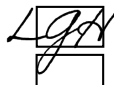






Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, Work Session #6

-  Leslye Howerton, Planner Coordinator, Area 1, leslye.howerton@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4551
-  DeOcampo, Marc, Master Planning Supervisor, Area 1, marc.deocampo@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4556
-  Robert Kronenberg, Chief, Area 1, robert.kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.2187
- Laura Shipman, Senior Planner, Urban Design, Area 1, 301.495.4558
- Matt Folden, Planner Coordinator, Transportation, Area 1, 301.495.4539
- Tina Schneider, Senior Planner, Environment, Area 1, 301.495.4506
- Brooke Farquhar, Master Planner/Supervisor, Parks Department, 301.650.4388
- Rachel Newhouse, Park Planner, Parks Department, 301.650.4368
- Susanne Paul, Senior Planner, Parks Department, 301.650.4392
- Rick Liu, Senior Planner, Research Department, 301.495.5641
- David Anspacher, Planner Coordinator, Transportation, Functional Planning & Policy, 301.495.2191
- Scott Whipple, Supervisor, Historic Preservation, 301.563.3402

Completed: 12.30.15

Description

Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan: Work Session #6

Summary

Work session #6 will be a continuation from work session #5 with a detailed discussion of the zoning and building height recommendations as outlined in the Public Hearing Draft, along with the zoning and building height changes requested by property owners. The discussion will be on a district-by-district basis beginning with the Arlington North and Arlington South Districts. The Planning Board will also review proposed recommendations for the Battery Lane and South Bethesda Districts as time permits.

DISCUSSION

Remaining Work Session Schedule and Topics

Work session #6 – January 07, 2016

Topic: Land Use and Zoning

- Arlington North District
- Arlington South District
- Battery Lane District
- South Bethesda District (as time permits)
- Affordable Housing (as time permits)

Work session #7 – January 21, 2016

Topic: Analysis of Final Zoning and Building Height Decisions

- Final Density Tally
- Building Heights Analysis
- Density Transfer Implementation and Additional Incentives
- Plan Economics

Work Session #8 – February 4, 2016

Topic: Specific Plan Elements

- Parks and Open Space Recommendations
- Ecology and High Performance Area Recommendations

Work session #9 – February 25, 2016

Topic: Outstanding items, Review Plan language edits with Board, etc.

Vote-out

Land Use and Zoning Approach

The work session on July 20, 2015 provided a brief recap of the zoning strategy (as outlined in Work Session #1) as it relates to the recommended density and height increases across the Sector Plan area. Transportation analysis and school capacity was a factor in determining how much density may be increased without over-burdening the infrastructure in the Downtown. A comparative analysis was prepared with other similar urban downtown areas (White Flint, Silver Spring, Wheaton and Friendship Heights) in terms of acreage of planning area; Sector Plan vision build-out and vision build-out square feet per acre. Strategy objectives included:

- Accommodate projected growth over the next 20 years.
- Incentivize redevelopment in the expanded centers of activity and emerging centers (priority areas in the Plan) by increasing density and maximum allowable heights in the expanded centers of activity around proposed civic gathering spaces, such as the areas immediately around the Farm Women’s Market, the Bethesda Metro Station, and Veteran’s Park (the major civic gathering spaces).
- Balance opportunities for redevelopment and compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.

Vision and Goals

Over the past 20 years, the focus of Downtown Bethesda changed from a single center of activity focused around the Metrorail station to a series of activity centers with multiple downtowns. Each of the nine districts as identified by the community is distinct with its own unique character. One of the primary goals of updating the 1994 Sector Plan is to recognize this shift and build on the successes and lessons learned from the previous plan and to ensure that the distinct character of these districts remains. The Concept Framework Plan was developed through a collaborative effort among the community, County agencies and staff. The Concept Framework Plan identifies the basic components of the present-day urban fabric in Downtown Bethesda with respect to the following:

- Existing commercial activity centers.
- Emerging commercial activity centers over the next 20 years.
- Residential neighborhoods.
- Primary pedestrian corridors connecting activity centers and residential neighborhoods.
- Parks and open space network that complements the pedestrian corridors and anchors the community.

The Concept Framework Plan provides the basic elements and organization of Downtown Bethesda. All other Sector Plan details are built upon this structure to form a cohesive urban fabric that will evolve over the next 20 years.

District Character

Arlington North District

Arlington North is a transitional zone between the urban core and single-family neighborhoods to the west of the Sector Plan area. Houses used as offices are located along both Montgomery Lane and Arlington Road. The district is located between Woodmont Avenue and Arlington Road and extends from Hampden Lane to Moorland Lane. The form of new development has been mid- to high-rise apartments.

There are opportunities for both open space and connectivity improvements to enhance this area for residents. West of Arlington Road, the institutional buildings and park spaces provide a buffer to the single-family homes. East of Arlington Road, heights should continue to step up as the buildings approach Woodmont Avenue.

The Plan envisions the Arlington North District to retain its mainly residential focus with a mix of low, mid, and high-rise residential development and to continue as a transitional zone between the more commercial urban core and residential neighborhoods west of Arlington Road.

Arlington South District

Arlington South is an emerging center of activity with potential for commercial and residential redevelopment. As an automobile-oriented retail district, convenience and abundance of parking will be critical for this district as redevelopment occurs. By urbanizing the development pattern, building to the sidewalk with parking in the rear or underneath the buildings, the site can support the depth required for junior anchors while balancing the Sector Plan goals for creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape environment.

Battery Lane District

The Battery Lane District consists primarily of garden and mid-rise apartments on either side of Battery

Lane between Woodmont Avenue and Old Georgetown Road, directly south of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) campus. The Battery Lane district has the well-used Battery Lane Urban Park and North Bethesda Trail at its center, and a range of housing types, including single family homes and low- to high-rise buildings. Planted buffers provide an inviting green streetscape along Battery Lane.

The Plan envisions the Battery Lane District to retain its residential character with a mix of low, mid, and high-rise residential development, to have improved access and connectivity for pedestrians to enhance neighborhood livability and to expand and enhance the existing Battery Lane Urban Park.

South Bethesda District

South Bethesda is an established residential neighborhood situated north of Norwood Local Park, a major area amenity. The district has a garden character with tree-lined streetscapes, and offers several opportunities to create better connections for pedestrians and bikes within the district and to surrounding destinations.

The Plan envisions the South Bethesda District to retain much of its residential character with a mix of low to mid-rise residential development, to have improved access and connectivity for pedestrians to enhance neighborhood livability and to provide opportunities for small neighborhood-oriented open spaces.

Property Owner Zoning Requests and Staff Recommendations

As outlined above, this work session will discuss in detail the zoning and building heights as outlined in the Public Hearing Draft, along with the zoning and building height changes requested by property owners.

Property owner zoning requests from written testimony during the Public Hearing process have been documented in the attached spreadsheet and organized by District. In addition, the spreadsheet includes the current zone for the property, the Public Hearing Sector Plan recommended zoning and staff's recommendations based on the property owner's requests. Staff's recommendations weighed the impacts of the requests from property owners to the planning methodology used to achieve the concept framework plan and public benefit initiatives. A map corresponding to the properties and owner's requests will be provided during the hearing.

CONCLUSION

Following the January 7, 2016 work session, staff will summarize the zoning and building heights recommended by the Planning Board. A spreadsheet with the Planning Board's decisions will be posted prior to the next work session (work session #7).

