

BETHESDA DOWNTOWN PLAN MINOR MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

PLANNING BOARD WORKSESSION 1

Description

Worksession to address issues raised during the December 2, 2024, Public Hearing on the Public Hearing Draft of the Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment and discuss any changes to the draft before approving it as the Planning Board Draft plan. Staff recommends approval of the Public Hearing Draft with any modifications as the Planning Board Draft for transmittal to the County Council and County Executive.



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MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

Topic

Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan
Amendment Planning Board Worksession 1

Date

December 5, 2024

Lead Planner

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INTRODUCTION

The Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA) recommends technical updates to the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Plan* – including elimination of the existing development cap – to improve implementation of recommendations related to new parks, transportation infrastructure, a new recreation center, affordable housing, and more within a Plan Area of roughly 450 acres.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on December 2, 2024. Nine speakers, including representatives from the Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC), the Town of Chevy Chase, Edgemoor Citizens Association, and the resident and development communities, provided oral testimony. Since the Planning Board approved publication of the Public Hearing Draft Plan and set the public hearing, the department has received over 30 pieces of correspondence on various elements of the draft MMPA. All written testimony received as of the date of this staff report, as well as a summary of both the written testimony and the oral testimony provided at the Public Hearing, are attached to this report.

The public hearing record will remain open until December 9, 2024 at 5 p.m. for additional written testimony to be submitted to the Planning Board. Staff will update the testimony and summaries to reflect any additional testimony in advance of the December 12 worksession.

For the December 12 worksession, staff will present an overview of the testimony and work with the Planning Board to make any changes to the Public Hearing Draft MMPA the Board deems necessary. These changes are not limited to addressing issues raised during the Public Hearing or in the public record, but may also include issues raised by the Commissioners or staff.

At this time, staff is working to address the issues raised in the testimony with the Planning Board in a single worksession, but additional worksessions may be added at the Board's direction.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

Testimony addressed the following issues, to be discussed in greater depth at the worksession, listed in order of frequency in testimony received to date:

- Development Cap
- Transportation
- Affordable Housing
- Park Impact Payment (PIP)
- Additional Review
- Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ)
- General
- Parks
- Environment.

Since the publication of the Public Hearing Draft, staff identified two other issues to raise with the Planning Board:

- High Performance Area Public Benefit language revision
- Scrivener's errors.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the Public Hearing Draft of the Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment as the Planning Board Draft of the Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment, including any changes directed by the Planning Board during the worksession, and transmittal of the Planning Board Draft to County Council and the County Executive.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Summary table of oral public testimony received at the public hearing

Attachment B – Summary table of written public testimony received as of December 5, 2024

Attachment C – Written public testimony received as of December 5, 2024

Attachment D – County Executive comments