



Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, Work Session #8

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Completed: 02.18.16

Description

Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan: Work Session #8

Summary

Staff will present to the Planning Board the Plan recommendations for Parks and Open Space, Ecology and the High Performance Area in Downtown Bethesda.

The work session discussion will begin with an overview of the Parks and Open Space goals and recommendations for the Plan area followed by a discussion with the Planning Board of specific Parks and Open Space concerns addressed during the Public Hearing and through written testimony received by Planning Board members and staff.

Following the Parks and Open Space discussion, staff will present an overview of the High Performance Area and Environmental goals and recommendations as outlined in the Public Hearing Draft. The overview will be followed by a discussion with the Planning Board of specific recommendations presented.

DISCUSSION

Vision

In 2035, Bethesda residents will have a downtown that is a model for sustainability, accessibility, equity and innovation. There will be more affordable choices of housing in close proximity to jobs, shopping and recreation. They will safely walk and bike along shaded streets to stores and offices, past new energy-efficient buildings and familiar landmarks. New parks and open spaces will provide green, tranquil places for the residents, their families and friends to gather, socialize and relax. Nearby Metrorail and new Purple Line stations will be quickly reached via green corridors that line streets and sidewalks to meet the needs of both the residents and visitors to Downtown Bethesda.

This vision stems from the goals and recommendations within this Sector Plan to enhance Downtown Bethesda over the next 20 years. The aim of the Plan is not to radically transform the community but to achieve a truly sustainable downtown through incremental measures addressing its economic, social and environmental future.

Planning Framework

Overarching Goals:

Specifically, the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan builds on the past successes of Downtown Bethesda to create a truly sustainable downtown by focusing on recommendations to increase:

- Affordable Housing
- **Parks and Open Space**
- **Environmental Innovation**
- Economic Competitiveness

Strengthened Centers of Activity:

Bethesda is distinguished by multiple downtowns within its greater Downtown. Identified in Chapter Three are nine districts, including the established centers of the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor, Bethesda Row and Woodmont Triangle; emerging centers of the Pearl and Arlington South Districts; and residential and edge districts of Battery Lane, Eastern Greenway, South Bethesda and Arlington North. The Plan explores ways to strengthen these centers of activity through the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability.

Parks and Open Space Recommendations

Summary

The recommendations for the parks, trails and open spaces in the Bethesda Downtown Plan achieve 3 major goals: to support the centers of activity with civic green gathering spaces, to provide linkages and signature gateways to the major trail systems, and to create livable communities and appropriate transitions by greening and buffering the edges.

The new parks are envisioned to have different roles and functions in order to create a full system of open space opportunities for the residents and workers of Bethesda. The recommendations include new

parks for active recreation, central gathering spaces, walk to neighborhood parks, and an interconnected system of trails to connect the various open spaces. The park recommendations follow the guidance in the 2012 Park Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan to provide a system of parks and open spaces for every urban master plan or sector plan area through a combination of public and private efforts. Urban open space systems should support a vibrant and sustainable urban center by creating open spaces that will be comfortable, attractive, easily accessible, and provide a range of experiences. Those open spaces that rise to the level of serving as a focal point of community life for the sector plan area are typically recommended to be publicly owned and operated parks, while those open spaces serving each district, neighborhood, or block are often recommended as public use spaces to be owned by the private sector. The following hierarchy should be applied to all urban master plans and sector plans:

For the Sector Plan Area:

- active recreation destinations within or near the plan area
- a central civic urban park, ranging in size from 1/2 to 2 acres
- an interconnected system of sidewalks and trails to connect parks and open spaces
- wooded areas that will provide a sense of contact with nature

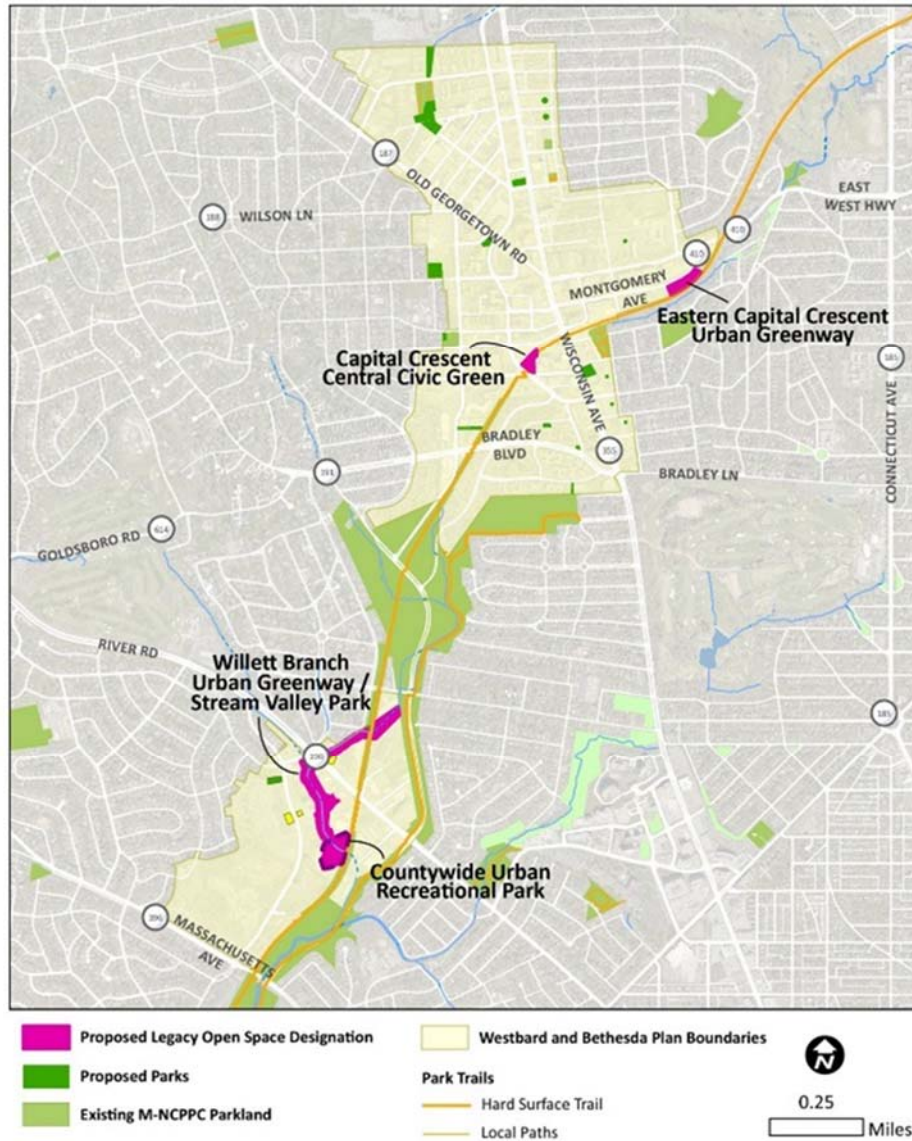
This PROS Plan redefines urban parks by revising the Park Classification System to better reflect the open space needs of urban communities. The revised Park Classification System includes three urban park types under Countywide Parks - Civic Green, Countywide Urban Recreational Park, and Urban Greenway and three under Community Use Parks - Community Use Urban Recreational Park, Urban Buffer Park, and Neighborhood Green.

Staff will be discussing the vision, role and implementation scenario for each new park and trail recommendation.

Revisions to the Plan Recommendations: Legacy Open Space Designations

The Legacy Open Space program has evaluated all the proposed parks in the Bethesda Downtown and Westbard Sector plans to determine if any sites merit designation as LOS Urban Open Spaces. After analysis and review with the LOS Advisory Group, Park Planning & other Park staff and Planning Department staff, staff has identified two additional sites of countywide significance that should be designated as LOS Urban Open Spaces: the Capital Crescent Civic Green and the Eastern Capital Crescent Urban Greenway. These recommended sites in Bethesda complement two sites already designated in the Planning Board Draft of the Westbard Sector Plan. See the figure below for the locations of the four proposed LOS Urban Open Spaces across the two plans:

Proposed Legacy Open Space Urban Designations in Westbard Sector and Bethesda Downtown Plans



The unifying theme for these four Urban Open Spaces is that they provide for a variety of types of green and recreational spaces along the County’s most heavily used trail, the Capital Crescent Trail. The four sites include two Urban Greenways, one Countywide Urban Recreational Park, and one Central Civic Green. These sites all meet the LOS criteria to increase access to open space and recreation in dense urban communities, to promote interconnectivity of the urban green infrastructure, and to provide community open space for casual use and large community gatherings. These park spaces adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail clearly rise to the level of being “best of the best” open spaces in the entire County that deserve designation in LOS and active efforts to implement as public parkland.

Designation of these sites in the LOS Functional Master Plan via the Bethesda Downtown Plan provides additional tools, including access to LOS funding, to make the implementation of these two parks a reality as Bethesda moves forward as an urban destination to live, work and play.

In section 2.7.3.A.3 (page 77), add the following paragraph to the description of the Capitol Crescent Civic Green:

Implementation: The Capital Crescent Civic Green meets the criteria to be designated as an Urban Open Space of countywide importance within the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan (2001). This critical civic green will create one of the primary green spaces in the center of Bethesda. It will provide key community open space for recreation and casual use by the large population center in this community, as well as support trail usage and special events to serve the entire County. Designating this site in the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan here provides for the use of Legacy Open Space tools and funding to implement this park recommendation.

In section 2.7.3.B.3 (page 79), add the following paragraph to the description of the Eastern Capital Crescent Urban Greenway:

Implementation: The Eastern Capital Crescent Urban Greenway meets the criteria to be designated as an Urban Open Space within the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan (2001). This new Urban Greenway will increase access between one of the most important trail corridors in the County and the center of Bethesda and will provide key additional recreational open space to a community with high population density. Designating this site in the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan here provides for the use of Legacy Open Space tools and funding to implement this park recommendation.

The proposed parks and their implementation scenarios

Since the beginning of this planning process, staff has been working with property owners to get a sense of viable public space locations and implementation scenarios. These scenarios will be discussed at the work session. Staff is recommending approximately 12 acres of new parkland to serve the growing population of Bethesda.

Name	Summary of testimony	Staff Response
Aldon Management	Support the recommendation to Expand Battery Lane Urban Park and create better connectivity. Concept for Arlington South property shows a proposed neighborhood open space and gateway feature.	N/A
Harvey Companies and Scheer Partners – corner of Arlington Road and Bradley Blvd.	Agree with vision if they get sufficient density and height. Disagree to a plaza on Arlington Road. Agree with a linear pedestrian/bike connection to the Capital Crescent Trail. Are suggesting a new accessible trail connection, a new gathering space by the trail, and new gathering space in front of the existing office building. Would like text changes to allow more flexibility in design.	The proposed plaza at the office building is in the interior of the site and will need to be design in such a way that the public knows it is a public space and open to all. Staff agrees with the text changes.
Battery Lane residents – numerous emails and a petition	Residents do not want a street through the park.	The proposed street would only occur if there is no net loss of parkland to Battery Lane Urban Park.
GNRW Properties LLC on Glenbrook Road	Designation of their entire site for a park severely limits the re-development opportunities for their property. Requests text change to suggest part of the property may be used to expand the park.	This Plan recommends a long term vision for parks. The intent is to acquire the property when the owner is ready to sell.

<p>Mark Scheffkind letter about expanding Caroline Freeland Urban Park</p>	<p>Opposed to expansion because, it was not mentioned during the facility plan, it is too expensive and it should not be used for new parking spaces.</p>	<p>Regarding the Caroline Freeland Facility Plan process, the recommendation to acquire Lot 6 was first proposed as part of the Draft Bethesda Downtown Plan (May 2015), which came only two months prior to the approval of the Facility Plan on July 16, 2015. This draft recommendation was referenced in the Facility Plan Staff Memo under the “Master Plan Recommendations” section (page 3) and was also specifically noted during the Planning Board hearing presentation on July 16, 2015. The Staff Memo simply stated that “if acquired for parkland in the future, the land may be used as an extension of play areas, planted buffers, and may accommodate requested accessible parking.” The accessible parking comment was provided by CPWD (Commission on People with Disabilities) during a briefing to them on 10/8/14. If the property were eventually acquired, there would be a public process established to determine the program for the acquired portion of the park, which is when the concerns over the accessible parking space requested could be addressed. Urban parks are typically considered “walk to” amenities.</p>
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Environmental and High Performance Area Recommendations

Staff will be discussing the vision, goals and recommendations for the High Performance Area and specific environmental recommendations related to Energy, Canopy Cover, Green Cover and Stormwater.