Attachments

- Staff Recommendations for Property Owner Zoning Change Requests Spreadsheet
- December 15, 2015 work session #5– Planning Board recommended zoning and building heights for the Eastern Greenway District and revised building heights map
- Recent Correspondence

	A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	DISTRICT	MAP LOCATOR	PROPERTY OWNER/DEVELOPER/ATTORNEY	PROPERTY LOCATION/ADDRESS	CURRENT ZONING	SECTOR PLAN ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPERTY OWNER REQUESTED ZONING	STAFF RECOMMENDATION
143	Arlington North	A	ZOM Mid-Atlantic ATTY: Heather Dhopolsky	4816, 4820, 4905, 4910 Moorland Lane, Bethesda MD 20814 7505, 7507, 7509, 7511 Arlington Rd. Bethesda MD 20814	CR-2.25, C-0.5, R-2.0, H-35T	CR 2.75, C-0.75, R-2.5, H-40 CR 1.25, C-0.25, R-1.25, H-50	CR 4.0, H-75	2.75 FAR for all and max height of 50 feet
144		B	Edgemont at Bethesda Apartments	4903 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814	CR-2.5, C-0.25, R-2.5, H-75T	CR 3.0, C-0.5, R-3.0, H-90	CR 3.5, H-120	C 2.5, C-0.5, R-2.5, H-90. Property not likely to redevelop on its own
145		C	Abraham Morrison Memorial LLC ATTY: Emily Vaias	4885 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814	R-60	CR 2.5, C-0.5, R-2.5, H-120	CR 4.0, C-0.5, R-4.0, H-175	CR-2.75, C-0.5, R-2.75 (No Change in Height)
146		D	The Bethesda Library - Greg Ossant	7400 Arlington Road	R-60	R-60	CR 2.0, C-0.25, R-2.0, H-50	CR 2.0, C-0.25, R-2.0, H-40
147	Arlington South	A	Bradley Boulevard Shopping Center ATTY: Jody Kline	6900 Arlington Rd. Bethesda, MD 20815	CRT-0.5, C-0.5, R-0.25, H-45	CRT 0.75, C-0.75, R-0.5, H-70	CRT 2.0, C-2.0, R-1.5, H-70	CRT 2.0, C-2.0, R-1.5, H-70
148		B	Harvey Companies ATTY: Stacy Silber	6933 Arlington Rd. Bethesda MD, 20814	CRT-2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45/60	CRT 2.75, C-1.75, R-1.0, H-70	CRT 3.5, C-3.25, R-3.25, H-120/70	FAR 3.0, Equalize C and R - 120H along Arlington Blvd only, 70' Height on back of property next to CCT
149	Battery Lane	A	Aldon Management Company	4949, 4998, 5015 Battery Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814	R-10	R-10	CR 4.0, H-150	NC
150		B	Battery Lane Apartments ATTY: Robert Harris	4887 Battery Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814	PD-100	CR 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-120	CR 4.0, H-150	CR - 2.75, C-0.5, R-2.75, H-120
151		C	Aldon Management Company	4890, 4858, 4857 Battery Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814	PD-100	CR 3.5, C-0.5, R-3.5, H-120	CR 4.0, H-150	NC
152		D	Aldon Management Company	4900 Battery Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-120	CR 4.0, H-150	CR - 2.75, C-0.5, R-2.75, H-120
153		E	4918-4938 Battery Lane LLC ATTY: Heather Dhopolsky	4918 Battery Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-120	CR 3.5, C-0.5, R-3.5, H-120	CR - 2.75, C-0.5, R-2.75, H-120
154		F	Shelter Development (GNRW Properties, LLC) ATTY: Pat Harris / Francoise Carrier (owner rep)	4907 Rugby Ave. Bethesda, MD 20814	CR-3.0, C-1.0, R-2.75, H-90T	CR 3.5, C-1.25, R-3.0, H-120	Plan revision to park edge designation - cuts through brightview site	Recommend revision to Park edge designation in Plan Graphic
155		G	The Maven Group (GRNW Properties, LLC) Francoise Carrier	8101 Glenbrook Rd. Bethesda, MD 20814	CR-3.0, C-1.0, R-2.75, H-90T	CR 3.5, C-1.25, R-3.0, H-35	H-110	CR 3.0, C-1.0, R-2.75, H-90 (Keep existing including split zone)
156		A	Aldon Management Company	4800,4804,4808 Wellington Dr. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-70	CR 4.0, H-130 or H-150	NC
157	South Bethesda	B	Aldon Management Company	4701-4705, 4709 Bradley Blvd. Bethesda, MD 20815 6900-6904, 6908 Strathmore St. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-70	CR 4.0, H-130 or H-150	NC
158		C	Aldon Management Company	4740 Bradley Blvd. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70	CR 4.0, H-130 or H-150	NC
159		D	Aldon Management Company	4730 Bradley Blvd. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70	CR 4.0, H-130 or H-150	NC
160		E	HOC Barclay Co	4716 Bradley Blvd. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 3.0, C-0.25, R-3.0, H-70	CR 4.0, H-100	NC
161		F	Aldon Management Company	4757 Chevy Chase Dr. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70	CR 4.0, H-130 or H-150	NC
162		G	Aldon Management Company	4750 Chevy Chase Dr. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-70	CR 4.0, H-130 or H-150	NC
163		H	John Cokinos	4740 Chevy Chase Dr. Bethesda MD, 20815	R-10	CR 3.5, C-1.0, R-3.5, H-70	H-85	NC
164		I	Bethesda Fire Department	6600 Wisconsin Ave. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 1.5, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-70	CR 2.5, H-80	NC
165		J	Strathmore Apartments (Kossov MGNT) ATTY: Robert Harris	7025-7036 Strathmore St. Bethesda, MD 20815	R-10	CR 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70	CR 4.0, H-150	NC
166		K	Offutt Dynasty Trust Properties	6903 Strathmore Street, 6930 and 6932 Wisconsin Ave	R-10, CR 3.0, C-2.0, R-2.75, H-75T	Strathmore Street = CR 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70. Wisconsin Ave: CR 3.5, C-2.5, R-3.25, H-90	CR-5.0, H-120	NC

From: [Richard Latty](#)
To: [Anderson, Casey](#); [Wells-Harley, Marye](#); [Dreyfuss, Norman](#); [Fani-Gonzalez, Natali](#); [Presley, Amy](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Kronenberg, Robert](#); [DeOcampo, Marc](#); [Howerton, Leslye](#)
Subject: Bethesda Plan
Date: Monday, December 28, 2015 2:43:07 PM
Importance: High

Dear Planning Board Member,

Prior to your vote on any further developments in Bethesda, you need to drive from on Wisconsin Ave from East-West highway to Bradley on any weekday from 7:30 to 9:30. Then add 50 cars more ahead of you. What is the expected flow. Add 75, 100, 150. Without this experience I believe you are not prepared to vote on these issues.

Where does quality of life enter the Cost/Benefit evaluations? More congestion for more tax revenue? What critical need is going unmet? The need to go safely to and from school and work are critical.

