



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

**APPROVED
MINUTES**

The Montgomery County Planning Board met in regular session via Microsoft Teams video conference on Thursday, December 3, 2020, at 9:05 a.m., and adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Present were Chair Casey Anderson and Commissioners Gerald R. Cichy and Partap Verma.

Commissioner Tina Patterson joined the meeting at 9:08 a.m. following discussion of Item 1B, and Vice Chair Natali Fani-González joined at 11:36 a.m. following discussion of Item 3.

Items 1 through 4 are reported on the attached agenda.

The Planning Board recessed for lunch at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened via video conference at 12:47 p.m.

Items 5 through 8 are reported on the attached agenda.

Chair Anderson left the meeting at 2:22 p.m. during discussion of Item 6, to attend a conference call with the County Executive regarding the proposed FY22 Budget. Vice Chair Fani-González assumed the chairmanship during his absence.

Chair Anderson rejoined the meeting at 2:56 p.m. before discussion of Item 7, and offered brief updates about the main points discussed at the FY22 budget meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, December 10, 2020, via video conference.

M. Clara Moise

M. Clara Moise
Sr. Technical Writer/Editor

James J. Parsons

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Sr. Technical Writer/Editor

Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting
Thursday, December 3, 2020
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-495-4605

1. Consent Agenda

***C. Other Consent Items**

Ruck Property, Administrative Subdivision Plan No. 620190120, Regulatory Review Extension Request No. 2---Request to extend the regulatory review period for Administrative Subdivision Plan No. 620190120 from 11/26/2020 until 2/4/2021: An Application to create one lot on 3.38 acres of land in the AR zone, located on Rocky Road, 2100 feet west of Route 108, SW quadrant of the intersection of Rocky Road and Route 108, Parcel 70, 1980 Preservation of Agricultural & Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/VERMA

Vote:

Yea: 3-0

Nay:

Other: FANI-GONZÁLEZ & PATTERSON ABSENT

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Administrative Subdivision Plan Extension request cited above, as amended.

***A. Adoption of Resolutions**

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: There were no Resolutions submitted for approval.

***B. Record Plats**

Subdivision Plat No. 22011220, Rosewood Estates -- RE-1 zone, 2 lots; located on the north side of Rosewood Manor Lane, approximately 1,200 feet east of Woodfield Road (MD 124); Upper Rock Creek Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220200290, Butler Farm -- AR zone, 3 lots; located on the west side of Davis Mill Road, approximately 2,900 feet north of Wildcat Road; Agriculture and Rural Open Space Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220200810, Sunnyside --- CR zone, 1 lot; located on the northeast side of Old Georgetown Road (MD 187), 550 feet west of Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355); Bethesda Downtown Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/VERMA

Vote:

Yea: 3-0

Nay:

Other: FANI-GONZÁLEZ & PATTERSON ABSENT

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Record Plats cited above, as submitted.

***D. Approval of Minutes**

Planning Board Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2020

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/VERMA

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: FANI-GONZÁLEZ ABSENT

Action: Approved the Planning Board Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2020, as submitted.

2. Roundtable Discussion

- Planning Department Director's Report

BOARD ACTION**Motion:****Vote:****Yea:****Nay:****Other:****Action: Received briefing.**

Planning Department Director's Report – Planning Department Director Gwen Wright briefed the Board on the following ongoing and upcoming Planning Department events and activities: the Audubon Naturalist Society Naturally Latinos Conference taking place this morning, for which Vice Chair Fani-González was chosen as the keynote speaker; the status of the approved County Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP), with Planning Department staff receiving training regarding implementation of the new policy, a Planning Board briefing scheduled for today, a presentation on the annual Schools Test Guidelines scheduled for December 17, and continued Department work with County Council staff regarding the Policy; the status of the THRIVE Montgomery 2050 Update to the General Plan, with a recent Planning Board Public Hearing held on November 19, for which written testimony will continue to be received until December 10, continuing meetings with community groups, and the first Planning Board worksession scheduled for December 17; the status of the Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Amendment, with transmittal to the County Council forthcoming; the status of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, with a third worksession scheduled for later today; the status of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, with a Planning Board briefing on community outreach scheduled for later today, and additional community Listening Sessions scheduled throughout December; the status of Corridor Forward – The I-270 Transit Plan, with a Planning Board briefing scheduled for later today; the status of the Advancing the Pike District project, with a Planning Board briefing scheduled for December 17; the recent presentation of the Preservation of Affordable Housing Study to the County Council Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee; and the status of the Planning Department medallion, which has been safely removed from the floor of the former Montgomery Regional Office (MRO) lobby and will be installed in the new Wheaton Headquarters Building.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to Ms. Wright.