Plan Vision

The central theme of this Sector Plan is sustainability, not just environmental sustainability but also economic and social sustainability. Integrating the latest planning principles for each of these three elements such as affordable housing, alternative modes of transportation, access to parks, high performance buildings, and greener streets will increase urban livability and desirability for Bethesda's residents, support a prosperous economy, and provide a healthy place to live work and recreate.

The Sector Plan establishes goals for each of these elements and then sets forth a system for measuring success toward reaching the goals. Each idea proposed herein can be evaluated in terms of six key performance areas that are important measures of overall sustainability. The targeted performance areas for Downtown Bethesda include:

- Community Identity
- Equity
- **Habitat and Health**
- Access and Mobility
- **Water**
- **Energy and Materials**

Many of these performance areas are already well integrated into the fabric of Bethesda's existing urban landscape. The recommendations within the plan fill in the gaps where improvements can be made to make Bethesda better, forward thinking, progressive, and a destination point.

High Performance Area Goals and Recommendations:

This designation aims to raise the level of sustainability through exceeding the County's minimum requirements for high performing, energy-efficient buildings that save resources, decrease operating and maintenance costs, and incentivize development that will help achieve the County's climate objective. The High Performance Area will be implemented through the public benefits in the Commercial Residential (CR) zone.

Energy-efficient buildings will be accomplished through the optional method of development that allows higher density as an incentive to providing significant public benefits. This Plan prioritizes the benefit points for energy conservation and generation.

Environmental Goals and Recommendations:

The Sector Plan recommends strategies that compensate, mitigate, and minimize lost resources to grow a healthier and greener downtown. These approaches include transit-oriented development to lessen carbon outputs; high performance buildings to lower energy demand and operational costs; stormwater management that mimics nature to improve groundwater recharge and stream quality; and stratified vegetative plantings to improve habitat, purify air and water, and cool the urban landscape. When implemented comprehensively and on a site-by-site basis, these performance-based recommendations can be quantified and measured to improve and sustain a healthier, greener and more prosperous community.

Canopy Cover and Green Cover:

Through the recommendations identified below, this Sector Plan aims to reestablish and link green spaces via streetscape improvements, tree canopy corridors and green roofs.

A. Goals:

- Increase overall tree canopy cover.
- Reduce heat island effect.
- Improve air quality.

B. Recommendations:

The following recommendations are critical to achieving the habitat goals of this Sector Plan:

- Supplement tree planting along streets and public space to achieve a minimum of 50 percent canopy cover.
- On private property, provide a minimum of 35 percent green cover, which may include either singularly or a combination of the following:
 - Intensive green roof (six-inches or deeper).
 - Tree canopy cover

Stormwater:

Improving water quality in the three receiving tributaries (Coquelin Run, Bethesda Mainstem and Willett Branch) is an important goal that will take many years to achieve. With each new development and streetscape design, the construction of integrated stormwater management treatments will begin to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater runoff and water in the receiving streams.

A. Goals:

- Reduce untreated stormwater runoff to improve stream quality.

B. Recommendations:

- Integrate stormwater management within the right-of-way where feasible.
- Plant intensive green roofs

- Use Low-Impact Development Techniques

CONCLUSION

Following the February 25, 2016 work session, staff will summarize the parks and open space and the high performance area and environmental decisions recommended by the Planning Board and post them to the Downtown Bethesda website.

Attachments

- February 4, 2016 work session #7– Planning Board recommended zoning and building heights for the South Bethesda District and revised building heights map
- Recent Correspondence between February 4, 2016 and February 17, 2016

MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED
02 13
FEB 17 2016

From: Sarah Hughes <sarah94hughes@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 6:11 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Design research shows children need open space to develop creative thinking

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

Dear Board Chairman,

Good morning,

My name is Sarah Hughes and I am a Bethesda resident and the mother of a 5 year old son who, in warmer weather, plays in Battery Park every afternoon.

I am also a K-12 education researcher and grant writer.

I oppose putting a road that cuts through Battery Park.

Design research* shows that young people need a few key things to foster their creativity:

Freedom
Mobility
Security
Exploration in Environment
Comfort

(*page 35 of Effective Design Principles in Promotion of Children's Creativity in Residential Spaces article)

A road through Battery Lane Park hampers young children's ability to experience those 5 key things that promote and foster their sense of creativity in an open green space.

A road limits their sense of freedom; their mobility within the park; their sense of comfort and security within the park; and their ability to fully explore the environment.

Please keep Battery Lane Park as a whole and intact green space where young people can feel free to run around to their hearts content, and fully explore and take in the green space around them.

Best,
Sarah Hughes

MCP-CTRACK

From: Michele Rosenfeld <rosenfeldlaw@mail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 10:37 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Downtown Plan: Christopher Condominium (Arlington North District)
Attachments: 2.17.2016 PB letter.pdf

Dear Chairman Anderson:

Please see the attached request that the Board reconsider its preliminary action on the proposed ZOM development based on material information that was not made available to the Board during the course of its deliberations, and that the Christopher Condominium be allowed to testify before the Board on the issues raised.

Regards,

Michele Rosenfeld
The Law Office of Michele Rosenfeld LLC
1 Research Court
Suite 450
Rockville MD 20850
301-204-0913 (direct)
rosenfeldlaw@mail.com (email)
michelerosenfeldllc.com (website)



THE LAW OFFICE OF
**Michele
Rosenfeld LLC**

February 17, 2016

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Bethesda Downtown Plan: Moorland Lane and Arlington Road Properties, Bethesda

Dear Chairman Anderson:

I represent the Christopher Condominium, located in the Arlington North District of the Bethesda Downtown Plan ("Sector Plan"). The Christopher Condominium abuts 3 of the 7 properties under contract to developer ZOM Mid-Atlantic ("ZOM"), which has proposed zoning densities that will allow it to build a mid-rise 7-story residential building with more than 120 apartments. Those properties currently are improved with single-family structures that are used primarily for commercial purposes.

During the Board's January 7, 2016 Sector Plan Worksession #6, ("Worksession"), without notice to the Christopher Condominium, the Planning Board discussed and then voted in favor of increased height for all of the seven parcels from 35 to 75 feet, and increased FAR from 2.25 to 4.0 – despite a Staff recommendation of a maximum height of 50 feet with a FAR of 2.75.

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention information that was not provided to the Board during its Worksession, and to ask that the Board reconsider its decision in light of this information.

Material Supplemental Information

During the Worksession, various attorneys speaking before the Planning Board held a discussion about density that ZOM, in its June 24, 2015 letter to the Board, described as "lost" density.¹ What

¹ Heather Dhlopolsky: [...] the property sold off significant density to the adjacent building back a number of years ago. [...] the 4 FAR is what is needed to make the pro-forma work, to make something happen here. So that's the reality that we're dealing with. [...] And we just have a problem with the numbers working for us.

Chairman Anderson: Okay. And I have to ask you about that last part. If you sold off the density, why should you get it back for free? [...]

David Lieb: *[interjecting]* [...] If I can try and make a clarification . . . If I'm not mistaken, there might have been a private transaction. There wasn't a density transfer, I don't think, in the sense that we usually think about it. I think they were made part of the gross tract area that was included in an application. Is that correct?

Heather Dhlopolsky: I believe it actually was a density transfer. [...]

David Lieb: I didn't think density transfers were permitted in this area.

was not made clear is that the density was not "lost," and the Board was not made aware of the following information when it considered the ZOM proposal:

1. Approximately 69,000 square feet of density was transferred from five of the adjoining lots and incorporated into the Christopher Condominium as part of a carefully conceived development plan design approved by the Council when all of the properties were rezoned from R-60 to the TSR zone.
2. This density transfer, implemented pursuant to zoning standards in effect at the time, was approved because all of the properties were the subject of TS-R rezoning applications approved in 1988 and recorded on a single Record Plat (No. 17325). The density transfer was achieved through the *de facto* assemblage of the properties into a unified development design.²
3. As part of the rezoning from R-60 to TS-R, the Council established non-professional residential offices as a permissible use of the 5 houses.
4. In the unified site plan, the 5 house parcels retained only approximately 15,678 square feet of density – the area of their existing structures plus enough additional density for some modest additions.
5. When the condominium units were marketed and sold, the marketing materials depicted the enclave of single-family houses, known as "The Mews," as part of the project.
6. The Mews includes streetscape features such as trellised and paved walkways, extensive landscaping, 15 streetlights, 5 historic signs, and large shade trees, all required by the site plan and designed to unify them with the Christopher Condominium.
7. The Christopher Condominium and the Mews properties are linked through common easements: owners of three of the Mews parcels have pedestrian and vehicular access easements across 3,800 feet of the Christopher's paved driveway, and the Christopher has perpetual shared easement rights over more than 600 square feet of walkways linked to four of the five parcels.
8. The Christopher Condominium pays for the 15 streetlights in the Mews.

Heather Dhltopolsky: [...] I think it was part of a local map amendment application.

David Lieb: I stand corrected.

David Brown: I think it was TS-R rezoning. It was part of TS-R.... aggregation of properties.

This colloquy was transcribed from the on-line video of the Worksession.

² The developer paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for this density. The high-rise building is on Lot 16, and the 5 house parcels are identified as Lots 17 thru 21. Attachment One. The homes in the Mews are located at: 4816 Moorland Lane; 4820 Moorland Lane; 4910 Moorland Lane; 7507 Arlington Road; and 7509 Arlington Road.

A November 1987 Planning Staff memorandum to the County Council analyzing the proposed TS-R rezoning application explained the relationship between the Christopher Condominium, the Mews, and the single-family community across the Arlington Road:

Such [commercial] uses [in the single-family structures] would provide a buffer between high density residential areas and the single-family community west of Arlington Road. If offices are retained, they would be included in the development standards calculation, for any unified parcel that includes such a use. Thus, some density, within the parcel, would be shifted to other new buildings in the project... The intent of the amendment is to permit existing offices to remain, if approved as part of a development plan.

The unused density (actually the number of square feet, that are not being used by the houses) has been incorporated into the proposed project, thereby preserving the existing small buildings and allowing the new apartment building to be correspondingly larger. *Once this project is approved with the 2-story buildings incorporated in it, no more intense development of the property will be permitted.* [Emphasis added.]

A December 1987 Technical Staff Report to the County Council explained that "The five lots with existing residential structures to be retained will provide a desirable, small-scale building edge along Arlington Road." And when the development subsequently underwent site plan review,³ Planning staff noted in its report to the Board that:

The site plan achieves an efficient and desirable arrangement of buildings given the assemblage of lots. The plan locates the tallest portion of the apartment building, 13 stories, parallel to Woodmont Ave and steps down with two terraces to an 8-story building adjacent to the Chase, an existing 8-story building to the south. *One of the more desirable aspects of the plan is the preserved residential character along Arlington Road which will be maintained in perpetuity as established by approval of the site plan.*" [Emphasis added.]

The record clearly shows that the assembled site design reflects the "residential urban village character" cited in the Sector Plan's vision, and the Board's recommendation to allow significantly higher density virtually ensures that these design features cannot be retained or replicated in any meaningful way.

The Christopher Condominium's Position on Sector Plan Recommendations

That said, the Christopher Condominium is not opposed to a Sector Plan recommendation that would allow redevelopment of the Mews and adjoining properties, but only on a far lower scale than ZOM has proposed. Any new development must remain in keeping with the original unified design approved in the Christopher's site plan by continuing the current residential character of Arlington Road in along the northern blocks. On the east side of Arlington Road is the 2-story tier of the Garden Plaza building set back 55 feet from Arlington Road and extending 43 feet further back; on the west side is the Bethesda Elementary School zoned R-60 with single-family homes.

The Board recognized at its Worksession that any new development should have a lower height along Arlington Road. Moreover, any new building would need to have design features to ensure compatibility with The Christopher's gracious front entrance and circular driveway, which now faces

³ Site Plan Review #8-88031, staff report dated Sept 12, 1988.

the carefully streetscaped Mews. We would ask that such design features be incorporated into the recommendations of the amended Sector Plan.

We do not at this time seek to address any other density issues such as traffic, schools, Metro station overload and impaired quality of life occurring with the 630 new dwelling units that have been built within three blocks of The Christopher in the last two years, and 70 more approved.

We ask that the Board take up these properties again to reconsider its recommendation for excessive height and density for the ZOM property in light of this supplemental information, and I ask for an opportunity to speak on these issues when it does.

