

Public Hearing on the Bethesda Downtown Plan October 18, 2016

Testimony from Mary Flynn,
Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents (CBAR)
Email: mary@cbar.info | Mobile: (650) 450-9025



Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Mary Flynn and I'm the founder of the Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents, or CBAR. I am also an elected Councilmember of the Town of Chevy Chase, but tonight I speak for CBAR.

I respectfully offer citizen input on how to bring four troubling components of the Plan into balance: Parks, Schools, Transportation and Compatibility with Edge Communities.

PARKS

First, CBAR added up every fraction of an acre of proposed park and open space (Table 3), and applied two standard metrics to assess adequacy (Table 2). Despite the laudable effort to prioritize Parks, the Plan fails.

At full build-out:

- Parkland as a percentage of total Plan area acreage tops out at a mere 4%
- Acres per 1000 people is a dismal 0.54. For comparison, Washington DC provides 13.2 acres per 1000 people.

CBAR will work hard to make the proposed greenways, pocket parks and plazas a reality.

We will also push hard to designate county-owned parking lots and the open space owned by WMATA as recreational parks and community event spaces.

SCHOOLS

Second, parents and voters want a written endorsement from the Board of Education before the Plan goes to Council for a final vote. CBAR also wants the Board of Education to work with the County to:

1. Identify sites that are suitable for new school construction.
2. Include feasibility and capacity assessments for each remediation option offered in the Plan.

TRANSPORTATION

Third, the transportation tests used to validate the Plan are widely discredited.

CBAR wants a new transportation study from an expert third party, such as the National Transportation Center at the University of Maryland. We want the data, assumptions and commentary published with a revised Plan.

COMPATIBILITY WITH EDGE COMMUNITIES

Finally, we applaud the greenway concept as a way to buffer the edges. However, it's an unfair barter that brings with it excessive traffic and noise from commercial up-zoning, and imposes unacceptable heights that diminish the sense of neighborhood.

The county's economic objectives can be achieved without encroaching on edge communities. There are over a hundred "non-edge" properties with appropriate zoning capacity to build out the Plan.

In summary, before the Plan goes to the Council for a final vote, CBAR wants a revision that:

1. Includes a written endorsement from the **Board of Education**.
2. Designates county-owned parking lots and open space owned by WMATA as **recreational parks and community event spaces**.
3. Validates **transportation** adequacy with a new study from an expert third party.
4. Incorporates greenways into a **compatibility plan** that limits height, density and allowable uses along the **edges**.

The public is looking to you individually and as a governing body for your leadership. Please demonstrate your commitment to serve the tens of thousands of current and future Bethesda area residents by strengthening the Plan with respect to parks, schools, transportation, and compatibility with edge communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

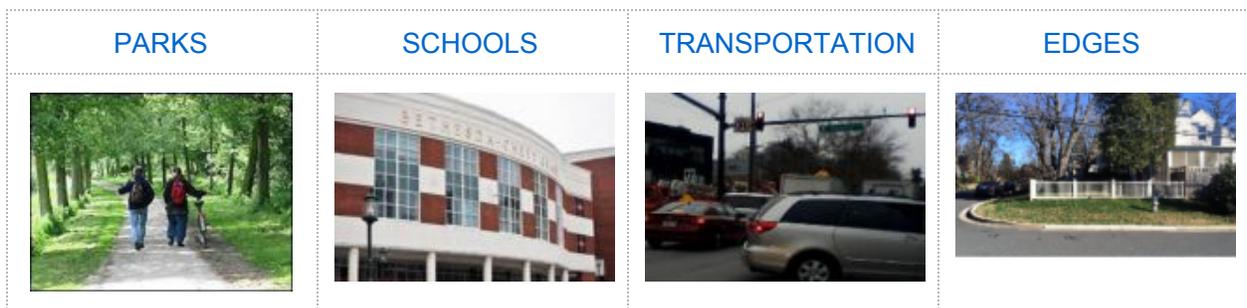


Table 1: Population Projections

Plan area Plan area consists of Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ) 637, 662, and 663	457 acres
2015 population Source: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Forecast Round 8.4	18,127
Additional proposed population Source: Leslye Howerton, Montgomery County Planning Department	16,010
Total population proposed in the Bethesda Downtown Plan	34,187

Table 2: Parkland Adequacy

Parkland area as a percentage of total acres Calculation = $18.19 / 457$	4%
Acres per 1000 people Calculation = $18.19 / 34$	0.54

Table 3: Portfolio of Parks

#	Page	Title	ACRES		
			2015	Additional Proposed	Total Proposed
1	83	1 Veterans Park Civic Green		0.50	0.50
2	83	2 Farm Women's Market Civic Green	0.60	0.00	0.60
3	83	3 Capital Crescent Civic Green		0.50	0.50
4	84	1 North Bethesda Trail Urban Gateway		0.90	0.90
5	84	2 Gateway into Norwood Park			0.00
6	85	3 Eastern Capital Crescent Urban Greenway		1.89	1.89
7	85	4 Arlington South Gateway Plaza			0.00
8	85	1 Fire Station 6 Urban Buffer Park		0.85	0.85
9	85	1 Old Georgetown Road Neighborhood Green		0.30	0.30
10	86	2 Wellington Drive Neighborhood Green		0.50	0.50
11	86	3 South Bethesda Public Plaza		0.15	0.15
12	86	4 Bethesda-Chevy Chase East Neighborhood Green		0.30	0.30
13	86	5a Eastern Greenway Neighborhood Green #1		0.50	0.50
14	86	5a Eastern Greenway Neighborhood Green #2		0.50	0.50
15	86	5b Eastern Greenway Neighborhood Green #1		1.00	1.00
16	86	5b Eastern Greenway Neighborhood Green #2		1.00	1.00
17	86	5b Eastern Greenway Neighborhood Green #3		1.00	1.00
18	86	6 Western Edge at Bethesda Elementary School		1.00	1.00
19	86	6 Caroline Freedland Neighborhood Park	1.00	0.15	1.15
20	87	1 Battery Lane Neighborhood Park	2.00	0.65	2.65
21	87	2 Chase Avenue Neighborhood Park	0.40	0.40	0.80
22	87	3 Elm Street Neighborhood Park	2.10	0.00	2.10
		Totals	6.10	12.09	18.19

Note: CBAR written testimony will demonstrate that expanding the analysis to include parks in edge communities (Lynbrook, Leland and Norwood) actually *decreases* parkland as a percentage of total acres to 2.4%, and only nominally increases acres per 1000 people to 0.95.