

 **Montgomery Planning****CLIMATE ASSESSMENT FOR  
ZTA 23-03 BETHESDA OVERLAY ZONE**

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**PURPOSE OF CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS**

The purpose of the Climate Assessments is to evaluate the anticipated impact of master plans and zoning text amendments (ZTAs) on the County's contribution to addressing climate change. These assessments will provide the County Council with a better understanding of the potential climate impacts and implications of proposed master plan or ZTA at the County level. The scope of the Climate Assessments is limited to addressing climate change, specifically the effect of land use recommendations in master plans and ZTAs on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and sequestration, and how actions proposed by master plans and ZTAs could improve the County's adaptive capacity to climate change and increase community resilience. Climate assessments are conducted in accordance with the *Climate Assessment Recommendations for Master Plans and Zoning Text Amendments in Montgomery County, December 1, 2022*.

While co-benefits such as health and cost savings may be discussed, the focus is on how the proposed master plan and ZTA may impact GHG emissions and community resilience.

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**SUMMARY**

The Montgomery County Planning Board anticipates that the ZTA 23-03 Bethesda Overlay Zone will have no impacts on the County's greenhouse gas emissions or sequestration rates. Nor will the ZTA effect the County's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions or increasing carbon sequestration.

The proposed ZTA would amend the Development Procedures of the Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) to grant a one-time, one year extension to the deadline that requires applicants to have a building permit application for the primary building core and shell accepted by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) within two years of the mailing of an applicable site plan resolution. It will not have an impact on the density of buildings under the permit process, nor will it change Bethesda's density cap of 32.4 million square feet. For these reasons, it will not have an impact on the county's carbon emissions, sequestration, or the county/community capacity towards climate resiliency and adaptation.

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## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ZTA 23-03 BETHESDA OVERLAY ZONE

ZTA 23-03 was introduced at the request of the Planning Board to provide short, one-time relief for development projects within the BOZ that are facing difficulties obtaining construction financing because of ongoing inflation, rising interest rates, and a tightening credit market. The BOZ is unique in setting a 24-month deadline for development projects to apply for a building permit for the core and shell of the principal building. Because total development in the BOZ is capped, the 24-month deadline is intended to ensure developers do not receive approvals of BOZ density and then not move forward to construction, possibly keeping other development applications from receiving plan approvals. A one-year, one-time extension of this deadline provides equal, limited relief to projects currently in the post-approval stage, without compromising the intent of the deadlines.

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## VARIABLES THAT COULD AFFECT THE ASSESSMENT

### CLIMATE-RELATED VARIABLES

The ZTA is strictly a permit extension for an already approved site plan and therefore there will be no impacts to any categories in the climate assessment including transportation, embodied building emissions, energy, and land cover and management.

### OTHER VARIABLES

The ZTA will not affect other variables such as density, location, or building use and design.

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## ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

There are no anticipated impacts to greenhouse gas emissions, sequestration rates, community resilience, or climate related adaptive capacities.

### GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, CARBON SEQUESTRATION, AND DRAWDOWN IMPACTS

None. See above.

### COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND ADAPTIVE CAPACITY IMPACTS

None. See above.

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## RELATIONSHIP TO GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION AND SEQUESTRATION ACTIONS CONTAINED IN THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

ZTA 23-03 does not involve any increases or decreases in greenhouse gas or sequestration rates.

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## RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act (Bill 3-22) requires the Planning Board to offer appropriate recommendations, amendments or other greenhouse gas reduction measures that could help counter any identified negative impacts of the proposed ZTA. Since there will be no impacts, staff has no climate related recommendations.

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## SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ASSUMPTIONS, AND METHODOLOGIES USED

The climate assessment for ZTA 23-03 was prepared using the methodology for ZTAs (tables 1 and 8) for ZTAs contained within the [\*Climate Assessment Recommendations for Master Plans and Zoning Text Amendments in Montgomery County, December 1, 2022\*](#).