

Montgomery County Planning Board

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED
MINUTES AND SUMMARY

SUMMARY
Thursday, January 8, 2026
2425 Reddie 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, January 8, 2026, beginning at 9:41 a.m. and adjourning at 2:58 p.m.

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

Item 2, Item 7, Item 8, Item 10, and Item 12 were discussed in that order and reported in the attached Minutes.

Items 4 and 9 were removed and Items 5 and 6 were postponed until January 22, 2026.

The Planning Board recessed for lunch at 12:48 p.m. and reconvened in the auditorium and via video conference to return to open session at 1:27 p.m. to discuss Item 11, as reported in the attached Minutes.

Commissioner Hedrick returned to the meeting following lunch during Item 11 at 1:40 p.m. and was present for the remainder of the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, January 15, 2026, 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

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: There were no Resolutions submitted for approval.

B. Approval of Minutes

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: There were no Minutes submitted for approval.

C. Other Preliminary Matters

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: There were no other Preliminary Matters submitted for approval.

Item 2. Record Plats (Public Hearing)

Subdivision Plat No. 220260040, Glen Hills, Section 3

RE-1 zone, 4 lots; located in the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Circle Drive and Newgate Road; Potomac Subregion 2002 Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220260120, Somerset Heights

R-60 zone, 1 lot; located on the north side of Essex Avenue, 900 feet west of Surrey Street; Bethesda – Chevy Chase Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220260130, West Chevy Chase Heights

R-60 zone, 1 lot; located on the south side of Maple Avenue, 250 feet east of Kentucky Avenue; Bethesda – Chevy Chase Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Record Plats 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.

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Item 4. REMOVED - Roundtable Discussion

Parks Director's Report
M. Figueredo

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: **Item removed.**

Item 5. POSTPONED - DPS Zoning and Site Plan Enforcement will cover the Site Plan MOU/Enforcement Coordination

Overview of the coordination efforts between the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) and Montgomery Planning for enforcement of Site Plans. We will also cover the updates to the Site Plan Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding Site Plan enforcement responsibilities.

R. Kronenberg

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Postponed to January 22, 2026.

Item 6. POSTPONED - Land Development will present on ROW, Stormwater, and Wells & Septic

Overview of the coordination efforts for land development in the county between the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS), the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), and Montgomery Planning. The briefing will cover planning and analysis related to County right-of-way (ROW) plans and permits, stormwater management and storm drain plans and analysis and properties served by well and septic.

R. Kronenberg

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Postponed to January 22, 2026.

Item 7. A Framework for Equitably Redeveloping Commercial “Strip Malls”

Staff from the Purple Line Corridor Coalition will present a recent report studying the redevelopment potential of commercial strip malls along the Purple Line corridor and a framework for supporting equitable redevelopment.

Staff Recommendation: Receive briefing

C. McCarthy

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Received briefing.

Carrie McCarthy, Chief of Research and Strategic Projects, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the redevelopment potential of commercial strip malls along the Purple Line corridor. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated December 30, 2025.

Ms. McCarthy offered comments regarding the Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC) and introduced Sheila Somashekhar, PLCC Director, Nick Finio, Associate Director for the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education (NCSG), and Kathryn Howell, Executive Director for NCSG.

Ms. Somashekhar discussed the PLCC’s equitable development goals and stated the PLCC received a planning grant from the Federal Transit Administration to help develop a plan to add affordable housing, preserve small businesses, and improve access for walkers and cyclists in neighborhoods at risk for gentrification along the coming Purple Line. Ms. Somashekhar discussed the Equitable Mixed-Use Redevelopment (EMUR) Report features

Mr. Finio discussed the potential strip mall redevelopment opportunities within the County, the strip mall redevelopment identification process, strip mall density across the corridor, and factors for determining redevelopment potential. Mr. Finio stated the team developed a set of scoring criteria based on site characteristics that were used to classify each site into one of three groups including: redevelop, reenvision, and retool. The report includes a set of recommendations to influence and strengthen equitable redevelopment potential for sites in each category. Mr. Finio also discussed the methodology, findings, and recommendations from the study in greater detail.

Ms. Somashekhar discussed the strategies and actions for the strip malls within the redevelop category with high potential for immediate redevelopment, the reenvision category with moderate potential for redevelopment, and the retool category with substantial restrictions for redevelopment. Lastly, Ms. Somashekhar discussed the next steps for PLCC’s vision.

The Board asked questions regarding whether a mix of development potential was assumed, what factor was weighted most heavily in the scoring criteria, cutoff rationale between the redevelop and reenvision categories, reasoning for excluding government and institutional buildings, and if consideration was given to site-specific constraints or enablers during evaluation.

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Ms. Somashekhar and Mr. Finio offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

The Board also offered comments and suggestions regarding building a funding capacity before implementation to get ahead of the curve, adding specific policy recommendations and/or conditions that would be most effective along the corridor in order to help implement policies and apply to matters coming before the Planning Board, and potential future design competitions in order to help inform policy for some of the sites.