Respectfully,

Michele Rosenfeld, Esq.

cc: Leslye Howerton, MC Planning Dept. Staff
Heather Dishopolsky, Esq., Counsel for ZOM Mid-Atlantic

From: Alicia Delahunty <info@valuablelessons.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 13, 2016 4:14 PM
To: COUNCILMEMBER.BERLINER@MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD.GOV; McManus, Patricia; Wright, Gwen; Howerton, Leslye; Kronenberg, Robert; MCP-Chair; adacompliance@montgomerycountymd.gov
Cc: Holly Clemans; Michael Fetchko; Judyth Gilbert; Lv1509; Lakshmi Goparaju; Elizabeth LeBarron; Kevie Niland; Lee Weinstein; Daniel Velez; Duane Arenales; Bonnie Forman; Susan Spring
Subject: Bethesda's disappearing grass and trees/Road expansion in Battery Lane Park/Doublethink and Doublespeak

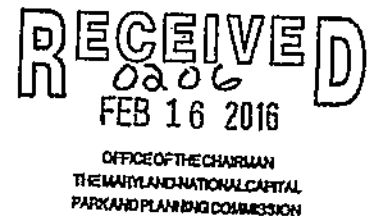
Dear Council Member Berliner, Planning Board Chairman - Casey Anderson, Area One Division Chief - Robert Kronenberg, Project Manager - Leslye Howerton, Planning Director - Gwen Wright, Parks Section Chief - Patricia McManus, ADA Compliance - Nancy Greene, Montgomery County Officials,

Bethesda's grass and trees are disappearing.
Last month I sent you photographs of thirteen of the trees recently removed from Battery Lane Park. Now the county will be considering a road "expansion" of Battery Lane Park at Worksession #8 of the Bethesda Downtown Plan.

How is more pavement equal to more parkland?

The County recommendations are for the withering away of grass and trees and, at the same time, the County stands for the strengthening of parks and recreation, which represents the most desirable and valuable of all forms of the County.

This is doublespeak and to accept the above is to ask us to doublethink as in "1984"
- for ordinary County residents to accept simultaneously two mutually contradictory beliefs as correct.



Our family has enjoyed Battery Lane Park since our son was tiny and we would like it to continue for the next generation.

Please put an end to the planned road through, along, or beside Battery Lane Park, Bethesda.

Keep Battery Lane Park kid-safe and car-free!

The planned new road expansion of Battery Lane Park:

- will increase car traffic and discourage walking and bike commuting.
- will not achieve its stated goal of revitalizing the Rugby Lane area, as cars are not a necessary precondition of commercial success.
- will reduce unbroken green space in an area that is losing trees and permeable landscape already at an astonishing rate.
- will render dangerous and unusable one of the only children's recreation options in the Woodmont Triangle area when we are adding new families every month with new multifamily unit construction.

I am concerned the County may be envisioning a "Battery Row" future for Battery Lane Park

- joining Battery and Norfolk commercially
with another cobblestone retail shared park street
as is now between Bethesda Avenue and Elm Street
marketed as Bethesda Row.

Please reconsider.

Battery Lane Park is for the young-at-heart, of all physical and mental abilities,

for real children of all ages, not Pottery Barn Kids®.

Sincerely,
Alicia Delahunty

VALUABLE LESSONS

from

Alicia Delahunty

M.S. University of Maryland

C.E.L.T.A. University of Cambridge (U.K.)

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MCP-Chair

From: Allan Kaye <gwenallan@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 13, 2016 4:36 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: An alternate proposal for Battery Lane Park

An alternate proposal for Battery Lane Park: Leave the park as a park and change Norfolk Avenue into a pedestrian only mall.

Montgomery County is proposing cutting a road through a park to connect Battery Lane to Norfolk Avenue in Bethesda. The noise, pollution and danger created by the roadway will make the park a much less attractive place for children to play and for pedestrians to walk to the stores, restaurants, and public transportation in downtown Bethesda.

Rather than increase the traffic in Bethesda, the planning commission should look to ways to make Bethesda a more pedestrian friendly city. To that end a better plan for the citizens and merchants of Bethesda would be to turn Norfolk Avenue into a **Pedestrian only mall** from the park to Woodmont Avenue.

Surrounding Norfolk Avenue are several public parking garages and condo/apartment complexes with underground parking. I have walked down Norfolk Avenue to check and found not one of these parking facilities enter or exit onto Norfolk Avenue. All parking facilities enter and exit on the cross streets. Norfolk Avenue is parallel to two main roads, Wisconsin Avenue on one side and Old Georgetown road on the other.

Many cities both large and small around the world have been creating pedestrian only zones to encourage their citizens to walk and utilize their intercity. A pedestrian zone rather than additional vehicular traffic would be a better direction for Bethesda. Currently Bethesda closes Norfolk Avenue to traffic half a dozen times a year for public food and art festivals or summer farmers markets. Keeping it closed all year will just enhance Bethesda's attraction as a walkable urban environment.

--

Allan Kaye gwenallan@gmail.com

From: holclem@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2016 4:41 PM
To: MCP-Chair; Howerton, Leslye; Kronenberg, Robert; McManus, Patricia;
councilmember.berliner@mccouncilmd.lmhostediq.com
Subject: Improve Battery Lane Park Without Dangerous Road
Attachments: Battery Lane Park NO Road Feb 14 2016.docx

From:Holly and Jim Clemans
4977 Battery Lane #420
Bethesda MD 20814
phone: 301 802 1030
holclem@aol.com

To: Bethesda Planning Board Members and Elected Officials

Subject: Improve Battery Lane Park Without the Proposed Dangerous Road
Date: February 14, 2016

Dear Planning Board Members and Elected Officials,

We are again contacting you to say that we are strongly against the proposed "shared park street" for car traffic to run through Battery Lane Park. We are not opposed to adding land that is contiguous to the park or making improvements such as lighting, or even improving park visibility from Battery Lane and Rugby and Norfolk Streets. We think that the existing north end of Norfolk Street redesigned as a shared access street, could be a beneficial neighborhood feature. Several community events already take place at the Norfolk location. The Bethesda Sector Plan should keep Battery Lane Park as a green park with no planned street.

A new road through our park brings the danger of car traffic (even if it is planned to be slow traffic) into our quiet, safe park, where children play and people of all ages enjoy the park, without the pollution of car exhaust and the hazards of car parking and traffic.

The developer of the proposed assisted living building at the south end of the park claims that the area is pedestrian safe for their planned elderly residents. Our park is pedestrian safe now, but if you add a road, the park could become a danger to our elderly neighbors.

We have not had a problem with crime in our park, and thus we see no reason to use the possibility of crime as an excuse to build a road through our park. We do not want to lose this grass and tree area for concrete, even though concrete and brick technically meet the definition of public space and are sometimes colored dark green on plan maps.

The current park will be disrupted by adding "retail opportunities" and/or "flexible public space for events" and concerts. We have plenty of retail nearby, and we already easily walk to Woodmont Triangle. What we need is a quiet well-maintained green park, away from car traffic.

The additional intersection would be dangerous because it is near the apex of the curvature of Battery Lane. The BCC Rescue Squad trucks, which use Battery Lane at all times of day and night, would need to run sirens and honk at the new intersection. This new road would also create an additional intersection for metro transit buses, and school buses to navigate. Unfortunately, one of the transit buses struck and killed a woman at the intersection of Battery Lane and Old Georgetown Road just 2 months ago. We implore you, who are in a position to stop this road through our park, to

carefully look at the consequences of adding cars to our safe green park, and do all you can, to put an end to this ill conceived and disastrous proposal.

We are not against the idea of acquiring additional green space for Battery Lane Park, but only if the additional land is connected to our existing parkland, and only if it is actual green grass and trees, rather than bricks, concrete or asphalt. It makes no sense to add land to the park if that land is across a street such as Battery Lane or Rugby or Norfolk avenues. Having these already existing streets break up the proposed larger park is inconvenient and dangerous to all who use our park.

There is no reason why a new road through our park would make our park better, there is no gain, no value added for our Bethesda neighborhood.

Please keep and improve Battery Lane Park as it is now: a park that is enjoyed by people of all ages, a park that provides a safe place for sitting, strolling, playing and biking, without the danger of cars on park land. It is essential to preserve and enhance our neighborhood walking and biking potential rather than expand car traffic, no matter how slow, through our park.

Please use your heart and your head to vote a resounding NO to the proposal to add car traffic to Battery Lane Park where children, dogs, elderly residents and families of all kinds play in the park's safe environment.

Thank you for your careful consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Holly and Jim Clemans

4977 Battery Lane #420
Bethesda MD 20814
phone: 301 802 1030
hojclcm@aol.com

From: Holly and Jim Clemans
4977 Battery Lane #420
Bethesda MD 20814
phone: 301 802 1030
holclem@aol.com

To: Bethesda Planning Board Members and Elected Officials

Subject: Improve Battery Lane Park without the proposed dangerous road

Date: February 14, 2016

Dear Planning Board Members and Elected Officials,

We are again contacting you to say that we are strongly against the proposed "shared park street" for car traffic to run through Battery Lane Park. We are not opposed to adding land that is contiguous to the park or making improvements such as lighting, or even improving park visibility from Battery Lane and Rugby and Norfolk Streets. We think that the existing north end of Norfolk Street redesigned as a shared access street, could be a beneficial neighborhood feature. Several community events already take place at this location. The Bethesda Sector Plan should keep Battery Lane Park as a green park without a planned street.

A new road through our park brings the danger of car traffic (even if it is planned to be slow traffic) into our quiet, safe park, where children play and people of all ages enjoy the park, without the pollution of car exhaust and the hazards of car parking and traffic.

The developer of the proposed assisted living building at the south end of the park claims that the area is pedestrian safe for their planned elderly residents. Our park is pedestrian safe now, but if you add a road, the park could become a danger to our elderly neighbors.

We have not had a problem with crime in our park, and thus we see no reason to use the possibility of crime as an excuse to build a road through our park. We do not want to lose this grass and tree area for concrete, even though concrete and brick technically meet the definition of public space and are sometimes colored dark green on plan maps.

The current park will be disrupted by adding "retail opportunities" and/or "flexible public space for events" and concerts. We have plenty of retail nearby, and we already easily walk to Woodmont Triangle. What we need is a quiet well-maintained green park, away from car traffic.

The additional intersection would be dangerous because it is near the apex of the curvature of Battery Lane. The BCC Rescue Squad trucks, which use Battery Lane at all times of day and night, would need to run sirens and honk at the new intersection. This new road would also create an additional intersection for metro transit buses, and school buses to navigate. Unfortunately, one of the transit buses struck and killed a woman at the intersection of Battery Lane and Old Georgetown Road just 2 months ago. We implore you, who are in a position to stop this road through our park, to carefully look at the consequences of adding cars to our safe green park, and do all you can, to put an end to this ill conceived and disastrous proposal.

Subject: Improve Battery Lane Park without proposed dangerous road

Date: February 14, 2016

We are not against the idea of acquiring additional green space for Battery Lane Park, but only if the additional land is connected to our existing parkland, and only if it is actual green grass and trees, rather than bricks, concrete or asphalt. It makes no sense to add land to the park if that land is across a street such as Battery Lane or Rugby or Norfolk avenues. Having these already existing streets break up the proposed larger park is inconvenient and dangerous to all who use our park.

There is no reason why a new road through our park would make our park better, there is no gain, no value added for our Bethesda neighborhood. Please keep and improve Battery Lane Park as it is now: a park that is enjoyed by people of all ages, a park that provides a safe place for sitting, strolling, playing and biking, without the danger of cars on park land. It is essential to preserve and enhance our neighborhood walking and biking potential rather than expand car traffic, no matter how slow, through our park.

Please use your heart and your head to vote a resounding NO to the proposal to add car traffic to Battery Lane Park where children, dogs, elderly residents and families of all kinds play in the green park's safe environment.

Thank you for your careful consideration on this matter.
Sincerely,

Holly and Jim Clemans

4977 Battery Lane #420
Bethesda MD 20814
phone: 301 802 1030
holclem@aol.com

MCP-CTRACK

From: florez53@verizon.net
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 10:04 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Battery Park Lane

RECEIVED
0190
FEB 11 2016

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

I live across the park on Battery Lane and I would like to let you know that I am 100 percent in favor of the propose road. I moved to this area 14 years ago and I must have crossed that park, probably, only 10 times because I am afraid. The park is most of the time empty or with drunken persons sleeping there. If somebody assaults you, nobody will hear or help you. I consider the park a very dangerous place.
Gloria Florez

MCP-CTRACK

From: Robert Goldman <rgoldman@mhpartners.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 1:39 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan
Attachments: Bethesda Sector Plan.pdf

Attached is MHP's testimony on the Bethesda Sector Plan and Aldon Mgmt's proposed plan.

