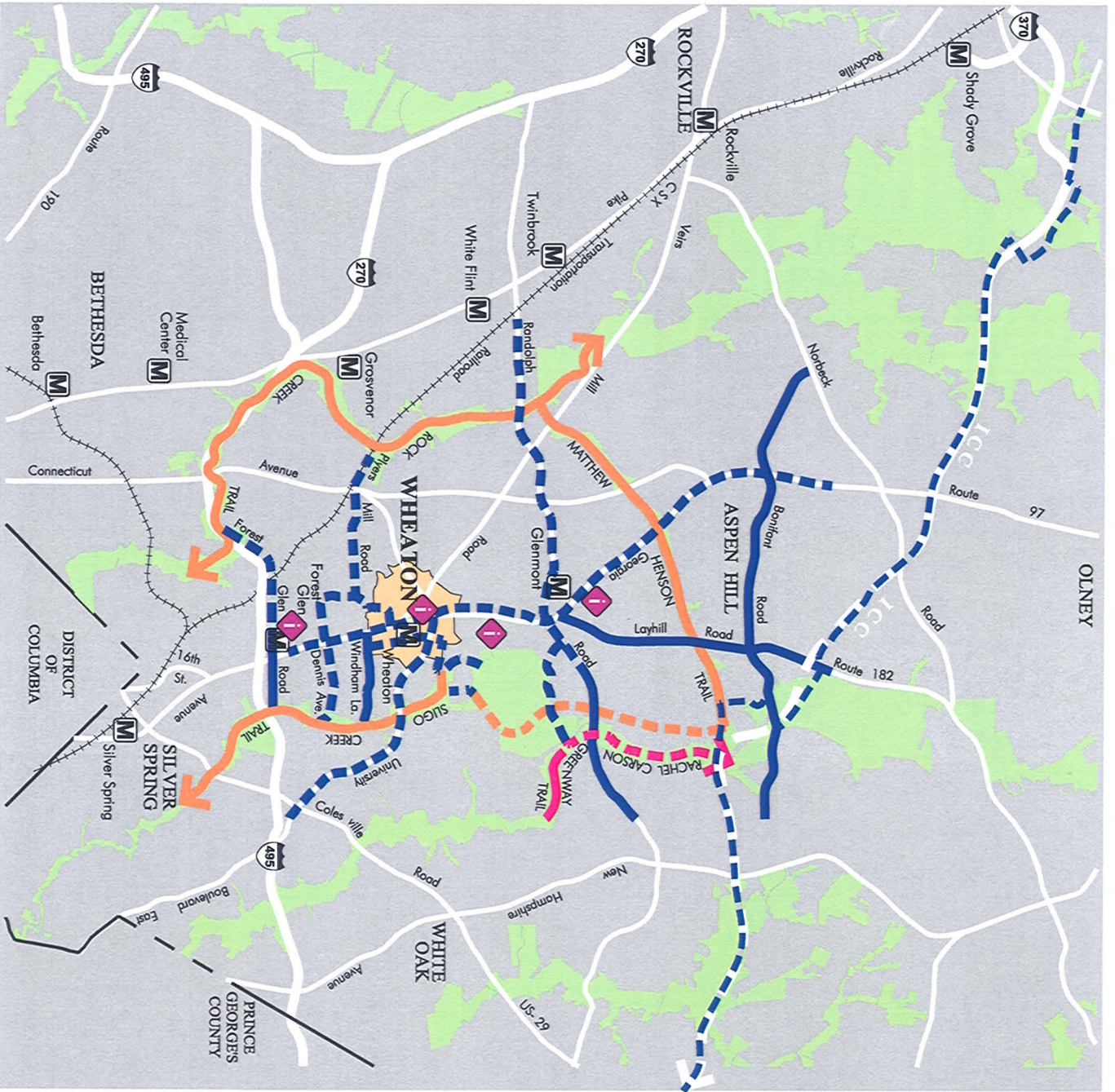
- M** Wheaton Metro Station
- Wheaton Sector Plan Boundary
- 31/12 WTOP Radio Transmitter Designated Historic Site
- Central Business District
- Existing Parkland
- * Proposed Open Space (General Location)
- S School
- L Library
- P Post Office
- F Wheaton Rescue Company 2
- Mid-County Regional Services Center



Community Facilities

The Wheaton community is served by a regional services center, public schools, a library, private hospitals and health clinics, police stations, fire and rescue facilities, family services, a regional park, and a variety of public and private recreation facilities including a pool and recreation center. The Plan's recommendations ensure that public services and facilities are safe and accessible and will meet the present and future needs of all residents.

