

# Montgomery County Planning Board

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED  
MINUTES AND SUMMARY

SUMMARY  
**Thursday, February 8, 2024**  
2425 Reedie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
301-495-4605

The Montgomery County Planning Board met in regular session in the Wheaton Headquarters Building in Wheaton, Maryland, and via Microsoft Teams video conference on Thursday, February 8, 2024, beginning at 10:04 a.m. and adjourning at 4:13 p.m.

Present were Chair Artie Harris, Vice Chair Mitra Pedoeem, and Commissioners James Hedrick and Josh Linden.

Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent for the meeting.

Items 1 through 3, Item 7 and Item 8 were discussed in that order and reported in the attached Minutes.

Commissioner Linden was necessarily absent for Items 1 through 3 and joined the meeting late for Item 7.

The Planning Board recessed for lunch at 12:12 p.m. and reconvened in the auditorium and via video conference to return to open session at 1:29 p.m. to discuss Item 11, Items 4 through 6, Item 9 and Item 10 as reported in the attached Minutes.

Commissioner Linden left the meeting at 3:09 p.m. and was necessarily absent for Items 9 and 10.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, February 15, 2024, in the Wheaton Headquarters Building in Wheaton, Maryland, and via video conference.

*Rachel Roehrich*  
Rachel Roehrich  
Technical Writer/Legal Assistant

MINUTES

**Item 1. Preliminary Matters**

**A. Adoption of Resolutions**

1. 7025 Strathmore Street Sketch Plan No. 320240030 – MCPB No. 24-005

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Hedrick/Pedoeem  
**Vote:** 3-0  
**Other:** Commissioners Bartley and Linden were necessarily absent.  
**Action:** Adopted the Resolution cited above, as submitted.

**B. Approval of Minutes**

1. Minutes for December 14, 2023
2. Closed Session Minutes for December 14, 2023
3. Minutes for January 25, 2024

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Hedrick/Pedoeem  
**Vote:** 3-0  
**Other:** Commissioners Bartley and Linden were necessarily absent.  
**Action:** Approved Planning Board Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2023 and January 25, 2024; and the Closed Session Minutes for December 14, 2023, as submitted.

**C. Other Preliminary Matters**

1. Adoption of Corrected Resolution for Tregoning Property Forest Conservation Plan No. F20230420 – MCPB No. 23-119

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Hedrick/Pedoeem  
**Vote:** 3-0  
**Other:** Commissioners Bartley and Linden were necessarily absent.  
**Action:** Adopted the Corrected Resolution cited above, as submitted.

**Item 2. Record Plats (Public Hearing)**

**Subdivision Plat No. 220230650, Sumner Park**

R-60 zone, 1 lot; located on the southwest side of Massachusetts Avenue (MD 396), 200 feet northwest of Cape Cod Court; Bethesda – Chevy Chase Master Plan.

*Staff Recommendation: Approval*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem**

**Vote: 3-0**

**Other: Commissioners Bartley and Linden were necessarily absent.**

**Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Record Plat cited above, as submitted.**

**Subdivision Plat No. 220231000, Shops at Travilah**

NR zone, 1 parcel; located on the south side of Travilah Road, 300 feet west of Piney Meetinghouse Road; Potomac Subregion 2002 Master Plan.

*Staff Recommendation: Approval*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem**

**Vote: 3-0**

**Other: Commissioners Bartley and Linden were necessarily absent.**

**Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Record Plat cited above, as submitted.**

**Item 3. Regulatory Extension Requests (Public Hearing)**

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Other:**

**Action: There were no Regulatory Extension Requests submitted for approval.**

**Item 7. Bowie Mill Bikeway (Public Hearing)**

A. Mandatory Referral: MR2023016: The Montgomery County Department of Transportation proposes to construct a 3.3-mile-long shared use path along Bowie Mill Road between Muncaster Mill Road and Olney-Laytonsville Road, a facility included in the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan.

