

IAC Comments for BDP 2022 Annual Monitoring Report

Commenter #1:

General comments:

There are quite a few typos, verb tense errors, missing prepositions, etc. suggest having an editor give it a quick read to correct.

The font color used in the key for many of the figures is very pale. Given the small font size used in those keys and the ink color, it's very difficult to read the keys, especially on the screen. Please use a darker color for the key fonts.

Specific comments:

Page 7

Blurb on Construction: Please add addresses for projects where only a name is given (e.g., 4316 Wisconsin for Metro Tower). Many readers will not know project names, but will know addresses. There seem to be several projects missing from the list.

Blurb on Parks: This and Open Space: lists the PIP anticipated from the approved projects. Please list also the PIP funds actually collected to date and how much PIP money was spent during the past year. Also this blurb should include any acquisitions of new park/green space this past year or a statement that none was acquired.

And please also add to the text of the Executive Summary,, how much of the PIP funds have been spent to date and how much was spent this past year.

Blurb on Transportation. This blurb should include the completion of the bike lane for Phase 1 of the surface Capital Crescent Trail

Pg. 10. In the paragraph about the DAP, please add the url for the DAP web site (similar to how the IAC url is given). Also, in the DAP paragraph, it says the DAP has reviewed 4 projects "since May 2021", but the title of the table on page 11, says projects reviewed "since April 2021". These dates should be the same and given "since April 2021" is used on other tables, suggest choosing that date..

Pg. 12 Hampden East. 2nd para. The text says that the DAP reviewed this project favorably. This sounds like the project was reviewed this past year, which makes the reader wonder why it is not in the list of projects reviewed this year. A subsequent reference to a 2nd DAP review gives a date of March 2021, so it becomes clear why this project is not in the table of projects reviewed this past year. To reduce confusion, suggest adding the review date of that first DAP review . In final para about this project, please add the amount of BOZ density approved for the project.

4901 Battery Lane. Please add a sentence to the description of this project clarifying where in the approval process this project is.

Pg. 14 4725 Cheltenham 2nd para, 5th line beginning 76841: Needs “square feet” inserted following this number.

Status of Available BOZ density, para 1 line 7. “Available” is misspelled as “available” Last sentence, suggest putting “Available” at beginning of sentence before “BOZ density” to make the statement clearer.

Pg. 15 Figure 1. 7126 Wisconsin Ave. (west side of Wisconsin Ave. between Miller Ave. and Bethesda Ave.) is marked in yellow which the key identifies as County DOT parking lot. This is incorrect. This property should be marked in dark blue to represent sketch/preliminary plan approval. The properties on the east side of Wisconsin between Willow and Leland and between Leland and Walsh should have the yellow marking. The dark blue shaded area bordered by Arlington Rd. and Bethesda Ave. seems way too large for the proposed project there.

I don't see a shaded space for the approved EuroMotors construction on Bethesda Ave. And is there shading for the Audi development?

Pg. 15 Status of Available BOZ density section.

Suggest adding a bit more detail here and referring to Tables 3a, 3b, and 3c (hopefully to be renumbered 2a and 2b and 2c.) It would be helpful to cite the square footage numbers for new development and approved unbuilt development and “cancelled” development because time limits ran out to show how we get to the current figure for available BOZ density.

Pg. 16 Last sentence of Approve Unbuilt Development. Reader is told that there is a table showing these properties (those with site plan and/or preliminary plan approvals). But the next table (Table 2) goes with the following section and shows public benefit points. It's not until several pages later that the promised table shows up as Table 3a and 3b. Suggest moving this table, or if that's not possible, citing the table numbers in the Approved and Unbuilt Development paragraph.

Pg. 16 Public Benefit points, Table 2. Confusing to see Avondale included in this table because this is the first time this project has shown up. It becomes clearer once the reader gets to Tables 3a and 3b. If tables 3a and 3b were actually 2a and 2b, and the current Table 2 was Table 3, this would flow better.

Pg. 18 Table 3C. Was this table discussed anywhere in the text? Good to see it in the report, but it deserves a mention in the text.

Before heading into the Schools section of this report, it would be useful to have a section that describes how many new residential units have been built thus far, how many are approved, and how many are under construction. There was a statement early on about the total number of new residential units expected to be built in Bethesda under the plan, so some sort of accounting for where we are in this would be good.

Also, the annual report should include tables showing cumulative information for Bethesda, not just information for the past year. Specifically: a table should be included that shows total projects that have received sketch/preliminary/site plan approval since the Plan was adopted, number of completed projects since the Plan was adopted, number of projects that are in progress, number of projects that have not started, number of projects whose approval expired during the report year and the number that will expire in the coming report year, PIP funds received total and during the report year, how much square footage has been constructed to date, how many new housing units are completed (and how many of these are MPDUs), how many housing

units were lost due to new construction (that way we can see the housing gains) etc. This information is needed for readers to get a picture of how things are moving along. Reports of traffic, etc. aren't very meaningful without this sort of information.