Existing and Proposed Trails



- Wheaton Sector Plan Area
 - Parkland
 - Metro Stations
 - Information Kiosks
-
- Countywide Park Trails**
- | | |
|--|---|
| Existing | Proposed |
| Natural Surface Recreation Trails | Natural Surface Recreation Trails |
| Hard Surface Recreation Trails | Hard Surface Recreation Trails |
| Bikeways | Bikeways |
| Countywide | Countywide |

Public Park Facilities

- Provide an interconnected system of parks, trails, and public open spaces where people can gather, enjoy the outdoors, and conduct business. Wheaton’s public use space system should be designed to create connections, both physical and visual, to the parks and trails, as well as to other destinations. Spaces serving the entire planning area and beyond should be owned and operated by the Department of Parks.
- If Wheaton Veterans Urban Park is not included in a public/private redevelopment initiative, renovate it to be more visible and inviting from the surrounding streets. If it is redeveloped, the function of memorializing war veterans should be moved to a more central open space. Any redevelopment of the veterans memorial should be closely coordinated with veterans groups.
- Provide a central, civic urban park in the Core District, close to the Metro station, for public events and community-wide activities. This space should be located in the vicinity of Parking Lot 13 and become a permanent public use space.

Insert sidebar:

Wheaton Veterans Urban Park is a block east of the Metro station and has the potential for redevelopment with transit-oriented uses. If the park property is needed for revitalization purposes, the park and memorial function must be replaced, at equal or greater value, and any redevelopment proposal must include a replacement veterans memorial within the Plan area.

- Provide opportunities for urban recreation in the downtown. Because developable land is at a premium, a typical, suburban 15-acre local park is not feasible. The Department of Parks 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*. Staff anticipates that some recreation facilities will be achieved within the downtown through the *Recreation Guidelines* that guide the Planning Board in determining the adequacy of recreation facilities during the development review process.
- Improve connectivity to regional parks and trails near the CBD. Improve signage on streets that lead to trail connectors, as well as on the trails to Wheaton Regional Park and Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park, along Windham Lane to Sligo Creek Park and along Blueridge Avenue to Wheaton Regional Park.
- Improve access to Wheaton Regional Park. Provide entry features where roadways lead to the park, and wayfinding kiosks at central locations such as the Metro station and public parking facilities.

County Recreation Facilities

A variety of community recreation facilities are located adjacent to the Plan area and are accessible by public transportation. The Wheaton Community Center at Georgia Avenue between Hermitage and Parker Avenues is a multi-purpose recreational facility that serves people of all ages. Also outside the Plan area, in Wheaton Regional Park, is the Wheaton Ice Arena. It is one of two ice skating facilities owned and managed by the Parks Department.

Wheaton residents are served by three regional indoor pools, all accessible by transit: the Montgomery Athletic Club (MAC) in White Flint, the Olney Athletic Club (OAC), and the Martin Luther King Athletic Club (MLKAC) on New Hampshire Avenue. There is one outdoor pool, the Wheaton/Glenmont Pool, located minutes from the Plan area by car. There is community interest in another pool and the County Recreation Department should evaluate this possibility.

Public Schools

The Plan area is served by the Downcounty Consortium cluster including Blair, Kennedy, Wheaton, Einstein, and Northwood High Schools. Students may attend their home school or choose a signature program offered by a school in the Consortium. This arrangement has been successful in managing capacity constraints. Under current projections, the three middle schools (Colonel E. Brooke Lee, Newport Mill, and Sligo) have capacity. The elementary schools—Arcola, Glen Haven, Rock View, and Oakland Terrace—are projected to be over capacity in the near future under existing conditions.

The Stephen Knolls Elementary School is also located in the Plan area, in the Kensington View neighborhood, south of the Westfield Wheaton Mall. It provides special education programs.

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

- If this occurs, this Plan recommends reusing the County-owned former elementary school building and site used by the Crossways Community, a non-profit provider of social services. The site is adjacent to the Plan boundary north of University Boulevard, west of Veirs Mill Road on Upton Drive.

Libraries

The Wheaton Library is located at the corner of Georgia and Arcola Avenues. The library is one of the Department's busiest branches with over 600,000 items circulated each year and more than 425,000 annual visits. The library's planned renovation at its current location, possibly in combination with the Wheaton Community Center, will consider future needs including the demand for computers, Wi-Fi, language learning programs, and services to teens and the diverse Wheaton community. Existing and future library services can accommodate new development recommended in this Plan.

Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services

The Plan area is served by two fire-rescue stations—the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad (WVRS) Station 42 and the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) Station 18 (on Georgia Avenue in Glenmont). Nearby fire-rescue stations that respond into the Wheaton CBD when needed include KVFD Stations 5 (Town of Kensington), 21 (Veirs Mill Village), and 25 (Aspen Hill) as well as the Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department Stations 16 (Four Corners) and 19 (Montgomery Hills).

While existing fire suppression and heavy rescue resources serving the CBD area should remain adequate for the foreseeable future, DFRS projects that an EMS unit will likely be needed at Station 18 to serve future additional residents. By about 2014 or soon thereafter, Station 18 will be relocated in Glenmont on the west side of Georgia Avenue across the street from the Glenmont Metro Station. The

relocation is necessary due to the planned grade separation of Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road, which will utilize the existing site. Also within the early timeframe of this Plan, the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad (Station 42) will be relocated from its Grandview Avenue location in Wheaton's downtown to the corner of Georgia and Arcola Avenues. The new rescue station will be approximately 28,000 square feet and have four bays to accommodate a fleet of ambulances, medic units, and heavy rescue apparatus. The new locations of Stations 18 and 42 are necessary and will facilitate adequate response coverage throughout the Wheaton area.

