

Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)

Agenda

Friday, July 10, 2020 (Virtual Meeting)

Notes taken by Joyce Gwadz

7500 OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD. Amendments to Clark Building approvals under CBD-3 zoning. (David Drobnis, Jane Mahaffie, and Vinita Phonseya, Stonebridge, and Matt Gordon, Selzer Gurvitch) (up to 15 minutes)

COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDELINES (Stephen Aldrich, Andrew Bossi, Planning Department) (up to 30 minutes)

SUBDIVISION STAGING POLICY UPDATE (Jason Sartori, Eric Graye, Planning Department) (up to 45 minutes)

NEW BUSINESS (as needed to close of meeting)
Determine date of next meeting

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

Meeting Notes and Attendees:

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM.

7500 Old Georgetown Road (the “Clark Building”)

The following persons presented:

Jane Mahaffie, Dave Drobnis, Stonebridge, Robert Dalrymple, Selzer Gurvitch

The building at 7500 Old Georgetown Road was built in 1984 and was purchased by Stonebridge Carras (in partnership with Rockwood Investments) in 2019. The building is currently 75% occupied. The goal of the project is to revitalize the building and update its amenities. Key aspects of the renovation include pulling out the vestibule to add 3800 sq. ft. of plaza and interior renovations and adding windows to the 16th floor to convert that floor to office space.



The building was approved in 1983 for 301,000 square feet, mixed use. However, it was built out to approximately 18,400 more square feet than approved. When approved the building was zoned CBD3, but it is now CR. Stonebridge plans to clean up the prior approval and to add 3900 square feet. (In the CR zone an additional 30,000 square feet would be permitted.) Stonebridge will go to the Development Review Committee (DRC) and then to the Planning Board to clean it up.

Diagrams of the project showed bringing the building overhang out closer to the street, making the building more open to the plaza, adding planters, adding windows to the 16th floor, and painting the pre-cast to present the building as less monolithic.

Stonebridge submitted for site plan approval at the end of June and proposes to meet with the DRC in early August. The goal is to go to hearing in September, and to start the project by the end of 2020 or early in 2021. The work is expected to take approximately 14 months.

In response to questions from IAC members, the presenters stated, and Planning confirmed, that with the grandfathering under the CR zone no Park Impact Payment (PIP) is required. During construction there may be some disturbance of the sidewalks, but disturbances will be temporary. Stonebridge has met with Brookfield (developers of a building in the Metro Plaza) and is in continued discussions with Brookfield regarding access to the Stonebridge building from the Metro Plaza when the Brookfield building is completed.

Ms. Mahaffie and Messrs. Drobnis and Dalrymple left the meeting at the close of the presentation and question period.

Complete Streets Design Guidelines

The following persons presented:

Stephen Aldrich with the Planning Department, Andrew Bossi with MCDOT

Members of the Planning Department presented on screen the draft “Complete Streets Design Guide.” The purpose of the Guide is to provide a one-stop resource, to apply across the entire County, for the development of “healthy streets” for all, automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, and public transit, and to work toward the Vision Zero Goal. The primary focus is County streets, but the Guide is also intended to be advisory for state highways in the County. The Guide is intended for use by County staff, developers, design firms, and members of the public.

The Guide is broken into ten chapters: (1) Vision; (2) Street Types; (3) Complete Streets Decision-Making Framework; (4) Sidewalk Zone; (5) Street Zone; (6) Intersections; (7) Green Streets; (8) Bikeways; (9) Speed Management; and (10) Implementation. Select chapters were briefly discussed. Chapter 2, Street Types, explains 12 proposed new street classifications, including the downtown boulevard, residential shared streets, commercial shared streets, and rustic roads, with the street type linked to the target speed, the number of lanes, and the width



of lanes. Chapter 3, Decision-Making Framework, sets out the proposed priority for width reductions in the zones if even the minimum width cannot be met. Chapter 4, Sidewalk Zone, includes requirements for maintenance, for a clear pedestrian zone, and for driveways (expected to be at sidewalk grade). Chapter 6, Intersections, covers right turn lanes (including a proposal to eliminate channelized right turn lanes with islands) and protected crossings and signals, specifying spacing requirements (with crossings closer together in downtown areas). Chapter 8, Bikeways, contains detailed bike lane information, including separation of bike lanes from vehicle lanes in downtown areas. In a Central Business District (CBD) most business streets would become downtown streets under the Guide's proposed classification.