Sincerely,

Richard Latty
[Langdrum Lane](#)
[Chevy Chase](#)

From: Cathy Wolf <wolfc@starpower.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 23, 2015 1:30 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: The Bethesda CBD Plan

DEC 23 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

1113

To: Chairman Anderson and members of the Planning Board

I am a long-time resident of the Town of Chevy Chase. I recognize that change is bound to occur in terms of building density but I am dismayed that the Planning Board is considering a level of development which I believe is unsustainable in terms of infrastructure (i.e. traffic and schools) and destructive in terms of quality of life issues. I also feel that the developers are being given far too much control and power over this process and that the neighborhoods have not been heard adequately. I would ask for public hearings which would give voices to the residents who are affected by these changes. I believe there is a drastic difference between "Smart Growth" and runaway development. Please listen to those of us who call Bethesda "home" and not an "economic engine" for the County.

With respect,
Cathryn Wolf

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12/23
DEC 23 2015

MCP-CTRACK

From: Julie Stanish <jastanish@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 23, 2015 10:12 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Too much traffic

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Chairman Anderson and Planning Board Members,

Isn't there enough density in Bethesda? Enough traffic already?

I am a long-time resident of the Town of Chevy Chase. I am very concerned that *cumulative* impacts on infrastructure, schools, open space, traffic and quality of life for nearby neighborhoods have not been adequately presented or addressed. Unsustainable density is not smart growth, smart economics or in the County's best interest.

Please pause before granting any further density. Please review the sustainability of what has already been granted on existing infrastructure, schools, open space, and quality of life for nearby communities. Many communities believe they will be heavily impacted and have not been heard - and we vote.

Please hold at least two additional public hearings presenting data-driven analyses of *cumulative* impacts on schools, infrastructure, open space, and nearby communities. Following public comment, please revise all density, whether granted or proposed, to a sustainable level that respects our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Stanish

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1420

DEC 23 2015

MCP-CTRACK

From: Jean Shorett <jeshorett@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2015 6:53 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Unsustainable density in the Bethesda CBD is not smart growth - Disregard Previous

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PLANNING COMMISSION

Chairman Anderson and Planning Board Members,

As a supporter of smart growth I am concerned that it is being confused with adding unsustainable density to the Bethesda CBD Plan. As you know, smart growth requires a systematic approach which has not, in my view, been demonstrated so far. At the risk of being direct, the process to date appears unduly influenced by private advocates.

I am a long-time resident of the Town of Chevy Chase. I am very concerned that ***cumulative*** impacts on infrastructure, schools, open space, and quality of life for nearby neighborhoods have not been adequately presented or addressed. Unsustainable density is not smart growth, smart economics or in the County's best interest.

Please pause before granting any further density. Please review the sustainability of what has already been granted on existing infrastructure, schools, open space, and quality of life for nearby communities. Many communities believe they will be heavily impacted and have not been heard – and we vote.

Please hold at least two additional public hearings presenting data-driven analyses of ***cumulative*** impacts on schools, infrastructure, open space, and nearby communities. Following public comment, please revise all density, whether granted or proposed, to a sustainable level that reflects smart growth and respects our communities.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Shorett

MCP-CTRACK

From: Elizabeth Mumford <eam222@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2015 9:30 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Public hearings on Bethesda Development Plan

Chairman Anderson and Planning Board Members,

I concur with Jean Shorett's statement as follows:

As a supporter of smart growth I am concerned that it is being confused with adding unsustainable density to the Bethesda CBD Plan. As you know, smart growth requires a systematic approach which has not, in my view, been demonstrated so far. At the risk of being direct, the process to date appears unduly influenced by private advocates.

I am a long-time resident of the Town of Chevy Chase. I am very concerned that *cumulative* impacts on infrastructure, schools, open space, and quality of life for nearby neighborhoods have not been adequately presented or addressed. Unsustainable density is not smart growth, smart economics or in the County's best interest.

Please pause before granting any further density. Please review the sustainability of what has already been granted on existing infrastructure, schools, open space, and quality of life for nearby communities. Many communities believe they will be heavily impacted and have not been heard - and we vote.

Please hold at least two additional public hearings presenting data-driven analyses of *cumulative* impacts on schools, infrastructure, open space, and nearby communities. Following public comment, please revise all density, whether granted or proposed, to a sustainable level that reflects smart growth and respects our communities.

Elizabeth A. Mumford
4301 Stanford ST
Chevy Chase, MD 20815-5209
(H) 301-656-6124
(C) 301-928-6094

RECEIVED
2401
DEC 22 2015

MCP-CTRACK

From: simma.kupchan@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2015 6:13 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: al.lang@townofchevy Chase.gov; fcecere@townofchevy Chase.gov
Subject: Concerns about Bethesda Sector Plan

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear County Planning Board,

Thank you for all of your hard work in considering the Bethesda sector plan.

We are residents of the Town of Chevy Chase and wanted to express our own concern about the increased height and density allowances that the proposed plan allows.

I am sure you are aware that the local elementary schools are already overcrowded. This overcrowding has been a significant deterrent to young professional friends of ours living in downtown DC and considering where to buy their first home. Many prefer Northern Virginia, or remaining in DC, because of the packed classrooms in Montgomery County. It would be a shame if the excellent reputation of Montgomery County schools is allowed to deteriorate further due to more crowding. We cannot understand how authorities could countenance a large population increase in the neighborhood without a corresponding plan to expand educational resources for the children who would move in. Please ensure that any permitted increases in density are accompanied by a plan to increase the numbers of schools providing for these new numbers.

You are also aware, we are sure, that Wisconsin Avenue is virtually un-drivable at many times during the day due to congestion. A significant increase in local residents without any plan to accommodate the guaranteed additional traffic would render the key artery virtually unusable, reducing our quality of life. We request that any allowance for increased density be accompanied by a specific, feasible, and (at least partially) developer-funded plan to alleviate traffic. Perhaps additional rapid buses or bike share stations could help.

Thank you for your public service and for your attention to our comments.

Sincerely,
Simma and Charles Kupchan
Town of Chevy Chase residents

From: Robert Lyford <robert.lyford@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2015 9:40 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan input from Chevy Chase, Md. resident

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Sir or Madam,

My wife and I have been residents of Chevy Chase, Maryland for over 30 years. We are very troubled by the Bethesda Sector Plan. We have loved living in our quiet, convenient and safe neighborhood of Chevy Chase for decades, and hope to continue to live here for many more years.

The Bethesda Sector Plan, in our view, allows developers and development to take priority over the wishes of those living in neighborhoods nearby. If you allow development to continue in Bethesda as it has in the recent past, our Bethesda will resemble Crystal City--with towering office and residential buildings, too much congestion and pollution from traffic. Driving in Bethesda now, especially on weekends and during rush hour, is almost impossible. How do we know? We live here and deal with the noise and traffic all the time.

We urge you to limit building heights to prevent neighborhoods from being dwarfed by high rise buildings which block out light and turn park areas into canyons where no one wants to walk. We urge you to support quality of life for residents over profits for developers and county tax coffers. By allowing over-development, you are destroying the quality of life which current residents enjoy. In short, you are destroying Bethesda and ruining its charm.

The proposal for a new firehouse in Bethesda is a good example of developer's and county government's overreach in search of quick profits and increased tax revenue.

We realize this letter will have little impact on your plans, but we feel it is necessary to voice our opinions as taxpayers and long-time residents. Hopefully, if enough of my neighbors voice their opposition, we will have some impact. None of my neighbors I have talked with feel the Bethesda Sector Plan is a plus for the Town of Chevy Chase and has had minimum input from those most affected.

