

# Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)

## Agenda

Friday March 9, 2018 (rescheduled from March 2, 2018)

- I. **RECAP OF FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES** (5 mins.)
- II. **FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS DISCUSSION** (30 MINS.)
- III. **ONLINE MONITORING AND TRACKING PROGRAM PRESENTATION** (20 min.)
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS** (5 min.)
- V. **NEXT MEETING – Friday April 6, 2018**

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

### **Meeting Notes and Attendees:**

#### I. Brief Recap of February Meeting and Minutes:

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

#### II. Future Agenda Topics Discussion:

1. The committee discussed clarifying their role regarding the review of development applications and needing to focus on other recommendations in the Plan such as the transportation, schools and park elements and the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) discussions currently with the County Council. The committee agreed that they would like to focus on the infrastructure recommendations in the Sector Plan and should only ask development applicants to present to the IAC in the event of controversial issues, development located near the edges of the downtown, etc. Planning staff will assist the IAC in determining which projects should be reviewed under these parameters.

2. The committee spent the remainder of the meeting working on a coordinated response letter to the County Council regarding the FY19-24 Capital Improvements Program as it related to the recommendations in the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan. The letter provides the committee's position on school capacity issues at Bethesda Elementary, Somerset and the B-CC High School, as well as delivering on the Sector Plan parks recommendations in a timely manner and finally



the concerns over providing continued funding to implement the bike, pedestrian, transit, and transportation improvements outlined in the Sector Plan (final letter is attached here).

3. Reed Street Abandonment Update: Elza Hisel-McCoy from the Planning Department gave a brief update on the recent Planning Board approval of the Reed Street Abandonment petition. On January 9, 2018 the Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) received a revised Abandonment Petition AB757. The subject petition requested abandonment of the eastern 18 feet of right-of-way of Reed Street, located between Bethesda Avenue and Elm Street in downtown Bethesda. JBG/Woodmont II, LLC owns the adjacent property to the east (4749 Bethesda Avenue) and M-NCPPC owns the triangular property, west of the Reed Street right-of-way (4801 Bethesda Avenue) as a result of a recent park acquisition. (see attached letter from the Planning Board). A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday March 28, at 7 p.m., in the Executive Office Building Lobby Auditorium, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville. A link to the detailed planning staff report is provided below.

[http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/AB757StaffReport\\_Final\\_Feb15KM.pdf](http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/AB757StaffReport_Final_Feb15KM.pdf)

### III. Online Monitoring and Tracking Program Presentation - Rescheduled to April 6, 2018 meeting

- Link to Planning Board presentation below, start time 1:17:00  
[http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=7&clip\\_id=1799](http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=7&clip_id=1799)

### IV. New Business

- Upcoming Council Hearings:
  - Reed Street Abandonment Petition - A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday March 28, at 7 p.m., in the Executive Office Building Lobby Auditorium, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville. A link to the detailed planning staff report is provided below.
  - Bill 34-17, 38-17 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU Amendments) continued – PHED Committee March 19, 2018 2:00pm

#### Meeting Attendees:

Amanda Farber, Anna Fierst, Dedun Ingram, Naomi Spinrad, Steve Long, Emily Vaias, Jack Alexander, Jad Donohoe, Matt Gordon, Ken Hartman, Rick Ammirato, Leslye Howerton, Elza Hisel-McCoy, Cindy Gibson, Kent Morgan, Jill Ortman-Fouse





**Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan  
Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)**

VIA EMAIL

March 13, 2018

Montgomery County Council President Hans Riemer,  
District Councilmember Roger Berliner,  
and Members of the Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Ave, Sixth Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: FY19-24 Capital Improvements Program - Comments for the Implementation of the Bethesda  
Downtown Plan

From: Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)

Dear Council President Riemer, Councilmember Berliner, and Members of the Montgomery  
County Council:

Montgomery County's new Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) is the only group specifically charged with coordinating and monitoring the progress of development in Bethesda and addressing implementation of the recommendations in the Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Plan (the "BDP"). The Implementation Advisory Committee is composed of residents and business representatives. To ensure that the new Bethesda Downtown Plan gets off to a successful start, we offer the following comments regarding schools, parks, and transportation items that we have identified as CIP priorities.

Addressing School Capacity Concerns

The IAC is pleased that the Council recognizes the urgent need to plan for school needs in Bethesda, especially at the elementary level. The Bethesda Downtown Plan area is served by Bethesda ES and Somerset ES and is projected to enter moratorium due to projected overcrowding unless school capacity solutions can be identified and implemented. Site constraints indicate that no additional capacity can be built at either Bethesda ES or Somerset ES. All stakeholders in Bethesda benefit from quality schools with adequate capacity, and school quality is a key reason families decide to live in Bethesda and the surrounding neighborhoods. We commend the Council for beginning to take steps to address the capacity problem and we ask for prompt discussion on finding and funding a real permanent solution (BDP, page 90).