***3. Creekside at Cabin Branch: Preliminary Plan No. 120200050**---Application to create 326 lots and 22 parcels for a residential development consisting of 117 single-family detached units and 208 single-family attached units, including 12.5% MPDUs, and one existing single-family detached dwelling unit for a total of 326 dwelling units; +/-402.6-acres; RNC Zone; Clarksburg West Environmental Overlay Zone; located on the northwest quadrant of the intersection of MD Route 121 (Clarksburg Road) and West Old Baltimore Road; 2014 Clarksburg Ten Mile Creek Area Limited Amendment.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

BOARD ACTION

Motion: VERMA/CICHY

Vote:

Yea: 3-0-1

Nay: PATTERSON

Other: FANI-GONZÁLEZ ABSENT

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary Plan cited above, subject to revised conditions discussed during the meeting, and as stated in the attached adopted Resolution.

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed a proposed Preliminary Plan request to construct a residential development of single-family detached and townhouse units. The approximately 402.6-acre property, consisting of parcels P222, P600, and P900, is located on the northwest quadrant of the intersection with Clarksburg Road (MD121) and West Old Baltimore Road and is zoned Rural Neighborhood Cluster (RNC) within the Clarksburg Master Plan, Hyattstown Special Study Area (SPA), Clarksburg Ten Mile Creek Area Limited Amendment, and Clarksburg West Environmental (CWE) Overlay Zone areas. Access to the site is currently from MD121 via a driveway that runs along the northern boundary of parcel P900, through parcel P600 to an existing farmhouse and accessory structures. To the south, a second driveway from MD121 provides access to the existing historic Cephas Summers House on P900. Staff noted that a landlocked 4.0-acre parcel, identified as P225, the Delaney property, is located on the southern portion of P222, accessed via an easement from Old Clarksburg Road, and is not part of the site or the application under review today. In addition to the existing structures, the property includes a mix of woodlands, farm fields, and forest covering much of the stream valleys.

Staff noted that the applicant proposes to create 326 lots for a residential development consisting of 117 new single-family detached units, 208 new townhouse units, including 12.5 percent Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs), and one existing single-family detached dwelling unit for a total of 326 dwelling units. Staff noted that until the necessary school

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***3. Creekside at Cabin Branch: Preliminary Plan No. 120200050**CONTINUED

capacity is available, only Phase I of the project will be constructed, which will limit the development to 187 dwelling units consisting of 60 single-family residences and 127 townhome units. The applicant will request approval of additional units once school capacity becomes available. As conditioned, the historic Cephas Summers House, which is extremely damaged and in poor condition, will be reconstructed in its original location, and its 66.4-acre parcel will be subdivided, with the environmental setting reduced to 10.21 acres. Access to the property will be at an unsignalized intersection of MD121 and proposed public road Creekside Boulevard. The applicant will conduct a signal warrant analysis to ensure safe long-term operation of the main site entrance and will assume responsibility for implementation of a signal, if warranted. A shared driveway, which connects to a small portion of Old Clarksburg Road, will serve two existing properties located on the southwest side of the entrance, one of them the Cephas Summers House. An additional emergency-only access point will be provided north of the site to connect with the retained portion of Old Clarksburg Road, which will remain terminated in its current location with signage added to restrict access from the road. Bicycle access will be provided via the reconstruction of an existing six-foot-wide bike lane along the northern portion of MD121 frontage, with sidewalks proposed along both sides of all public roads and additional interior connections provided across and along mews for pedestrian use. The application also includes conveyance of approximately 280.8 acres to the Parks Department as an addition to the Ten Mile Creek Conservation Park and the creation of a new ten-acre neighborhood park. Additionally, twenty-two parcels will be created for on-site open space and amenities, resulting in 81 percent rural open space and six percent open space for recreation and amenities. Staff added that the applicant is also seeking waivers for the standard centerline radius, use of curbs and gutters, use of non-through roads, and off-street vehicle parking requirements, which staff supports. Staff then briefly discussed minor corrections to the Conditions of Approval.