We urge you to seek more input directly from citizens of the Town of Chevy Chase, not just the currently elected Town Council, whose views are not necessarily those of the majority of Town residents.

Robert Lyford and Jean Gwaltney
7112 Beechwood Drive,
Chevy Chase, Md. 20815

MCP-CTRACK

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DEC 21 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

1386

From: Mona Sarfaty <monasarfaty@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 20, 2015 11:55 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan

To: Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

I am a resident of the Town of Chevy Chase who was previously a proud resident of Bethesda. I understand that the meeting on the Bethesda Sector Plan (12/15) resulted in a number of recommendations that were counter to the advice of the Planning Commission staff. I believe that these recommendations did not solicit nor permit sufficient input from residents of the Town of Chevy Chase who would be heavily impacted by the proposed development.

Allowing buildings of the size that would be permitted by the Planning Commission does not take into consideration a number of extremely negative impacts on both the Town of Chevy Chase as well as Bethesda. The proposed properties would be built just east of Wisconsin Avenue and north of Bradley Boulevard, and on the two parking lots just south and just north of Leland Street. There are multiple negative implications to the plan approved on December 15. First, traffic on Wisconsin Avenue from Western Avenue to north of the National Institutes of Health has become extremely congested at all times of day except for the later evening. In fact, the increase in traffic in recent years recalls the incredible congestion that was present years ago on Rockville Pike at most times of day. There has been steady expansion of apartment and condominium living space in Bethesda going back nearly 25 years. There is such a thing as too much building, and too much development. The current plan falls into that category.

Second, the building heights for the proposed developments are excessive. In recent years, the residential building heights in downtown Bethesda centered on the Woodmont/Bethesda Avenue intersection "hub" and over to Arlington Avenue and up to the Metro have been purposely limited. This has created an inviting community that draws people to it, as opposed to an overwhelming urban-scape that is not nearly as inviting. At this time, people who visit Bethesda are attracted there partly due to that moderate "human" sizing of the buildings. The eateries and other commercial properties in that part of Bethesda have succeeded so well because development there has been limited, well thought out, and intelligent. Buildings with excessive heights such as those proposed will dramatically alter the feel of the area.

Third, The disconnect between the limited residential building heights that have gone up most recently around the "hub" and what is proposed for the properties in question shows disregard for those who have not bought into the expensive rental and condominium properties closest to that commercial and entertainment "hub" of Bethesda. Those closest to that hub are being protected from the worst excesses of over-development. In fact, the people living on 46th Street have equally valuable properties to those living close to the "hub", and should be shown the same consideration.

There are many alternatives to the current plan that might add to rather than detract from the quality of life for those who live in this rapidly expanding Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, as well as the rest of the county. I will mention two of many that might be considered. Residents of the Town, and Planning Commission staff, have already recommended a greenway for the parking lot areas. This idea could compensate for green space that is likely to be lost as a result of the Purple line, and expand the "walking culture" that is central to the resilient communities that we must build in the face of climate change. Another idea is large solar installations that could cover the parking lots and help bring down power costs for all the residents of the County and serve as a model for clean energy development. In addition, the County could look for tenants for those spaces that had entirely different conceptions of how to develop them in a way that was environmentally conscious, intelligent, and forward looking.

A great deal of community involvement is needed to find the best plan. The best of Bethesda planning has succeeded so well because it has been done intelligently, with an eye toward walkability, modest heights in keeping with the feel of Washington, DC, and public gathering spaces that help build community. The current approach has not solicited nearly enough community input. Thus, another hearing or two, and a series of meetings with residents and small business owners in the area is warranted.

Mona Sarfaty, MD MPH, 4501 Leland Street, Chevy Chase, MD

20815

cc: Montgomery County Council

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1386
DEC 21 2015

MCP-CTRACK

From: Mona Sarfaty <monasarfaty@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2015 1:26 PM
To: yahoogroups; MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PLANNING COMMISSION

----- Forwarded Message ----- From: Mona Sarfaty To: "MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org" Sent: Sunday, December 20, 2015 11:55 PM Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan

To: Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

I am a resident of the Town of Chevy Chase who was previously a proud resident of Bethesda. I understand that the meeting on the Bethesda Sector Plan (12/15) resulted in a number of recommendations that were counter to the advice of the Planning Commission staff. I believe that these recommendations did not solicit nor permit sufficient input from residents of the Town of Chevy Chase who would be heavily impacted by the proposed development. Allowing buildings of the size that would be permitted by the Planning Commission does not take into consideration a number of extremely negative impacts on both the Town of Chevy Chase as well as Bethesda.

The proposed properties would be built just east of Wisconsin Avenue/north of Bradley Boulevard, and on the two parking lots just south and just north of Leland Street. There are multiple negative implications to the plan approved on December 15.

First, traffic on Wisconsin Avenue from Western Avenue to north of the National Institutes of Health has become extremely congested at all times of day except for the later evening. In fact, the increase in traffic in recent years recalls the incredible congestion that was present years ago on Rockville Pike at most times of day. There has been steady expansion of apartment and condominium living space in Bethesda going back nearly 25 years. There is such a thing as too much building, and too much development. Most of us have probably witnessed this effect in this community or others. The current plan falls into that category.

Second, the building heights for the proposed developments are excessive. In recent years, the residential building heights in downtown Bethesda centered on the Woodmont/Bethesda Avenue intersection "hub" and over to Arlington Avenue, as well as up to the Metro have been purposely limited. This has created an inviting community that draws people to it, as opposed to an overwhelming urban-scape that is not inviting and does not follow the same recipe for success. At this time, people who visit Bethesda are attracted there partly due to that moderate "human" sizing of the buildings. The eateries and other commercial properties in that part of Bethesda have succeeded so well precisely because development there has been limited, well thought out, and intelligent. Buildings with excessive heights such as those proposed will dramatically alter the feel of the area.

Third, the disconnect between the limited residential building heights that have gone up most recently around the "hub" and what is proposed for the properties in question shows disregard for those who have not bought into the expensive rental and condominium properties closest to that commercial and entertainment "hub" of Bethesda. Those closest to that hub are being protected from the worst excesses of over-development. In fact, the people living on 46th Street have equally valuable properties to those living close to the "hub", and should be shown the same consideration.

There are many alternatives to the current plan that might add to rather than detract from the quality of life for those who live in this rapidly expanding Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, as well as the rest of the county. I will mention three of many that might be considered. Residents of the Town, and Planning Commission staff, have already recommended a greenway for the parking lot areas. This idea could compensate for green space that is likely to be lost as a result of the Purple line, and expand the "walking culture" that is central to the resilient communities that we must build in the face of climate change. Another idea is large solar installations that could cover the parking lots and help bring down power

costs for all the residents of the County and serve as a model for clean energy development. In addition, the County could look for tenants for those spaces that had entirely different conceptions of how to develop them in a way that was environmentally conscious, intelligent, and forward looking. A great deal of community involvement is needed to find the best plan. The best of Bethesda planning has succeeded so well because it has been done intelligently, with an eye toward walkability, modest heights in keeping with the feel of Washington, DC, and public gathering spaces that help build community.

The current approach has not solicited nearly enough community input for such an important part of the County. Thus, another hearing or two, and a series of meetings with residents and small business owners in the area is warranted.