Item 8. In Response to a Forest Conservation Law Violation; Forest Conservation Plan Amendment No. F20250780 (previously 119930270), Lot 38, Block “BB”, Good Hope Estates; 1112 McNeil Lane Silver Spring, MD 20905

Request to abandon a total of 0.09 acres (approximately 3,920 square feet) of existing Category I Forest Conservation Easement and provide offsite mitigation at a 4:1 ratio or 0.36 acres (15,682 square feet). Good Hope Estates, Lot 38, Block BB; 40,001 square feet, RE-1 Zone, Paint Branch Watershed, Cloverly Master Plan, Special Protection Area.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

S. Peck

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Linden

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Forest Conservation Plan Amendment cited above, subject to conditions as modified during the meeting, which will be reflected in an associated draft Resolution to be adopted by the Planning Board at a later date.

Stephen Peck, Senior Forest Conservation Inspector, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the Lot 38, Block “BB”, Good Hope Estates. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated December 22, 2025.

Mr. Peck stated the Forest Conservation Plan Amendment is in response of a forest conservation law violation for encroachments of two sheds and a timber wall within an existing forest conservation easement. As a result of the violation, Mr. Peck stated the original Amendment proposed release of a 0.09-acre area of conservation easement to create additional usable side yard space to allow retention of the sheds, 4:1 mitigation off-site through the purchase of forest mitigation bank credits, and permanent fencing at the retained conservation easement boundary.

Mr. Peck noted Staff supported the original proposal, as conditioned in the Staff Report; however, the Applicant requested modifications to the conditions on January 5, 2026. Mr. Peck stated the Applicant requested an additional 900 square feet of conservation easement be removed for a total of 4,820 square feet of conservation easement removal, a change to mitigation from 4:1 off-site to 2:1 offsite with 1:1 onsite supplemental planting to occur in the remaining easement area, and utilization of conservation markers to delineate the easement line rather than permanent fencing.

Mr. Peck presented Staff’s recommended revisions to Condition Numbers 2, 4, 7, and new Condition Numbers 5 and 9.

David Dunmire of the Eyes of Paint Branch offered testimony regarding opposition to the Forest Conservation Plan Amendment, raising concerns that the Amendment does not adequately protect the Paint Branch watershed and allows for off-site mitigation rather than requiring mitigation on-site.

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Steve Crum of MHG offered comments on behalf of the Applicant regarding the encroachments, retaining wall, and noted agreement to the modifications to conditions proposed by Staff.

Nancy Valentine Harper, the Applicant, offered comments regarding lack of knowledge of the forest conservation easement, alleged violations, and potential cost of implementing the Amendment.

The Board asked questions regarding legal notification requirements for forest conservation easements, timing of violations, cost to rectify violation and Forest Conservation Plan Amendment. The Board further discussed the appropriate mitigation for the violation, including the additional 900 square foot grass area requested to be released from the easement.

Staff, including Christina Sorrento, Chief of the Environment and Climate Division, and Josh Kaye, Forest Conservation Inspection Supervisor, offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

The Board held further discussion regarding the possible release of 900 square foot grass area and Staff's proposed amended totals for onsite mitigation and offsite mitigation.

The Board adopted the amended recommendations for 2:1 off-site mitigation, 1:1 on-site mitigation, and requiring conservation markers to delineate the easement line. The Board declined to release the 900 square foot grass area and required that it remain part of the conservation easement.

Item 9. REMOVED - Bennett Road Properties: Preliminary Plan No. 120240090 & Preliminary/Final Forest Conservation Plan No. F20240490 (Public Hearing)

A. Bennett Road Properties: Preliminary Plan No. 120240090: Request to subdivide an existing forested property into three (3) lots for single-family detached homes and conduct a transfer of adjoining land between the M-NCPPC (equal to or greater in size) to provide roadway frontage and access to the properties along Alderton Lane; located at the southwest quadrant of the Bennett Road (paper street) and Alderton Lane intersection on approximately 1.33 acres of land in the Residential 200 (R-200) zone; within the 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

B. Bennett Road Properties: Preliminary/Final Forest Conservation Plan No. F20240490: The proposal is subject to Chapter 22A, the Forest Conservation Law, and requires a Forest Conservation Plan; variance request to remove and impact specimen trees; located at the southwest quadrant of the Bennett Road (paper street) and Alderton Lane intersection on approximately 1.33 acres of land in the Residential 200 (R-200) zone; within the 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

T. Graham/H. Johnson

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Item removed.

Item 10. Cloverly Local Park ADA Access Improvements Water Quality Plan, PP2025001 (Public Hearing)

Request to approve the Water Quality Plan submitted for ADA Access Improvements at Cloverly Local Park. Located at 900 Briggs Chaney Road, Silver Spring, within the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the Water Quality Plan.

M. Stamets

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Water Quality Plan cited above, with modifications discussed during the meeting.

Molly Stamets, Planner I, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the Water Quality Plan for Cloverly Local Park ADA Access Improvements. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated December 29, 2025.

Ms. Stamets stated the Montgomery Parks Department, the Applicant, is proposing ADA access and site improvements, ADA compliant walkways to be built between fields and courts where none currently exist, parking lot modifications including the removal of excess pavement, and a net impervious surface area decrease by approximately 2,000 square feet. Ms. Stamets noted there is a forest conservation exemption and stated there are no encroachments or effects to the environmental buffer area.

