

WHEATON STREETScape STANDARDS UPDATE



Description

Staff will brief the Planning Board on the Wheaton Streetscape Standards update, which builds on the recommendations of the 2012 *Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan* and the recently approved *Wheaton Downtown Study*. Staff requests that the Planning Board approve the Wheaton Streetscape Standards.

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PROJECT INFORMATION

Document

Wheaton Streetscape Standards

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Planning Board Information

MCPB

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SUMMARY

The update of the Wheaton Streetscape Standards follows the work completed earlier this year on the *Wheaton Downtown Study*. As context for the Planning Board, Staff will provide a brief summary of the Study's process and strategies, followed by the briefing on the Streetscape Standards update.

BACKGROUND

Streetscape Standards used to date in downtown Wheaton were created by the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) in the 1990's and were last updated in 2002. Since created, the Wheaton standards have been extensively implemented in various configurations throughout the Central Business District and have become a defining visual for the downtown area. County-led efforts have retrofitted several pedestrian areas with variations of these standards, and a few redeveloped properties have implemented the standards to the fullest showcasing how transformative improvements to the public domain are achievable in Wheaton.

INCLUDED IN THIS UPDATE

The updated Wheaton Streetscape Standards are based on adaptable streetscape types developed to accommodate pedestrians and alternative mobility modes in safe and attractive environments. This update includes:

- A reduced number of streetscape types to streamline implementation as redevelopment occurs, in support of the recommendations of the 2012 *Wheaton Central Business District and Vicinity Sector Plan*, which envisioned significant redevelopment of downtown's commercial properties.
- Streetscape components that allow for flexibility in implementation, consistent with the sidewalk zones recommended by the *Complete Streets Design Guide (CSDG)* and components that support the revitalization goals of the recently approved *Wheaton Downtown Study*, which included strategies to leverage the economic benefits created by potential large-scale redevelopment to foster small property owners and businesses interested in evolving and adapting in the near-term.
- Integration of pavement types recently introduced to the downtown area, most notably the variety of pavement materials associated with the construction of M-NCPPC's Wheaton Headquarters, with the continued use of the prevailing Wheaton concrete paver pattern.
- Information on street trees, groundcover plantings, and options to achieve adequate soil volumes to ensure planting growth.
- Information on street furnishings and street lighting.

- Information to facilitate coordination with guidance from recent plans and policies that promote enhanced bus transit, expanded bicycle networks, safer pedestrian facilities, zero fatalities and serious injuries on roadways, and environmentally sustainable practices.

PROCESS

The Planning Department engaged the consulting services of Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated (RHI), who have collaborated with Montgomery Planning to develop streetscape guidelines for Silver Spring and the Pike District, to work with Staff and stakeholders to evaluate the current streetscape standards, review existing conditions, consider the recommendations of recent plans and policies, and propose suitable updates. Staff also engaged property owners, agency partners, community members, and other stakeholders to evaluate the potential for furthering the vision of the 2012 Plan. Outreach included:

- Interview DHCA Staff involved in the creation of the current streetscape standards to understand background and purpose.
- Interview Wheaton Urban District Staff to understand maintenance challenges.
- Workshop with stakeholders active in the Wheaton area, including the Art and Walkability Project, and public agencies including the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (developed the standards currently in use), Montgomery County Department of Transportation, and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration.
- Coordination with the Mid-County Regional Services Center, Wheaton Urban District, and Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee.

Staff requests that the Planning Board receive a briefing on the Wheaton Streetscape Standards update. Staff further requests that the Planning Board approve the Wheaton Streetscape Standards.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A: Wheaton Streetscape Standards