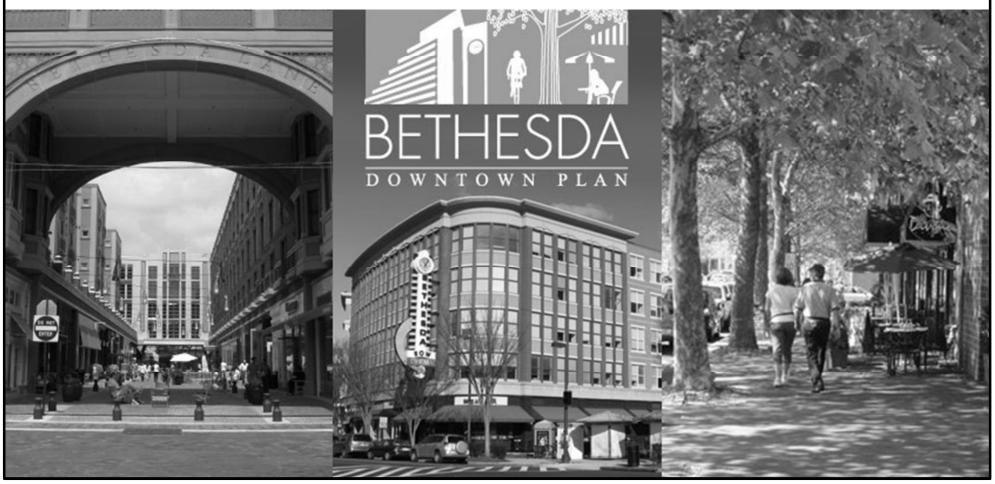
Town Neighbor Meeting

October 6, 2016



Tonight's Goals

- ✓ Provide Clear Information on the Draft Plan
- ✓ Outline Committee Recommended Town Positions
- ✓ Hear from Residents
- ✓ Encourage Residents to Participate

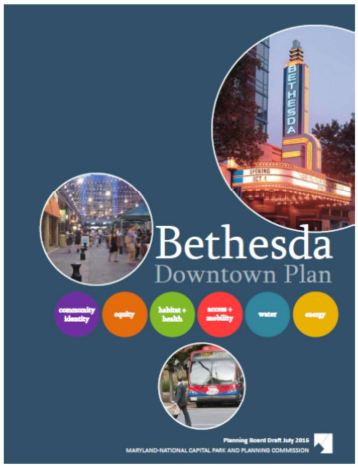
- will present what is allowable under current plan – some general impacts, others more Town specific
- will outline what position the Town may take
- Will ask you to share what you think – we will be able to take a few questions on each section tonight but we have also provided cards which you can use to either ask a question or make a comment. Please share by putting in the box when you leave. And, of course you can write into the Town office by Monday the 10th.

PROCESS

Planning Board

- ✓ Process Completed July 21, 2016
- ✓ Document Available On-Line:

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/bethesda_downtown/documents/BDPPlanningBoardDraft_lowres.pdf



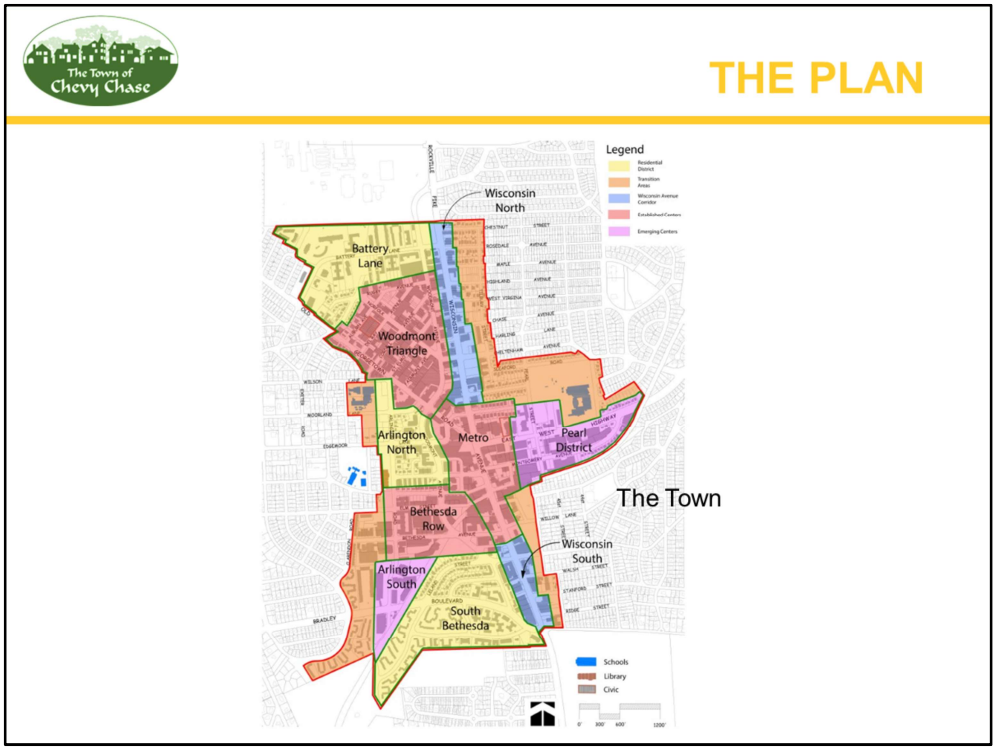
- 20 year plan last completed in 1994
- New plan under development since 2014 by the County Planning Board. Town has been steadily involved.
- Planning Board has completed its process and has now sent on to the County Council for discussion
- Document over 168 pages