*Staff Recommendation: Approval with Comments*

B. Preliminary/Final Water Quality Plan: MR2023016: The Montgomery County Department of Transportation proposes to construct a 3.3-mile-long shared use path along Bowie Mill Road between Muncaster Mill Road and Olney-Laytonsville Road, a facility included in the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan.

*Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions*

E. Glazier

**A. BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem**

**Vote: 4-0**

**Other: Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.**

**Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval to transmit comments to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, as presented by Staff with additional comments discussed during the meeting, to be stated in a transmittal letter to be prepared at a later date.**

**B. BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem**

**Vote: 4-0**

**Other: Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.**

**Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary/Final Water Quality Plan cited above, subject to conditions, which will be reflected in an associated draft Resolution to be adopted by the Planning Board at a later date.**

Eli Glazier, Acting Transportation Planning Supervisor, offered a multi-media presentation regarding Bowie Mill Bikeway. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 10, 2024.

Mr. Glazier stated the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is designing a Proposed 3.3 mile-long sidepath along Bowie Mill Road and Muncaster Mill Road between Needwood Road and Olney-Laytonsville Road. Mr. Glazier also noted a portion of the project is located within the Upper Rock Creek watershed, a Special Protection Area. Mr. Glazier described the two typical sections of the project stating the sidepath is typically eight-feet-wide along the east side of Bowie Mill Road and ten-feet-wide on the west side of Bowie Mill Road. Mr. Glazier stated the project is fully funded through the County CIP with the final design to be completed in early 2024 and construction estimated to begin in FY25. Mr. Glazier did note a correction to the Staff Report stating there was construction funding when the Staff Report stated there was not.

Mr. Glazier described Bowie Mill Road, the project corridor, parkland traversed by the proposed project, Master Plan consistency, and transportation analysis.

Mr. Glazier then discussed the transportation recommendations listed below in greater detail as follows:

1. Ensure vertical obstructions, including utility poles, fences and guardrails, are at least two feet from the edge of the sidepath;
2. Provide directional curb ramps that are aligned with high visibility marked crosswalks at all street and driveway crossings;
3. Explore additional protected crossing locations throughout the project area;
4. Replace missing bus pad at Sequoyah Elementary School;
5. Tighten curb radii at all intersections and driveways in line with the Complete Streets Design Guide (CSDG) default radii (15 feet);
6. Construct raised crossings at all intersections where the sidepath crosses Neighborhood Streets and Neighborhood Yield Streets;
7. Ensure all intersections comply with the Department's Protected Intersection Checklist to the extent applicable;
8. Smooth abrupt shifts in the sidepath alignment;
9. Extend the Bowie Mill Road Sidepath to the Olney-Laytonsville Road pedestrian crossing;
10. Explore opportunities to widen the sidepath and street buffer between Briars Road and Olney-Laytonsville Road; and
11. Develop a wayfinding plan using the bikeway branding standards.

Jackie Hoban, Senior Natural Resources Specialist, gave an overview of the impacts to parkland, mitigation requirements, and conditions for the park recommendations. Ms. Hoban noted the sidepath, bridge, and drainage improvements will affect three park units and will require permanent impacts on parkland for the continued maintenance of the sidepath, bridge and drainage infrastructure as well as temporary impacts on parkland for the construction and access.

The permanent impact will result in the creation of additional MCDOT right-of-way (through the granting at fair market value of a perpetual easement) consisting of 943 square feet in North Branch Stream Valley Park Unit 3. Temporary impacts for construction and access include approximately 3,800 square feet in North Branch Stream Valley Park Unit 4, 6,450 square feet in North Branch Stream Valley Park Unit 3, and 4,300 square feet in Bowie Mill Local Park.