Mona Sarfaty, MD MPH, 4501 Leland Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
cc: Montgomery County Council

MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED
1377

DEC 17 2015

From: Barbara Levitt <bslevitt@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2015 10:50 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Fwd: [townneighbors] CALL TO ACTION/ Bethesda Sector Plan

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

For Casey Anderson:

Please see below regarding our opposition to the high degree of urbanization envisioned by the current Bethesda Sector Plan (building heights, density, traffic, general congestion, overcrowding in schools).

From Barbara Levitt
Town of Chevy Chase resident

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Barbara Levitt <bslevitt@gmail.com>
Date: December 17, 2015 at 10:25:18 AM EST
To: townoffice@townofchevyCHASE.org, townneighbors@yahoogroups.com
Cc: Lila Asher <Lilaasher@verizon.net>
Subject: Re: [townneighbors] CALL TO ACTION

It seems that our town's future is now in the hands of the moneyed interests of developers and their lawyers who are paid to attend every Town meeting on this subject and whose voices have become a substitute for our own.

Where are our elected representatives on these issues? Why are they not speaking for us? If they will not speak for us, perhaps they need to hire paid lobbyists to represent our point of view, which seems to be virtually unanimous (judging by the lack of stated opposition to date.)

Personally, I am fatigued by the pressure to attend meetings--isn't this why we have a town council and standing committees? And why is this issue being aired in the busiest season of the year?

If the Council won't/can't stand up for our interests, I think they should hire professionals to speak on our behalf, in opposition to the developers and their lawyers at these all too frequent meetings. We are no match for them, because we have day jobs and families to attend to.

I don't believe any of us moved to TOCC because we had a yearning to live in Crystal City, VA. If we let the developers have their way, this is surely what the Town will become.

TOCC is known the world over (see recent article in The Guardian) as a distinctive community of some character and an educated workforce. It has enviable Montgomery County schools, tree-lined streets, environmentally-conscious residents with progressive and family-oriented values. Are we going to let the developers and their lawyers turn our town into another Crystal City, Virginia?

We must urge the Council to take all necessary steps to protect us from the development bandwagon preying upon our Town and threatening to roll right over us.

Barbara Levitt
Meadow Lane

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 16, 2015, at 1:52 PM, Lila Asher lilaasher@verizon.net [townneighbors] <townneighbors@yahoogleroups.com> wrote:

Many of us have the same opinion. The council seems to be willing to go along with the development, while the residents are not. This is urgent that our dissent is made know - communicate with the council and the county.

Lila Asher

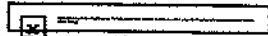
[Moderator's Note: To contact the Council members, send an e-mail to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org and ask that your message be distributed to the Council members. To comment to the County, send an e-mail to Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board, at MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org ---Ann]

Posted by: Lila Asher <lilaasher@verizon.net>

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RECEIVED
1376
DEC 17 2015

MCP-CTRACK

From: Naomi Spinrad <nspinrad68@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2015 1:08 PM
To: Anderson, Casey; Wells-Harley, Marye; Dreyfuss, Norman; Fani-Gonzalez, Natali; Presley, Amy
Cc: Wright, Gwen; Kronenberg, Robert; DeOcampo, Marc; Howerton, Leslye; Councilmember Berliner's Office; councilmember.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov Gov; Councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov Gov; Councilmember Riemer's Office
Subject: Reject Rezoning - County Executive says no need for redevelopment at Fire Station 6

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION



Dear Chair Anderson, Vice Chair Wells-Harley, Commissioner Dreyfuss, Commissioner Fani-Gonzalez, and Commissioner Presley:

I write to share with you comments made by Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett regarding Fire Station 6 at Wisconsin and Bradley during an online chat on Tuesday, December 15 (relevant sentence highlighted):

Ed from *Bethesda-Chevy Chase* The Bethesda Fire Department claims it needs to construct a high-rise apartment building on its property at 6600 Wisconsin Avenue to "ensure that we can maintain our high standard of service and safety of the communities we serve." Putting aside the fact that the Bethesda Fire Department doesn't even provide fire & EMS services (it is County firefighters who actually provide the fire & EMS service, using trucks and equipment purchased by the County), why would Montgomery County allow a plan that is universally opposed by all of the communities served by this fire station?

Mr. Leggett: Thank you for your question. Although the Bethesda station is staffed by County employees and equipped by the County, the property is owned by the Bethesda volunteer fire department, an independent nonprofit organization. Montgomery County does not see the need for immediate changes to Station 6. The redevelopment is not necessary to ensure service to the community. We are monitoring the Bethesda Downtown Plan discussions before the planning board which will make its recommendations to the County Council early in 2016. Before it gets to the Council I will have an opportunity to review the plan in its entirety and to comment on its implementation. My number one concern is maintaining emergency service to the community under any future scenario. (Full transcript at <http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/News/Discussion/PIOTrans.asp?schedID=76>)

Bethesda Fire Department board members have stated repeatedly, in meetings and in written materials, that the reason for seeking rezoning (and redevelopment) was to be able to continue providing emergency service. Now that the County has publicly and explicitly stated that redevelopment is NOT necessary for this, the rezoning request should be flatly rejected as the rationale is moot.

Chevy Chase West continues to believe that designating the undeveloped space at this location as green space within the Bethesda Downtown Plan is the best use for the wider community. The approximately 35,000 square feet here would be a huge addition to green space within the plan area, and the remaining area, about an acre, is large enough for a new fire station at such time as one might be needed. If the design for the Jaffe Group property adjacent to St. John's Church does indeed result in a greenway pass-through from West Avenue/Eastern Greenway to Wisconsin Avenue, green space here would provide a nearly contiguous connection to Norwood Park. (This is not an endorsement of that design in its entirety.)

Unlike the Jaffe Group property owners, the fire station owners have made no effort to collaborate with the community. Although members of the BFD board met with various groups among its neighbors and service area, the vast majority of those who have weighed in have opposed the rezoning and redevelopment. Yet the BFD response, in its testimony in June, was to devise a new way via ZTA to get nearly the FAR it had originally requested, and to request a greater height than it had originally requested. Our concerns – CCW, Somerset, Drummond, Chevy Chase Village, nearby condominium associations, the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights – all fell on deaf ears.

For all these reasons – the fact that the County has stated that redevelopment is not needed to ensure delivery of emergency services, the potential for an improved connection from the Eastern Greenway to Norwood Park, and the lack of real collaboration and responsiveness by the BFD to the community – we respectfully request once again that the zoning for the BFD Fire Station 6 property at Wisconsin and Bradley remain solely residential, either unchanged at R-10 or changed to R-60 for compatibility with our single family residential neighborhood directly across Nottingham. We also continue to request that the undeveloped space on this property be designated green space.

Thank you for your continuing attention to this.