PROCESS

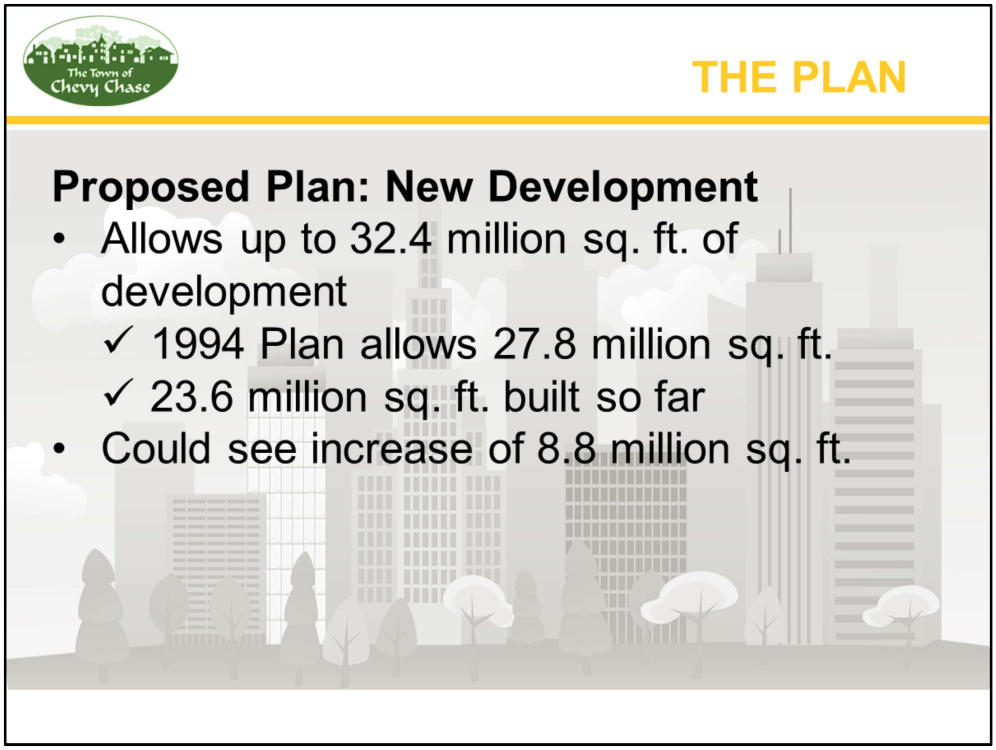
County Council Schedule

- ✓ Public Hearings: October 18, 19 & 20
- ✓ PHED committee discussions
- ✓ Full Council Discussions
- ✓ Plan Passage: Spring '17

- First step are the public hearings.
- Uncertain schedule: real work likely to be January – March.
- PHED = Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee of the County Council



- Note that boundaries of Bethesda Downtown go up to the Town's borders on the West and North.