Ms. Hoban discussed the Parks Recommendations as listed below:

1. Construction plans must be submitted to the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks Department for review as part of the Park Construction Permit process to ensure that all work is performed in accordance with Montgomery Parks standard details, specifications, and policies. No work on parkland may occur until an approved Park Construction Permit is issued for the project;
2. Any approved Commission parkland such as North Creek Stream Valley Unit 3 to be added to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation Road right-of-way (ROW) will

be transferred to the County, as appropriate, via perpetual easement. The Commission must be paid the fair market value of the perpetual easement;

3. MCDOT and Montgomery Parks will continue to coordinate on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at Bowie Mill Local Park regarding access and maintenance which must be agreed to and finalized between MCDOT and Montgomery Parks before the issuance of a Park Construction Permit;
4. MCDOT will continue to coordinate with Montgomery Parks on the design of the path and other elements including lighting, user safety elements, drainage improvements, and natural resource protection and mitigation; and
5. Mitigation for impacts to Montgomery Parks trees (with a 6" DBH or greater) damaged or removed, shall either be (1) replacement planting on parkland at a rate of one inch to one inch diameter or (2) a monetary per inch caliper basis at the rate of \$100/diameter inch, to be paid to Montgomery Parks prior to completion of construction.

Mr. Glazier discussed the environmental analysis, forest conservation, public engagement, and testimony received for the Mandatory Referral.

Joe Fritsch, an individual, offered testimony regarding support for the project moving forward as quickly as possible due to the increased safety the bikeway will provide and much needed connections to Olney, schools, and Metro.

Kathleen Reitz, an individual, offered testimony regarding the negative impacts of the current project design. Ms. Reitz offered further comments regarding safety hazards, adequate lines of sight, and suggested a modified design providing shoulders on both sides of the bikeway.

Daniel Rubenstein of the Greater Olney Civic Association offered comments regarding support for the project and recommendations but offered a design comment regarding the safety of the crossing at Bready Road and Bluebell Lane. Mr. Rubenstein offered a multi-media exhibit and further stated GOCA would recommend eliminating the proposed traffic signal at Bready Road included with the current design and installing a HAWK signal at the end of the North Branch Trail where it intersects Bowie Mill Road.

Rebecca Park of MCDOT offered comments regarding the final design of the project being completed by the end of 2024 and further stated the final design will be presented at a future public meeting. Ms. Park offered further comments regarding additional potential traffic calming measures along Bowie Mill Road due to community concerns for speeding.

The Board asked questions regarding the confirmation of signalization at location where the bikeway crosses the road, distinction between Special Protection Area and Parkland, potential mid-block connections, maximum protected crossing standards, pros and cons of installing a HAWK signal, possible connection between the North Branch Trail and south natural trail, potential traffic calming measures along Bowie Mill Road, and the financial feasibility for removal of utility poles, fencing, and guardrails.

Staff, including Principal Natural Resources Specialist, Doug Stephens, offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

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Patrick Coppage of JMT offered comments regarding the proposed signal at Bready Road and Bluebell Lane, as well as the possibility of a HAWK signal.

The Board held further discussion regarding need for community outreach and input, consideration for the removal of utilities along the narrower parts of the path, importance of a protected crossing at the elementary school, turning radii, and further consideration of installing a HAWK signal at the end of the North Branch Trail where it intersects Bowie Mill Road.

A motion was made to approve the Mandatory Referral as presented by Staff with additional comments regarding potential additional traffic calming measures on Bowie Mill Road, community outreach, and consideration of a HAWK signal.

**Item 8. Corso Chevy Chase, Preliminary Plan Application No. 120240020, Site Plan Application No. 820240030, and Forest Conservation Plan No. F20240110 (Public Hearing)**

A. Preliminary Plan No. 120240020 – Request to create one new lot for a senior living community of up to approximately 700,000 square feet, including a Residential Care Facility (over 16 persons) containing up to 287 independent dwelling units and 190 assisted living beds and 30 memory care beds, and up to 5,000 square feet of commercial/retail use in the CRNF 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.25, H-70 zone

B. Site Plan No. 820240030 – Request to develop a mixed-use senior living community with up to 695,000 sq. of residential density, including a Residential Care Facility containing up to 287 independent dwelling units, 190 assisted living beds, 30 memory care beds, and up to 5,000 square feet of commercial/retail uses, and amend the Floating Zone Plan.

C. Forest Conservation Plan No. F20240110 – Request for approval of a Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan to impact and remove specimen trees and satisfy afforestation/reforestation requirements associated with Preliminary Plan application No. 120240020 and Site Plan Application No. 820240030.

*Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions*  
T. Gatling

**A. & C. BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Hedrick/Pedoeem

**Vote:** 4-0

**Other:** Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.

**Action:** Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary Plan and Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan cited above, subject to conditions, which will be reflected in an associated draft Resolutions to be adopted by the Planning Board at a later date.

**B. BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Hedrick/Pedoeem

**Vote:** 4-0

**Other:** Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.

**Action:** Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Site Plan cited above, subject to conditions and modifications discussed during the meeting including an amendment to the Floating Zone Plan, which will be reflected in an associated draft Resolution to be adopted by the Planning Board at a later date.

Tsaiquan Gatling, Planner III, offered a multi-media presentation regarding Corso Chevy Chase. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 29, 2024.

Mr. Gatling described the property, vicinity and previous approvals, stating the 13.64-acre Property is located on the west side of Connecticut Avenue approximately a quarter mile north of the intersection at Bradley Lane. Mr. Gatling stated the Applicant is proposing to redevelop the Property with a residential-scaled senior housing development. The Project will contain up to



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approximately 700,000 square feet, including a Residential Care Facility (for over 16 persons) containing Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care services, and up to 5,000 square feet of commercial/neighborhood-serving retail use which, while predominately intended for use by the project's residents, will be publicly accessible. Mr. Gatling stated the Applicant is also requesting the Planning Board approve an amendment to the Floating Zone Plan associated with LMA No. H-148, to identify both the temporary and permanent antenna locations on the Site on the Floating Zone Plan.

Mr. Gatling discussed the circulation and access to the site, noting the addition of a traffic signal controlling northbound and southbound movements onto Connecticut Avenue, as well as the conceptual architecture and massing of the buildings.

Mr. Gatling explained the associated Forest Conservation Plan, noting 2.97 acres of forest will be retained within a Category I Conservation Easement, and the Applicant proposes to remove approximately 0.74 acres of forest. Mr. Gatling stated a variance request was submitted for impacts and removals to specimen trees, and native canopy tree plantings have been included in the plan as mitigation for proposed tree removals.

Mr. Gatling noted correspondence received from the community regarding concerns with the site access and stormwater management.

Lastly, Mr. Gatling noted changes to Site Plan Condition Number 18(a) regarding locations of both the temporary and permanent antennas.

Irene Lane, the Mayor of the Town of Chevy Chase, offered testimony regarding support for the project noting need for a senior living facility. Ms. Lane offered further comments relating to site access and stormwater management as well as the need for the proposed traffic signal.

Carolyn Wilson, an adjacent property owner, offered testimony regarding concerns with proposed commercial zoning, retail, tree canopy, and noted opposition to the proposed traffic signal at Taylor Street.

Stephen Mathias, an adjacent property owner, offered testimony regarding concerns for infrastructure, increased traffic, and commercial activity. Mr. Mathias further suggested a review of impacts to traffic after Phase 1 and before moving forward with Phase 2. Mr. Mathias also noted opposition to proposed traffic signal at Taylor Street.

Steve Robins of Lerch, Early, and Brewer offered comments on behalf of the Applicant regarding the previously approved Local Map Amendment, the forest buffer being maintained, and collaborative work regarding the parking and access issues. Mr. Robins further highlighted the different levels of care the project will provide, Master Plan conformance, and agreement with Staff's conditions and recommendations.

Tim Gary of Galerie Living offered comments regarding the collaborative effort with Community Three and Staff throughout the process.

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Grant Epstein of Community Three offered comments regarding the extended community outreach with the Town of Chevy Chase, Section 3, and surrounding neighbors. Mr. Epstein offered further comments regarding the access to the site, parking, compatible building heights, architecture and design, high-quality amenities that will be provided, and described the location of the public use space.

The Board asked questions regarding whether the existing building will be completely demolished, the public use space and location, and the telecommunications tower location.