Sincerely,

Naomi Spinrad

Vice President

Chevy Chase West Neighborhood Association

cc: Gwen Wright, Planning Director

Robert Kronenberg, Area 1 Supervisor

Marc DeOcampo, Area 1 Deputy Supervisor

Lesiye Howerton, Bethesda Plan Lead Planner

Councilmember Roger Berliner

Councilmember Marc Elrich

Councilmember Nancy Florin

Councilmember George Leventhal

Councilmember Hans Riemer

RECEIVED
1374
DEC 17 2015

MCP-CTRACK

From: Deborah Vollmer <dvollmer@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2015 9:23 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: townneighbors@yahoogroups.com; 'Town Office'; 'Al Lang'; 'John Bickerman'; 'Fred Cecere'; 'Kathy Strom'; 'Vicky Taplin'; Dedun Ingram; christinerealdezua@gmail.com; 'Craig Brooks'; 'Mona Sarfaty'; tlcoplan@verizon.net; 'Stephen Seidel'; 'Lila Asher'; 'Sandy Burk'
Subject: RE: Bethesda Sector Plan

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PLANNING COMMISSION

To: Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Commission

Below is the e-mail which I sent to you on Monday, detailing my objections to the proposed Bethesda Sector Plan. I would have been there in person to testify, had I known that this was such an important session, and that it was an opportunity to appear and testify in person. It turns out that there are a number of concerned residents here in the Town of Chevy Chase, who would have attended, had the meeting been better publicized, and had it been generally known that this was an opportunity for public testimony.

I respectfully request that the Planning Board schedule an additional round of hearings, to hear from residents from our Town and surrounding communities with respect to the Bethesda Sector Plan, before any recommendations are forwarded to the County Council. I request that these hearings be well-publicized, and that ample opportunity be provided for both live testimony from all who would like to testify, and written statements.

The proposed increased development set forth in the Bethesda Sector Plan presents serious challenges to our Town, our residents, and our environment, on a scale which threatens our quality of life, both within the Town of Chevy Chase, and in other surrounding communities, including Bethesda itself.

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Deborah A. Vollmer
Resident of the Town of Chevy Chase
7202 44th Street

Telephone: 301-652-5762

From: Deborah Vollmer [mailto:dvollmer@verizon.net]

Sent: Monday, December 14, 2015 12:26 AM

To: 'MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org' <MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org>

Cc: 'townneighbors@yahoogroups.com' <townneighbors@yahoogroups.com>; 'Town Office' <townoffice@townofchevychase.org>
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan

To: Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

I am a resident of the Town of Chevy Chase. I understand you are having a work session on the Bethesda Sector Plan. I wish to comment on various aspects of the Bethesda Sector Plan.

Let me begin by saying that, in my opinion, the position paper that was presented to the Planning Board previously by Town Council Member Fred Cecere, and which appears on the Town's website, does not represent the views of the majority of residents in our Town with respect to these issues. Some of us have been requesting for some months now that the Town do a survey of the residents with respect to 1) the future of Elm Street Park, 2) the future of the parking lots behind the Farm Women's Market and next to the Writer's Center and 3) the proposed building heights at our Town's border. Our Town Council has steadfastly refused to withdraw language from the position paper that does not reflect our feelings on these matters, and has failed to survey the opinions of the residents with respect to the Town's position on these issues.

First, I want to address the issue of Elm Street Park. Many of us take issue with the statement in the position paper presented to you on behalf of the Town by Mr. Cecere that Elm Street Park is "severely underused." That language does not reflect the view of our residents. In my opinion, and in the opinion of many other Town residents, the Elm Street Park should remain the passive park that it is, a haven from the hustle and bustle of a Bethesda that many of us feel is all too quickly growing and developing as if it is on steroids. Elm Street Park was designed as a passive park: a place where Town residents and workers and residents in Bethesda alike could escape from the activity of an urbanizing Bethesda, and seek refuge among the trees, the birds, and other wildlife. I have no problem with adding a few simple amenities such as water fountains, but the park should remain as the passive park that it is.

Second, it is my position, and I believe the position of many others in our Town, that the parking lot behind the Farm Women's Market and the parking lot next to the Writer's Center should remain as open space without any building on them, whatsoever. Furthermore, we have a number of residents with impaired mobility, many of whom are senior citizens, who are very dependent upon their cars. They need those parking lots, when they frequent the Farm Women's Market, the Writer's Center, and the restaurants and shops in that portion of Bethesda that borders our Town. I have spoken to some of these residents, who have serious safety concerns with respect to the idea of underground parking. I would also note that it is

not only residents of our Town that use these parking lots, but also others who drive into Bethesda from other parts of the County.

My own idea for the parking lots would be to keep them as surface level parking. They provide open space which is a needed buffer between our Town and the development in Bethesda. I would consider eliminating just some of the parking spaces, not to provide space for construction, but rather to enhance the parking lots with additional islands of green space planted with trees. In effect, this would be a hybrid between keeping the parking lots as they are, and the idea of the Green Commons previously advanced by our Town leaders.

Finally, I want to comment about building heights at the borders of our Town. As I mentioned before, many of us are concerned about overdevelopment of Bethesda, which seems to be growing exponentially, as if on steroids. This would appear to be a profit-driven trend for the benefit of builders and developers, but not for the benefit of the residents of our Town, or even for the residents of Bethesda itself. I do not believe that there is sufficient infrastructure to support this increase in development. I foresee a strain on our school system with the increase in residential development, which will not be sustainable.

Another problem with the increase in building heights, is that with taller and taller buildings, there is a developing canyon effect, diminishing sunlight, not only on Wisconsin Avenue itself, but also in Elm Street Park and in nearby parts of our Town, especially on Elm Street. In this regard, I am especially concerned with the proposed increase of building height to 290 feet. With respect to the site of the Apex Building, that would be nearly triple the height of the building that is now there. That will cast a long shadow on Elm Street Park, which will be detrimental to the park experience. I am also concerned about potential storm water issues generated by all this additional development, which also will affect us in our Town.

Please consider these views, of an ordinary resident of the Town of Chevy Chase. Please reconsider the underlying premise that this fast-paced development is a good thing---it is not. Please stop the insanity, before we lose the tranquility of Elm Street Park and the surrounding area, in our Town.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Deborah A. Vollmer
Resident of the Town of Chevy Chase
7202 44th Street

Telephone: 301-652-5762

DEC 17 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

From: Wicca Davidson <wicca@wiccadavidson.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2015 11:14 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan RE:Town of Chevy Chase

To the Planning Board:

Good planning and zoning dictates that commercial development be stepped back from residential areas. The whole concept of zoning was initiated to allow sunlight between structures, and areas of quiet and peaceful enjoyment.

As a long time homeowner in the Town of Chevy Chase, I very much appreciate the Planning Board's consideration of the people who live near St. John's Church. I hope that the Planning Board will take into consideration the comments made by John Freedman about neighbors' concerns about the proposed development next to St. John's.

In addition, I am asking the Planning Board to re-consider the use of the parking lots behind the Women's Farm Market. This area (including the block of the Women's Farm Market) and the Elm Street Park are the only buffers between the very tall buildings in Bethesda, the noise and the traffic – and the residents of the Town of Chevy Chase. From this area of Bethesda it is only one block before you get to the houses.

I understand the that there is need that the central business district to function like a central business district and be urban. However, at the same time we need it to be compatible with the houses and the people who live just one block into the east.

I am asking the Planning Board and everyone who is interested in this set of properties to think carefully about what you see here, both the pros and the cons – and revisit that issue. Please reconsider how tall the buildings are going to be and change your decision. Please leave a buffer between this development area and the people and houses that are that block away - giving sunlight and a small area of quiet.

As someone who lives on Connecticut Ave - effectively a 6 lane highway - I understand the need for proper zoning and planning. My house is barraged by noise, cars, ambulance sirens. I do not have peaceful enjoyment of my property. I would hate for the rest of the town to suffer as well.