Lastly, Ms. Stamets noted modifications to Condition Number 3 regarding impervious surfaces.

Item 12. Climate Assessment Report for the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan Planning Board Draft

Staff will share results from the Climate Assessment for the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan Planning Board Draft prior to its transmittal to the County Council.

Staff Recommendation: Receive briefing and transmit to the Montgomery County Council.

C. Larson/S. Findley

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved Staff recommendation for approval of the Climate Assessment Report for the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan with additional comments discussed during the meeting and transmittal to the Montgomery County Council as an appendix to the Planning Board Draft, as stated in a transmittal letter to be prepared at a later date.

Steve Findley, Planner IV, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the Climate Assessment Report for the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 2, 2025.

Mr. Findley stated an updated version of the Climate Assessment was forwarded to the Board on January 7, 2026, with a change to Page 15, and noted the rest of the Climate Assessment was unchanged.

Mr. Findley and Bianca Noveno, Planner II, discussed the basis for conducting Climate Assessments, the purpose of the Climate Assessment, and Climate Assessment input assumptions. Mr. Findley also gave a summary of the Climate Assessment findings and discussed the primary drivers of the assessment findings as well as suggested Sector Plan amendments and Countywide actions in greater detail.

The Board asked questions regarding differences between the input assumption scenarios and reasoning for negative impacts. Staff offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

The Board held further discussion regarding the analysis of the Greenhouse Gas Quantification Tool finding an estimated increase in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by the year 2045 of approximately eighty percent, and the estimated number of transportation-related emissions by 2045 being approximately 148 percent higher. The Board also offered suggestions and directed additional comments be transmitted noting the estimated increases in GHG emissions, the creation of transportation-related emissions elsewhere, and that the Quantitative Assessment Tool used in the modeling does not consider where future residents and employees might locate if the Sector Plan is not adopted, which could lead to anticipated growth in more dispersed locations, longer travel distances, increased automobile dependence, and higher per-capita energy use and vehicle miles traveled.

Item 11. Shady Grove Bikeway & Safety Improvements Alternatives Analysis (Public Testimony Accepted)

The Planning Board will review proposed alternatives for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements along Shady Grove Road between Darnestown Road and Midcounty Highway.

Staff Recommendation: Identify preferred alternatives and transmit comments to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the Montgomery County Council Transportation and Environment Committee

S. Aldrich

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Pedoeem

Vote: 5-0

Other:

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

Sofia Aldrich, Planner IV, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the Shady Grove Bikeway and Safety Improvements Alternatives. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated December 30, 2025.

Ms. Aldrich stated the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is evaluating two options for implementing pedestrian, bicycle, and safety improvements along Shady Grove Road between Darnestown Road and Midcounty Highway. The project's goals include corridor-wide improvements to reduce conflict points between drivers, pedestrians, and bicycles, and implementation of strategies to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety at intersections.

Ms. Aldrich stated MCDOT has prepared two potential improvement options as a result of the work completed to-date. Ms. Aldrich described Option 1, which is the Applicant's preferred alternative, that includes a breezeway between Key West Avenue and Metro Access Road, a pedestrian/bike bridge over I-270, and continuous bike and ped facilities on the east side of Shady Grove Road. Ms. Aldrich also discussed Option 2 and stated the option includes no breezeway on the east side of Shady Grove Road, an at-grade crossing of I-270, continuous bike and pedestrian facilities on east side of Shady Grove Road, and more consistent bike and pedestrian facilities on the west side. Ms. Aldrich noted Staff recommends Option 1 over Option 2 and discussed Staff's analysis and recommendations in greater detail.

The Board asked questions regarding the location of the bike/pedestrian bridge proposed in Option 1, approaches to the proposed Option 1 bike/pedestrian bridge next to I-270, potential need for easements from adjacent properties, cost differences between Option 1 and Option 2, whether a 40 percent contingency is normal, utility pole locations, the separation between the bike/pedestrian facilities for the Option 1 breezeway recommendation, bike lane width for the Option 1 breezeway recommendation, MCDOT's option preference, and the timing of Option 1 versus Option 2.

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Staff, including Dave Anspacher, Chief of Transportation Planning, offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

Michael Mercado of Mercado Consultants, Inc. offered comments and responses to the Board's questions regarding the proposed bike/pedestrian bridge for Option 1, bike/pedestrian approaches, and utility pole locations.

Rebecca Park, Cameron McAllister, and Dara Soum of MCDOT offered comments and responses to the Board's questions regarding the potential need for easements from adjacent properties, the 40 percent contingency, breezeway bike/pedestrian separation, option preference, and potential timing.

The Board held further discussion regarding the option recommendations regarding project phasing, bike improvements across I-270, and width of the breezeway in Option 1 for the two-way separated bike lanes.

Staff suggested an additional comment could be added regarding bike improvements to ensure connectivity across I-270 if the project is constructed in phases and the deletion of Recommendation Number 2 regarding the breezeway width for the two-way separated bike lanes.