Regional Services Center

The Mid-County Regional Services Center on Reddie Drive is one of the County's five regional service centers and occupies a part of the WMATA Triangle. It has served the community since 1978.

In addition to housing the offices of the Mid-County Regional Services Center and the Wheaton Redevelopment Program, it accommodates the Mid-County Citizens' Advisory Board, the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee, Conflict Resolution, Adult Behavioral Health, Women's Cancer Control, Information and Referral Services, Projecto Salud Health Clinic (Montgomery Cares), Community Police Resource Center, and the Mid-County United Ministries. The building is approaching obsolescence and the Center's managers are examining possible options for its replacement.

- Rebuild the center in the Core District as part of a public/private partnership to redevelop the WMATA block and Parking Lot 13.

Law Enforcement

The Fourth District Police Station at 2300 Randolph Road serves Wheaton, Glenmont, Aspen Hill, and some areas extending to Howard County. Originally constructed in 1958, the facility is the County's oldest police station but was recently modernized. A district satellite office, used by officers only to write reports, is located at the Westfield Wheaton Mall. According to the Police Department, no new public safety facilities would be needed for the Plan's estimated growth.

Historic Resources

WTOP Transmitter Building, 2115 University Boulevard

The WTOP Transmitter Building is a designated historic site in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The WTOP transmitter building was completed in 1940. The transmitter, historically known as WJSV, had what was considered a cutting-edge design with a distinctive sculptural quality, lack of ornamentation, and stark simplicity—hallmarks of the International Style that was virtually unknown in Montgomery County. Influence of the Art Moderne, popular in this era, is evident in curving, streamlined surfaces and the use of glass block. *Architectural Record* featured a two-page layout on the WJSV/WTOP Transmitter in 1941, one year after the radio station began operation. WTOP is one of the oldest radio stations in the country and still broadcasts from this facility, operated remotely from offices in Northwest Washington.

The environmental setting for this historic resource is 1.4 acres. The larger property is interlaced with buried copper wire mesh used for broadcasting, a potential constraint for future redevelopment.

See the Plan Appendix for more information about this historic resource and the Historic Preservation program.

- Any redevelopment of the WTOP site must conform to the requirements established in its historic designation, including preserving the 1.4-acre historic setting.

Implementation

Zoning

This Plan will be implemented incrementally through infill development, adaptive reuse, and the actions of many stakeholders. Zoning is one of the most significant implementation tools to achieve the recommendations of this Plan.

Implementing the Plan's vision is best accomplished with a mixed-use zone. Following the Plan's approval by the County Council and adoption by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) will be considered to implement the zoning recommendations. Once the SMA is approved by the County Council and adopted by the M-NCPPC, its zoning will guide all future development in the Plan area.

Public Amenities and Benefits

In the Wheaton Plan area, these projects are identified for contributions to the Amenity Fund:

- public use spaces in the vicinity of Parking Lots 13, 14, and 17
- public market
- through-block pedestrian connections
- indoor and outdoor active recreation facilities

Public Benefits in the CR Zone

The CR Zone requires that public benefits are provided under the optional method of development.

The following public benefits are priorities to meet the Plan's vision:

- advanced right-of-way dedication
- bike station on the WMATA block
- child daycare center
- dwelling unit mix
- on-site space for small businesses
- public art
- structured parking
- public use space in the vicinity of Parking Lot 13
- through-block pedestrian connections

In addition, the CR Zones allow contributions for public parks and public use space in lieu of onsite provisions.

County Capital Improvements Program and State Consolidated Transportation Program

The public sector must also invest in capital improvement projects necessary to implement the Plan's recommendations, such as roads, schools, and bike paths that cannot be provided through redevelopment.

In the Wheaton Plan area priority should be given to the following projects:

- public use spaces in the vicinity of Parking Lots 13, 14, and 17
- realigning and creating new streets
- streetscape improvements
- bus rapid transit along Veirs Mill Road

- a new elementary school, if needed
- indoor and outdoor active recreation facilities
- sewer system improvements by WSSC
- implementation of context-sensitive roadway design features
- routes and facilities in the designated bicycle and pedestrian priority areas
- public market.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO)

In general, properties that have APFO approvals prior to the adoption of a sector plan remain vested through their expiration date and are not affected by rezoning unless they modify their plans to increase the number of trips.

Urban Design Guidelines

Wheaton's Urban Design Guidelines will help implement the recommendations in the approved and adopted Sector Plan. They will provide information on how Plan recommendations and Zoning Code requirements can be met, elaborate on the area or district context for individual sites, and illustrate ideas about best practices in building and site design.