Staff offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

**Item 11. State Legislative Update**

- A. HB 0131 Housing Development Permit Applications – Local Reporting Requirements  
*Staff Recommendation: Support with Amendments*
  - B. HB 0420 State and Local Parks – Play Area Accessibility – Communication Boards  
*Staff Recommendation: Briefing/Informational*
  - C. HB 0566 State and Local Government – Real Property – Confederate Naming Prohibited  
*Staff Recommendation: Support with Amendments*
  - D. SB 0333 (Cross filed HB0283) Housing and Community Development - Affordable Housing - Identifying Suitable Property  
*Staff Recommendation – Support*
- D. Borden

**A. BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Hedrick/Linden

**Vote:** 4-0

**Other:** Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.

**Action:** Approved Staff recommendation to Support HB 0131, with amendments and additional comment from the Board.

**B. BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Other:**

**Action:** Received briefing.

**C. BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Hedrick/Pedoeem

**Vote:** 4-0

**Other:** Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.

**Action:** Approved Staff recommendation to Support HB 0566, with amendments.

**D. BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Hedrick/Pedoeem

**Vote:** 4-0

**Other:** Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.

**Action:** Approved Staff recommendation to Support SB 0333.

Debra Borden, General Counsel, gave an overview and update on the current legislation.

Ms. Borden gave an overview and discussed Bills HB 0131, HB 0420, HB 0566, and SB 0333 in greater detail.

The Board asked for clarity regarding Bill HB 0131 as to the definitions of what complete applications approved and residential unit approved meant, the purpose of the data collected, the

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reporting requirements, and if Gaithersburg and Rockville would be required to submit data as well.

Staff, including Planning Director, Jason Sartori, offered comments and responses to the Board.

The Board held further discussion on Bill HB 0131 regarding potential encouragement to the State of Maryland to lower the threshold to trigger the reporting requirement, and including language suggesting a threshold for required participation, but encouraging participation from all jurisdictions. The Board agreed.

The Board asked for clarity regarding HB 420 as to why a position would not be taken, and Ms. Borden offered comments and responses.

The Board asked questions regarding HB 0566 as to potential recommendation/provision to reduce the 6-year timeline if there is a clear name match. Mr. Sartori and Ms. Borden offered comments and responses.

**Item 4. Roundtable Discussion**

Planning Director's Report  
J. Sartori

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Other:**

**Action: Received briefing.**

Planning Director, Jason Sartori, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the latest updates for the Planning Department and James Lee, Forecaster and Demographic Research Specialist, provided a demonstration of Montgomery Planning's PopStats Mapping Tool.

Mr. Sartori stated February is Black History Month and noted upcoming activities and events within M-NCPPC and the Planning Department to celebrate Black History, to educate on the County's diverse heritage, and reflect on the many achievements and contributions from African Americans to the County.

Mr. Sartori discussed the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative and Growth and Infrastructure Policy Update briefings that will be held on February 22, 2024 and noted the recent farewells to department Staff including Melissa Petschauer, Lauren Heath, and Chris Van Alstyne.

James Lee, Forecaster and Demographic Research Specialist, gave a demonstration of the Montgomery Planning PopStats Interactive Map. Mr. Lee stated the data for the map and demographic information were recently updated in 2023, and Mr. Lee proceeded by giving a demonstration of the different data categories and layers of the interactive map, which can be found on Montgomery Planning's website.

The Board asked for clarification of location on the website and if the boundaries of the ACS and Census data were the same.

Staff offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

**Item 5. Westbard Urban Recreational Park**

*Recommendation: Authorization to acquire 21,657 square feet of land, more or less, improved, from Schnabel Foundation Company, located at 5210 River Road, Bethesda*  
B. Sandberg/A. Fothergill

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: Pedoeem/Hedrick**

**Vote: 4-0**

**Other: Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.**

**Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the proposed land acquisition cited above and adopted the attached Resolution.**

Brenda Sandberg, Real Estate Management Supervisor, offered a multi-media presentation detailing the background, park concept, and public benefits for the acquisition of Westbard Urban Recreational Park. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 19, 2024.

