

Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)

Agenda

Friday May 4, 2018

- I. **RECAP OF APRIL MEETING MINUTES** (5 mins.)
- II. **REVIEW DRAFT ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT** (45 MINS.)
- III. **NEW BUSINESS** (10 min.)
- IV. **NEXT MEETING – Friday June 1, 2018**

<http://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-1/bethesda-downtown-plan/bethesda-downtown-implementation-advisory-committee/>

Meeting Notes and Attendees:

I. Brief Recap of April Meeting and Minutes:

- The committee agreed with the April meeting notes and they were approved to be posted to the IAC webpage.

II. Review Draft Annual Monitoring Report

The IAC received a working draft of the text for the upcoming Annual Monitoring Report on Friday April 27, 2018.

The IAC prepared the following comments prior to the meeting on Friday May 4, 2018:

Introduction section / General comments:

- Near the end of the Introduction is this sentence: “The Plan’s Vision will be implemented through various actions, including zoning, a park impact payment, and annual monitoring.” The Design Guidelines need to be added to this sentence. They are a key element of this Plan.
- Several references are made to acquisition of the civic green. Modify these statements to say that land for the civic green has been acquired, not the civic green space itself. As stated it is misleading, giving the impression that it is in place and operational. The later section on the civic space clarifies this, but these initial references need to be modified to be clear and accurate.
- Activating the various tracking efforts and initiating the DAP and the IAC are all clear accomplishments of the past year. But it feels like a lot of the report is simply restating the plan goals. Perhaps it’s necessary to do this to refresh people’s memories, but it feels like padding.



Design Advisory Panel (DAP) section:

- “The primary goal of the five-Member DAP is to provide advice and recommendations that will heighten design excellence and improve the quality of architecture, urban design and landscape architecture in Downtown Bethesda.” This statement of the DAP’s primary goal does not mention the Design Guidelines and I think it should. The following sentence says they are guided by the Guidelines but this is a bit weak. Part of their role should be to advise if a project complies with the Design Guidelines.
- Add some substantive information about the work the DAP has done. Don’t just say how many projects were reviewed. Include information about how many points each project asked for and how many of them were approved by the DAP for the full amounts asked for. How many projects had to resubmit? Summarize any criticisms the DAP had about projects – is there a recurring problem, for example with not providing step-backs, or insufficient sidewalk width, or issues with driveway entrances?
- In the sections describing the Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plan, and Site Plans that have been submitted provide some real analysis. For example, report how many of the projects want/are getting BOZ and paying any PIP, how many want/are getting BOZ, but paying no PIP because they are doing 25% MPDUs. Provide detail about heights -- how many buildings are <100 feet, 100-199 feet 200-299 feet, 300+ feet.

Status of BOZ Density section:

- Given that the current amount of SF available for development far exceeds that amount thought to be available when the Plan was adopted, include a brief discussion of how that number was arrived at, referencing the parcel file and the parcel document that describes the methodology.

Transportation section:

- Page 23: BIPPA designation information is good. There is a BIPPA CIP program (run by Matt Johnson). Is the Bethesda BIPPA on the timeline to be implemented under that program?
- Page 24: CCST. What is the construction schedule? 6 months, 12 months...
- Page 24: Woodmont Ave. "Design for this project is underway but it is too early to project a date for construction." How does that tie to CIP? Most CIP projects go through two phases of Facilities Development before entering the CIP. But I thought this was already in the CIP as part of this year's amendments. If we're just in design, what is the timeline for design? Are there construction dollars in the CIP?
- Page 24: Montgomery Ln/Ave. "Concept design is underway." Please define in the process better. It sounds like it's Facility Planning. Let's define it as such. What is the timeline for design?
- Page 24: Pedestrian Improvements. There have been some Pedestrian Road Safety Audits conducted by MCDOT that could be tracked within this section. One was done on Woodmont within the last five years. What is the timeline for the LPI study on Woodmont/Bethesda and Bethesda/Arlington?
- Page 24: Regarding traffic improvements - Some general comments – there is a compelling need for more crosswalks on Wisconsin and Old Georgetown, lights at every intersection on these major roads, and elimination of right turn on red in all streets within the CBD. What’s listed here is a good start and I’m aware that some streets come under MCDOT and others under SHA, but



if this is to be an urban, walkable area then pedestrians must have priority. The policy at the moment is pretty confused.

- Page 24: New Streets - There's a reference in the first paragraph to the Bethesda Chevy Chase Highway. What is this and where is it? Never heard of it in 25 years here.
- Page 26: I don't have editorial comments here, but a discussion point. We should get briefed on the Unified Mobility Program in a reasonable timeframe. I would hesitate to propose road capacity improvements in this area until we have completion of BRAC and maybe even Purple Line activities because a lot of the traffic concerns are east-west and will be affected in some way by those changes. This is a useful presentation of the traffic conditions and annual counts (and change) will be helpful.
- Traffic tests - Were new traffic tests done since those for the plan itself – i.e., in the past year? It would be helpful to include the date of any new traffic tests.
- Looking over the data presented, it occurs to me that there is no effort to examine the chain of traffic, what I think is called queuing – that is, delays at one intersection affecting delays at another. We have repeatedly seen contradictions between measured delays and what road users say they experience. For example, heading south on Wisconsin, the Bradley/Wisconsin intersection often backs up such that traffic backs up at Wisconsin and Stanford, and even at Wisconsin and Woodmont/Leland. This seems to be addressed regarding Arlington Road on page 31 but not with Wisconsin, Old Georgetown from west of Arlington to Woodmont, or Montgomery from Wisconsin to Connecticut.