Thank you for your consideration,
Wicca Davidson
7600 Connecticut Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED

From: Pam Gardner <gardner.pam@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2015 6:21 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Please take seriously TOCC residents' objections to new density along Wisconsin

1370
DEC 17 2015
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Anderson,

My husband and I have lived on Meadow Lane in the TOCC since 1988, and intend to live here as long as possible. We have recently renovated our house to allow for "aging in place" years down the road. Along with virtually every one of our neighbors, we are distressed by the proposed building heights and density of the new construction proposed for the Wisconsin Ave. corridor from the Farm Woman's Market to St. John's Church.

I will not reiterate the points already made to you by other TOCC residents opposed to higher buildings and greater density, but want to signal how fervently we agree with those points.

The TOCC is being encroached upon by Bethesda development, with enormous potential loss of quality of life and residential property value.

The current TOCC Council, as I'm sure you know, came into office because of a stealth campaign and does not have the trust or support of many, if not most, residents here. Whatever representations that Council has made to you with reference to TOCC support for increased density and higher buildings on our borders, please consider them skeptically.

If Montgomery County wants to attract affluent families to its tax base, it should consider what such families want: good schools, green space, quiet neighborhoods, trees, and general livability. More businesses which are hard to access, less above-ground parking, high-rises, and congested streets will turn Bethesda into a commonplace commercial nightmare, and drive away the very demographic which has supported it and helped it thrive since the 1940's.

Thank you for taking the time to read our protest.

respectfully,

Pamela Fowler and Timothy Gardner

7320 Meadow Lane, Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

RECEIVED

DEC 16 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

1366

From: David Federbush <federbus@erols.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2015 11:13 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Battery Lane Park - no road

Please don't put a road/part of a road through Battery Lane Park - it would destroy the relaxed, quiet nature and neighborhood aspect of the park, and would be disruptive. It would also be a threat to little kids in the park, even when supervised by adults.

Good work in resurfacing the tennis court.

David Federbush
4977 Battery Lane #913
Bethesda, MD 20814
301/657-4691

DEC 15 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

From: Brooke Haughey <brookehaughey@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2015 7:34 AM
To: Howerton, Leslye
Cc: Wright, Gwen; Garcia, Joyce; Neam, Dominique; MCP-Chair
Subject: Re: CTRACK #2014-0726 - Haughey/Bethesda Downtown Plan and 7121 Wisconsin Ave.

Leslye,

I am touching base again as a part of the Bethesda Sector Plan progress, as it seems clear that the concerns of residents impacted by the plan are being subsumed in a larger vision that has very little to do with those of us who actually live here.

The proposed height and increased densities for the corridor along Elm St Park, the Farm Women's Market, and points south benefit only the county seeking tax revenue - not those of us who have to live in already-massive congestion, losing green space, and concerned about the feasibility of sending our children to already-overcrowded schools. It seems as though this plan is geared towards a purely hypothetical 2040, while utterly ignoring the needs of 2015 taxpaying families.

You have heard from other neighbors and concerned stakeholders, and I wanted to rejoin the chorus - the proposed development adjacent to the Town hurts everyone:

Elm Street Park is not underutilized - it is heavily utilized! "Activating" it will only increase loitering and congestion, and take away a small oasis for workers, residents, and children. I live across the street from it and see it every day. Moreover, the purple line will place a construction easement on it and eliminate the usage of the north end of the park, while there is a 10' planned bike trail on the west. Without removing the park itself, how can further demands be placed on it?

The addition of townhomes behind the market with underground parking will vastly increase congestion and noise pollution, particularly in tandem with the proposed height and density increases fronting Wisconsin. We will be subjected to years of heavily disruptive construction, culminating only in more congestion.

And overall, it can take up to 10 minutes to navigate south on Wisconsin from Leland to Bradley, as the addition of the new stoplight has further backed up a heavily overused strip of road. What will happen to our community when there are thousands of new residents trying to do the same thing as well?

We are deeply concerned about the progression of this plan, and as taxpayers and residents, that our existing rights and needs are being utterly ignored. I recognize that you are in a difficult position, but would urge the board to preserve the character of what has made Bethesda special and successful thus far.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Regards
Brooke Haughey

On Thu, Nov 6, 2014 at 4:27 PM, Howerton, Leslye <Leslye.Howerton@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Dear Ms. Haughey:

Your October 27 email to the Planning Board Chairman has been forwarded to me for response as the lead planner on the Bethesda Downtown Plan.

I very much appreciate your concern about maintaining an appropriate boundary between the detached homes in Chevy Chase and the next block, which, as you know, is bounded by Wisconsin Avenue. We have heard similar concerns from representatives of the Town of Chevy Chase.

Your correspondence is timely, as the planning team is preparing preliminary recommendations on the Bethesda Downtown Plan for the Planning Board. There is a long way to go before the Board or the County Council approves any plan, so I would urge you continue to make your concerns known.

The block containing the Women's Market and the county parking lot makes a compressed transition from the urban scale development along Wisconsin Avenue to the detached houses fronting along 46th Street. In the Bethesda Downtown Plan, this site needs to be dealt with very sensitively to make sure that any future development maintains an appropriate transition. This master plan may call for taller buildings to be allowed along Wisconsin Avenue, as are allowed under the current mixed-use zoning on this site, however the eastern portion of the site should be compatible with the single family neighborhood to the east of 46th street. In order to ensure an appropriate transition, and to achieve our goal of enhancing open space within downtown Bethesda, the master plan may call for a linear greenway running parallel to 46th Street. Moreover, the Plan is likely to call for any redevelopment toward the east of this site be lower rise residential, compatible with the homes along 46th Street. Moreover, the zoning code contains requirements for buildings that confront a residential zone to be stepped back appropriately to foster compatibility.

As you note in your email, a developer has presented a concept for redeveloping the County's surface parking lot. This concept calls for low-rise or townhouse development on the eastern portion of the site. This is a conceptual proposal for land that the developer does not control. There is a long way to go – and much uncertainty, including whether the County would enter into the necessary agreement with this or another developer – between this concept and any redevelopment of this site.

Thanks for your interest in this planning effort and the future of Bethesda. We will keep your concerns in mind as we move forward. And again I urge you to stay involved in this process.

Leslye Howerton, Assoc. AIA, LEED-GA

Planner Coordinator, Area One

Montgomery County Planning Department

M-NCPPC

8787 Georgia Avenue

Silver Spring, MD 20910

301.495.4551, leslye.howerton@montgomeryplanning.org

montgomeryplanning.org

[www.Bethesda Downtown Plan](http://www.BethesdaDowntownPlan.com)

sign up for our e-mail list [here](#)

DEC 15 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

From: Andrea Harris <andrea.dee.harris@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2015 8:10 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: fcecere@townofchevy Chase.org; kstrom@townofchevy Chase.org
Subject: comments on planning board draft Bethesda Sector plans for 'Southern Gateway'

December 14, 2015

VIA EMAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair

and Members of the County Planning Board

Montgomery County Planning Board

8787 Georgia Avenue

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Bethesda Sector Plan: Eastern Greenway/Wisconsin Avenue Corridor "Southern Gateway" Proposal

Chairman Anderson and Members of the County Planning Board:

I am writing to individually voice my opposition to the so-called "Southern Gateway" component of the Eastern Greenway/Wisconsin Avenue Corridor in the May 2015 Staff Draft of the Bethesda Sector Plan. Specifically, I consider the proposals in the Staff Draft to include a proposal (i) to increase the zoning for building height for the St. John's Parish, the St. John's parking lot, and the Bray & Scarf building (6801 Wisconsin) to 145 feet, (ii) to increase the zoning for the Shops at Wisconsin Avenue to 120 feet, and (iii) to increase the zoning for the portion bordering West Avenue between Bradley Lane and Stanford Street to 70 feet.