Rob

Robert A. Goldman, Esq.
President
Montgomery Housing Partnership

12200 Tech Road
Suite 250
Silver Spring, MD 20904
Phone - 301-622-2400 ext. 14
Direct Dial - 301-812-4114
Fax - 301-622-2800

Get updates at www.mhpartners.org

Stay connected on  



*Housing People * Empowering Families * Strengthening Neighborhoods*

February 10, 2016

Casey Anderson
Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: Bethesda Sector Plan

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The redevelopment of the vast array garden style apartments in Montgomery County is one of the most difficult issues facing the County today. These apartments typically provide a substantial amount of market rate affordable housing. At the same time, with the growth in the County, there is considerable pressure to redevelop these properties to a higher density. Considering that most new multifamily residential building is high end luxury housing, there is a real fear that the redevelopment of the garden style apartments will result in a loss of affordable housing in this County.

These issues are most prominent on Battery Lane and Bradley Blvd. — where the properties owned and managed by Aldon Management provides much needed market rate affordable housing in downtown Bethesda and provides families the benefits of strong amenities, diverse retail options, and good schools. It is also one of the most expensive areas of the County where affordable housing options are limited. Maintaining and/or developing affordable housing in Bethesda should be one of the county's top priorities. As a result, Montgomery Housing Partnership has been in lengthy discussions with Aldon Management about their proposal to redevelop their apartments on Battery Lane and Bradley Blvd.

After careful review, we do support their plan for redevelopment for the following reasons:

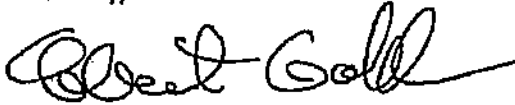
- 1) It provides a one-for-one replacement of the housing being lost. Currently the owner has 953 units in Bethesda, and the redevelopment plan calls for setting aside 953 units of affordable housing — either as MPDUs or Workforce housing.
- 2) The distribution of MPDUs and Workforce housing exceeds the resident and rent profile that currently exists at the properties.
- 3) Currently, the owner's 953 units are not regulated or part of the County's MPDU or workforce system — it is just market rate affordable housing. As a result, there is no guarantee that over time these units will stay affordable or that the occupants of the units will be people who most need an affordable place to live. Their proposed plan would put 953 units within either the County's MPDU program or Workforce Housing Program — guaranteeing the rents will be affordable under those programs and guaranteeing that the families moving into those units will be low and moderate income families under the regulations of these programs.

4) Their plan exceeds the minimum requirements of the MPDU program. In order to get a higher density, we believe that developers should in return exceed the minimum 12.5% MPDU requirement. In this case, the owner has agreed to set aside 15% as MPDUs and 10% as Workforce Development.

As a result, we are in support of Aldon Management's proposal for Bethesda. We also want to note that as you review other redevelopments of market rate affordable housing that it should not be formulaic and just a requirement of 15% MPDU/10% Workforce. Each redevelopment project has unique aspects to it and need to be analyzed separately.

I welcome the chance to discuss these issues with you further. Please feel free to reach me at rgoldman@mhppartners.org or 301-812-4114.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Goldman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert A. Goldman, Esq.
President

MCP-CTRACK

From: Lila Asher <lilaasher@verizon.net>
Sent: Sunday, February 07, 2016 1:23 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: plan

RECEIVED
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FEB 10 2016

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

Buildings or and tall buildings on the parking lots of the Town of Chevy Chase can only take away from our quality of living here. There is no need for buildings there. There is good argument or the green space although loss of all the parking will be hard on many residents. The buildings must not be allowed.

Lila Asher

MCP-CTRACK

From: Barbara Levitt <bslevitt@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 9:10 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org; townneighbors@yahoogroups.com
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan/ parking lots 10 and 24

Dear Chairman Anderson,

As senior citizens and long-time residents of the Town of Chevy Chase, we wish to express strong opposition to apparent County plans to make changes to parking lots 10 and 24. We know for a fact, based on attendance at Town meetings, that no Town residents want the County to allow developers to build buildings of any kind on the parking lots. This would be a travesty as it would ruin the look and ambiance of our historic neighborhood. There is less unanimity on whether turning the parking lots into a park would advance or retard residents' interests. We believe we speak for the vast majority of senior citizens who want the parking lots to remain parking lots and believe the fetish with parks stems to a greater extent from ideology than common sense. There are already a plethora of parks nearby, many of which appear to be underused, and very few above ground parking lots. Parks can be dangerous places at night. For older people, underground lots are no substitute because the mechanics of use are more difficult and many older people experience fear going under ground no matter how good the lighting. In short we believe that what is there works, so why change it and spend public funds in the process? Let's be practical and sensible and leave the parking lots as they are!

Sincerely yours,

David and Barbara Levitt

Sent from my iPad

MCP-CTRACK

From: Deborah Vollmer <dvollmer@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 9:14 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: 'Town Office'; 'Al Lang'; 'John Bickerman'; 'Fred Cecere'; 'Vicky Taplin'; kstrom@townofchevyCHASE.org; 'Mona Sarfaty'; 'Mary Margaret Flynn'; townneighbors@yahooGroups.com; johnafreedman@gmail.com; 'Cecily Baskir'; 'Melanie Manfield'; 'Barbara Levitt'; 'Hassan Ali'; 'Elrich's Office, Councilmember'; 'Lila Asher'; anglofiles1@gmail.com; 'Berliner's Office, Councilmember'; info@bethesdamagazine.com; Dedun Ingram; 'Craig Brooks'; tips@patch.com; 'Stephen Seidel'; 'Katherine Shaver'; scottfosler@aol.com
Subject: Living on the Edge (the Bethesda Sector Plan)

To: Casey Anderson, Chair of the Planning Board:

Please share this, with all members of the Planning Board.

I have previously sent you e-mails, and followed up briefly in person with you at breaks during the most recent Planning Board meeting, on the subject of the future of the parking lot behind the Farm Women's Market and adjacent businesses, and the parking lot behind several small businesses and across from the Writer's Center (Lots 10 and 24, the two large County-owned parking lots between Walsh Street and Willow Lane). I told you about the leafletting that I have done at the beginning of this year, speaking directly with people who were using the parking lots, some from the Town of Chevy Chase, some from other parts of Montgomery County, and some of whom had come from as far as D.C., Delaware, and Virginia.

I probably talked to approximately forty people when I leafletted at the beginning of the year. To a person, all were surprised at the plans to allow building on the parking lots; and all were strongly opposed to these plans. They were appalled by the idea that the surface-level parking might go away, and that there might be the construction of buildings on these parking lots. Some told me they came to Bethesda to shop, that this was the only convenient place for them to park in order to shop, in all of Bethesda, and that they hated underground parking. Some told me that they came to Bethesda to work. In short, virtually everyone that I talked to was contributing to the economy of Bethesda in some way.

When you and I talked about this issue of the parking lots, and I asked that you reopen the matter for additional public hearings, you told me that this was not likely to happen; and that if it was, I would have to present some very compelling reasons to reopen the subject. While I think that I already have done so, I do have some additional points.

You have stated on the record at Planning Board meetings that you are sensitive to the needs of single-home, residential communities, positioned on the edge of Bethesda development. The Town of Chevy Chase is one of those communities. We are at the edge. Directly in front of one of the parking lots, along Wisconsin Avenue, and between Walsh Street and Leland Street, is a row of buildings with a low profile, topped with Tudor-style pitched roofs, in multiple colors. The buildings are of human scale, in contrast to the

high buildings in close proximity, and they house several small businesses, four of which have been at that location for many years (two restaurants, a dry cleaners, and a jeweler's).

These buildings date back to my childhood, yet they have been well-maintained, and the owners of the businesses there take obvious pride in their establishments, which serve both residents of our Town and the greater Bethesda downtown area. When I walk by these businesses with their Tudor style roofs and low profile, I marvel at the old-town character and human scale. They are a comfortable reminder of the past, still thriving in the present. In my opinion, they should receive historic designation.

When we are considering the effect of the Bethesda Sector Plan on edge communities like our Town, I think it is important to consider the Tudor style buildings on Wisconsin Avenue between Walsh Street and Leland Street, and the parking lot behind them, as well as the parking lot behind the Farm Women's Market and the adjacent businesses (between Leland Street and Willow Lane), together.

I ask that the Planning Board reopen the issue of the future of both the two parking lots and the Tudor buildings, as this is an important edge between the Town of Chevy Chase, and development in Bethesda.

Respectfully,
Deborah A. Vollmer
7202 44th Street
Chevy Chase, Maryland, 20815

Telephone: 301-652-5762

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FEB 09 2016

MCP-Chair

From: Elizabeth Mumford <eam222@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 9:00 PM
To: MCP-Chair; Dreyfuss, Norman; Fani-Gonzalez, Natali; Presley, Amy; Wells-Harley, Marye
Cc: Joe Gitchell
Subject: Voter comments on Bethesda Central Business District development

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PLANNING COMMISSION

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

We live in the Town of Chevy Chase and are writing to oppose further decision making without community participation on the border properties along Wisconsin Avenue as well as the publicly owned surface parking lots on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue in the CBD of Bethesda.

We've lived in 4 residences in walking distance of the Bethesda metro since 1992 and are closely familiar with traffic issues at any time during the day on any day of the week. Not only can residential neighborhood streets *not* support large developments, the main thoroughfares already are an issue. We urge you to reconcile the total density numbers with the carrying capacity of our roads, our schools, and the public transit infrastructure. This must be done prior to considering any Plan for approval.

Further, research is producing the evidence for what our hearts and minds have always known: trees and green spaces matter to human health and the child development. Do not substitute private plazas or green roofs for public parks. The growing population in downtown Bethesda will require additional recreational green space. Short term financial benefits have long-term repercussions in terms of compromised social behaviors and health outcomes.

Moreover, we ask that you retain existing transition zones in the current plan. We have spent extensive personal time working on a prior planning board issue address "border properties" in this Bethesda community, and we understand and support the nearby residential property owners who argue that they deserve to retain access to sunlight and safe roads for walking, biking, and driving in the face of developers' quest for financial gain. (We would note that the empty retail spaces around Bethesda further underscore the economic pitfalls of assuming that new, bigger space will support the economic vitality and attractiveness of the CBD for potential consumers.)

We are not aware of expansion or improvement plans that demonstrate that the region's schools and transportation infrastructure can support the increased density. Our neighborhood school is at capacity today. We do not want our kids going to school in a converted office building with no interior gym or outdoor play area. We struggle with Wisconsin Avenue and East-West highway traffic every single day. We are not opposed to development, but do want assurances that the Planning Board is doing the hard work of *planning for smart growth*.

Please do not approve the pending requests from the Jaffe Group and St. John's Church for greater heights and densities along West Avenue. Also please reconsider the decision that allows CR zoning fronting residential roads in general. Our small neighborhood roads cannot handle the traffic and service vehicles necessary to serve and maintain high rise development.

Sincerely,

Joe Gitchell & Elizabeth Mumford
4301 Stanford ST
Chevy Chase, MD 20815-5209

MCP-Chair

From: Greer Murphy <greermurphy@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2016 8:05 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Apex Plan Bethesda

Dear Planning Board:

I am opposed to the plan for redevelopment of the Apex Building area in Bethesda.

I support these modifications:

- 1) Height should be limited to 250 and not allowed to go to 290 feet.
- 2) There should be a stepped back design of the 2 towers from Wisconsin and Elm to minimize impact on pedestrians of their enormous height.
- 3) Space should be left between the towers so some of the setting sun's light and afternoon light can reach Elm Street Park and the neighborhood to the east.
- 4) Sidewalks should be at least 20 feet wide on Wisconsin and on Elm St.
- 5) I have serious concerns about the safety of a garage entrance on Wisconsin with its heavy pedestrian use and impacts on traffic flow. Have you actually driven on Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda at rush hour? Gridlock!
- 6) The facade should be articulated of to minimize massing impacts.
- 7) Accept only building designs that minimize wind tunnel creation and reflection of hot sun on pedestrians
- 8) Public open space, in addition to the CCT tunnel and the Purple Line station entrance, should be provided. The space should be easily accessible by pedestrians from Wisconsin and Elm St.
- 9) The project should be linked to a commitment by the County Council to build the second tunnel for the Capital Crescent Trail.

Rapid and thoughtless development in Bethesda is negatively affecting quality of life for those who live nearby, as well as for those who come to the area to work, shop, and dine.