Staff then discussed the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan (PFCP), the Preliminary SPA Water Quality Plan (WQP), Preliminary Conservation Management Plan (PCMP), and Preliminary Stream and Wetland Restoration Plan, noting that the property includes 173 acres of existing forest, 11 acres of existing wetlands, 209 acres of environmental buffers, and currently drains to three sub-watersheds of the Little Seneca-Ten Mile Creek watershed, identified as LSTM 110, LSTM 111, and LSTM 112, with 110 and 111 being the most sensitive. The associated PFCP, which proposes removing 0.66 acres of forest, retaining 172.08 acres, and planting 82.34 acres within a protected environmental buffer, will not generate a forest planting requirement. The applicant has also submitted a variance request for the removal of five trees and to impact, but not remove, 23 others that are considered high priority for retention, which will be mitigated through the onsite planting of 15 trees. Staff supports the variance request. The Preliminary SPA WQP proposes 0.10-acres of environmental buffer encroachments for storm drain and other outfalls, to be mitigated through the reforestation of 78 acres of unforested environmental buffer and limiting impervious surfaces to 5.99 percent. The PCMP proposes the planting of approximately 62 acres of native, pollinator friendly meadow and grassed areas, as well as individual native trees and shrubs. As required by the Preliminary Stream and Wetland

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***3. Creekside at Cabin Branch: Preliminary Plan No. 120200050**CONTINUED

Restoration Plan, the applicant will be required to restore approximately 1,000 linear feet of stream sections adversely affected by past agricultural uses. Staff noted that the final Plans will be submitted at the time of Site Plan review. Staff has received correspondence from the Friends of Ten Mile Creek, as well as from several local residents, who raised environmental concerns regarding potential impacts to sub-watersheds, tributaries, the Little Seneca Reservoir, and rare threatened endangered species; soil disturbance and compaction; and the reduction of forest cover. Staff addressed each of these issues, as detailed in the November 20 technical staff report.

The following speakers offered testimony: Ms. Diane Cameron representing the TAME Coalition; Ms. Ginny Barnes representing Conserve Montgomery; Mr. Thomas Leedy representing the Friends of Ten Mile Creek; Ms. Miriam Schoenbaum representing the Boyds Civic Association; Mr. John Parrish representing Friends of Ten Mile Creek; Ms. Anne Cinque representing Friends of Ten Mile Creek; Mr. Julius Cinque representing Friends of Ten Mile Creek; Ms. Caroline Taylor representing the Montgomery Countryside Alliance; Ms. Roberta Steinman of Fairview Road; Ms. Sylvia Tognetti of Menlo Avenue; Ms. Cathy Wiss of Albemarle Street; and Ms. Shruti Bhatnagar representing the Montgomery County Sierra Club.

Mr. Bob Harris, attorney representing the applicant, offered comments and concurred with the staff recommendation.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff, during which Commissioner Patterson noted that she remains concerned about cumulative impacts to drinking water and would prefer that the applicant reduce the proposed number of impervious surfaces.

4. Silver Spring Downtown & Adjacent Communities Plan – Planning Board Briefing Project Update- Community Engagement and Existing Conditions. This briefing to the Planning Board will include an update on the community engagement activities since the scope of work was approved in June 2020 and what the planning team has been hearing. The second part of the update to the Planning Board will include a briefing on the existing conditions analysis that the team has been conducting and what the briefing book will include when presented to the Planning Board in full in early 2021, along with updates on the project process and schedule.

Staff Recommendation: Receive Briefing

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: Received briefing followed by discussion.

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed the proposed Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, specifically the ongoing community engagement efforts and Existing Conditions Study. Staff noted that since the Planning Board approved the Scope of Work on June 4, 2020, the team has spent the past five months engaging with the community through various listening sessions, office hours, small in-person outdoor walks, online meetings, web surveys, and email newsletters while simultaneously conducting the existing conditions analysis of the Plan area. To date, staff has engaged over 500 residents, property owners, business owners and community stakeholders from across the Plan area, including downtown and the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Staff then discussed equity and transparency in their engagement efforts, noting that in keeping with the county's Racial Equity Act, they have been reaching out to organizations and residents of this diverse community who may not have participated in the previous Plan engagement efforts, as well as collecting demographic information from an online survey and a post-Listening Session survey, in an effort to understand who is being reached effectively. Challenges have included the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, reaching communities with whom the Planning Department does not have an existing relationship, limitations of online and in-person engagement, and participants who are unfamiliar with the Microsoft Teams online meeting platform. Comments, concerns, and recommendations received thus far during outreach efforts include preserving the area's diversity, preserving the existing small independent businesses, the potential for overdevelopment in the Plan area, preserving the character of