- 8.8 mm sq. ft. is equal to 40 x Ford Building (located at NE corner of Wisconsin & Leland)
- We are not suggesting such buildings will be constructed – new guidelines would probably block such a structure – but this does convey the potential scale of development
- Could accommodate 7,000 to 8,000 dwelling units – that's equal to six to seven times the number of homes in the Town of Chevy Chase.

THE PLAN

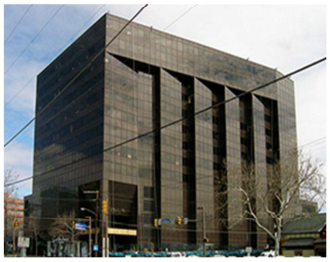
Proposed Plan: Key Features

- Allows new heights
- Creates “density” pool: most density distributed on first-come, first-served basis
- Subjects projects to “detailed design guidelines,” yet to be drafted
- Increase in parks

THE PLAN

New Heights, with Detailed Design Guidelines

Feet	Bethesda: Current	Bethesda: Plan	Examples of Plan Heights
200+	4	32	Chevy Chase Bank, Towers, Clark Building
140-199	24	43	Air Rights, 7101 Wisc., Ford Building



Source: Emporis & July 2016 BDP Draft

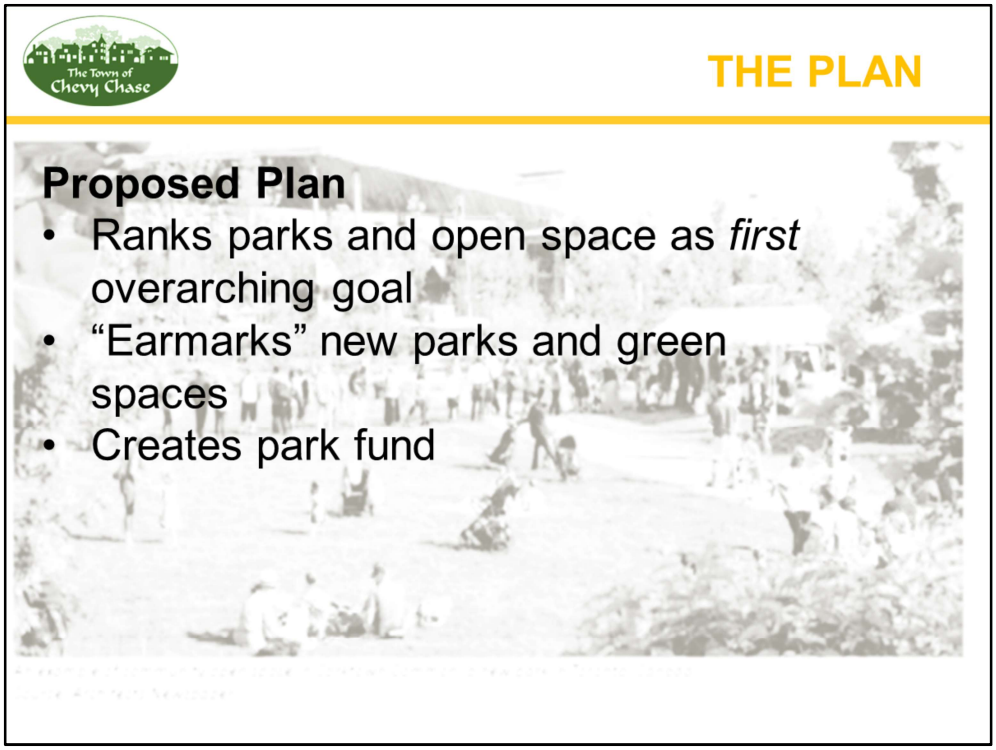
- Very substantial increase in heights would be allowed.
- Planning staff does not believe it likely that all these can be built, because the 8.8 mm sq. ft. would be used up, and act as a ceiling.
- But: many of the properties with the increased height are along Wisconsin, and we expect this corridor to be an area of particular focus by developers. So with these heights, a large proportion of the additional development could be near our Town.
- Detailed Design Guidelines to be drafted: likely to require step downs in heights towards edge communities.