The guidelines are expected to be presented to the Planning Board on July 23, with Planning Board work sessions in September and October. Council Review would be in January, or possibly earlier. Implementation of the proposed guidelines would require an update to the Functional Master Plan of Highways and Transit.

The Design Guide is very much a document in progress, with the draft subject to further changes as it moves along in the process. A copy of the draft presented is available on the Planning Board's website.

Subdivision Staging

Members of the Planning Department are engaged in an effort to update the subdivision staging policy. Those involved have had four work sessions with the Planning Board. They expect to post the final document by July 23, and to send it to the County Council and the County Executive by July 30. A change of policy name to "County Growth Policy" is recommended. The policy is intended to implement the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. Although the policy is subject to a November adoption deadline, it may include later effective dates.

The presenters did not have a full presentation available for the meeting but provided a "high level summary" of the recommendations. The biggest change may be the "School Impact Areas," described to include Infill Impact Areas (apartments, which are believed to generate few students per unit), Turnover Impact Areas (turnover of existing homes), and Greenfield Impact Areas (new development, mostly single-family homes, generating many new students). The proposals recommend adjustments to the annual school tests, and also that the Residential Development Moratorium apply only in the Greenfield Impact Areas. It is proposed that the student generation rate be calculated by analyzing only units built since 1990, because units built since 1990 have overall generated fewer students.

Transportation Element Recommendations include recommendations regarding the Local Area Transportation Review, Vision Zero Standards, and vehicle congestion standards.

Tax Recommendations were also described. These recommendations include allowing a credit against the School Impact Tax for additional types of improvements to a school (credits are now



allowed for land and some improvements), intended as a way to fund delayed improvements (for example, a new HVAC system for a school), and eliminating the School Impact Tax surcharge on larger homes, based on data showing that there is no correlation between the size of a home and the number of students generated. The Impact Tax would also be reduced as an incentive to growth in certain areas (the 23 “activity centers” designated by the Council of Governments were mentioned). The proposed changes in the Impact Tax would result in reduced revenue, and to recoup that revenue a higher tax on the turnover in properties is proposed, through an increase in the Recordation Tax. A further additional payment would be imposed on sales over \$1 million, with the revenue to go to the affordable housing fund.

In response to questions, it was stated that no change was proposed to the “Red Zone” area boundary in Bethesda, which follows the 2017 sector plan boundary. Regarding the proposed changes to the Impact Tax and the Recordation Tax, the presenters acknowledged that the increase in the Recordation Tax would likely increase the burden on owners in residential areas, but also noted that the recordation taxes are paid by all, including commercial owners, and that 70% of increased school enrollment comes from turnover. The changes to the Recordation Tax would apply not only to sales but also to refinancings for more than the original mortgage amount. There was also some discussion of how (or whether) the Impact Tax would apply in a designated Enterprise Zone, and there seems to be a desire to retain the exemption, for both current and formerly designated enterprise zones.

New Business

By agreement, there will be no meeting of the IAC in August. The next meeting will be on Friday, September 11.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.

Meeting Attendees (via Microsoft Teams)

IAC Members: Amanda Farber, Joyce Gwadz, Dedun Ingram, Naomi Spinrad, Susan Wegner, Steve Long, Michael Fetchko, Emily Vaias, Jack Alexander, Jad Donohoe, Matthew Gordon, Kristi Smith, Christopher Smith

Montgomery Planning Department: Leslye Howerton, Stephanie Dickel, Jason Sartori, Emily Balmer, Stephen Aldrich, Andrew Bossi

Montgomery Parks: Hyojung Garland

Bethesda Urban Partnership: Jeff Burton

B-CC Regional Services Center: Ken Hartman, Derrick Harrigan

Bethesda Green: Adam Roberts

