






Planning Board Briefing, Bethesda Downtown Plan

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**Description**

*Summary*

Update the Planning Board on the progress of the Bethesda Downtown Plan regarding:

- Outreach
- Plan Concepts
- Retail Planning Strategy

*Outreach*

On October 29, 2014, staff held an Online Property Owners Forum. Property owners were invited to participate in an online forum regarding the [Bethesda Downtown Plan](#). An [interactive map](#) was developed that included information about specific parcels within the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan area. This tool gave property owners the opportunity to inform and collaborate with the community about their ideas and plans for the area and their properties, and allow residents to give feedback.

This forum was a new initiative launched by Montgomery Planning to enable greater access and interactivity for the community and property owners, and increase participation in the planning process. Through the use of the online interactive map, property owners and residents were able to pinpoint properties that have been discussed so far.

To watch the video of the Property Owner’s Forum that took place on October 29, 2014, please go to [http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/bethesda\\_downtown/index.shtm](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/bethesda_downtown/index.shtm)

## *Plan Concepts*

The Concept Framework Plan, as presented on June 26, 2014, identified key elements of the vision for Downtown Bethesda:

- activity centers
- civic gathering spaces
- parks and open space
- streets
- relative development intensity.

For the past six months staff has been working on refining these elements through urban design concepts, increased connectivity and enhanced transportation options, parks and public open space network, environmental sustainability concepts, and land use and zoning implementation strategies. These refinements take into account the existing and emerging activity centers, proximity to the Red Line and Purple Line stations, heights of existing buildings and compatibility with existing residential neighborhoods.

## *Retail Planning Strategy*

As a component of the Bethesda Downtown Plan, Streetsense began work in August 2014, to complete a Retail Study that addresses:

- The relative positioning of each existing retail node within each district and over a 20 year period to identify market-supportable strategies to improve the area's retail environment;
- The phasing of retail for build-out to guide the formation of development, zoning and growth policies, and develop synergies with other land use functions;
- The strategies to improve conditions for existing retailers and eliminate any obstacles that might dissuade tenants from locating in any of the study areas.

The work to complete the Retail Planning Strategy for the Downtown Bethesda Plan included extensive field surveys, data analysis, market analysis and observation of specific conditions within each of Downtown Bethesda's sub districts.

Attachment 1: Bethesda Downtown Plan – Plan Concepts Briefing

Attachment 2: Bethesda Downtown Plan – Retail Planning Strategy