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4. Silver Spring Downtown & Adjacent Communities Plan – Planning Board Briefing

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existing neighborhoods, transportation issues, pedestrian and bicycle safety, parks and public spaces, preserving green spaces and trees, and the need for all residents to be included in the planning process.

Staff then very briefly discussed the ongoing Existing Conditions Study, noting that they are concluding six months of data gathering and analysis, the results of which will be presented in a briefing to the Planning Board and community in early 2021. The briefing will address the history of Silver Spring; demographics; land use, zoning, and urban design; housing; the public realm, public space, and parks; transportation; environment and economic development; schools and community resources; and historic preservation.

The next steps for the Plan include the conclusion of Phase I engagement efforts with the final December listening sessions scheduled for December 8 and 14, additional meetings, and the kick-off of Phase II of engagement efforts, identified as the Visioning stage, scheduled for February and March.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff.

5. Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan

Staff Recommendation: Receive Briefing on the Corridor Forward Plan and Provide Feedback Regarding Service Areas and Initial Transit Concepts

BOARD ACTION**Motion:****Vote:****Yea:****Nay:****Other:****Action: Received briefing followed by Board discussion.**

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and briefed the Planning Board on the I-270 Transit Plan/Corridor Forward and provided feedback regarding the service areas and initial transit concepts. Staff noted that since the project's scope of work was presented to the Planning Board on April 30, 2020, work has significantly advanced. The project's statement of purpose acknowledges that there are many master-planned and speculative transit options that could improve accessibility along the I-270 Corridor, but it also acknowledges that the county cannot realistically advance each option and needs a clear strategy to ensure resources are directed to the most advantageous projects. To satisfy this purpose, the Plan will evaluate and prioritize transit options based on typical transit planning metrics such as ridership and capital costs, but also metrics representative of each option's support of environmental resilience, economic health and equity, consistent with the Public Hearing Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050. Once priorities are determined, the project team will develop an implementation plan detailing the major steps necessary to realize the highest priority projects.

Staff added that the purpose of this briefing is fourfold: 1) provide an outline of the Plan's planning process, including refinements to the April 30 scope of work following the project procurement process; 2) review the attributes of various transit modes included in the scope and discuss the role of limited use technology in the project; 3) provide an overview of the conceptual transit alternatives and provide feedback to staff on the initial pre-screening framework; and 4) provide an update on outreach efforts carried out by staff. The project milestones have been slightly refined to be consistent with the process proposed by the selected project consultant. The process discussed in detail in the November 25 technical staff report provides the Planning Board and the community the opportunity to have a large impact on planning outcomes and a more comprehensive view into the benefits of six key study alternatives. The transit value questionnaire has provided staff with initial public perceptions pertaining to the values encompassed by the Plan's goal. Several different transit modes could serve the I-270 Corridor, ranging from local bus service to commuter rail. Staff has received

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5. Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit PlanCONTINUED

comments and inquiries from individuals who believe the project scope of work should be expanded to include less commonly used technologies, including maglev, or magnetic levitation vehicles, which are rapid transit vehicles that are typically designed to cover long distances at speeds of 373 miles per hour, and personal rapid transit (PRT) pods.

Staff then discussed the proposed alternatives and noted that each of the nine conceptual alternatives discussed will be evaluated through a pre-screening and refinement process, which will examine the options considering the Plan goal and values of strategic connections, economic health, community equity and environmental resilience. Staff also noted that since the last briefing to the Planning Board, staff has conducted several outreach events with key stakeholders and hosted a public kick-off meeting for the proposed project. In addition, staff has developed several outreach materials, including the transit value questionnaire, educational videos, a project infographic, and an interactive web map. Following this briefing, staff will work through the pre-screening to refine the conceptual alternatives and determine which of the conceptual transit alternatives will be recommended to advance into planning a robust scenario. Staff will also develop the evaluation metrics and methodology and will return to the Planning Board in winter 2021 to confirm the alternatives and metric outputs.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff.