THE PLAN

Jurisdiction	Buildings 200+ Feet
Baltimore	73
Bethesda Proposed Plan	32
Tysons Corner	17
Alexandria	15
Silver Spring	10
Washington DC	7
Bethesda CBD Current	4
Rockville	1

Source: Emporis & July 2016 BDP Draft

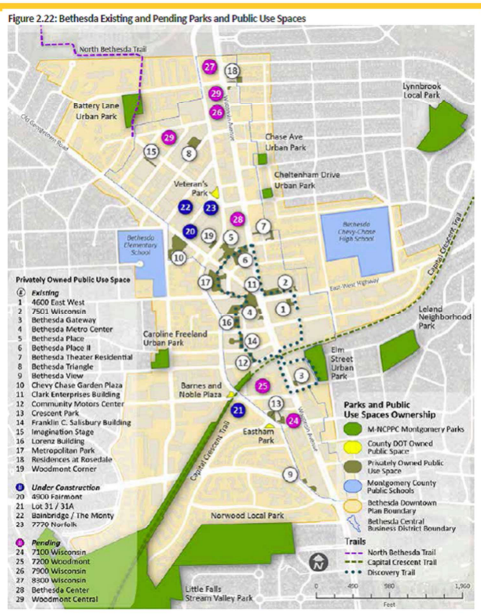
- Regardless of just how many tall building will actually be built, we can see that Bethesda is slated to stand out as one of the dominant urban communities in our region.



- Park Impact Payment: In exchange for additional square footage, developers pay into a park fund; Amount recommended is $10/square foot;
- Proceeds would be used to buy parkland

THE PLAN

Today's public parks and open space = 2.2% of 450 acres



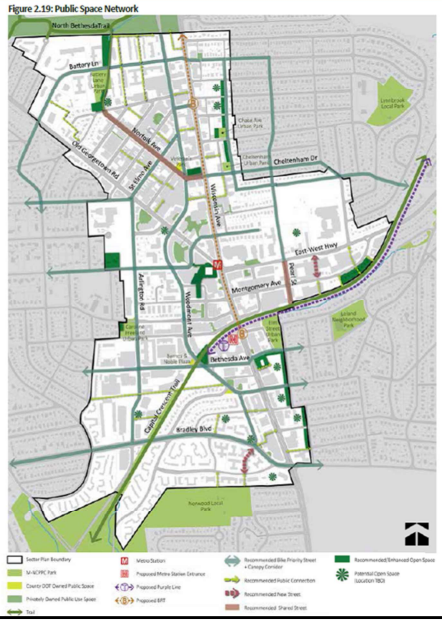
- DC has 19% of its land in parks.

THE PLAN

- Proposed Plan's public parks and open space = 4.9%
- Greenway along 46th St.

Informal community gathering space with movable furniture

Figure 2.19: Public Space Network



- Plan in essence doubles open space – still not very much.
- Provides mainly for pocket parks and green linkages.
- One important proposal to us is the "Eastern Greenway," - specifically to provide a buffer between our Town and buildings along Wisconsin.
- Most of the expansion is on private property: how much will it cost to assemble? How long will it take?
- Does not take advantage of County owned land

Town Discussion Issues

Recap:

- The plan calls for taller, bigger buildings, an increase in open space, and undertakes efforts to protect edge communities: greenway, design guidelines.
- We know development will come; We have not approached our task from the perspective of being opposed to change and growth.
- What we have focused on, is how much growth can be accommodated; how much is reasonable

DENSITY

Key Questions:

- Can area public schools support this level of development?

- Can roads sustain proposed development without unreasonable congestion?

- The Planning Board has taken the view that traffic is not a major issue in a community on the Metro, and assumes that most of the trips generated by new residents of the downtown area will use mass transit.
- But for all of us who live here, and know cars are still used, this remains a major issue.
- The Planning Department previously concluded (in conjunction with its work on the Purple Line Bethesda Station) that several key intersections will exceed congestion standards.
- Wisconsin & Bradley and Wisconsin & Montgomery will be approaching the congestion limit
- Connecticut & Bradley and Connecticut & East West will be over the congestion standard
- We believe additional and careful work is needed to asses this risk: The Planning Department appears to have used old data which could have underestimated the impact at some major traffic intersections

- In March, the Montgomery County Board of Education, citing the Plan and other recent plans, stated:
  - There will be a need for "*opening a new elementary school*"
  - accommodating the high school students "*will be much more challenging*" because even with the addition, BCC will exceed capacity by 2021, and *"enrollment increases already strain the high schools surrounding the BCC Cluster"*
  - *planned assessments* of School Impact Taxes and School Facilities Payments on developers *are likely to be insufficient.*
- These concerns were based on the assumption that the 8,000+ new residential units in downtown Bethesda will only generate 695 new students.
- This projection assumes a conservative student "generation" rate. Using more moderate assumptions the number of new students could be 1,175 or more.

