

Resolution No.: 20-770  
Introduced: April 8, 2025  
Adopted: April 8, 2025

**COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
SITTING AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION  
OF THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT  
WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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Lead Sponsor: County Council

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**SUBJECT:** Approval of Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment

1. On December 20, 2024 the Montgomery County Planning Board transmitted to the County Executive and the County Council it's draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA)*.
2. The Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment* is an update to the *2017 Bethesda Downtown Plan* which covers an area of roughly 450 acres. The MMPA amends the *2017 Bethesda Downtown Plan* and *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, as amended.
3. On February 26, 2025, the County Council held a public hearing on the Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment*, which was referred to the Council's Planning, Housing, and Parks Committee for review and recommendations.
4. On March 10 and March 24, 2025, the Planning, Housing, and Parks Committee held a worksession to review the Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment*.
5. On April 1, 2025, the County Council reviewed the Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment* and the recommendations of the Planning, Housing, and Parks Committee.

**Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District lying situate in Montgomery County, Maryland, states as follows:

The Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment*, dated Winter 2024, is hereby approved with revisions. District Council revisions to the Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment* are identified below. Deletions to the text of the Plan are indicated by [brackets], additions by underscoring. Montgomery County Planning Department staff may make additional, non-substantive revisions

and/or corrections to the Master Plan Amendment before its adoption by The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission.

All page references in this section are consistent with the page numbering in the print version of the Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment*.

Page 14 Modify the section *Measuring the Cumulative Experience of Implementing the Plan Vision* as follows:

*[Measuring the Cumulative Experience of Implementing the Plan Vision] 5-Year Comprehensive Review of Plan Implementation*

Montgomery Planning and Parks, County and County Council staff undertake significant efforts to analyze master plan implementation progress and impacts through a variety of lenses and timeframes, from development application to the Capital Budget and the CIP to the GIP. With the goal of better [quantifying the cumulative experience of change resulting from implementation of the plan vision] understanding the cumulative impacts of development and progress toward the Plan vision, the MMPA recommends staff [investigate approaches used in other jurisdictions and present them to the Planning Board as part of an upcoming Annual Monitoring Report] undertake a 5-year comprehensive review of the plan.

Page 17 Modify the fifth recommendation under *4.2 Transportation and Adequate Public Facilities* as follows:

- Support MCDOT, WMATA, MDOT, and other regional transit providers study and implementation of enhanced transit service connecting downtown Bethesda to nearby residential neighborhoods and regional activity centers, including expanded transit support facilities needed to accommodate existing and enhanced service, such as bus layover capacity.

Page 20 Modify the section *Expanding the PIP Reduction* as follows:

The BOZ currently stipulates that if a property owner dedicates to [the] Montgomery Parks land designated in the master plan as a recommended open space, the Planning Board may reduce the amount of square footage for which a PIP must be made. As a primary purpose of PIP funds is the acquisition of parkland recommended in the master plan, this reduction reflects the benefit of having the land dedicated directly to [the] Montgomery Parks.

To allow greater flexibility for private development to provide master-planned open space, the MMPA recommends the consideration of extending [this] a PIP reduction to land designated in the master plan as a recommended open space that

a property owner makes publicly accessible as a Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) under conditions approved by Montgomery Parks and the Planning Board, including maintaining the POPS to Montgomery Parks standards and ensuring public access. Montgomery Parks and Planning staff should further investigate the potential implications, both positive and negative, of extending the PIP reduction to include POPS and present a recommendation to the Planning Board for consideration alongside other actions required to update the BOZ as recommended elsewhere in this MMPA. In recognition of the fact that POPS do not provide the same level of long-term control of open space as parkland dedications and to incentivize parkland dedications over POPS, the recommendations for the BOZ updates should ensure that PIP reductions for POPS are not equal to PIP reductions for parkland dedication.

Page 22      Modify the second paragraph under *Expand the Height Incentive Area east of Arlington Road* as follows:

Excluded from the Height Incentive Area (HIA) are the blocks east of Arlington Road, between Moorland Lane to below Montgomery Avenue. These blocks include a mix of multi-family apartment buildings ranging in height from four to 15 stories, townhouses ranging from three to four stories, and single-family structures, predominantly used as businesses. The single-family structure sites are zoned CR with a maximum height of 60 and 70 feet. [To encourage these underdeveloped sites to redevelop and provide more much-needed affordable housing, the MMPA recommends expanding the Height Incentive Area to Arlington Road in this area but limiting any additional height on these blocks to a maximum of 24 feet or not more than two stories. These blocks front onto the library and Bethesda Elementary School site and will have reduced impact on the single-family homes behind those sites.] The MMPA recommends further study of the expansion of the HIA along Arlington Road, which could be addressed in a future ZTA to the BOZ.

### **General**

All illustrations and tables included in the MMPA will be revised to reflect the District Council changes to the Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment*, dated Winter 2024. The text and graphics will be revised as necessary to achieve and improve clarity and consistency, to update factual information, and to convey the actions of the District Council. Graphics and tables will be revised and re-numbered, where necessary, to be consistent with the text and titles.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



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Sara R. Tenenbaum  
Clerk of the Council