6. Amherst Avenue Separated Bike Lane Project – Alternative Selection---Presentation on the alternatives for the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Amherst Avenue Separated Bike Lane project.

Staff Recommendation: Receive Briefing and forward comments to MCDOT

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/PATTERSON

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: ANDERSON TEMPORARILY ABSENT

Action: Received Briefing and approved staff recommendation to transmit comments and recommendations to Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

In keeping with the November 25 detailed technical staff report, Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and briefed the Planning Board on the Amherst Avenue Separated Bike Lane project, which is identified in the Bicycle Master Plan as one of the highest priority bikeways in Montgomery County. The proposed project would substantially improve the safety and comfort of the bicycle experience for people travelling to and through the Wheaton Central Business District (CBD) by installing a bikeway from Windham Lane to Arcola Avenue that would be comfortable for people of all ages and bicycling abilities. The proposed bikeway will connect communities to the Wheaton CBD from the north and south. Future work will extend this bikeway south of Forest Glen Road as a master-planned Neighborhood Greenway. Collaboration between MCDOT, the Planning Department, and the Department of Parks is also underway to pursue a master-planned trail along a paper street which extends from Arcola to Henderson Avenues, providing future connectivity into Wheaton Regional Park, the Wheaton Public Library and other community resources. Amherst Avenue is the spine that supports the entire Wheaton-area bicycling network. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MDOT) is proposing to construct a bikeway along a 1.1-mile section of Amherst Avenue and has developed five bikeway alternatives. This briefing will provide the Planning Board the opportunity to recommend a preferred alternative to the County Council and transmit comments and recommendations to MCDOT for further project refinement.

Staff noted that Amherst Avenue is a two-way, two-lane roadway that runs in the north-south direction between Dennis and Arcola Avenues. It is classified as a primary residential street at its northern and southern ends, and a business district street between Reddie Drive and Blueridge Avenue. The project extents are from Windham Lane in the south to Arcola Avenue in the north, along the east side of the Wheaton CBD. In addition to the two through lanes, turn lanes are currently present at the intersection of Amherst Avenue and University Boulevard, and

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6. Amherst Avenue Separated Bike Lane Project – Alternative SelectionCONTINUED

the intersection of Amherst and Arcola Avenues. The posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour and on-street parking is present on many roadway segments, both designated metered spaces and residential permit parking. Parking counts were conducted as part of this project and the results are provided in the staff report. The existing corridor includes traffic signals at one intersection on University Boulevard, with all other intersections stop-controlled. There are curb extensions with stormwater bio-retention at the intersection of Blueridge and Amherst Avenues. The project corridor abuts a mixture of land uses, both commercial and residential. There are apartment buildings, townhouses and single-family detached houses along the corridor, as well as small-scale retail, restaurant, and civic uses, as is the MCDOT Wheaton garage, Wheaton Veterans Park, a car dealership, big box retail and self-storage.

Staff then discussed the proposed alternatives and noted that MCDOT has engaged the community using a newsletter mailing which provided an overview of the project and an invitation to a public meeting, which was held on October 3, 2019 at the Arcola Elementary School, with an option of streaming the meeting online. The overall feedback from the community was positive, with some concerns of potential impacts to house frontage and impacts to street trees, as well as existing parking spaces.

At the Board's request, Ms. Angel Cheng of MCDOT offered comments and answered questions from the Planning Board.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff and MCDOT representatives, Corey Pitts and Dan Sheridan, also present via video conference.

7. **Briefing on New Growth and Infrastructure Policy**---Planning staff will update the Planning Board on the newly adopted Growth and Infrastructure Policy (formerly the Subdivision Staging Policy), highlighting how the County Council’s decisions differ from the recommendations included in the Planning Board Draft.

Staff Recommendation: Receive Briefing

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: Received Briefing.