DENSITY

Recommendation:

- The Plan should include staging
  - ✓ Specify interim limits at multiple stages
  - ✓ Demonstrate schools and roads can accommodate more development before moving to next stage

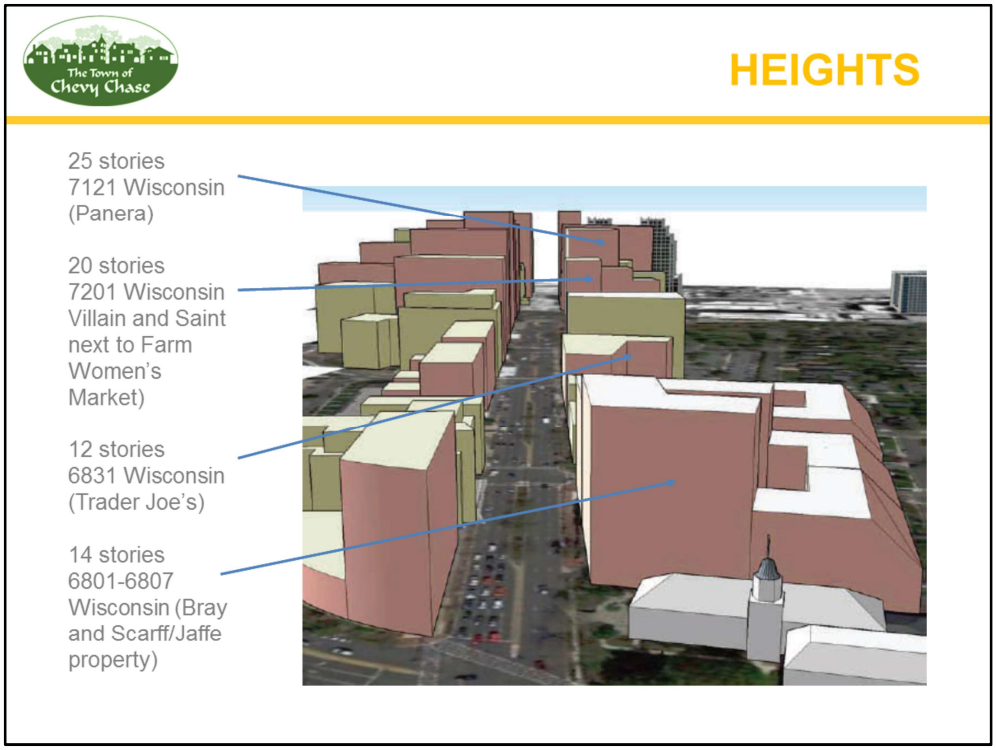
- Fundamental point: No one is smart enough to know today exactly how much further development can be sustained in Bethesda. And, Bethesda is not a vacuum – planned increased development in adjacent areas. So let's take incremental steps that we won't regret, instead of one giant step that we could regret.
- We would recommend a staged approach to allowing additional development. Once a stage – of a stated number of additional sq. ft. – has been built, there should be tests to determine infrastructure adequacy; If met, the next stage of development would be allowed.
- Plans for Chevy Chase Lake & White Flint have used stages.

HEIGHTS

Key Questions:

- Are the proposed heights in Bethesda reasonable?
- Where should the greatest heights be located?

- This is a rendering of what could be built at the Jaffe property next to St. John's Church
- This is not from the Jaffe organization, but conforms to the potential dimensions of a building on this site: 145 feet (~ 14 stories), with step down behind.



- Bird's eye view from Bradley, looking north on Wisconsin.
- In this image, all the buildings in red are on lots receiving additional height in the new plan.
- Note: We don't know what the actual designs will be; all we have here is the envelope. In all likelihood, the actual buildings – even if of these heights – would not be as massive.
- In the current Plan, the development metaphor was a "tent:" the most intense development and tallest buildings are concentrated around the Bethesda Metro, while tapering down away from it.
    - Panera: 9 stories; V & S, Trader Joe's and Jaffe - 7 to 8 stories.
    - The Ford building 7101 Wisconsin at Leland 14 stories and Air Rights building 7315 Wisconsin at Elm 13 stories are the tallest buildings near town.
- We now have a much taller tent.

HEIGHTS

Putting Heights in Context

- And we don't have to imagine what a stretch of Wisconsin may look like: Old Georgetown today, looking towards Wisconsin, Just 3 blocks from the metro.
- These buildings are 14 stories tall.

HEIGHTS

Along Montgomery Avenue

14 stories
4424 (PNC)

12 stories
4400 (Sport and Health)

- Not just Wisconsin.
- Sport and Health Club is currently 5 stories and in new plan could be built up to 12. (new heights are not shown on this rendering.)

HEIGHTS

Recommendations:

- ✓ Reduce proposed building heights of the tallest buildings along the Town's borders
- ✓ Advocate for density and heights to be concentrated near Metro station
- ✓ Support mandatory building design guidelines

- Building guidelines would require new buildings to taper down toward the edges of residential communities. Important that these "guidelines" are, in fact, requirements.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Key Questions:

- Is the proposed increase in overall park space adequate?
- Can this plan be achieved?
- What is the Town's goal for the two surface parking lots we use?

- In the next few slides, we will review what is planned for open space near the Town
- Should the town advocate that the county already owns open space that could be used for parks – i.e. parking lots?

Adjacent to the Town, the Plan recommends:

- FWM -- Replace asphalt with green space immediately around the historic building

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Eastern Greenway along 46th Street and West Avenue

- Along 46th Street and West Avenue; Width of greenway depends on height of adjacent building --35 ft. to 70 ft. Taller the building, wider the setback;
- Developer decision, upon approval from Planning Board.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parking Lot 10 – Behind "Tudor" Shops

- Property designated "priority sending site"
- *Could* allow for green space at the site
- Unguaranteed outcome

- Owned by DOT: 320 spaces across both lots.
- DOT belief: surface parking will not last.
- DOT goals: have the future of both lots determined at the same time in one plan; and all 320 places remain – underground. Cost: $20 - 25 mm. Nothing will happen at these sites until plans are undertaken which net DOT the cash needed to build the garage.
- Priority Sending Site. Could sell density and thus would extinguish development rights allowing for park at location.
- But not obligated to – DOT could, alternatively, decide to sell the land and have a 70 ft. high building go up.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parking Lot 24 – Behind Farm Women's Market

- Not designated "priority sending site"
- Could be developed up to 70 ft.

- Plan does not offer the possibility of being a Priority Sending Site.
- If built upon, strip along 46th would become part of the "Greenway"-- setback allocated based on height of buildings adjacent to greenspace
- But can DOT raise the $20 – 25 mm from sale of land, to pay for putting the spaces underground?

- And finally, the plan calls for creating new dog and skate parks on 4300 block of Montgomery Ave
- County must purchase individual properties which are currently privately owned small businesses
- We know most of those businesses want to sell, but at what cost to the County?

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Recommendations:

- ✓ Town should advocate for adequate buffer zones
- ✓ Town should advocate for keeping both parking lots as open space

NEXT STEPS

Resident Comments

- ✓ Feedback welcome to Town Council by email to townoffice@townofchevychase.org
- ✓ Please put “BDP Comments” in the RE: line
- ✓ Send comments no later than 5pm Monday 10/10.

Committee will take comments from tonight and by email
They will draft recommendation to the Town Council
Town council will discuss the Town Statement at the next Town council Oct. 13 meeting

NEXT STEPS

Resident Action

- ✓ Sign up to testify at the public hearings in Rockville on October 18th, 19th or 20th at 7pm by calling 240-777-7803
- ✓ Attend the Public Hearings to show your support
- ✓ Write the County Council no later than November 1. Email links provided at **www.townofchevychase.org**

- The Town of Chevy Chase has no independent authority over what happens.
- Whatever changes we advocate will only be realized through a persistent political process, where we take our case to the County Council.
- This is not just an effort the for next few weeks. We will have to remain engaged through out the process.

Special Bethesda Downtown Plan Committee

Cecily Baskir	Michael Gravitz	Quynh Tran
Pat Burda	Dedun Ingram	Deborah Vollmer
Tina Coplan	Ken Rubin	Fred Cecere
Karen Elkins	Mona Sarfaty	Barney Rush
Chris Files	Steve Seidel	
John Freedman	Jean Shorett	

We've had a terrific team of town residents working very hard on these issues. Let's give them all a big round of applause for all that they have done.