In addition, attention must be directed towards the impending high school capacity limit. BCC HS is currently undergoing an addition and is projected to continue to have a growing student population. It is by far the smallest high school site in the County, it will have enrollment at the high end of what is desired for high schools, and it is projected to be overcapacity in the 2022-2023 school year. A solution will be needed to address overutilization of BCC HS in the near future (BDP, page 92).

### Delivering on Park Promises in a Timely Manner

We recommend the creation of a Capital Improvements Program item specifically dedicated to Parks acquisition and improvements within Bethesda. The Bethesda Plan identified and prioritized the need for thirteen new and improved parks in Bethesda (BDP, pages 80-85). The County must step forward to “prime the pump,” and help make these long-term, quality-of-life investments as it has so wisely done in other urban areas (for example, investments in major park facilities in Silver Spring). The Park Impact Payment (PIP) fund alone cannot provide quickly enough the dollars needed to acquire new parkland. Other funds will be needed to create new parks and also update existing parks.

Following the facility planning process, the newly acquired land for the Capital Crescent Civic Green will need to have sufficient funding in place for full park development and construction. The completion of the park should coincide with the completion of the Purple Line construction in that location.

With regards to existing park projects, we welcome the pending improvements of Battery Lane Urban Park, which were first discussed as needed 10 years ago. Improvements to Elm Street Park and Caroline Freeland Park have also been delayed and it is necessary that those projects be completed in a timely manner. It will be important that the renovation of the northern portion of Elm Street Park be planned and funded to coincide with the completion of the Purple Line and Capital Crescent Trail in that location.

Such a forward-thinking investment will add to the appeal of the downtown and surrounding areas, helping to generate new tax revenues anticipated by Bethesda redevelopment.

### Keeping Bethesda Moving - Bike, Pedestrian, Transit, and Transportation Needs

Finally, although we applaud the CIP funding for some of the bike routes and improvements identified in the Bethesda Downtown Plan, we note that it is essential for the safety of users and to meet the goal of increased non-auto mode share that these routes be realized. However, we are concerned that no dollars have been allocated for other transportation improvements called for in the Bethesda Downtown Plan. Specifically, we call for CIP items to plan the future conversion of Norfolk Avenue and Pearl Street into “shared streets,” (BDP, pages 114-117, 122-123) and to study how to restore one-way streets back to two-way traffic (BDP, pages 15 & 36). These projects could be advanced into facility planning (P509337) as soon as possible to begin the necessary planning work for implementation.

We also look forward to the completion of the design, cost estimate, and full funding for the Capital Crescent Trail tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue as that is a critically important component of the non-auto transportation network in the area (BDP, page 159).

We recognize the number of needs you face. While Bethesda has been and will continue to be a dependable source of revenue to support other County priorities, Bethesda itself now needs further reinvestment in order to continue to meet your vision for its future.

Sincerely,

Amanda Farber  
Co-Chair, IAC

Jad Donohoe,  
Co-Chair, IAC

cc: Montgomery County Councilmembers  
Marlene Michaelson, Council Administrator  
Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Administrator  
Casey Anderson, Planning Board Chairman  
Gwen Wright, Planning Director  
Robert Kronenberg, Division Chief Area 1  
Leslye Howerton, Planner Coordinator Area 1, Liaison to the IAC



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

March 13, 2018

Mr. Michael S. Cassedy  
Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
101 Monroe Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4168

RE: Abandonment Request No. AB-757  
Request to abandon the eastern 18-foot wide section of Reed Street Right-of-Way  
Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan

Dear Mr. Cassedy:


At its regularly scheduled meeting of March 1, 2018, the Montgomery County Planning Board reviewed the Abandonment Request No. AB-757 for partial abandonment of the Reed Street public right-of-way in downtown Bethesda. After a briefing and presentation by Planning staff, the Planning Board voted 4-0, with Commissioner Natali Fani-González absent, in favor of recommending the abandonment and transmitting comments to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

The Planning Board heard testimony from the Petitioner and a representative from the Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents. Based on this testimony, the Board is recommending one important condition to the abandonment. Please consider this letter and the following comment as the Planning Board's testimony for the official record.

- The Petitioner must enter into a legally-binding, long-term agreement with Montgomery County in the form of a covenant or other appropriate legal instrument, to ensure that the subject abandonment area remain publicly accessible.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and a recommendation concerning this petition. Please contact me directly or contact Katie Mencarini with Area I Team of the Planning Department at 301-495-4549 if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,



Casey Anderson  
Chair

cc: Gwen Wright  
Katie Mencarini  
Elza Hisel-McCoy  
Robert Kronenberg  
Christina Sorrento  
Rebecca Torma, MCDOT