Pg. 21 and 22. There is a comment that the kindergarten class was larger this past year than the previous year (when the number was smaller due to the covid pandemic). Would be useful to note whether the first grade enrollment numbers this past year were up from the previous year showing that the missing kindergarten students were in BCC 1st grade classrooms this past year. Also, Some comment on the overall enrollment impacts of covid on elementary, middle, and highschool enrollment would be useful.

On page 22, last sentence of 1st para starting "Current projections": no time frame is given here and needs to be.

Note for page 23 (if not this year, then next year). One of the options for easing crowding at B-CC high school was to acquire neighboring properties. The property usually referred to was just west of the school on East-West Hwy. This property has now come to planning with a proposal to redevelop into a multi-family residential building, so it will no longer be an option.

Pg. 24 Recommendations section. Sentence beginning "The table on page 26". Suggest inserting the table number here.

Pg 25. &26. Figure 4 and Table 5. The map does not accurately portray the proposed park space on lots 10 and 24 and the write-up in the table doesn't reflect the likelihood of these parks. This map is a bit confusing – hard to see where Wisconsin Ave. is for example so hard to orient.

In several places in the parks section, Elm St. Urban Park is referred to as Elm St. Neighborhood Green. I'm unaware of this park's name being changed. In fact, the parks department recently installed a new sign with the name Elm St. Urban Park to replace the old sign that read Elm St. Park.

Transportation

Pg. 31 Capital Crescent Surface Trail. Suggest modifying the final sentence that now reads, "Substantial completion of Phase 1 (Bethesda Ave/ Willow Lane Woodmont to 47th) of the project was in May 2022" to say that this portion was completed in May 2022. This would make this section consistent with the description of it on page 50.

Pg. 32 Pedestrian crossing at Bethesda Ave. and Wisconsin. The entry just says "Bethesda Avenue & Wisconsin Avenue (Anticipated to be completed in June 2022) Assume this is referring to the modifications made for the Capital Crescent Surface Trail. Suggest that this be explicitly stated and that it was completed in June 2022. There are other safety changes that have been proposed for this intersection and you might want to indicate that as well.

The IAC has suggested other intersections that need pedestrian improvements such as Bradley and Wisconsin. Suggest adding those to the list.

Pg. 35 Surprised not to see East-West Hwy and Connecticut intersection in the list of intersections where the demand for the cue lane for turns exceeds the space available.

Pg. 45. 2nd column, 7316 Wisconsin Ave. This is Metro Tower, not Hampden House. Please also add that pedestrian access on the north side of Hampden Lane between Wisconsin and East Lane often is closed due to the construction.

Pg. 45 4300 Wisconsin Ave. The closure of this section of Elm St. is not for the Purple Line station, it's for construction of the south entrance to the Bethesda Metro station. Further, it is not open to pedestrians on the south side of Elm St. as the text currently states; It is totally closed to pedestrians.

Suggest adding blurbs to this report about the closures of Woodmont Street and Norfolk for the streeteries and the possibility of making the Norfolk streeteries permanent.

Pg. 50. Capital Crescent Trail tunnel. Wasn't this project knocked out of the CIP this year? If so, this should be reflected here.

Pg. 54. It states that the J4 ceased operation due to covid and there are no plans for its resumption. Yet in the final paragraph on this page it says all service (meaning metrobus, metrorail, and Rideon) has been restored.

Pg. 55. Bullet about county parking lots 10 & 24 needs to be updated. The current plan is for 200 of the 300 existing parking spaces to be replaced in an underground garage. This was the number recommended in a study the parking district conducted.

Pg. 55 Table 12. I think the labels for the 2nd and 3rd colons were switched. (or the data were). Right now, the 2nd column should be labeled "Average occupancy" and the 3rd column should be labeled "Capacity".

Commenter #2:

Page 9 - Includes "The Plan estimates a maximum of 8,456 additional multi-unit residential units if limited commercial development occurs." How many total new units have been delivered between May 2017-July 2022? How many total MPDUs?

Page 45 - Transportation - Construction and Operation Impacts on Network - This section should include mention of the fact that there are laws for sidewalk closures in urban/transit-oriented areas.

County Roads -

https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/DownloadFilePage?FileName=2636_1_10546_Bill_38-19_Signed_20200327.pdf

State Roads - <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2020RS/bills/hb/hb0194F.pdf>

How many waivers within the Plan area have been given for these laws since they were enacted?

Page 59 - Green Cover - It would be good to include the "Sustainability Performance Area Metrics" from the Plan (page 11 of the Plan) in the report to remind people. The 2017 metrics said their could be 137% increase in Tree Canopy Cover in the HPA (with an additional 62 acres approximately); TBD additional Tree Cover Outside the HPA; and a 4800% increase in area of green roofs (from .75 acres to 30-36 acres approximately).

Also would be worth noting how many LEED Buildings have been built since 2017 (since that was also a metric).