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and briefed the Planning Board on the newly adopted Growth and Infrastructure Policy, formerly known as the Subdivision Staging Policy. Staff discussed and highlighted how the County Council’s decisions differ from the recommendations included in the Planning Board Draft. Staff noted that on Monday, November 16, 2020 the County Council unanimously adopted the 2020-2024 Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP). The Council also adopted Bills 37-20 and 38-20, which pertain to the extension of an adequate public facilities validity period and development impact taxes for transportation and school improvements. Staff added that the key features of the new policy include: 1) eliminating residential development moratoria; 2) requiring developers of new housing projects to make tiered Utilization Premium Payments (UPP) in areas with overcrowded schools; 3) modifying the calculation and applicability of development impact taxes to better reflect actual costs and to provide incentives for desired development in preferred areas; 4) changing the name of the policy to Growth and Infrastructure Policy; 5) designating neighborhoods by School Impact Areas, which are characterized by the amount and type of residential development they experience and the impact on school enrollment; 6) incorporating Vision Zero concepts in transportation adequacy reviews; 7) eliminating the motor vehicle adequacy test in areas around Metro rail stations and future Purple Line stations; and 7) updating the multi-modal adequacy tests that require developer-funded bicycle, pedestrian and bus improvements.

Staff then provided an overview of the County Council’s decisions, as discussed in the November 25 memorandum and attachments, highlighting changes from the recommendations that the Planning Board submitted to the Council in July 2020. Staff also added that this briefing will prepare the Planning Board for the upcoming briefing and consideration of the updated FY21 school test results and its review of the Annual School Test Guidelines, which are both scheduled for discussion at the upcoming December 17 Planning Board meeting.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff.

8. Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Worksession No. 3: Community design, design guidelines, and zoning recommendations, plan mark-ups, and approval of the Planning Board Draft.

Staff Recommendation: Discuss Issues and Provide Direction to Staff and Approve the Planning Board Draft of the Plan

BOARD ACTION

Motion: FANI-GONZÁLEZ/CICHY

Vote:

Yea: 5-0

Nay:

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation to approve the Planning Board Draft Plan, including the changes discussed at the meeting, and to transmit the Draft Plan to the County Council.

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and noted that staff is requesting final guidance from the Planning Board on the community design, design guidelines, and zoning recommendations for the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan and approval of the Planning Board Draft Plan for transmittal to the County Council.

As discussed in detail in the November 25 technical staff report, staff noted that the primary unresolved issues are the proposed zoning in the southeast quadrant of the Plan's Village core neighborhood and the detail of the Design Guidelines within the Plan area. The Plan's Design Guidelines provide specificity to the community design recommendations and add terminology, architectural context, and best practices. Staff also noted that great care went into creating the community design recommendations and the Design Guidelines so that they would work in tandem with the proposed zoning recommendation to realize the Plan's vision of a vibrant, low-rise, walkable and bikeable village center where residents could informally meet. Ashton and other rural villages that were used as a basis for some of the design recommendations rarely have buildings over two and a half-story, with an occasional modestly sized three-story building. The proposed 40-foot height limit would already allow at least three and a half-stories and in some cases four, which is higher than any existing building in Ashton and is higher than currently allowed by zoning. The community has explicitly expressed that providing too much density and height in the recommended zoning for the southeast quadrant would lead to oversized, suburban feeling development, which few want to see. The community argued that the draft Plan already provides too much density. Staff defended its recommended density when taken in conjunction with the Design Guidelines but believes the requested density and height from the property owner does not support a rural village character, which is the vision of this Sector Plan.

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8. Ashton Village Center Sector Plan Worksession No. 3CONTINUED

Staff further added that the vision of the Sector Plan is for Ashton to become a compact, low-rise, walkable and bikeable rural village with a mix of land uses. The Plan envisages diverse housing options, new businesses, and new gathering spaces for the community. Close to the main intersection, state routes 108 and 650, new buildings frame streetscapes, with parking and loading behind or to the sides of the buildings and screened from the public realm. Buildings become smaller and more widely separated as they transition from the village center to the single-family detached homes and farms outside the Plan area. New or improved sidewalks, shared use-paths and street crossings provide for safe and convenient ways to walk and bike through Ashton. Context-sensitive architectural elements and building massing and placement create a sense of community integration while respecting Ashton's rich cultural history and its location at the headwaters of tributaries to the Patuxent and Anacostia Rivers.

Staff then discussed community design recommendations, building height transition, varied building heights, building form along state roads, building types, massing and composition, details of the Design Guidelines, and the Village core zoning.

Staff added that it has redlined recommended changes to the Public Hearing Draft that has been distributed as an attachment and requests Board approval of the changes discussed and transmission to the County Executive and the County Council.

Planning Department Director Gwen Wright also offered comments and answered questions from the Board.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff.