




UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PLAN WORK SESSION #2



Description

The second work session will focus on the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for properties with existing commercial uses, residential buildings, and properties near planned Bus Rapid Transit (or “nodes”) at Amherst Avenue, Inwood Avenue, Arcola Avenue, Dennis Avenue, and Four Corners, including the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. The work session will include a discussion of relevant testimony received on the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

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SUMMARY

- The Planning Board received public testimony on the University Boulevard Corridor Plan Public Hearing Draft during the public hearing on February 27, 2025, and received written testimony through March 13, 2025. During the first work session on March 20, 2025, staff provided an overview of the public testimony received and discussed the recommended organization and schedule of the remaining work sessions with the Planning Board.
- In the second work session, staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for properties with existing commercial uses, residential buildings, and properties near planned Bus Rapid Transit (or “nodes”) at Amherst Avenue, Inwood Avenue, Arcola Avenue, Dennis Avenue, and Four Corners, including the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. Staff will discuss the testimony received on these elements, including testimony related to the Kemp Mill Shopping Center.
- Staff will also discuss the rationale for the Draft Plan’s land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations.
- Staff will present options for the Planning Board’s consideration in response to testimony received related to the Kemp Mill Shopping Center.

MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

Draft

University Boulevard Corridor Plan
Public Hearing Draft Work Session #2

Date

March 28, 2025

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Planning Board Information

MCPB

Item No. 8

April 3, 2025

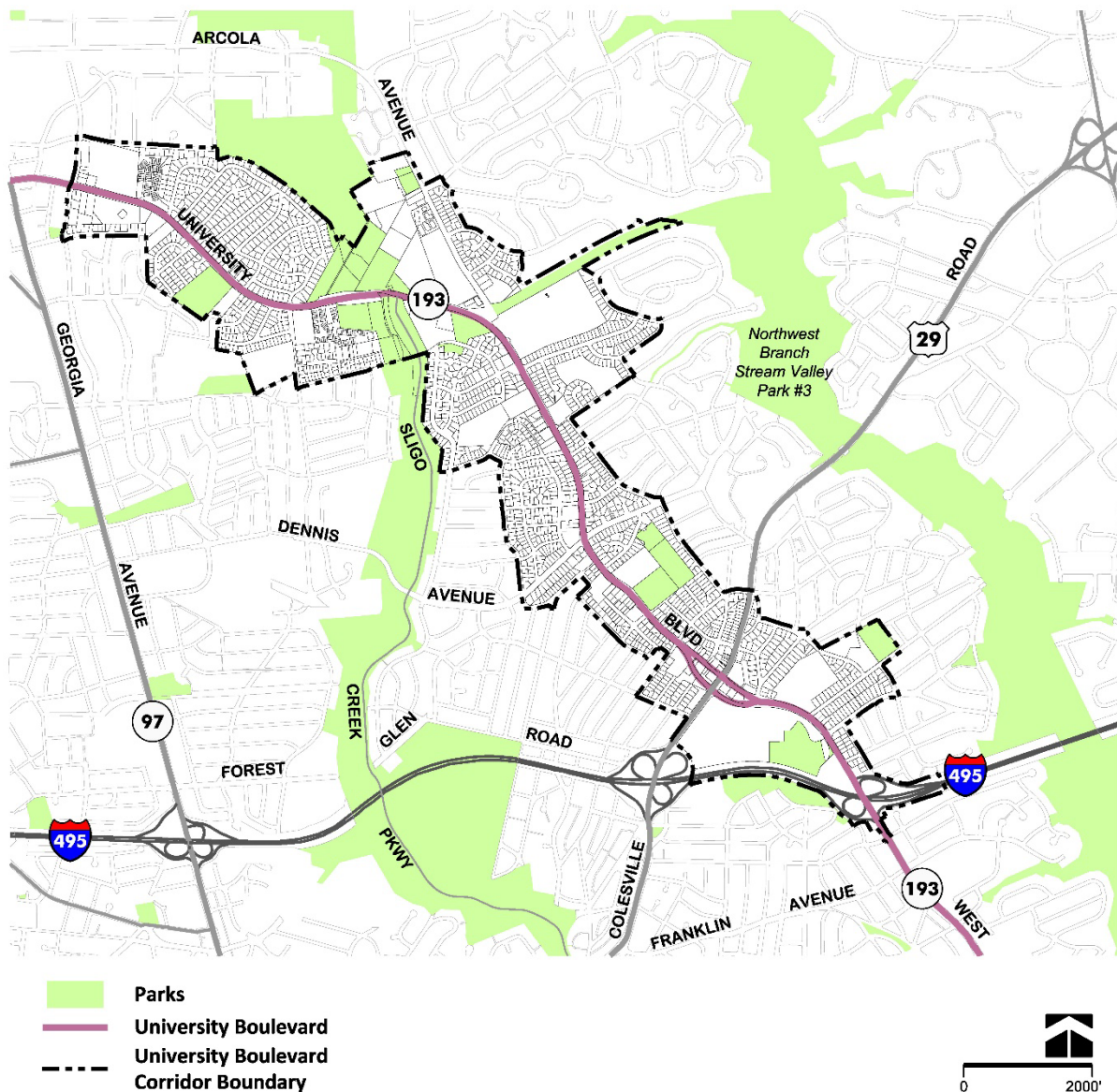


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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050

The Public Hearing Draft of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan (Draft Plan) is the first plan to commence following the adoption of *Thrive Montgomery 2050* (Thrive) in October 2022. Thrive recommits to concentrating development in centers of activity, including downtowns, town centers, and small neighborhood centers, and promotes development along major transportation corridors to maximize infrastructure investment and the efficient use of land as well as create communities that include a range of uses, services, and amenities. Thrive also seeks to “make walking, rolling, bicycling, and transit the most practical, safe, and attractive ways of getting from one place to another”¹ and provide more housing of all types, sizes and prices to meet a variety of housing needs. It aims to strengthen the social and physical health of community members, as well as mitigate and adapt to climate change. Thrive’s policies and practices, including its overarching objectives of economic competitiveness, racial equity and social justice, and environmental health and resilience are central to the vision and recommendations of the Draft Plan.

Thrive aspires for compact growth within the county’s centers and along major corridors served by existing or planned transit. Thrive acknowledges that centers of activity can range in scale from large centers, such as Silver Spring, to villages and neighborhood centers, such as Colesville. While Thrive seeks to concentrate existing and future compact growth within centers, the General Plan also acknowledges that the amount and intensity of growth should be commensurate with the center’s location and context.

The Draft Plan seeks to focus new development and infill development at strategic centers or “nodes” in the Plan area, including locations with existing commercial uses, residential buildings, and locations near existing and planned transit. The Draft Plan considers the location and context of the “node,” including proximity to transit, opportunities for infill or redevelopment, and surrounding uses.

The second work session will focus on the Draft Plan’s land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for properties with existing commercial uses, residential buildings, and properties near planned Bus Rapid Transit stations (or “nodes”) at Amherst Avenue, Inwood Avenue, Arcola Avenue, Dennis Avenue, and Four Corners. The work session will include a discussion on the testimony received on the Draft Plan’s land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations. A future work session, anticipated on May 1, will focus on the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for existing residential blocks between “nodes,” where the Draft Plan seeks to expand housing choice.

¹ Thrive Montgomery 2050, 2022, p. 109.

PLAN FRAMEWORK

PLAN DISTRICTS

The Draft Plan advances Thrive’s goals for corridor-focused development, complete communities, and “15-minute living” by promoting transit-supportive development near planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations at Amherst Avenue, Inwood Avenue, Arcola Avenue, Dennis Avenue, and at Four Corners. The Plan establishes four districts along the corridor that are anchored by these BRT stations, referred to as the Amherst Avenue and Chestnut Ridge District, the Arcola Avenue District, the Dennis Avenue District, and the Four Corners District. Each of these districts are further divided into smaller neighborhoods or “nodes” with specific land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations.

This memorandum is organized by Districts and includes a discussion of the testimony received related to the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for each “node” in the four districts. The memorandum also provides a summary of the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations in each District, as well as a rationale for the commercial and residential densities recommended in the Draft Plan.

The Draft Plan area is located between large centers of activity with a variety of services and amenities, including Wheaton and Silver Spring. Land uses in the Draft Plan area are predominantly residential. As a result, land use and zoning recommendations generally seek to encourage additional small and medium-scale infill residential development between the larger districts of Wheaton and Silver Spring. Opportunities for non-residential uses are limited without property consolidation, given most lot sizes along the corridor are not large enough for commercial development. For that reason, the Draft Plan focuses recommendations for non-residential development at strategic locations where mixed-use development exists, at planned BRT stations, and where co-location can happen with existing institutional uses.

TESTIMONY AND RESPONSES

OVERALL REZONING TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Preserving neighborhood character is a key concern and is expressed as opposition to the Draft Plan’s Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zoning recommendations and its perceived potential to produce structures that do not fit the existing neighborhood's character. There are concerns about buildings affecting sun access and changing the general character of single-family residential areas. However, there is also strong support for mixed-use development, particularly for properties owned by religious institutions. Mixed-use development is seen as essential for creating vibrant and

financially viable districts, providing new housing options, and supporting commercial enterprises. Additionally, testimony suggests that faith-based organizations could use their land to serve the community better if zoning restrictions are eased.

RESPONSE

During the second work session, there will be a discussion of the Draft Plan's recommendations for properties with existing commercial uses, residential buildings, and locations near existing and planned transit, including properties owned by religious institutions. Additional information on the rationale for the land use and zoning recommendations proposed for institutional properties, including those owned by faith-based organizations, are discussed in greater detail in the remainder of this memorandum.

It is anticipated that land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for residential blocks, including the CRN zoning recommendations, will be discussed during the fourth work session on May 1, 2025. At that time, staff will present the concerns for maintaining neighborhood character and present options for the Planning Board's consideration in response to these concerns.

Developments in the Commercial Residential zones recommended in the Draft Plan, including Commercial Residential (CR), Commercial Residential Town (CRT), and Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) are required, by Section 4.1.8. of the Zoning Ordinance, to provide compatible building setbacks and heights when abutting a property in a residential detached or residential townhouse zone to maintain compatibility in building placement and height.

PLANNING BOARD DISCUSSION DURING REVIEW OF WORKING DRAFT PLAN

SUMMARY

During the presentation of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan Working Draft on January 16, 2025, there was a request to consider maximizing the commercial and residential floor area ratios permitted on properties recommended for the CR zones to provide flexibility for future development of either commercial or residential uses.

RESPONSE

While it is desired to provide flexibility for commercial or residential development on properties recommended for the Commercial/Residential zones in downtown and town center areas, such as Silver Spring, Bethesda, or North Bethesda, an alternative approach is recommended for the properties recommended for Commercial/Residential zones in the University Boulevard Corridor Plan area.

For discussion in greater detail in a future work session, the Draft Plan envisions University Boulevard as primarily a residential corridor, with opportunities for non-residential uses on properties with

existing commercial development, institutional uses, or properties located near the planned BRT stations.

On properties with existing commercial uses, where a mixture of commercial and residential development is envisioned in the future, such as Four Corners, the Draft Plan recommendations include higher commercial floor area ratios (FAR) to ensure conformance with the existing commercial uses, and to encourage additional commercial uses with any future infill or redevelopment. Conversely, in areas where commercial uses are designed to advance the concepts of complete communities and 15-minute living but may be challenging to achieve due to a lack of surrounding commercial uses, the Draft Plan recommends a minimal amount of commercial FAR but maximizes the residential FAR to prioritize residential development. In these locations, the recommendations allow an entirely residential development to proceed by maximizing the residential FAR.

During the second work session, there will be a discussion of the Draft Plan's zoning recommendations for properties with existing commercial uses, residential buildings, and locations near existing and planned transit. The rationale for the Draft Plan's zoning recommendations is enumerated in the remainder of this staff memo and can be discussed in greater detail during the work session.

AMHERST AVENUE AND CHESTNUT RIDGE DISTRICT

TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Testimony relevant to the Amherst Avenue and Chestnut Ridge District primarily addresses issues related to the WTOP site at 2115 University Boulevard West and the Har Tzeon – Agudath Achim synagogue site at 1910 University Boulevard West. The WTOP site, due to its proximity to downtown Wheaton, is seen as ideal for increasing housing density and improving transit access. However, concerns about traffic congestion and the impact on the area's peaceful nature persist, with some residents opposing high-rise developments that could overshadow homes and increase noise. Suggestions include using the WTOP site for housing to alleviate congestion on Arcola Avenue in lieu of sites in the Kemp Mill Neighborhood. Testimony also raised the question of the impact on any connecting streets planned on the WTOP site on adjoining neighborhoods.

For Har Tzeon, the proposed rezoning to accommodate a 90-unit independent senior residential building, raised a concern about displacing the synagogue and neglecting the needs of the local community. Additionally, some testimony also highlights the existing housing at Inwood House as opposition to any further upzoning in the district or elsewhere in the Draft Plan area.

RESPONSE

The WTOP property is an appropriate location for additional housing, as well as neighborhood serving retail, both due to its adjacency to the Wheaton Central Business District, and its proximity to the existing Metrorail station and planned Bus Rapid Transit. As the WTOP Transmitter Building is a

designated historic resource in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, any new development is required to maintain a 1.44-acre environmental setting around the Transmitter Building, which provides an opportunity to maintain open space on the site. The Draft Plan recommends maximum height of 70-feet for any new development on the WTOP property, as a transition between heights permitted in the Wheaton CBD and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Testimony related to street connections will be addressed during the transportation focused work session, anticipated on April 24, 2025.

The Har Tzeon-Agudath Achim property at 1910 University Boulevard West, has an approved preliminary plan ([No. 120210230](#)) for a new 90-unit independent senior residential building, as a conditional use (CU22-04), and a 22,000-square-foot synagogue. The Draft Plan's zoning recommendations for the property seek to acknowledge the recent preliminary plan and conditional use approvals and encourage the co-location of institutional uses and housing.

ARCOLA AVENUE DISTRICT

TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Testimony related to the Arcola Avenue District and the Kemp Mill node has largely focused on the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. The primary concern is the zoning recommendation and any potential redevelopment. Those providing testimony expressed concern about the impact of new zoning on existing businesses that serve specific cultural needs. There is also interest in ensuring that any new growth transitions to the existing neighborhoods to maintain harmony with adjacent residential properties and to minimize disruption to the commercial and cultural activities. There is also opposition to new housing in Kemp Mill Shopping Center due to concerns about traffic, school enrollment, increased rents, and developer benefits. There were also concerns about the loss of kosher offerings from potential redevelopment of the Kemp Mill Shopping Center, and concerns about the Young Israel Shomrai Emunah (YISE) rezoning impacts, with YISE mislabeled as a park on page 26. There was also a concern about YISE having proposed Townhouse Medium Density zone on page 50. There is also concern about the lack of information on employment opportunities within the Arcola Avenue District and the types of businesses that would relocate there.

In addition to the concerns related to land use and zoning, there were also concerns regarding the Draft Plan's transportation recommendations, including recommendations to repurpose travel lanes, reduce roadway design speeds, and restrict right-turning movements, particularly at the intersection of University Boulevard and Arcola Avenue. The transportation recommendations, including a summary of testimony received, will be discussed further during the transportation work session, anticipated on April 24, 2025.

RESPONSE

The Draft Plan recommends rezoning the property that has the Kemp Mill Shopping Center to a Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zone, to enable a flexible mix of retail, office, and residential uses. This zoning designation allows for moderate increases in building height- up to 70 feet from the 45 feet mapped in the current zone- and a higher Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The new zoning aims to promote a more economically sustainable mix of uses by allowing residential growth while maintaining commercial area. The higher Floor Area Ratio (FAR) could accommodate this balanced approach, ensuring both residential and commercial spaces coexist effectively.

The CRT zoning is intended to expand opportunities for commercial and residential activity and the provision of public benefits that are available through the Commercial-Residential zone. Any future growth would be contingent upon the property owners' decisions and market conditions. The Draft Plan does not mandate redevelopment, nor does it require the property owner to sell, terminate any leases, or redevelop. Rather, it seeks to provide a framework that allows for the community's vision to be acknowledged in any future redevelopment by the property owner.

As discussed in greater detail below, it is recommended that the Planning Board include additional language in the Draft Plan which acknowledges that the Kemp Mill Shopping Center is a valued cultural asset for the Kemp Mill community. Its services, amenities, retail stores, and restaurants, along with nearby places of worship, communal gathering spots, schools, recreational facilities, and diverse housing options, are important to the community. Many businesses in the shopping center are locally owned, providing employment for residents.

The Young Israel Shomrai Emunah (YISE) synagogue properties at 1128 and 1132 Arcola Avenue are recommended for rezoning from RT-12.5 to the Townhouse Medium Density (TMD) zone. The RT-12.5 zone predates the 2014 Zoning Ordinance, and the equivalent zone in the current Zoning Ordinance is a Townhouse Medium Density (TMD). The religious assembly use, which is defined by Zoning Ordinance Section 3.4.10 as "a meeting area for religious practices, including a church, synagogue, mosque, convent, or monastery" is a permitted use in the TMD zone. In Figure 8, the proposed land use map on page 26 of the Public Hearing Draft incorrectly identifies the proposed land use as "residential attached-townhouses" for the YISE properties. The map should be updated to correctly identify these properties as an "institutional/community facility use" in the Planning Board Draft.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

In response to the testimony received, there are options for revisions to the Draft Plan's recommendations for the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. While there are a number of changes that can be considered, two options are described below, along with benefits and limitations of each option.

A. Confirm Existing Neighborhood Retail (N/R) Zoning

Pros:

- Reinforces current zoning, reassuring the community and business owners that are concerned about changes to the zoning.
- Preserves the status quo, aligning with current expectations of scale and land use.

Cons:

- Less opportunities for mixed-use development because the amount of residential development is capped at 30 percent of the site density.
- Does not allow for the provision of public benefits through optional method redevelopment, such as enhanced walkability, environmental improvements, affordability improvements to M-NCPPC parks, or other public realm upgrades.

B. Revise Draft Plan to Provide Additional Guidance for Future Redevelopment

Pros:

- Allows for flexibility in use while utilizing all available tools to ensure compatibility and alleviate resident concerns.
- Provides a framework and vision that sets a foundation for potential redevelopment scenarios.
- Encourages context-sensitive redevelopment if and when proposed.

Cons:

- As with all zoning matters, there is potential for confusion and anxiety concerning development height, density, quality, and uses.
- Many community members worry that zoning changes will inevitably lead to redevelopment, altering the character of their neighborhood.

The second option, to revise the Draft Plan to provide additional guidance for future redevelopment, is recommended. The following language is recommended to be added to the plan.

Recommended Plan Language: (Existing Plan language is shown in plain text and recommended language is shown in red underlined text)

The Kemp Mill Shopping Center is a treasured cultural resource for the Kemp Mill community. The shopping center's services, amenities, retail stores, and restaurants, combined with the nearby places of worship, communal gathering spots, schools, recreational facilities, and diverse housing options,

create a community that residents greatly value. Many of the businesses and retail establishments in the Shopping Center are locally owned and provide employment for nearby residents.

This Plan recommends new infill residential and non-residential development, via the CRT Zone, for the properties associated with the Kemp Mill Shopping Center, including the Cornerstone Montgomery Inc. office building at 1398 Lamberton Drive. As the Kemp Mill Shopping Center fulfills a critical need in the community, the Plan encourages any new development to retain retail space that serves the needs of the Kemp Mill community. To incentivize retaining the retail space, the Plan recommends:

- A phased redevelopment of the Kemp Mill Shopping Center, that allows existing neighborhood retail to operate and site access to be maintained during redevelopment activities.
- Implementing strategies for retaining existing and attracting new independent retailers that may include incentives to preserve affordable rents, establishing business cooperatives, and building smaller store sizes that could accommodate local businesses.
- Attracting and supporting local retailers and small businesses through loans and technical assistance programs offered by State and County economic development agencies.

DENNIS AVENUE DISTRICT

TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Testimony in the Dennis Avenue District focused on the proposed rezoning for a mix of housing types along University Boulevard including Dennis Avenue. The testimony included objections to rezoning for multi-unit dwellings, concerns about increased crime, stress on existing infrastructure, slow road repairs, and inadequate police response. This is compounded by the belief that adding more residents without addressing current issues will strain resources. There is concern that future redevelopment could replace affordable single-family homes with more expensive housing. There were requests for new multi-unit properties to include parking spaces due to insufficient on-street parking. There were concerns about how rezoning would affect properties near Dennis Avenue, enabling redevelopment for apartments, duplexes, or other buildings, with concerns about preserving the neighborhood's aesthetic quality and ensuring redevelopment is appropriately constrained. There was also support for upzoning in the testimony as it is perceived to foster economic growth and environmental sustainability. Some expressed strong support for the proposed zoning changes, viewing it as a means to improve livability along with environmental sustainability. Some residents recognized that the Plan offers the flexibility-not the obligation-for homeowners to build new housing types.

RESPONSE

The discussion in the Dennis Avenue District portion of this memorandum (pages 19 to 21), provides the context and rationale for the Draft Plan’s zoning recommendations near the planned BRT station at the intersection of University Boulevard and Dennis Avenue. A discussion of land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for residential blocks, including the CRN zoning recommendations, is anticipated for the fourth work session on May 1, 2025. At that time, the concerns for maintaining neighborhood character will be presented and options will be presented for the Planning Board’s consideration in response to these concerns.

FOUR CORNERS DISTRICT

TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Testimony in the Four Corners District focused primarily on concerns about transportation issues at Four Corners. The community also expressed concerns about upzoning in areas seen as largely single-family residential. There is a desire to see more dense housing at existing commercial areas such as the property with Safeway and the Woodmoor Shopping Center. However, there is a desire to see development standards that require new construction to gradually blend into existing neighborhood heights and character. Structured parking, either above or below grade, should minimize street exposures, and parking availability in Four Corners should be improved. There was a concern that many neighborhood streets are already at capacity for on-street parking, and without parking requirements for new commercial and residential development, parking could become problematic. There is a desire to see more housing types within Four Corners to allow people to live locally instead of in distant developments that contribute to sprawl. However, there is a desire specific guidance be given on affordable housing. Finally, there is a desire to see guidelines that incorporate new public green spaces if certain large parcels of land are redeveloped.

RESPONSE

As discussed in greater detail on pages 22-25 of this memorandum, the Draft Plan’s land use and zoning recommendations for the Four Corners District encourage mixed-use growth by increasing the overall development capacity, including the permitted residential densities and heights, to achieve a mixture of uses, including housing, services, and amenities supported by BRT. Given the proximity of the commercial center to the surrounding residential neighborhoods, new growth will be required to transition from the 60-75-foot recommended heights to the surrounding residential neighborhoods per Section 4.1.8 of the Zoning Ordinance. New growth will also be subject to the Draft Plan’s housing recommendations (included in Chapter 5), including the county’s Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) law. The Draft Plan’s urban design recommendations encourage the exploration of consolidated, structured parking solutions integrated into new growth to minimize street exposures, and also the provision of privately-owned public spaces with future redevelopment.

The testimony in the Four Corners District primarily focused on concerns regarding the transportation recommendations and the recommended zoning for residential blocks. The transportation recommendations, including a summary of testimony received, will be discussed further during the transportation work session, anticipated on April 24, 2025. It is anticipated that there will be a discussion of the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for residential blocks, including the CRN zoning recommendations, during the fourth work session on May 1, 2025. At that time, concerns for maintaining neighborhood character will be presented as well as options for the Planning Board’s consideration in response to these concerns.

LAND USE, ZONING, AND URBAN DESIGN SUMMARY FOR NODES

The remainder of the memorandum provides a summary of the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for the smaller neighborhoods or “nodes” in each District, as well as a rationale for the commercial and residential densities recommended in the Draft Plan. This memorandum, and work session 2, will focus on the properties recommended for Commercial Residential (CR) or Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zones. Properties recommended for Commercial Residential Neighborhood Zones, including residential blocks between “nodes” will be discussed during the fourth work session on May 1, 2025.

AMHERST AVENUE AND CHESTNUT RIDGE DISTRICT

WTOP AND HEARTHSTONE VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Draft Plan’s WTOP and Hearthstone Village neighborhoods are located at the eastern edge of the Wheaton Central Businesses District (CBD), identified as a Large Center in *Thrive Montgomery 2050*. Wheaton is well-served by retail, restaurants, and community facilities, including the Wheaton Library and Recreation Center. Wheaton is also well-served by existing and planned transit, including the Wheaton Metrorail Station, Metrobus, and Ride On, and several planned BRT routes, including on Veirs Mill Road, Georgia Avenue, and University Boulevard. These neighborhoods are within a ½ mile to 1 mile walk of the Wheaton Metrorail Station, and a BRT station is planned at the intersection of University Boulevard and Amherst Avenue.

The Draft Plan’s WTOP and Hearthstone Village neighborhoods include several properties with the potential for infill development or redevelopment due to their proximity to high-capacity transit, services, and amenities in the Wheaton CBD. The commercial properties along Amherst Avenue have zoning capacity and sufficient land area to develop separately but combined with the developable areas of the 12-acre WTOP property would provide a significant site to achieve mixed-use development with ground-floor retail, a range of residential unit types, an expanded street grid, and privately-owned public space that integrates the WTOP transmitter building, a listed historic resource.

The Draft Plan recommends confirming the existing Commercial Residential (CR) zoning (CR-2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75) for the commercial properties along Amherst Avenue and recommends rezoning the

WTOP transmitter property from the R-90 zone to Commercial Residential Town (CRT 1.5-C.0-5, R-1.25, H-70) to enable a mixed-use development that can serve as a transition between the Wheaton CBD and the surrounding residential community.

This zoning is consistent with a Town Center area type; the Draft Plan recommends three new Town Center Streets—each with two lanes of vehicular traffic, sidewalks, separated bike lanes, and landscaped street and pedestrian buffers—to provide circulation through the WTOP transmitter property and connect it to the surrounding street network. The Draft Plan recommends that Bucknell Drive continue south through the WTOP transmitter property from its current terminus at Blueridge Avenue to connect to University Boulevard, that Blueridge Avenue continue east from Amherst Avenue to Bucknell Drive, and that a new segment of Hickerson Drive connect from Amherst Avenue to the proposed extension of Bucknell Drive. The recommended streets will be discussed further during the transportation work session, anticipated on April 24, 2025.

Commercial and institutional properties in the Hearthstone Village neighborhood also provide opportunities for development, albeit of a less significant scale. The Draft Plan recommends confirming the existing Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zoning (CRN 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-45) of the commercial properties along Amherst Avenue (south of University Boulevard) and rezoning the adjacent properties, including the Canaan Christian Church properties, from R-60 to CRN 1.0, C-0.0, R-1.0, H-50 to facilitate infill development. The Draft Plan also recommends rezoning the Har Tzeon property from R-60 to CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.25, H-60 to encourage the colocation of new residential units while retaining the existing synagogue.

Properties recommended for the Commercial Residential (CR) and Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zones in the WTOP and Hearthstone Village Neighborhoods are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: WTOP and Hearthstone Village Neighborhoods Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
2119 University Blvd W and Properties along Amherst Ave	CR 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75	CR 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75	Confirming existing zoning.
WTOP	R-90	CRT 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.25, H-70	Accommodate predominantly residential uses, and limited neighborhood-serving retail near planned BRT.
Har Tzeon	R-60	CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.25, H-60	Encourage the colocation of new residential units while retaining the existing synagogue.

INWOOD HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Draft Plan’s Inwood House neighborhood, generally located between Wheaton Forest Local Park and Sligo Creek Park, is anchored by the planned BRT station at University Boulevard and Inwood Avenue. Given that the Inwood House neighborhood is located farther from the services and amenities in the Wheaton CBD, the Draft Plan provides an opportunity for more modest infill development at the Pomander Court and Inwood House properties and provides the opportunity for a small amount of neighborhood-serving retail near the planned BRT station with development in support of Thrive’s goals for complete communities and 15-minute living. The Draft Plan recommends rezoning the Pomander Court property from the Residential Town (RT-12.5) zone to the CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-60 and the Inwood House property from the R-60 zone to the CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70 zone.

Properties recommended for the CRT zones in the Inwood House Neighborhood are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Inwood House Neighborhood Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
Pomander Court	RT-12.5	CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-60	Accommodate predominantly residential uses, and limited neighborhood-serving retail near planned BRT. Residential development can build to the maximum recommended FAR.
Inwood House	R-60	CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70	Accommodate predominantly residential uses, and limited neighborhood-serving retail near planned BRT. Residential development can build to the maximum recommended FAR.

ARCOLA AVENUE DISTRICT

UNIVERSITY TOWERS NEIGHBORHOOD

The Draft Plan’s University Towers neighborhood is centered at the intersection of University Boulevard and Arcola Avenue and includes two townhouse developments, a cluster of multifamily residential buildings – University Towers, the Warwick Apartments, and Arcola Towers – as well as the Parkland Pool, the Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington synagogue, the Yeshiva of Greater Washington school, and the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. The neighborhood also includes the

Autumn Lake Healthcare at Arcola - a rehabilitation and long-term care facility - and a portion of the Kemp Mill Estates residential neighborhood.

The neighborhood provides the opportunity to access many daily needs within walking distance of multifamily residential buildings, townhouses, and single unit detached uses in the larger Kemp Mill community. The Kemp Mill Shopping Center is a treasured cultural resource for the Kemp Mill community. The shopping center's services, amenities, retail stores, and restaurants, combined with the nearby places of worship, communal gathering spots, schools, recreational facilities, and diverse housing options, create a nearly complete community that Kemp Mill residents greatly value. Many of the businesses and retail establishments in the Shopping Center are locally owned and provide employment for nearby residents. The Draft Plan recommendations will enhance this area as a Town Center for the local community, with improved connectivity that includes safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and public open space connected to community facilities and amenities.

In addition to the range of housing types, services, community amenities, and cultural resources, the Draft Plan's University Towers neighborhood is also near a planned BRT station at the intersection of University Boulevard and Arcola Avenue. The Draft Plan recommends rezoning the Kemp Mill Shopping Center site from the Neighborhood Retail (NR) zone to Commercial Residential Town (CRT 1.5-C.0-75, R-1.25, H-70) to maintain commercial uses while accommodating residential units. The Draft Plan also recommends rezoning the existing townhouse developments, the Parkland Pool, and the Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington synagogue to a Townhouse Medium Density zone, which permits each of these uses. The Draft Plan also recommends rezoning University Towers, Warwick Apartments, and Arcola Towers to a Commercial Residential Zone to achieve zoning conformance for the existing structures and provide an opportunity for infill development.

The Draft Plan recommends two new Town Center Streets—each with two lanes of vehicular traffic, sidewalks, separated bike lanes, and landscaped street and pedestrian buffers—to provide circulation through the neighborhood and improve connectivity to University Boulevard. The Draft Plan recommends an extension of Lamberton Drive west from Arcola Avenue to the western edge of the Kemp Mill Shopping Center site; this recommended connection provides a safer and more comfortable path for people walking, biking, and rolling who today must share the street or traverse landscaped areas without a sidewalk or bicycle facility when, for example, biking from Kemp Mill Estates to the Sligo Creek Trail or walking from the Westchester neighborhood across Sligo Creek to the Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington synagogue. The Draft Plan also recommends improving and extending the existing Access Road from University Boulevard as a Town Center Street to connect to the Lamberton Drive extension, linking the Kemp Mill Shopping Center and the multifamily residential buildings to the south, as well as providing a more direct connection to University Boulevard.

Properties recommended for the CR and CRT zones in the University Towers Neighborhood are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: University Towers Neighborhood Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
University Towers, the Warwick Apartments, and Arcola Towers	RH	CR 2.0, C-0.25, R-2.0, H-200	The RH zone was eliminated in the 2014 Zoning Ordinance, so a new zone must be applied to replace the RH zone. The CR zoning recommendation brings the existing building heights into zoning conformance and also allows predominantly residential uses, with limited neighborhood-serving retail near planned BRT. Residential development can build to the maximum recommended FAR.
Kemp Mill Shopping Center	NR 0.75, H-45	CRT 1.5, C-0.75, R-1.25, H-70	Recommendation allows shopping center to exceed existing commercial square footage and accommodate residential units.

BREEWOOD PARK AND NORTHWOOD NEIGHBORHOODS

The Breewood Park neighborhood extends from Sligo Creek Parkway to Orange Drive and is anchored by the planned BRT station at the intersection of University Boulevard and Arcola Avenue. The Northwood Presbyterian Church property provides an opportunity for a mixed-use development that co-locates religious, residential, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses adjacent to the planned BRT station in support of Thrive’s goals for more complete communities and 15-minute living. To facilitate this opportunity, the Draft Plan recommends rezoning the Northwood Presbyterian Church from the R-60 zone to CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70. While slightly further from the planned BRT station, the Draft Plan includes similar recommendations for the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in the Plan’s Breewood Park neighborhood and the Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church, in the Plan’s Northwood neighborhood (across University Boulevard), rezoning these places of worship from R-60 to CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-60 to provide opportunities for infill residential development co-located with the places of worship.

The Draft Plan includes a recommendation to connect Breewood Road to Whitehall Street with the redevelopment of the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church to improve site access and local circulation and to provide a more direct travel route for people walking and biking. The recommended streets will be discussed further during the transportation work session, anticipated on April 24, 2025.

Properties recommended for the CRT zones in the Breewood Park and Northwood Neighborhoods are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Breewood Park and Northwood Neighborhoods

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
Northwood Presbyterian Church	R-60	CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70	Encourages the colocation of new residential units while retaining the religious institution or provide neighborhood-serving retail near planned BRT. Residential development can build to the maximum recommended FAR.
Good Shepherd Episcopal Church and Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church	R-60	CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-60	Encourages the colocation of new residential units while retaining the religious institution or provide neighborhood-serving retail near planned BRT. Residential development can build to the maximum recommended FAR.

DENNIS AVENUE DISTRICT

SLIGO WOODS NEIGHBORHOOD

The Draft Plan’s Sligo Woods neighborhood extends roughly from Orange Drive to Dennis Avenue and is anchored by the planned BRT station at the intersection of University Boulevard and Dennis Avenue. There are limited opportunities for redevelopment in the Plan’s Sligo Woods Neighborhood, as most of the properties are detached residential, apart from the Verizon utility building and Collins Funeral Home, between Kerwin Road and Dennis Avenue. While the Verizon utility building and the Collins Funeral Home are not anticipated to redevelop, the Draft Plan recommends rezoning the Verizon utility building and four detached residential properties located between the Verizon building from R-60 to CRN-1.0, C-0.0, R-1.0, H-50, and the Collins Funeral Home from R-200 to CRT 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.25, H-60 to encourage additional development near the planned BRT station.

Properties recommended for the CRT zone in the Sligo Woods Neighborhood are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Sligo Woods Neighborhood Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
Collins Funeral Home	R-200	CRT 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.25, H-60	The funeral home, undertaker use is a limited use in the CRT zone. The zoning recommendation allows the existing use to remain and provides opportunity for future infill or redevelopment near a planned BRT station.

MARY’S CENTER AND NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEIGHBORHOODS

The Draft Plan’s Mary’s Center neighborhood, located between Dennis Avenue and Lorain Avenue, provides greater opportunity for infill and redevelopment near the planned BRT station at University Boulevard and Dennis Avenue, due to a combination of vacant properties, existing uses, and opportunities for consolidation. Four properties at the corner of University Boulevard and Dennis Avenue are under common ownership (700, 704, and 708 Dennis Avenue and 420 University Boulevard West) and provide an opportunity for a consolidated redevelopment at this strategic location. Three of the four properties at this strategic location are currently vacant. When considered with the Silver Spring Masonic Temple / National Children’s Center property at 410 University Boulevard West, three additional properties under common ownership at 400 University Boulevard West (one of which is vacant, and a second which is improved with a surface parking lot), and the Mary’s Center property at 344 University Boulevard West there is over four acres of land with the potential for infill development or redevelopment. The Draft Plan recommends rezoning each of these properties to CRT-1.5, C-0.5, R-1.25, H-50 to provide the opportunity for additional residential uses, services, and amenities near the planned BRT station.

During outreach and engagement for the Draft Plan, it was communicated that existing single unit detached properties would not be recommended for any commercial development. However, the Draft Plan’s Mary’s Center neighborhood includes two properties improved with single unit detached houses. Due to the number of vacant properties, existing uses, and opportunities for consolidation adjacent to the planned BRT station, the Draft Plan recommends providing the opportunity for mixed-use development at this location – housing with either neighborhood-serving retail or community serving uses, such as those that exist in the neighborhood today.

The Draft Plan includes a recommendation to implement a connected network of streets with redevelopment of these properties, including connecting Gilmore Drive between Dennis Avenue and Dallas Avenue and continuing to Brunett Avenue as well as connecting Greenock Road to Royalton Road at University Boulevard. These recommended connections improve site access and local circulation and provide a more direct travel route for people walking and biking to University

Boulevard and the planned BRT station at Dennis Avenue. The recommended streets will be discussed further during the transportation work session, anticipated on April 24, 2025.

The Draft Plan’s North Four Corners neighborhood is located across University Boulevard from the Mary’s Center neighborhood. While the neighborhood includes predominantly residential uses, the Oaks at Four Corners property provides an opportunity for infill development or redevelopment, near the planned BRT station at Dennis Avenue and adjacent to North Four Corners Local Park. To facilitate redevelopment, and perhaps accommodate a small amount of non-residential development, the Draft Plan recommends rezoning the Oaks at Four Corners property from R-60 to CRT-1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70.

Properties recommended for the CRT zone in the Mary’s Center and North Four Corners Neighborhoods are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Mary’s Center and North Four Corners Neighborhoods Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
Silver Spring Masonic Temple, Mary’s Center, and adjacent properties	R-60 and EOF	CRT 1.5, C-0.5, R-1.25, H-50	These properties have the potential for a consolidated development of primarily residential uses, with a limited amount of neighborhood-serving commercial near the planned BRT station.
Nichiren Shoshu Myosenji Temple	R-60	CRT 1.0, C-0.25, R-1.0, H-50	This recommendation provides an opportunity for adaptive reuse, or residential units at the maximum FAR, if the Temple is no longer in use.
The Oaks at Four Corners	R-60	CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70	Accommodate predominantly residential uses, and limited neighborhood-serving retail near planned BRT. Residential development can build to the maximum recommended FAR.

FOUR CORNERS DISTRICT

The Draft Plan’s Four Corners District extends between Lorain Avenue and I-495/Capital Beltway and includes the neighborhoods of Four Corners West, Four Corners North, the Woodmoor Shopping Center, and Montgomery Blair High School. The District is centered at the intersection of University Boulevard and Colesville Road, two “growth corridors” identified in Thrive, and a significant transfer point for existing and planned transit riders. In addition to the area’s role in the transportation network, the Four Corners District also includes many single-use commercial establishments, including a grocery store, post office, convenience retail, and restaurants. While the Four Corners District offers amenities and services to surrounding community members, as well as the students at Montgomery Blair High School, it is auto-oriented and dominated by the one-way couplet of University Boulevard.