Ms. Sandberg described the policy and planning rationale for acquiring the property, in that this site was identified to create an important new park that supports the goals and objectives in many adopted policies and master plans, including the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan, 2022 PROS Plan, Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan, Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan, and the recently updated general plan Thrive Montgomery 2050.

Ms. Sandberg described the park concept noting the park will serve two main purposes. First, it will serve as a gateway to the proposed Willett Branch Greenway, linking the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) with the greenway, as well as connecting existing and new developments within Westbard. The second purpose will provide additional recreation amenities to serve the local community, users of the CCT, and other visitors from outside the immediate area. The actual park design will be determined during the Facility Planning process with broad community input.

Lastly, Ms. Sandberg discussed the other benefits from the acquisition, acquisition costs and funding sources, followed by an overview and breakdown of the start-up costs and Operating Budget Impact (OBI) costs, post-closing phase, interim park phase, and ultimate park phase for the property and future park.

**Item 6. Briefing: County Executive’s Recommended FY25-30 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for the Parks Department**

*Staff Recommendation: Transmit to the County Council and County Executive an official response to the County Executive request for an affordability reduction to the Parks Department FY25-30 CIP22*

R. Peele

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** Pedoeem/Hedrick

**Vote:** 4-0

**Other:** Commissioner Bartley was necessarily absent.

**Action:** Approved Staff recommendation for approval to transmit comments with modifications discussed during the meeting to the County Council and County Executive, as stated in a transmittal letter to be prepared at a later date.

Ron Peele, Parks CIP Manager, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the County Executive’s recommended reduction to the Parks FY25-30 CIP request. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated February 1, 2024.

Mr. Peele gave an overview of the budget background and stated on January 16, 2024 the County Executive released his recommended CIP. Mr. Peele discussed the different non-recommended reduction tables, impacts to projects due to the reductions, and restoration tiers.

Andrew Frank, Chief of the Park Development Division, noted over 40 people expressed full support at the County Council to restore all Parks funding through both written and in person testimony, and Parks advocates represented over sixty percent of all speakers talking to the County Council. Mr. Frank noted areas of support included Lyttonsville Civic Green, Wheaton Regional Park, Parks infrastructure, the Trails Program, and Environmental Restoration Programs. Due to the community support, Mr. Frank stated Staff’s suggestion would be to shift some of the Tier 2 restoration requests to Tier 1, specifically including the natural surface trails.

The Board asked questions regarding how many GO Bond requests were cut and how many restoration tiers were normally transmitted to the County Council and County Executive.

Staff offered comments and responses to the Board’s questions as well as suggesting the possibility of moving natural surface trails, hard surface trails and part of both PLAR and Wheaton Regional Park requests to Tier 1.

The Board held discussion regarding shifting of requests and total number of restoration tiers, with consideration of transmitting requests for just two tiers.

Parks Director, Miti Figueredo, offered comments and suggestions regarding moving both natural surface and hard surface trails and PLAR to Tier 1 as well as shifting everything from Tier 3 to Tier 2, and transmitting requests for on two tiers.

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The Board agreed with Staff's suggestion and recommendations.



**Item 9. Mandatory Referral No. MR2024006; Rockville RNG Injection Site (Public Hearing)**

Proposal to construct a temporary gas unloading station at the existing Rockville system located at 7301 Westmore Road, Rockville, MD on 126.63 acres in the IM-2.5 H-50 zone.

*Staff Recommendation: Approval of the Mandatory Referral and the transmittal of the comments to Washington Gas.*

J. Penn

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem**

**Vote: 3-0**

**Other: Commissioners Bartley and Linden were necessarily absent.**

**Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval to transmit comments to Washington Gas, as modified during the meeting and stated in a transmittal letter to be prepared at a later date.**

Josh Penn, Planner III, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the Rockville RNG Injection Site. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 31, 2024.

Mr. Penn described the background and surrounding neighborhood, stating the property is located between MD-355 and East Gude Drive, and confronts and abuts the City of Rockville to the west and south as well as Montgomery County to the north and east. Mr. Penn stated the property is currently developed and operated by Washington Gas as a gas storage facility, and the proposed project will occur on approximately 1.21 acres of the overall property located immediately adjacent to Westmore Road west of the existing site improvements.