Thank you for your consideration

Greer Murphy
7401 Ridgewood Avenue
Chevy Chase MD 20815

MCP-Chair

From: Greer Murphy <greermurphy@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2016 8:28 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Parking Lots 10 and 24 Bethesda

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I do not think that area residents were given adequate notice of the Board's discussions of plans for these lots.

I for one had absolutely no idea that any modifications were being considered.

When projects of this magnitude are under consideration, I feel the Board should provide outreach to the local community to ensure that nearby residents have an opportunity to voice their opinions.

Please re-open you consideration of plans for lots 10 and 24 so that concerned neighbors can provide input.

Thanks you for your consideration.

Greer Murphy
7401 Ridgewood Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815



ST. JOHN'S NORWOOD
Chevy Chase-Bethesda

February 3, 2016

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FEB 08 2016

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

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland National Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

**Subject: St. John's Church, Norwood Parish – Comments on the Bethesda Master Plan,
St. John's Needs in Order to Grow as a Major Community Resource**

Dear Chairman Anderson and Members of the Planning Board:

St. John's Church, Norwood Parish ("the Church"), located at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Lane, has been working with the planning staff for almost two years to encourage the staff to appreciate the value of St. John's historical efforts and its future plans to expand as a major community resource. We would like to express our deep appreciation to the staff for their receptiveness, for the encouragement, information and insight they have provided us, and for giving us guidance on how we should work to achieve necessary goals in the new Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

The purpose of this letter is twofold. First, we would like to outline for you the ambitions and goals of the Church to serve as a community resource, and second to transmit specific recommendations for the Plan and future zoning that are critical to the Church for its long term viability, sustainability and growth as a community resource.

Over the past two years, St. John's Norwood has undergone an intensive Vision Process in which it consulted with Bethesda community, political, and business leaders, conducted interviews with residents, and studied demographic trends and critical social issues, all to identify how the Church might best allocate and focus its resources to support and strengthen the local community outside of its walls over the next decades. The resulting Vision Plan commits St. John's Norwood to making Bethesda a kinder, more altruistic place by focusing on three pillars: making it easier for citizens to enjoy healthy and more holistic relationships; to strengthen intergenerational connections; and to help create more meaningful interactions across the socio-economic spectrum. As we pursue these goals, we will remain mindful of the needs of the greater community and make every effort to be a positive force in the life of Montgomery County.

St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish
6701 Wisconsin Ave. Bethesda-Chevy Chase, MD 20815
www.stjohnsnorwood.org

Consistent with the goals of its agreed Vision, St. John's intends to examine the current usage of its space and evaluate how it may need to be changed to meet our goals of serving the community. This may involve renovation of our space and potential additions to the space, the extent of which is not known at this time. To accomplish our goals and continue our work, we are relying on the Board's support in three key areas: uniform zoning of our property, density in an amount that allows the church to improve its property as well as to help fund future community programming, and designation of St. John's as a Priority Sending Site. We have outlined each of these issues and our recommendations below. We consider these recommendations to be critical to St. John's continued growth as a religious institution and valuable resource to the community.

Zoning to Allow Improvements to St. John's Property

First and foremost, the Church anticipates that its facilities will require upgrading in the coming years. Proper zoning will help make this possible. Some of the critical elements will include obtaining close and accessible parking, enhanced community and contemplative space (protecting the Columbarium Memorial Garden with landscape and other elements and possible incorporation of other public space, providing community resource space, etc.), and ensuring both functional and design compatibility with neighboring development (improving pedestrian access and travel to our property, upgrade mechanical equipment and access to it, etc.). The Church will be engaging a consultant to determine its parking needs. Although the Church only rents some 35 parking spaces on the property adjacent to the Church, it may be that the Church will need up to 70-100 parking spaces, long term, to continue to thrive.

The Church is mindful of the impact to its immediate neighbors as it endeavors to grow as a congregation and as a community asset. The Church, therefore, fully intends to communicate with its neighboring community as it moves forward with its plans in the years to come.

After the Church assesses its on-site needs for improvements, it will also look to use any excess density as a resource to allow it to expand and strengthen its service to the people of Bethesda. The Church seeks density sufficient to advance its Vision by helping to fund these activities through the transfer of excess density to other properties in Bethesda. Very few churches, including St. John's, have the resources to compete with the economics of urbanization, yet they can be and can provide important community resources with the help of market resources.

Recommendation: Zone the entire Church Property CR 2.5 C 2.5 R 2.5 H-120, with restrictions on zoning along West Avenue to limit height to 70 feet with substantial setbacks as part of the Eastern Greenway. This density considers the adjacent rights-of-way as part of the density calculation.

Uniform Zoning of Property

The current split zoning of our property does not satisfy either the County's or the Church's needs with regard to the most efficient management of any renovation or improvements the Church may wish to undertake. At this time the Church has no specific building plans, but implementation of its Vision over the life of the Bethesda Plan will eventually call for the addition and renovation of facilities throughout the property. Split zoning makes the process more complicated without enhancing the County's ability to protect the neighborhood through design guidelines and reduced height zoning. In fact, the line separating the current zones of the Church property cuts through our Sanctuary near the altar without meaningful relationship to the existing buildings. With uniform zoning the Church will be able to most efficiently utilize its limited land base through facility planning and will not be limited by arbitrary zoning lines. At the same time the neighborhood will be protected by height and setback controls.

Recommendation: Recognize all parcels of the Church property as a single zone, with specific Design Guidelines for the Eastern Greenway that reduce the height to a 70-foot maximum along West Avenue with substantial setbacks, and a requirement that the building height be measured from Wisconsin Avenue as this is about 15 feet lower than West Avenue and will keep the actual height/appearance at a residential scale. The requested zoning for the entire Church Property is CR 2.5 C 2.5 R 2.5 H-120.


Priority Sending Site

As originally envisioned, the designation of Priority Sending Sites was intended to create and protect certain community resources without the need for public financial commitments. The Church believes in this philosophy and requests that the Planning Board maintain this concept in the Plan. The Priority Sending Sites should be given density that can be sold to developers with sufficient additional benefits to make it worthwhile for both parties. In addition, allowing developers to contribute resources to help Priority Sending Sites should qualify them for more public benefit points.

Recommendation: The Church property should have sufficient density to allow for transfer and be designated as a Priority Sending Site with true benefits.

Thank you for your continued assistance and consideration of incorporating our suggested recommendations into the Bethesda Plan. We look forward to continuing our mutual support of our collective efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roxanna Wolfe', written over the printed name.

Roxanna Wolfe, Senior Warden
St. John's Church, Norwood Parish

*Filip Dubovsky
5010 Edgemoor Lane
Bethesda MD 20814*

Casey Anderson
Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Chairman Anderson,

I am a resident of the Edgemoor area of Bethesda, a neighborhood adjacent to the Bethesda Central Business District. My home is in fact very close to the CBD, being the first home nearest to Arlington (tucked between the Bethesda Library parking lot and Sidwell Friend's school on Edgemoor Lane). I am writing to you because I am concerned about the direction the Bethesda Downtown Plan and the Planning Board's proceedings appear to be taking.

As you know the Edgemoor neighborhood is an established neighborhood that largely preceded the growth of the Bethesda CBD. The neighborhood and expanding CBD have co-existed primarily through the work of the planning staff and planning board that have worked to create a buffer between our single family homes and higher density apartments/retail space of the CBD. I am recent resident and purchased my home within the last couple of years after looking over the masterplan.

I am NOT opposed to the development of the properties on the East side of Arlington Rd (although I would naturally prefer some greenspace with bocce ball courts). I am however concerned about the apparent divergence of the Planning Commission Board from the recommendation of the Planning Board Staff (presumably due to the efforts of developer). The proposed increase in density and height (a whopping 63% increase!) would be in my opinion contrary to the establishment of a meaningful transition between the CBD and Edgemoor. The buffer would be eroded simply to a road (Arlington). The lack of an adequate transition between the business district and the single family homes raises questions about quality of life (including number of apartment dogs pooping in my yard), as well as the impact of the additional traffic on the safety of my kids going to school and metro.

I do hope that the Planning Board will assure there are meaning setbacks and green space associated with the development irrespective of the ultimate height/density decision. From walking around the recent downtown development the outdoor space appears perfunctory and of little true use to the community.

I appreciate the work that the Planning Board Staff put into the preparation of their draft and recommendations for the CBD. I also can easily imagine the tensions between established neighborhoods and new development. Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Best regards,


Filip Dubovsky

MCP-CTRACK

From: CBAR Admin <cbarmoco@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 11:28 AM
To: MCP-Chair; Anderson, Casey; Dreyfuss, Norman; Fani-Gonzalez, Natali; Presley, Amy; Wells-Harley, Marye; Howerton, Leslye; robert_kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org; Wright, Gwen; Wright, Gwen; councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Katz@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Rice@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov; oicemail@montgomerycountymd.gov; Greg.Ossont@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Press release: New Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents Comments on Bethesda Downtown Plan

Esteemed Commissioners, Council members, Executive Leggett, and area experts:

I want to bring your attention to the founding of a new Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents. Our mission is to encourage citizen participation in the Bethesda Downtown Planning process through enhanced access to public information and community support. Our four areas of interest are Schools, Transportation, Parks and Edge Communities. We try our best to understand and present complex issues and competing interests as best we can.

The press release is at <http://cbar.info/news/press-releases/new-coalition-of-bethesda-area-residents-comments-on-bethesda-downtown-plan/> and is copied below for your convenience.

Word is spreading and page views for the <http://cbar.info> website are rapidly increasing. I anticipate coverage in Bethesda Beat and will pursue coverage in other media outlets as we build momentum.

I hope that the CBAR website becomes a useful tool in your decision-making process.

With great regard for your efforts,

Mary M. Flynn
CBAR Founder

New Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents Comments on Bethesda Downtown Plan

CBAR requests specific actions related to schools, traffic, parks, and edge communities

CHEVY CHASE, Maryland—February 4, 2016

The Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents (CBAR) today commented on four areas of the the Bethesda Downtown Plan: schools, transportation, parks, and edge communities. CBAR also announced availability of new tools to support and encourage citizen participation in the planning process.

The CBAR website makes specific recommendations intended to better understand and predict the area's future carrying capacity and population needs. "Our analysis is that the recommendations set forth in the May 2015 Staff Draft inadequately address the requirements for schools, transportation, parks, and edge communities," said Mary Flynn, CBAR's founder. "Instead of helping address these concerns, Planning Board members proceeded to lift the mixed-use requirement for many properties and granted an additional 2.9 million square feet of density above Staff recommendations. The process by which the Board is reviewing the Staff Draft dismisses the importance and difficulty of good urban planning."

The approved density tally is currently at 35.3 million square feet of allowable development and represents a 50% density increase over what's now on the ground. "This isn't smart growth at all," continued Flynn. "It's an endorsement of aggressive development."

For more information on each area of concern, visit:

- **Schools:** <http://cbar.info/issues/schools/>
- **Transportation:** <http://cbar.info/issues/transportation/>
- **Parks:** <http://cbar.info/issues/parks/>
- **Edge communities:** <http://cbar.info/issues/edges/>

Publicly available tools include the website at <http://cbar.info>, a Twitter feed @cbar_moco, and a Meetup group at <http://www.meetup.com/Coalition-of-Bethesda-Area-Residents-Meetup/>. The website includes the following Resources:

- The most accessible compilation of Bethesda Downtown Plan Worksession resources: <http://cbar.info/worksessions/>
- A library of News articles related to the Bethesda Downtown Plan going back to 2013: <http://cbar.info/resources/in-the-news/>
- A directory of public officials and decision-makers: <http://cbar.info/resources/whos-who/>

ABOUT CBAR: The Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents (CBAR) are residents who advocate for a beautiful and vibrant downtown supported by livable communities. Our mission is to encourage citizen participation in the planning process through enhanced access to public information and community support. CBAR encourages leaders of local neighborhood groups to contribute Opinion pieces to the CBAR website and to speak at CBAR meetings. CBAR was founded by Mary Flynn, who walks to downtown Bethesda from her Chevy Chase home.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mary M. Flynn: cbarmoco@gmail.com

Web: <http://cbar.info>

Twitter: @cbar_moco

Meetup: Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents

MCP-CTRACK

From: Deborah Unger Borkowski <debunger@me.com>
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 11:44 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Development between Wisconsin Ave. and the Town of Chevy Chase

Hello Casey,

I am a resident of the Town of Chevy Chase and wanted to express my concerns about the upcoming changes being proposed to the area between Wisconsin Avenue and the Town of Chevy Chase, specifically the Jaffe Tower. As a mother of three busy children I can attest to the crazy bottleneaking at Bradley and Wisconsin Avenue on a daily basis. I pass through that intersection at least three to four times per day, often more. The concept of adding more traffic to this already congested area is upsetting. It is becoming more and more difficult to consider walking or riding bikes with the kids across that intersection. Folks are in line at the light for so long (I have found myself waiting up to 6 minutes to get through), and get so anxious that they are not looking closely when making turns. It will not be a comfortable option to walk to Norwood Park, or to the Capitol Crescent Trail. This really changes the dynamic of living in the Town. I am also afraid of what this building will do to the aesthetics of the area, how will this look towering over the sweet historical church of St. John's? It is difficult for me to envision something that does not look imposing and out of place.