As a single-use commercial center with surface parking, location at a major intersection, and transfer point for existing and planned transit riders, the Four Corners District has the potential to transition to a “node” with a mixture of uses including housing, services, and amenities, supported by BRT. The Draft Plan increased development capacity on most properties to incentivize development or encourage consolidation but given multiple individual ownerships and the limited size of most commercial properties in the area, opportunities to achieve this transformation are limited in the near term. For that reason, the Draft Plan includes short-term recommendations to improve the public realm for those walking, biking and rolling by repurposing one vehicular travel lane in each direction through the intersection to introduce landscaped buffers, continuous sidewalks and bicycle facilities to safely and more comfortably connect users to retail and existing and planned transit options. (The Four Corners transportation recommendations will be discussed further during the transportation work session, anticipated on April 24, 2025.)

FOUR CORNERS WEST NEIGHBORHOOD

The Four Corners West neighborhood, located between Lorain Avenue and Colesville Road, includes several neighborhood-serving uses, including a Safeway grocery store, post office, convenience retail, fast food restaurants, and a small office park. To facilitate infill and redevelopment, the Draft Plan recommends increasing permitted densities and heights in the Four Corners West Neighborhood. Specifically, the Draft Plan recommends increasing the density and height of the properties in the “island” of the one-way couplet from CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45 to CRT 2.5, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75. Likewise, the Draft Plan recommends rezoning the Safeway grocery store from R-60 and CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45 to CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60 and the post office to CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-2.0, H-60. The Draft Plan increases the amount of residential development permitted, as well as the height, to encourage a mixture of residential and non-residential uses with redevelopment. Along Lorain Avenue and Colesville Road, the Draft Plan recommends the Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zone as a transition to the South Four Corners Neighborhood.

Properties recommended for the CRT zones in the Four Corners West Neighborhood are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Four Corners West Neighborhood Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
Safeway	R-60 and CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	These recommendations seek to maintain a balance between residential and non-residential uses in this commercial center, at the intersection of two planned BRT routes. The recommendations increase residential densities and heights to facilitate mixed-use development.
112 University Blvd W	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75	
U.S. Post Office	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-2.0, H-60	
100 University Blvd W	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	
2, 22, 106, 108 University Blvd W and 10040 Colesville Rd	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45	CRT 2.5, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75	

FOUR CORNERS NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD

The Draft Plan’s Four Corners North neighborhood, located between Lorain Avenue, Timberwood Avenue, Colesville Road, and University Boulevard also includes several small-scale commercial businesses. Similar to the Draft Plan’s Four Corners West neighborhood, the Draft Plan supports redevelopment of the existing single-use commercial properties into mixed-use development to complement and support the existing and planned BRT on University Boulevard and Colesville Road. The Draft Plan also recommends rezoning properties at the intersection of University Boulevard and Lorain Avenue from Employment Office (EOF) to CRT, as well as increasing the residential density and heights permitted to encourage a mixture of residential and non-residential uses with redevelopment.

Properties recommended for the CRT zones in the Four Corners North Neighborhood are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: Four Corners North Neighborhood Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
10100, 10110, 10118, 10120, 10126, 10130, 10132, 10134 Colesville Rd, and vacant parcels	R-60 and CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-2.0, H-70	These recommendations seek to maintain a balance between residential and non-residential uses in this commercial center, at the intersection of two planned BRT routes. The recommendations increase residential densities and heights to facilitate mixed-use development.
10144 Colesville Rd and 110 Sutherland Rd	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	
101 University Blvd W	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	
105-111 University Blvd W	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	
115 University Blvd W, 10101 Lorain Ave and 10105 Lorain Ave	EOF 3.0, H-100	CRT 3.0, C-2.0, R-1.5, H-60	

WOODMOOR SHOPPING CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD

The Draft Plan’s Woodmoor Shopping Center neighborhood is anchored by the Woodmoor Shopping Center, at the intersection of University Boulevard and Colesville Road. The shopping center includes several neighborhood-serving uses including a bank, grocery store, pharmacy, and bakery. The Draft Plan recommends rezoning the shopping center from CRT 0.75, C-0.75, R-0.5, H-40 to CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60 to encourage a mixture of residential and non-residential uses with any potential infill or redevelopment.

Properties recommended for the CRT zones in the Woodmoor Shopping Center Neighborhood are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Woodmoor Shopping Center Neighborhood Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning	Rationale for Commercial and Residential Values
Woodmoor Shopping Center	CRT 0.75, C-0.75, R-0.5, H-40	CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	These recommendations seek to maintain a balance between residential and non-residential uses in this commercial center, at the intersection of two planned BRT routes. The recommendations increase residential densities and heights to facilitate mixed-use development.
Four Corners Ethiopian Evangelical Church	R-60	CRT 1.5, C-0.75, R-1.5, H-75	

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

During the second work session, there will be a discussion of the Draft Plan’s land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for properties with existing commercial uses, residential buildings, and properties near planned Bus Rapid Transit (or “nodes”) at Amherst Avenue, Inwood Avenue, Arcola Avenue, Dennis Avenue, and Four Corners, including the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. There will be a presentation of applicable testimony received on the Public Hearing Draft Plan, and request guidance from the Planning Board on potential revisions to the Plan text in response to testimony.

It is anticipated that the Planning Board will hold a third work session on April 24, 2025. During the third work session, it is anticipated that there will be a discussion of the public testimony received on the transportation recommendations of the Public Hearing Draft, as well as reviewing (1) the transportation vision for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, (2) policy guidance related to safety and multimodal travel options, (3) the existing transportation conditions that inform the Draft Plan recommendations, and (4) the public testimony received on the Draft Plan’s transportation recommendations.

It is anticipated that there will be a discussion of additional recommendations and testimony received in the following work sessions:

- April 24, 2025: Work Session #3 – Transportation
- May 1, 2025: Work Session #4 – Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design between “nodes”
- May 15, 2025: Work Session #5 – Housing, Community Facilities, and Schools
- May 22, 2025: Work Session #6 – Historic Resources, Environmental Sustainability, Parks, Trails, and Open Space

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Updated Summary of Testimony after COB March 12, 2025

Attachment B: Written Testimony updated 3.18.25.