Mr. Penn explained Washington Gas plans to build a temporary Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) Injection Facility, which will be in use for approximately 10-12 months, and the facility will be the end point of a "virtual" pipeline. Commercial trucks will receive the renewable natural gas from a landfill in Prince William County, VA, transport it to the temporary RNG injection site, and inject the renewable natural gas into the existing underground storage tanks already located on the Washington Gas gate station and storage site.

Mr. Penn stated upon the permanent pipeline completion, the temporary RNG Injection Facility will be decommissioned and restored to its original site conditions as lawn and the virtual pipeline will cease operation.

Mr. Penn also discussed the proposed improvements to the property, which are minimal and include two construction entrances on Westmore Road, a gravel pad, natural gas utility equipment, a small communications shed, and three generators.

Omobogie Amadasu of the Lincoln Park Civic Association offered testimony regarding the potential increased noise, traffic congestion, and potential access entrance from Dover Road.

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Elizabeth Rogers of Lerch, Early, and Brewer offered a multi-media presentation and comments on behalf of the Applicant regarding the property, zoning, number of trucks accessing the site., location of the injection site, truck route, traffic control plan, and reasoning for site choice. Ms. Rogers also requested the elimination of Comment 1 to Washington Gas from the transmittal as the Applicant does not see it as being necessary and offered comments regarding the need for a continuous schedule due to reducing greenhouse gases.

The Board asked questions regarding location of the injection site, type/size of trucks being used, number of trucks accessing the site during overnight hours, screening from the residential homes, usage of flaggers overnight, potential stopping and acceleration points along the route, potential for multiple trucks to safely deliver gas at the same time, noise during pumping, and implications of keeping Comment 1.

Staff, including Planning Director, Jason Sartori and Chief of Upcounty Planning, Patrick Butler, offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

Morgan Smith of Washington Gas offered comments regarding potential stopping and acceleration during the proposed route.

The Board held further discussion regarding Comment 1, reduced speed or screening to reduce/limit noise and light impacts, and community feedback.

The Board agreed to modify Comment 1 to limit noise and light impacts and add an additional comment for the Applicant to check-in within a few months with community feedback.

**Item 10. Scope of Work for Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan Study**

*Staff Recommendation: Receive a presentation on the proposed Scope of Work for a study of the Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan and direct staff to make any modifications to the scope before considering its approval.*

C. Larson

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Other:**

**Action: Receive briefing followed by discussion.**

Clark Larson, AICP, Planner III, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan Study Scope of Work. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 31, 2024.

Mr. Larson stated the Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan, approved and adopted in 2009, established a vision to transform Germantown's central employment core into a vibrant town center with mixed-use districts established along the I-270 corridor. This study will evaluate the land use and zoning recommendations of the Sector Plan to determine what, if any, interventions may be needed to support the Plan in the years to come as there have been changing trends in office and employment market demand.

Mr. Larson described the current Germantown Plan area noting the completed projects, projects under construction, and projects that have been approved, but are not fully built. Mr. Larson gave a photo tour of the area beginning with the town center area and the wider Germantown Sector Plan Area as well.

Mr. Larson stated elements of the study will include: current and potential office and employment market; potential for retail and residential growth; public realm and urban design standards; automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian needs; transit service improvements and expansion; zoning or regulatory barriers to future development; potential for urban district and/or parking district; scenario modeling of alternative future development; and any other issues raised by the community.

Mr. Larson gave an overview of potential community outreach and engagement as well as the study schedule which includes conducting the study and community engagement February through September 2024, preparation of findings and drafting of summary report August/September 2024, and presentation to the Planning Board and County Council October/November 2024.

The Board asked questions regarding the need and reasoning for the study versus moving forward with a Master Plan effort and offered suggestions to determine local housing targets to incorporate into recommendations to provide housing that the area is supposed to have.

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Staff, including Planning Director, Jason Sartori and Chief of Upcounty Planning, Patrick Butler, offered comments and responses.