I urge you to please consider the proposed building and all development between Wisconsin Avenue and the Town of Chevy Chase with great care.

Sincerely,
Deborah Borkowski
7105 Ridgewood Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD

MCP-CTRACK

From: Fairlie Maginnes <fairlieam@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 1:20 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Future of Chevy Chase Town

Dear Casey,

As residents of this town, my husband David and I are advocating that a couple of the parking lots above ground be preserved and that otherwise there be some green space between our residential area and the encroaching development of tall buildings. Buildings that are too high with respect to what already exists should not be allowed. Development should be wise, so that the character of this town be preserved. We advocate for lessening the overdevelopment that it looks as if the town is allowing.

Respectfully yours,
Fairlie and David Maginnes
Beechwood Drive

MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED
0161

FEB 08 2016

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

From: Nilmini Rubin <nilmini.rubin@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 9:54 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Parking lots

Dear Chair - Please do not allow parking on the lots between Bethesda and the Town of Chevy Chase. We should have that turned into park space for the families and couples and singles that will be living in the many apartment buildings and town houses to be built. You never get a second chance to preserve open space. Please do not turn our neighborhood into a concrete fortress. Sincerely, Nilmini Rubin (Walsh Street, Chevy Chase)

Sent from my iPhone

MCP-CTRACK

From: Robin Sherman <rosherman@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 07, 2016 1:36 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda Parking Lots

I am writing to urge the Planning Board to listen to town residents before deciding on any plan for the proposed parking lots behind the Women's Farm Market.

I have lived in the Town of Chevy Chase since 1982. I remember - and applauded - the opening of the Bethesda Metro (Full disclosure: I am a transplanted New Yorker and make full use of mass transit). I am not against development, especially if it is well thought out and considered.

For the past three years, the traffic on Wisconsin Avenue has been a nightmare. We all hoped that it would improve once Woodmont was reopened. Instead, a new construction project started almost immediately on the site where Easthams Exxon used to be. Once again we are faced with snarled traffic, angry drivers, and pedestrians who are taking a risk whenever they cross a street. The infrastructure simply cannot support more cars or people.

Please stop the madness. Look at the facts as they are now, before approving more high density development. Our schools, businesses, and residents are being adversely effected. We need open space now more than ever. What we have is used by old and young, residents and visitors. You have a chance to pause and scale back projects proposed by developers who don't live or work here. We do.

Robin Sherman
Leland

MCP-CTRACK

From: Marci <marciml@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 07, 2016 2:07 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Plans for Bethesda

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I am very distressed at the proposed plans for adding to the density of the Wisconsin Avenue corridor in the Bethesda/Chevy Chase area. The congestion, pollution, overcrowding and traffic dangers are destroying neighborhoods that are already poised at the edge of density disaster.

This past Friday, February 5, it took me 14 minutes to go south from Leland Street to Bradley around 10:30 in the morning – not a rush hour. There was no snow or rain, simply too many cars and trucks trying to get through on this relatively narrow street. Unfortunately, this is not a unique experience. Goodness knows how long it takes during the morning rush or the evening rush – and who knows how long it would take emergency vehicles – as was the problem during the days following the recent snow storm.

Other residents and business owners in Bethesda and Chevy Chase who are more eloquent than I am have written to you and your board. I urge you and your staff to check out the CBAR website at <http://cbar.info/>

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Marci Levin
7413 Oak Lane
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
marciml@aol.com

MCP-CTRACK

From: Robert Greenfield <rgreenfi2@tcloud.com>
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 1:36 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Parking lots adjoining town of Chevy Chase

I want to add my voice to what I imagine is already a chorus of TOCC residents who—belatedly, it seems—became aware of the approval of rezoning that will permit a massive increase in density and building height.

I have lived in my home in Chevy Chase since 1995, and I intend to remain there for another decade or two, at least. As one with a background in real-estate development, I certainly appreciate the advantages that inure to owners/developers and, at least as to the tax base, to the County, from increased density. However, in this instance the recently approved density increase is so extreme that it will produce undue hardship on current residents and owners, particularly those abutting or close to the edge of what are now parking lots. (Incidentally, I personally live about five blocks east of the subject properties, so the direct impact on me and my family will be far less. That said, I am concerned about the welfare of my neighbors.) Effects of concern include shadows, wind, increased vehicle traffic and, of course, the loss of surface parking, as well as the lack of adequate provision for offsetting green space.

Also of concern is that most Town residents only learned of this change—or that it was before the board—after the fact. When there is a variance requested by an owner in Town—and this practice is followed in other areas with which I am familiar, both in Maryland and out of state—abutters and others affected are notified and invited to weigh in. I wish this had happened on this matter. I suspect the outcome—or at least what you heard in your public meeting—would have been different.

Finally, I understand from information posted on the Town listserv—where sentiment is running massively against the proposed density increase—that what was approved appears to have ignored the recommendation of staff in favor of much higher density. Without meaning to be provocative, I can't help wondering why staff recommendations, which are typically well-considered and above the political fray, would have gone unheeded.

Mine is just one voice, but I hope that—in concert with others you are hearing from—it will encourage you to reconsider your decision.

Regards,

Robert M. Greenfield
4314 Curtis Road
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301 404 3791

MCP-CTRACK

From: Dorian Patchin <dorianp@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 10:53 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Concerns on Changing Bethesda Sector Plan

RECEIVED
0158
FEB 05 2016

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

Dear MCP Chair Casey Anderson

As a resident of East Bethesda, one block in from Wisconsin Avenue at Tilbury and Cheltenham, I am very concerned with the Planning Board's recommendations to add more Density and Height to the Bethesda Sector Plan. Since East Bethesda is directly adjacent to downtown Bethesda, the encroachment on neighboring single family residents is of particular concern. The increased density and traffic due to the Bethesda Sector Plan will impact the residents of East Bethesda and the greater community in many ways including greater risks to auto and pedestrian safety, overall quality of life of residents, and the ability of the B-CC Cluster schools to meet the needs of the community. In particular, we are alarmed by the increased Density and Height building allowances granted by the Planning Board.

Per the public agenda posted online, every single property owner has requested zoning in excess of the sector plan, and I implore you to adhere to the sector plan guidelines until impact from existing construction – already approved in excess of the sector plan – can be assessed. I am also dismayed to see that there is not a Bethesda resident on the Planning Board. This makes it less likely that you can comprehend existing day-to-day congestion issues in Bethesda, and all the more important to give weight to the voices of residents in the area who attempt to explain the challenges we face.

In addition to local concerns, we have the added burden of being a major commuting corridor, which is further exacerbated by traffic from NIH and Navy Medical, two of the largest employers in Montgomery County. New development will be compounding the effects of local and commuter traffic with every additional residence and office space created. The likely effects of development on the public schools in the area are alarming, and to develop at this rate without foresight and planning for the increase in the school populations is extremely troubling. MCPS has neither the capacity nor the resources to react quickly to the growth we can expect.

I support the actions suggested by the Edgemoor Citizens Association in their letter dated January 25, 2016. Please do not exceed sector plan zoning recommendations on any development projects.

Sincerely,

Dorian Patchin
7803 Tilbury Street
Bethesda, MD 20814

MCP-CTRACK

From: Lila Asher <lilaasher@verizon.net>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 11:51 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: planning

I am strongly opposed to any building on the parking lots of Chevy Chase Town. Maintaining some parking and adding some greenery would be a good compromise

Lila Asher

MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED
0199
FEB 04 2016

From: mdohlie <mdohlie@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 12:32 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Bethesda height and density recommendations

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PLANNING COMMISSION

To Mr. Anderson, Chairman, and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board,

As longtime Bethesda residents we are appalled at your recommendations to add density and height to the Bethesda sector plan. In our view, this is the usual Montgomery County fashion: there is outreach to citizens, a pretense to listening, and then the developers are given what they request without regard to the residents who have made Bethesda their home. This has deplorable effects on our quality of life.

When did "smart growth" become overbuilding, inadequate infrastructure, including overcrowded schools, congested roads, fiscally irresponsible public transportation projects (such as the Purple Line when less expensive and disruptive solutions exist that would actually take people off the road), and encroachment on parks, green space and existing neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Bethesda? For the last couple of decades or more, Bethesda has suffered from increasingly bad planning and decision making. One unattractive tall building after another is turning Bethesda into Maryland's Crystal City devoid of charm and increasingly filled with service providers who are able to pay the exorbitant rents, replacing many useful stores and small restaurants. Please note, it is not enough to beautify Bethesda Avenue and "uglify" the rest of the Bethesda community. The excessive height of buildings proposed at the north and south ends of Bethesda and along Wisconsin Avenue, Georgetown and Arlington Roads would overpower the adjacent existing homes and be completely out of character with the neighborhoods.

The streets in Bethesda suffer total gridlock at certain times of the day and are congested most of the time, endangering pedestrians and bikers in a community where planners claim to want walkability. Increased density - the addition of housing units and offices - appears to be favored by the Board and will only add to the current gridlock and congestion, as will development and workplaces north of Bethesda. Similarly, the Metro Red Line and Bethesda station are similarly congested - and during rush hour uncomfortably overcrowded.

Montgomery County is not taking sufficient advantage of the opportunity to widen sidewalks in the business district. In many places it is hardly possible to walk with a stroller or with a child and allow someone to pass from the other direction. Moreover, during construction Montgomery County permits sidewalks and lanes to be closed for months at a time instead of requiring a smaller footprint for new buildings, pedestrian bridges during construction, etc. Existing sidewalks will supposedly create a walkable community for additional thousands of residents! To create vibrant streets, wide sidewalks are needed where restaurants can expand, people have sufficient space to walk safely, and there is shade from trees - trees that are allowed to mature!

Montgomery County is justly proud of its schools but what will happen when the projected additional population begins to send children to already overcrowded schools? Bethesda Elementary and B-CC High School underwent renovation and expansion relatively recently but both needed portable classrooms very soon afterwards. And now they are in the process of another round of expansion. A second middle school is to be built in the B-CC cluster, but it will encroach on a park in Kensington! Where will the County build additional schools? Encroach on other parks? Based on our experience, projected student numbers have been consistently incorrect in the BCC cluster most of the 30+ years we have lived here - with the result that schools have been, at best at capacity, but usually overcrowded.

Current plans greatly encroach on parkland and green and public space, including, but not limited to, the plan to put a road through Battery Park and the addition of a building at the Metro Center, space that was set aside for public enjoyment. The greenery, parks, and small town charm that once attracted us and many others to Bethesda are

disappearing and, sadly, we no longer feel that we can recommend Montgomery County as an attractive and enjoyable place to live for people moving to the DC area.

We fully support the letters sent by the East Bethesda Citizens Association representing over 1,200 households and the Edgemoor Citizens Association similarly representing a large number of households. It is outrageous that the Planning Board which has not been elected and which does not have a single Bethesda representative would ignore sector plan and staff recommendations regarding building density and height. It's no wonder that people lose trust in government.

Regards,
Maj-Britt Dohlie and Mike Evenson
Bethesda
Mdohlie@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

MCP-CTRACK

From: margaret simmons <margaretsimmons@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 7:18 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Today's Planning Board Meeting

Dear Chair Anderson and Members of the Planning Board:

As you know, today you are considering plans for the development of my neighborhood. As a resident and owner in Bradley House located at 4800 Chevy Chase Drive, I am very concerned that the plans to increase the density of this area will have a detrimental impact and completely change the character of the neighborhood. This area is a transitional neighborhood between the intensive high rise residential and commercial development of Central Bethesda and the single family area to our South. The mature trees and narrow streets create an appealing residential neighborhood, that would be irreparably changed if the current proposal were to go forward.

Changes to the height and density of the rental properties in my neighborhood, will negatively impact my property value and eliminate affordable housing for middle class families that provides much needed ethnic and economic diversity to the neighborhood. The current balance of housing provides important housing choices for a range of families who cannot afford the new condos and apartments that are being built in Bethesda, and who would not qualify for government supported affordable housing.