Schools section:

- Page 9: This includes a lengthy discussion of schools that are part of the BCC cluster, but it omits Somerset Elementary School, which serves a significant portion of South Bethesda (the area south of Bradley and a few properties north of Bradley) - see <http://gis.mcpsmd.org/ServiceAreaMaps/SomersetES.pdf>.
- Although I believe no plans have yet been submitted for any properties in this area, there is also a placeholder envisioned for Somerset. The MCPS CIP report, in chapter 4 regarding the BCC cluster http://gis.mcpsmd.org/cipmasterpdfs/CIP19_Chap4_BCC.pdf; includes projections for significant overcrowding by 2023-24.
- Why is Somerset not included, on its own and as a component of the elementary schools in the BCC cluster, in the discussion here? Somerset's numbers should be part of this analysis, and might affect the overall conclusions.
- Regarding schools, the two elementary schools that serve downtown Bethesda will see enrollment grow without any amelioration for at least 2 years, and it will take much longer than that to create additional school facilities, by which time school population may well be expanding even more. With the expedited timeline for approval of development, and multiple residential developers submitting plans, development is likely to outpace school capacity. This is a major problem that is most definitely NOT addressed by placeholders, and it's not really addressed in this report. In addition, there are serious issues regarding priority for limited school funds, which must now also take into account the unanimous vote by the Council last week requiring consideration of equity in all Council actions. I think it's imperative at least to recognize this reality and raise it so that the Council can determine whether and how to address it.



Parks section:

- Page 21, Recommendations:
- The last bullet point, “Continue to work with and engage the Implementation Advisory Committee to ensure the recommended parks in the Sector Plan are realized.”
- My question – what does this mean? The IAC has no power or authority and can do very little to ensure anything like this. Why even mention it?
- It would be helpful to have a “measuring stick” to know how far along we are for park funding, design, and implementation towards the goals. For example, the staff had determined that ~\$117 million dollars would be needed for the proposed parks in the Plan to be developed at a “moderate” level (not too basic, and not too fancy). We are at ~\$7 million in the PIP out of ~\$117 million total funds needed (doesn’t include inflation). At the current rate of park acquisition and park development we will have ~.5 acres of new parkland at **year 5** of the Plan out of 13 acres recommended for the 20-year Plan.

Additional Comments from IAC during May Meeting:

- On April 18th the T&E Committee voted 2-1 to support studying Norfolk as a Shared Street and studying 2-way Traffic on the loop of one-way streets around the metro. I can’t see when the full Council votes on the CIP, or if they already did - can you find out for us?
- Has DOT started a study for the barnes dance/signal improvements for Woodmont and Bethesda Ave? Do we know the status of that project and when it may be started?
- In the transportation section, tie in the individual projects to the CIP more closely, including where they are in the process with the CIP and with more specificity.
- In the parking section, document from the parking study where parking is available, what the parking capacity numbers are for each garage, and generally pull out important information detailed in the Parking Study done earlier this year.
- In the Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections section, last paragraph on the two signalized intersections for an all pedestrian phase at Woodmont Avenue at Bethesda Avenue and Bethesda Avenue at Arlington Road; do we know the status of these studies, when they are going to be done or completed?
- In the transportation section, add a column to the data tables identifying when the information and analysis was gathered.
- Add the number of parking spaces provided with each new development in the sketch, preliminary and site plan application stages and if this is public or private.
- Provide any updates on the streetscape CIP for accessibility improvements.
- Add a narrative to the Schools section discussing the new model that MCPS will be using or rolling out in the Fall of 2018, discuss what this means for the current analysis and what the potential pitfalls are.
- Provide information in the Schools section on the Feasibility discussion that will be taking place this summer and completed by Fall of 2019. What is it and what does it mean.
- What do the new equity requirements mean for Schools?
- Discuss impact taxes and how they contribute to schools, what percent goes directly to schools.
- With the recent public discussion of “placeholder” projects, the IAC briefly discussed this topic as part of the comments on the Schools Section of the report.
- In the Parks section check consistency between table and the text.
- In the Parks section, under the Park Impact Payment, add a discussion on the development and process of the Project Development Form (PDF) that initiates the funds for the PIP.



- Add to the Parks section a discussion on Capital Crescent Civic Green Facility Plan and CIP process and timeline.
- The inventory table is lengthy, suggest adding the Capital Crescent Civic Green acquisition up front in the beginning of the section on Parks.

Staff will be preparing responses to the comments received before and during the meeting and will distribute those to the IAC in the next week. Staff will incorporate comments from the IAC and will continue to refine and finalize the document for the Planning Board hearing on May 31, 2018.

III. New Business

- Design Advisory Panel, May 23, 2018 - Projects being reviewed
 - 8280 Wisconsin (Sunoco site)
 - 7121 Wisconsin
 - 7126 Wisconsin
- Upcoming Planning Board Hearings:
 - May 31, 2018 - Bethesda Downtown Plan Annual Monitoring Report (see Planning Board Agenda for time and item number)
- Upcoming County Council/Committee Hearings (MONTH OF MAY):
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/calendar.html>
- June Agenda:
 - Farm Women's Cooperative Market Joint Development Presentation (7126 and 7141/7135 Wisconsin Ave)

IV. Next Meeting – Friday June 1, 2018

Meeting Attendees:

Amanda Farber, Anna Fierst, Dedun Ingram, Naomi Spinrad, Steve Groh, Steve Long, Drew Morrison, Ramsey Meiser, Emily Vaias, Jack Alexander, Jad Donohoe, Matt Gordon, Patrick O'Neil, Greg Rooney, Ken Hartman, Rick Ammirato, Leslye Howerton, Elza Hisel-McCoy, Veronique Marier, Allan Glass, Kent Morgan, Katie Mencarini, Jason Sartori, Eric Graye, Brenda Sandberg, Robert Kronenberg, Michael Brown