I believe that a) the impact of these changes on surrounding community has not been adequately analyzed, and that if implemented these changes will have a SIGNIFICANT negative impact on traffic, safety, and quality of life for our community, and b) the process leading to development of this draft has NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY PUBLICIZED or vetted with the most heavily impacted residents.

Development on this scale is inconsistent with the predominantly single-home residential character of the Town of Chevy Chase adjacent to the proposed zoning changes. Moreover, development on this scale is inconsistent with numerous other goals articulated in the Staff's Plan, as outlined in the Baskir/Freedman letter of December 8th (to which I am also a co-signatory).

I am particularly concerned with the proposed zoning changes contemplate multi-story development on West Avenue directly adjacent to existing single family residential areas on West Avenue, Ridge and Stanford Streets and Bradley Lane with no buffer.

Furthermore, this is a significant reversal of existing policies to mitigate the impact of rapid urbanization on long-existing residential communities. If implemented as planned, it will indelibly and irreversibly change the character of the community. I have been a resident of the Town of Chevy Chase for my entire life, and this is the first time that I feel that Bethesda planning has directly impacted my life in such a tangible way.

Transparency on this issue – and assuring full and complete consultation with surrounding citizens who will be impacted is incumbent on the planning board and the Bethesda and Montgomery County public authorities. Regardless of public revenue goals for the municipal or county budget, it is simply unacceptable for the property owners on Wisconsin Avenue to be given free reign in pursuing their desire for personal gain, at the direct personal cost to surrounding residents.

I want to outline several additional concerns:

1. The vast majority of impacted residents are entirely unaware of these proposed changes. 85% of the residents on my own block were unaware of these plans as recently as three weeks ago, when a small group of neighbors began to discuss them. **All of the neighbors I have spoken to are alarmed and outraged at the proposed zoning changes and their potential impact on our community.**
2. **The proposed 'stepback' plans are, in my view and those of my neighbors, only token and do not significantly mitigate any of the visual or practical impacts of drastic increase in building heights and densities. There is in essence no buffer between these proposed high-density developments and the Town of Chevy Chase.**
3. Just a few years ago, a traffic study identified the intersection of Bradley/Wisconsin (and by extension the nearby intersection of Bradley and West) as one of the most severely dysfunctional and dangerous intersections in the area. These plans, if implemented will **severely intensify the traffic/congestion/noise and cut-through problems** associated with this severely strained infrastructural dilemma. No plan has been made (or announced) to address these potential impacts.
4. Over the past 15 years, impact of the poor advance planning for the SHOPS at Wisconsin Avenue (where Trader Joes is currently located) has created severe noise, traffic, and nuisance impacts. I personally am awakened virtually EVERY night due to loading dock, truck traffic, or construction noise, and have been unable to get resolution to these problems despite many hours (over many years) of effort. Redevelopment of the adjacent properties will exacerbate these problems to an unmanageable degree. **West Avenue will in effect become an 'access road' to these new mixed use buildings, and this is an unacceptable price to place on the shoulders of a small number of nearby residents.**
5. It is unclear to any nearby residents what 'air rights' have been given and are being 'traded" (particularly between St. Johns Church and the adjacent property) and their role in the current zoning plans. **Full transparency and community awareness on this front is also essential – why are Bethesda and the County not taking this responsibility seriously?**
6. Impacts on school overcrowding, community green space and recreational opportunities, pedestrian safety and other quality of life issues have **not been adequately studied or publicized.**

7. Impact on construction staging and process have not been adequately studied or publicized prior to proposing action on these zoning adjustments.

Again, to the best of my knowledge, no public comments appear to have been filed on behalf of the proposed changes. Those who stand to benefit are the private property owners, and the community members located in near proximity to these properties stands to lose the most in both direct and indirect impairment of their ability to enjoy their own homes/properties in peace, quiet and safety. I reiterate in the strongest possible terms my belief that the proposed zoning changes should be stricken from the draft Bethesda development plan.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please include them in the public record.

Andrea D. Harris

Resident and Owner, 4428 Ridge Street

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Cc: Roger Berliner

Mark Elrich

Nancy Floreen

George Leventhal

Hans Riemer

Al Lang

Fred Cecere

MCP-CTRACK

From: Harris, Patricia A. <paharris@lercheary.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2015 8:27 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan Worksession -- West Lane

Dear Chair Anderson,

I wanted to quickly touch base prior to today's Sector Plan worksession with respect to the West Lane property and the owners request for an additional .5 FAR (19,000 square feet) and an additional 15' in height. As you noted when we previously spoke about this property, unlike perhaps any other in the Sector Plan area, it is moving forward -- the Owner has filed building permit plans which are currently under review. Thus, allocation of additional density on this site will materialize and result in additional residential units less than 800' from the Metro. Unfortunately, the costs of the project are significant (including unexpected costs of \$600,000 for having to convert to a high rise construction type and close to \$1,000,000 for undergrounding utilities) and the current project is relatively small -- resulting in significant costs per unit. The requested increase in height and density would allow for an increase in the number of units from 112 to approximately 144 units, including 5 additional MPDUs, for a total of 22.

I hope this is helpful and I look forward to discussing this further at the worksession. Thank you.

Pat

--

Patricia A. Harris - Attorney

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MCP-CTRACK

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

1348

From: Judith McGuire <judithsmcguire@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2015 5:40 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan Comments

Dear Mr. Casey and members of the County Planning Board.

I understand you are considering the Bethesda sector plan again tomorrow night (Dec. 15, 2015). As a neighbor I'd like to ask you to put the brakes on by reducing total future capacity in Bethesda from the previous proposals. This includes both height and density and it is particularly important along Wisconsin Avenue. My main motivation is that you are going to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Right now there is gridlock on Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue between the Beltway and the District Line. East-West highway and Bradley Lane often have more cars than they can handle between Connecticut and Wisconsin and the intersections among those east-west and north-south arteries are already over-capacity. By more than doubling the office space, commercial space, and residential space in Bethesda you will make it so unpleasant to get to Bethesda that people will avoid it and the great area we have will crash. We will be left with unoccupied buildings, ugly canyons of skyscrapers, and lack of green space. In addition, all the local schools will be grossly overcapacity with no obvious place for a new school.

I particularly object to turning the parking lots between Wisconsin Avenue and West St. into miniature parks overshadowed by huge buildings. Please, keep building height to human scale: 150 feet or less. Reduce the prospective density from the current plan. Increase the connected green space in Bethesda.

If you look regionally at all the development it is a recipe for disaster between White Flint, Chevy Chase Lake, and Bethesda.

Please wake up and come to your senses. People aren't going to stop driving to Bethesda (until they not longer want to go there). Reduce the overall size of Bethesda's expansion and distribute it away from Wisconsin Avenue. It's the only sane thing to do.

Judith McGuire
4003 Rosemary St.
Chevy Chase, MD 20815