Further, parking here is already woefully inadequate for residents as well as our guests. Underground parking in any new development is not a workable solution because the streets in our neighborhood as well as the thoroughfares that serve us cannot accommodate that much additional traffic.

Finally, the proposed development of Fire Station 6 is a particular problem. It is impossible to imagine the combination of high-rise housing, commercial activity, and emergency services at the already congested intersection of Bradley and Wisconsin. Emergency services will certainly suffer, as will traffic generally. I support the plan to turn the vacant land adjacent to the Fire Station into a more visible entrance to Norwood Park.

For all these reasons, I urge you to reject the proposals to upzone properties here and to allow commercial uses. South Bethesda cannot sustain more intense development without destroying the only neighborhood in the area with any economic and ethnic diversity.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret Simmons

RECEIVED
0147
FEB 03 2016

MCP-CTRACK

From: Jeanne Rader <JRaderX@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 2:45 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: FW: Battery Lane Park, Bethesda: Resident's Thoughts on Proposed Road
Importance: High

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

From: Jeanne Rader [mailto:JRaderX@verizon.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 2:16 PM
To: MCP-Chair@mncppc_mc.org
Subject: Battery Lane Park, Bethesda: Resident's Thoughts on Proposed Road
Importance: High

Hello. I am writing to express my thoughts on the proposed road through Battery Lane Park in Bethesda, MD. I have lived on Battery Lane for more than 30 years and see the Park as an extraordinary and valuable feature of this area. The tennis courts and basketball areas are in frequent use, walkers are common along the paths, bikers are also common, others use the paths as walkways from NIH to the Norfolk-Rugby areas of downtown Bethesda. In Spring through late Fall, it is often difficult to find a bench to sit on. The Park is also "home" to a number of beautiful old trees.

As a long-time resident, I am opposed to the proposal to build a road with two-way vehicular traffic for two major reasons: (1) Decreased safety for those using the Park, and (2) Increased traffic along Battery Lane.

- (1) Decreased safety for those using the Park: Many children are brought by parents, grandparents, caregivers, etc. to play in the childrens' area in the south end of the Park. The kids run freely along the current paths, play on the equipment, eat at the picnic table, run throughout the Park and are in no danger of being struck by cars driving through the Park. Adding a road through the Park will significantly decrease the safety of the children using the Park. It is likely that such a road will rapidly become a fast short-cut to reach Battery Lane or the Norfolk/Rugby area. The volume of traffic crossing the park will add to dangers for children trying to play there. It is worth noting that the nearest comparable park is the Greenwich Park (near Huntington Road), which is about 0.9 miles away from Battery Lane Park. Reaching that Park (particularly with small children in tow) requires crossing Old Georgetown Road, which is never an easy task. Battery Lane Park is an essential asset for this part of Bethesda and, in my opinion, would not be well-served by the installation of a road through it.
- (2) Increased traffic along Battery Lane: The traffic on Battery Lane has increased dramatically in the last 5 years. The street is often used as a short-cut between Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue. Speeding along Battery Lane is common and the installation of two pedestrian cross-walks has done little to make the task of crossing Battery Lane any easier, since cars generally "blow through" the cross-walk areas. Battery Lane has also been narrowed over the years by the introduction of bike lanes and the addition of parking along one side of the street (e.g., in the area of the Sussex building). The completion of two new high-rise buildings at the Wisconsin Avenue end of Battery Lane will add even more cars to the traffic on Battery Lane and will increase the current problems. The street is becoming increasingly congested. If a two-lane vehicular road is built through the Park, there will sooner or later be the need for a traffic light to control traffic along the street at the entrance and exit to the new Park road. In my opinion, a new road through the Park will only increase congestion along Battery Lane.

For the reasons stated above, I oppose the addition of a two-lane vehicular road through Battery Lane Park. That said, I agree with those who would like to see that the Park is refurbished (e.g., more benches, new playground equipment, new picnic tables, better drainage in some areas). The tennis courts were refurbished this Fall, and the improvement is much appreciated by those who use the Park.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Battery Lane Park is a beautiful and peaceful Park and we all hope that it remains that way for many years to come.

Sincerely,
Jeanne I. Rader
5001 Battery Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814

MCP-CTRACK

From: Vaías, Emily J. - EJV <EValias@linowes-law.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 3:45 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Howerton, Leslye; Kronenberg, Robert
Subject: Bethesda Plan - St. John's Comments
Attachments: StJohns232016ltr.pdf

Chairman Anderson and Members of the Board -- Attached is a letter from the St. John' Episcopal Church regarding the Bethesda Downtown Plan and its impact on their property. Thank you for your consideration. -- Emily

Emily J. Valas
Partner

Linowes and Blocher LLP
7200 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 800
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Direct: 301.961.5174
Main: 301.654.0504
E-mail: evalias@linowes-law.com
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/emilyvalas
Website: www.linowes-law.com

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ST. JOHN'S NORWOOD
Chevy Chase-Bethesda

February 3, 2016

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland National Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

**Subject: St. John's Church, Norwood Parish – Comments on the Bethesda Master Plan,
St. John's Needs in Order to Grow as a Major Community Resource**

Dear Chairman Anderson and Members of the Planning Board:

St. John's Church, Norwood Parish ("the Church"), located at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Lane, has been working with the planning staff for almost two years to encourage the staff to appreciate the value of St. John's historical efforts and its future plans to expand as a major community resource. We would like to express our deep appreciation to the staff for their receptiveness, for the encouragement, information and insight they have provided us, and for giving us guidance on how we should work to achieve necessary goals in the new Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

The purpose of this letter is twofold. First, we would like to outline for you the ambitions and goals of the Church to serve as a community resource, and second to transmit specific recommendations for the Plan and future zoning that are critical to the Church for its long term viability, sustainability and growth as a community resource.

Over the past two years, St. John's Norwood has undergone an intensive Vision Process in which it consulted with Bethesda community, political, and business leaders, conducted interviews with residents, and studied demographic trends and critical social issues, all to identify how the Church might best allocate and focus its resources to support and strengthen the local community outside of its walls over the next decades. The resulting Vision Plan commits St. John's Norwood to making Bethesda a kinder, more altruistic place by focusing on three pillars: making it easier for citizens to enjoy healthy and more holistic relationships; to strengthen intergenerational connections; and to help create more meaningful interactions across the socio-economic spectrum. As we pursue these goals, we will remain mindful of the needs of the greater community and make every effort to be a positive force in the life of Montgomery County.

St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish
6701 Wisconsin Ave. Bethesda-Chevy Chase, MD 20816
www.stjohnsnorwood.org

Consistent with the goals of its agreed Vision, St. John's intends to examine the current usage of its space and evaluate how it may need to be changed to meet our goals of serving the community. This may involve renovation of our space and potential additions to the space, the extent of which is not known at this time. To accomplish our goals and continue our work, we are relying on the Board's support in three key areas: uniform zoning of our property, density in an amount that allows the church to improve its property as well as to help fund future community programming, and designation of St. John's as a Priority Sending Site. We have outlined each of these issues and our recommendations below. We consider these recommendations to be critical to St. John's continued growth as a religious institution and valuable resource to the community.

Zoning to Allow Improvements to St. John's Property

First and foremost, the Church anticipates that its facilities will require upgrading in the coming years. Proper zoning will help make this possible. Some of the critical elements will include obtaining close and accessible parking, enhanced community and contemplative space (protecting the Columbarium Memorial Garden with landscape and other elements and possible incorporation of other public space, providing community resource space, etc.), and ensuring both functional and design compatibility with neighboring development (improving pedestrian access and travel to our property, upgrade mechanical equipment and access to it, etc.). The Church will be engaging a consultant to determine its parking needs. Although the Church only rents some 35 parking spaces on the property adjacent to the Church, it may be that the Church will need up to 70-100 parking spaces, long term, to continue to thrive.

The Church is mindful of the impact to its immediate neighbors as it endeavors to grow as a congregation and as a community asset. The Church, therefore, fully intends to communicate with its neighboring community as it moves forward with its plans in the years to come.

After the Church assesses its on-site needs for improvements, it will also look to use any excess density as a resource to allow it to expand and strengthen its service to the people of Bethesda. The Church seeks density sufficient to advance its Vision by helping to fund these activities through the transfer of excess density to other properties in Bethesda. Very few churches, including St. John's, have the resources to compete with the economics of urbanization, yet they can be and can provide important community resources with the help of market resources.

Recommendation: Zone the entire Church Property CR 2.5 C 2.5 R 2.5 H-120, with restrictions on zoning along West Avenue to limit height to 70 feet with substantial setbacks as part of the Eastern Greenway. This density considers the adjacent rights-of-way as part of the density calculation.

Uniform Zoning of Property

The current split zoning of our property does not satisfy either the County's or the Church's needs with regard to the most efficient management of any renovation or improvements the Church may wish to undertake. At this time the Church has no specific building plans, but implementation of its Vision over the life of the Bethesda Plan will eventually call for the addition and renovation of facilities throughout the property. Split zoning makes the process more complicated without enhancing the County's ability to protect the neighborhood through design guidelines and reduced height zoning. In fact, the line separating the current zones of the Church property cuts through our Sanctuary near the altar without meaningful relationship to the existing buildings. With uniform zoning the Church will be able to most efficiently utilize its limited land base through facility planning and will not be limited by arbitrary zoning lines. At the same time the neighborhood will be protected by height and setback controls.

Recommendation: Recognize all parcels of the Church property as a single zone, with specific Design Guidelines for the Eastern Greenway that reduce the height to a 70-foot maximum along West Avenue with substantial setbacks, and a requirement that the building height be measured from Wisconsin Avenue as this is about 15 feet lower than West Avenue and will keep the actual height/appearance at a residential scale. The requested zoning for the entire Church Property is CR 2.5 C 2.5 R 2.5 H-120.

Priority Sending Site

As originally envisioned, the designation of Priority Sending Sites was intended to create and protect certain community resources without the need for public financial commitments. The Church believes in this philosophy and requests that the Planning Board maintain this concept in the Plan. The Priority Sending Sites should be given density that can be sold to developers with sufficient additional benefits to make it worthwhile for both parties. In addition, allowing developers to contribute resources to help Priority Sending Sites should qualify them for more public benefit points.

Recommendation: The Church property should have sufficient density to allow for transfer and be designated as a Priority Sending Site with true benefits.

Thank you for your continued assistance and consideration of incorporating our suggested recommendations into the Bethesda Plan. We look forward to continuing our mutual support of our collective efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Wolfe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roxanna Wolfe, Senior Warden
St. John's Church, Norwood Parish

MCP-CTRACK

From: Vaías, Emily J. - EJV <EVAías@linowes-law.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 4:02 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Howerton, Leslye; Kronenberg, Robert; Elmendorf, Stephen P. - SPE
Subject: Farm Women's Co-op/St. John's Letter
Attachments: FarmwomenStjohnsletter.pdf

Chairman Anderson and Members of the Board – Attached is a joint letter from two Priority Sending Sites, the Farm Women's Coop and St. John's Episcopal Church. Thank you – Emily

Emily J. Vaías
Partner

Linowes and Blocher LLP
7200 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 800
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Direct: 301.961.5174
Main: 301.654.0504
E-mail: evalas@linowes-law.com
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/emilyvaías
Website: www.linowes-law.com

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February 3, 2016

Casey Anderson, Chair
Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Chairman Anderson and Planning Board members,


As two of downtown Bethesda's oldest institutions, St. John's Episcopal Church (located at 6701 Wisconsin Avenue and founded 1873) and Farm Women's Co-operative Market (located at 7155 Wisconsin Avenue and founded 1932) are asking to remain designated as Priority Sending Sites under the proposed Downtown Bethesda Plan.


St. John's and Farm Women's Co-op are community institutions and amenities that help keep Bethesda unique. Both are highly visible uses located in the lower gateway of Bethesda that help define Bethesda and provide visual and cultural balance between the surrounding residences and the growing modern urban landscape. Providing the tools to keep St. John's and the Farm Women's' Co-operative in downtown Bethesda will help to achieve the Plan's goals of strengthening community and nurturing opportunities for people to connect with one another.

The purpose behind designating these as Priority Sending Sites is sound in that it allows protection of these two landmarks of Bethesda's history through density transfers. The density transfer process will allow us as organizations to continue to thrive and serve the community. Without historic institutions such as ours, downtown Bethesda risks becoming an impersonal commercial zone, lacking authenticity, history, and texture. On balance letting our two sites remain Priority Sending Sites will not materially impact the new density plan at all but will provide us with the necessary resources to maintain our facilities and to grow with the needs of Bethesda. To thrive in the future, we both need the ability to sell our excess density at fair market value.