Commenter #3:

I wasn't specifically looking for typos or copy edit issues but I note some:

P. 18 paragraph 1, 5th line - All of the projects from Table 3b have (not has)

p. 37 chart #8 "intersection" column should say Wilson Lane at Old Georgetown Road

p. 39 last paragraph second column, 4th line, add "there are" so it reads "there are bollards..."

p. 45 first column 2nd paragraph, 5th line, 1st word - Delivery, not deliver

This comment refers to p. 32 "Pedestrian crossings..." but may be included in IAC comments at the end of the report.

Regarding the first bullet point, Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue: This intersection needs close observation and potential adjustments. Pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers are all confused by the signal timing and sequences. There is no mechanism to ensure cyclists and pedestrians don't collide in the clearly marked walkways crossing the bike lanes; DOT should consider placing "Stop" signs for cyclists or at least "Yield to Pedestrians" signs. There may be a need for additional signage as well, indicating the "all-pedestrian phase" and urging pedestrians to watch for turning cars.

Similarly for these comments regarding p. 35, "Key takeaways from the queuing analysis....":

1. Bradley Boulevard at Wisconsin Avenue - this intersection has come up several times at the IAC. It really requires close attention from the state and county. There is no truly safe time for pedestrians to cross in any direction because of signal timing - there are always cars coming from some place. The intersection strongly and quickly requires a site visit to identify safety issues around signalling and correct them (at the same time the misalignment of crosswalks can be addressed). It is likely that fixing the signal issues will increase delays for vehicles even as it increases pedestrian safety.

4. Bethesda Avenue at Arlington Road - Bethesda Avenue westbound backups are repeatedly worsened by turns onto Bethesda Avenue eastbound from southbound Arlington Road. Vehicles there turn even though by doing so they block left turns from Bethesda Avenue and sometimes even continuing westbound traffic. As well, there are often vehicles parked on the south side of Bethesda Avenue just east of this intersection, in front of Uncle Julio's, that further block turning traffic from both directions. With pandemic conditions eased, this area should be made a no parking area with consistent enforcement. A camera at the intersection for southbound turns from Arlington Road might also be helpful.

p. 39 8015 Old Georgetown Road -

The discussion of traffic issues around the work-live units does not indicate how these requirements will be enforced - or even they will be. Without enforcement mechanisms these constraints are meaningless.

This is probably for the end page, but refers to p. 42, bullet at bottom of first column referencing "constrained parking or no parking on-site". (on site should not be hyphenated here):

While the plan addressed parking minimums and maximums, development approvals have often been more focused on developer claims of market demands for parking. This is contrary to the Plan's goal of 55% merged NADMS. The Planning Board should be more assertive in reducing parking in plans within the Metro, Purple Line, and BRT walksheds.

p. 43 refers to employers who have been recognized by the MWCOG for having "highly effective TDM Plans." Is this purely an incentive-based effort?

p. 50 Capital Improvement Projects - I suggest rephrasing:
 Several On-road bicycle facilities are funded and in various phases of design or construction along segments of Woodmont Avenue...."

There is no mention of the Amenity Fund and how the IAC believes it should be directed, notably in the IAC's current thinking that it can be directed toward the Norfolk Avenue streetry. The Amenity Fund is not intended to fill shortfalls in CIP or other County or Parks and Planning funds.

Although the Bethesda Downtown area is still about 2 million square feet short of the point at which the Council may want to review, any such review should include a comprehensive look at parks, public facilities, and traffic issues and the extent both to which progress has been made as well as any new priorities that might be set. In that context, the next annual report might be more specific on these subjects.

Commenter #4:

Page Number of Report	Topic	Question/Comment
Pages 15-18	Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ); Planned Development	<p>The report restates the "existing on ground development, lowering it from 23.3 to 23.1 million SF, allowing for an additional 200,000 SF of development as part of the 2017 Bethesda Plan. Does the 30.4 million SF development threshold, noted in the report where the Council "may require certain actions before additional development is permitted, reflect this additional 200,000 SF of development potential?</p> <p>Could the report include a table of those projects that have received site</p>

		plan approval since 2017, but are either not yet under construction or are presently under construction?
Page 17	Public Benefit Points	What is the basis or formula for calculating the public benefit points?
Page 18	7070 Arlington Road Project	Is this a standard method project? Does that explain the lack of BOZ density use and no payment for park improvements?
Page 27 and Pages 55-56	Eastern Greenway	The Eastern Greenway is discussed under the section addressing Parks and Open Space. This discussion should be updated to reflect the proposed development on the two surface public parking lots (Numbers 25 and 44) which was announced in July, explaining specifically how the proposed developments will impact the park and greenway plans outlined in the 2017 Bethesda Plan.

Page Number of Report	Topic	Question/Comment
Page 41	4725 Cheltenham Drive Project; Cheltenham Bikeway	The discussion regarding the construction of a separated bike lane on the corridor between Tilbury and Wisconsin is very confusing with seemingly overlapping installation/construction obligations for the 4725 Cheltenham developer and MCDOT. It is not clear what will happen when and by whom.
Page 45	Urban Loading and Delivery Management Study	There is reference to this study, evidently initiated in 2020. When will it be available?