St. John's Episcopal Church and the Farm Women's Co-operative Market urge the Planning Board to maintain our sites as Priority Sending Sites in the Bethesda Downtown Plan and to strengthen the program to provide greater incentives for the purchase of density from Priority Sending Sites.

Sincerely,


Roxie Wolfe, Senior Warden
St. John's Episcopal Church


Stephen P. Elmendorf, Esq.
Farm Women's Co-op Market

February 3, 2016

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Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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Sincerely,



Roxy Wolfe, Senior Warden
St. John's Episcopal Church



Stephen P. Elmendorf, Esq.
Farm Women's Co-op Market

MCP-CTRACK

From: Davis-Cook, Shana <Shana.Davis-Cook@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 10:42 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: shana.davis-cook; Floreen, Nancy; Berliner, Roger
Subject: Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan
Attachments: LtrPlanningBoard_BethesdaDowntownPlan_020216final.pdf

RECEIVED
0146

FEB 03 2016

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

Dear Chairman Anderson:

Attached please find a letter on behalf of Chevy Chase Village regarding the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan. This letter is submitted for the record on this matter, which is scheduled for the Planning Board's consideration at your work session scheduled for February 4, 2016.

Sincerely,

Shana R. Davis-Cook
Manager, Chevy Chase Village
shana.davis-cook@montgomerycountymd.gov





February 2, 2016

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: Bethesda (Downtown) Sector Plan

Dear Chairman Anderson:

I am writing on behalf of the Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers in follow-up to the letter our community sent to you last summer regarding the Bethesda Sector Plan. As we stated in our letter dated June 11, 2015 (attached), the residents of Chevy Chase Village, an incorporated area directly south and east of the Bethesda Sector Plan area, remain concerned regarding the effects that the proposed increased density levels will have on local traffic congestion and school populations, which already well exceed capacity.

Additionally, we echo concerns expressed by residents in communities surrounding the Bethesda Sector area, especially the neighborhoods east and south of downtown regarding building height limits adjacent to single-family residences. Limiting immediately adjacent building heights to no more than 35' is critical for protecting the interests of these homeowners and the value of their properties.

In addition to maintaining reasonable building heights, we support the "Bethesda Commons" as a critical greenspace amenity for local residents and employees of the commercial buildings (as well as the proposed underground parking to replace the surface parking now on the site). As originally proposed by the Planning Staff, the "eastern greenway" concept is an effective means for providing a transitional area between the Wisconsin Avenue commercial corridor and the adjacent residential community. As you know, a similar buffer exists between Chevy Chase Village and the Friendship Heights commercial area.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to restate our community's objections to any rezoning of the Bethesda Fire Station property, located just south of Bradley Boulevard at the intersection with Wisconsin Avenue. The existing southern border for Bethesda's commercial

CHEVY CHASE VILLAGE
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Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815
Phone (301) 654-7300
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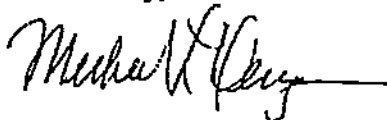
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ROBERT C. GOODWIN, JR.
Assistant Treasurer
MINH LE
Board Member

VILLAGE MANAGER
SHANA R. DAVIS-COOK
LEGAL COUNSEL
SUELLEN M. FERGUSON

district should be maintained at Bradley Boulevard, thereby protecting the residential character and the 'green mile' originally established within the Bethesda Master Plan.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Denger", with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Michael L. Denger
Chair, Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers

cc: Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Ms. Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Council President
Mr. Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Council
Town of Chevy Chase

MCP-CTRACK

From: Jean Alexander <jalexan1@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 11:02 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Battery Lane Park

Dear Mr Anderson:

I live in The Whitehall on Battery Lane and have done so for 4 years. I frequently walk through Battery Lane Park on my way to other parts of Bethesda. It is a pleasant oasis in the midst of our increasingly urban environment. It is also well used. There are almost always children on the playground and weather permitting there are people using the basketball court or the tennis court. There are often people sitting on the benches just enjoying the weather.

I was dismayed to hear the presentation by members of the planning board of the proposed changes to the park late last year. The whole proposal seems misguided to me. The idea of a road....even if not used for traffic would only add more pavement to an area that does not need more pavement. The idea of expansion while on the surface seems like a good idea...the reality of what was proposed was ridiculous. It would not add that much useable land to the park and if the road is a reality it would take away from the current green space and mature trees. I really hope the planning board thinks better of the proposal and dismisses it as planning gone amok.

What the park could use is more consistent maintenance and the planting of new trees to replace the ones that have had to be taken down.

We made a decision to retire back to Bethesda because of its many amenities and access to public transportation. The longer we live here though the more concerned I become that the developers are being given a free hand to take away much of what makes this an interesting place to live...restaurants and small shops that are not the usual chain stores of the mall. Some developers have been allowed to block sidewalks for several years, making walking difficult.

At the presentation about the park there was a consensus that we did not like or want the current proposal. I hope that the board will listen to our concerns and opinion.

Jean Alexander
4977 Battery Lane #711

MCP-CTRACK

From: Jill McKay <mckay.jill@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 11:28 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Regarding Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

I am a longtime resident of East Bethesda, and although I welcome and appreciate many of the improvements that were made to the Bethesda Avenue area by developer Federal Realty in the early 1990's the time has come to say **enough is enough.**

Bethesda has a vibrant downtown core surrounded by family-friendly neighborhoods. We have the treasure of the Capital Crescent Trail. It does not make sense to try and turn Bethesda into Rosslyn or even Friendship Heights. We need more trees, more green space, and more access to the sky and fresh air.

I have read that building owners and developers are lobbying to increase the maximum height of buildings. I **implore you to hold to firm to the height limits that you have already agreed upon.**

In your plans please also consider **the need for space for shade trees and green spaces that enhance the health and well-being of all citizens.**

With all the close-in neighborhoods that are experiencing a building boom due to our proximity to downtown Bethesda, why not make Bethesda a bike-friendly town? Increase the number of bike lanes and bike racks. Increase the shady areas that make it pleasant to spend recreation time in Bethesda. Look to the future when trees and green space will become even more treasured amenities and people will seek out Bethesda for those very qualities.

Consider the impact of increased density on our already over-crowded schools and roads. Please do not turn Bethesda into another urban wasteland of overcrowded schools, congested streets, concrete, and wind tunnels.

Thank you for your consideration of the health and well-being of all residents of Bethesda now and in the future.

Margaretta Jill McKay
East Bethesda Resident and Taxpayer since 1993



Al Lang, *Mayor*
John Beckerman, *Vice Mayor*
Vicky Taplin, *Secretary*
Fred Cecere, *Treasurer*
Kathy Strom, *Community Liaison*

Comments on Bethesda Sector Plan
Town of Chevy Chase
Al Lang, Mayor
February 3, 2016

I appreciate this opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Bethesda Sector Plan on behalf of the Town Council and residents of the Town of Chevy Chase. The Bethesda Sector Plan is critically important to the County and the greater Bethesda community, which includes all neighboring communities, as well as for the State of Maryland. The Planning Board and County Council must make certain that safety during and after construction is assured; that traffic congestion, which is already very bad, is reduced, not exacerbated; and because our children must come first, that school overcrowding is eliminated, not increased. All of these issues unless properly addressed will have a serious negative impact on the quality of life for the residents of all the neighboring Bethesda communities.

Safety, both during and after construction is critically important. Bethesda area residents will suffer from significant disruption while the plan is built out. Both pedestrians and motorists will feel a significant impact as massive construction projects proceed in the narrow Wisconsin Avenue corridor. In addition, serious attention must be given to safely moving cars and people within downtown Bethesda in light of the substantially increased density contemplated in the plan.

It is imperative that the Planning Board update existing impact studies before sending the plan to the County Council, since approved density increases go far beyond what was covered by the original studies. The Planning Board is obliged to consider the impact of the plan's cumulative additional density on traffic congestion and cut-through traffic and parking in residential neighborhoods. Bethesda area residents are already suffering from the negative impacts of previously approved density increases along Wisconsin Avenue and in downtown Bethesda. The detrimental effects are evident today and will only be exacerbated by additional future density.

Overcrowding in area schools is a significant concern. It is our understanding that MCPS has not yet considered the plan's cumulative additional density on area schools, which are already overcrowded. The enrollment projections in the MCPS CIP do not include new housing that is proposed in the Bethesda Downtown Plan. This is a significant oversight that must be addressed now.

We look forward to working with the Planning Board to resolve these significant concerns and to ensure a vibrant, welcoming, and appropriately scaled downtown Bethesda for the next twenty years. In light of our desire to work closely with the Board we provide the following specific observations.

First, we strongly encourage the Board to limit the height and density of buildings immediately adjacent to and across from all residential neighborhoods to ensure commercial development compatible with nearby single-family residences. With regards to protecting the property interests of residents of the Town of Chevy Chase specifically, we require that:

- The properties between Wisconsin Avenue and West Avenue should remain dual zoned or should be designated CRN ("Commercial, Residential, Neighborhood"), with building heights no greater than 75 feet along Wisconsin Avenue and 35 feet along West Avenue, and with a setback towards West Avenue that is consistent with Eastern Greenway principles. Additionally, if split zoning is eliminated, the FAR for these properties should be capped at 1.75, rather than 2.25 under the current plan.
- The Planning Board should limit the height and density of buildings at 7272 Wisconsin Avenue (the Apex building), at 7121 Wisconsin Avenue (beside the Farm Women's Market), and on those properties facing the Town along Montgomery Avenue and Pearl Street.
- When rezoning properties adjacent to the Town, the Planning Board should abide by the current Sector Plan principle of "stepped down development" from the Metro station. In addition, any rezoning should ensure mixed use development and should take into consideration the impacts to adjacent county and state roadways since the Town will exercise its authority to control access to its streets in the interest of public health, safety and welfare.
- Density transfers are misused and should not be permitted among properties adjacent to residential neighborhoods as they defeat the purpose of controlling the impact of development on such neighborhoods.

Second, we believe it is vitally important to implement the proposed Bethesda Commons plan on parking lots 24 and 10, between 46th St and Wisconsin Avenue, as an extension of Elm Street Park and the proposed Eastern Greenway. We reject the idea that the parking lots will never be turned into a park, and welcome discussions on how we might work with the Planning Board and the DOT to understand and achieve our respective goals.

- From a community perspective, the Commons would offer an appropriate transitional land use (i.e. "buffer zone") between a single-family neighborhood and high density development, as is called for in the Sector Plan. It would create a large "civic green" behind the Farm Women's Market with a modern, underground parking facility below.
- This location presents a unique opportunity to create a large, open recreation area proximate to an urban business district -- a disappearing and highly desirable resource in the down-county area -- for downtown Bethesda area residents and workers to enjoy.
- In the event that commercial development may occur on portions of parking lots 10 and 24 in conjunction with the Bethesda Commons plan, the Planning Board should zone these properties to allow for buildings no higher than 35 feet and with a FAR of 0.5.

Third, it is imperative that the Planning Board update existing impact studies before sending the plan to the County Council, since approved density increases go far beyond what was covered by the original studies.

- As acknowledged by the Planning Board staff, the Sector Plan contemplates significant density increases above professional staff recommendations on a parcel-by-parcel basis. The Planning Board is obliged to reconcile those increases with the impact of the cumulative additional density on traffic congestion, cut-through traffic and parking in residential neighborhoods, overcrowding in area schools, demand on public infrastructure,

storm water run-off and other environmental concerns, and quality of life of area residents both during and after construction.

- Bethesda area residents are already suffering from the negative impacts of previously approved density increases along Wisconsin Avenue and in downtown Bethesda. The detrimental effects are evident today and will only be exacerbated by additional future density.

Finally, we believe that the Board should solicit additional input from the public before making decisions regarding significant future development adjacent to our neighborhood.

- Many Town residents remain unaware of the potential impact of various aspects of the Sector Plan on their neighborhood and quality of life. While the Planning Board did hold hearings over the summer, significant changes, including the tentative approval of millions of square feet of additional built out space, have occurred quickly and recently without addressing the impacts of increased building heights and densities on the local community and without an opportunity for public comment.
- We ask the Planning Board to schedule another round of well-publicized hearings, at which Town residents can testify, on all aspects of the Bethesda Sector Plan before any recommendations are made to the County Council.