



Forecast

JULY 2024

NEWSLETTER FOR THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

Impacts of County’s Development Strategies

As we emerged from the pandemic, the Montgomery Planning Department initiated the formulation of policy adjustments to tackle the County’s housing shortage, advance public infrastructure metrics that would support anticipated population growth, and increase development in downtown Bethesda.

These policy changes will be scrutinized and debated by the Planning Board and the County Council this summer. While we encourage residents to enjoy some well-earned time off, the Town cannot slow consideration of these issues, so your timely feedback is crucial.

Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative (AHSI)

We extend our gratitude to the residents who attended the Public Forum on June 13, where the County’s recommendations for increasing the housing supply were discussed. These recommendations included zoning changes that would allow small-scale (duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes), medium-scale (small apartment buildings and townhouses), and large-scale housing developments throughout the County. The County Council’s Planning, Housing, and Parks (PHP) committee will be holding work sessions in July, potentially introducing legislation to implement these zoning changes in the fall. More information on AHSI is available at bit.ly/TOCCAHSI.

Growth & Infrastructure Policy (GIP)

Updated every four years, the GIP assesses the adequacy of the County’s essential public facilities, with a focus on school capacity and transportation improvements. It evaluates these infrastructures based on projected capacity, growth, and future development needs. For example, because Bethesda is classified as a transportation “red zone,” the priority is not on reducing motor vehicle congestion but on enhancing the safety and convenience of walking, biking, and transit. The County Council will deliberate changes to the GIP’s metrics this fall. More information on the GIP is available at bit.ly/CountyGIP.

Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA)

In 2017, following extensive input from Town and Bethesda area residents, the Bethesda Downtown Plan was formulated as a 20-year vision to sustain Bethesda as a thriving urban center. A key aspect of the Plan was its innovative strategy for managing additional density. Developers were allowed increased density, up to a development cap of 32.4 million square feet, in exchange for a Park Impact Payment (PIP) fee. This strategy has been highly successful, leaving now – just 7 years later – only 2 million square feet before the cap is reached. This summer, the Planning Department will decide whether the development cap should be eliminated or increased. More information on this issue is available at bit.ly/BDPMMPA.

Each of these policy changes and recommendations will be subject to public hearings this fall. The Town Council is actively seeking resident feedback. Please submit any comments and questions to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org.

Your input is vital to shaping the future of our community.

-- Mayor Irene Lane



Independence Day Picnic and Parade

July 4, 11:45 a.m.-2 p.m., Lawton Center Grounds

see page 3 for details



Public Hearings Scheduled for July 10 Council Meeting

The following public hearings are scheduled for the July 10 Council meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting, which begins at 7 p.m., please send comments to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org.

Proposed Additional Financial Contribution to Bethesda Market Park Project

The Town Council will hold a public hearing on a proposal to provide additional funds to the Bethesda Market Park project to maintain the quality and standard for the park that conforms to the initial vision and plans. This additional funding will allow for park amenities, including a stage/shade area, a recreation area for adults and children, an interactive water feature and dog runs, which cannot be provided within the original budget.

The Council recommends a financing plan that would potentially provide \$5 million in additional funding, with contributions from the Town, the State, and other sources, including the Parks Department. If this plan is realized, the Town will provide an additional \$3 million in direct funds to the project, which would raise the amount provided directly by the Town to \$7.5 million. Visit bit.ly/BMPFunding for a full presentation of the funding plan, including background and factors that the Council has considered.

Proposed Funding for Capital Crescent Trail Fencing and Barrier Improvements

The Town Council will hold a public hearing on proposed funding to improve the fencing and barriers along the Capital Crescent Trail to address Elm Street residents' privacy concerns. The contribution will allow for an opaque screen to be applied on the bridge that crosses over the Purple Line tracks adjacent to the Town and on portions of the ramps on either side of this bridge. The screening will be only on the side of the bridge and ramps facing resident's homes and will be applied at eye level to discourage trail users from looking into residents' homes and yards.

Leland Street/East Avenue Intersection Improvements

The Council will hold a public hearing to consider a proposed plan to modify the road alignment at the intersection of Leland Street and East Avenue and construct a new sidewalk and crosswalk on the north side of Leland Street extending from the east side of 44th Street. In response to resident concerns about vehicular and pedestrian safety at this intersection, the Public Services Committee asked the Town's traffic engineer to evaluate the intersection for possible safety improvements, and the PSC has recommended these improvements to the Town Council. Construction of the improvements is estimated to cost \$100,000. More information on the project is available at bit.ly/LelandEast.

Volunteers Needed for Town Committees & Boards

If you are interested in volunteering, please email townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org by July 31 and include a few sentences about why you would like to serve on a particular body.

- **Climate and Environment:** Inspires and facilitates energy conservation and environmental stewardship by the Town and its residents.
- **Community Relations:** Encourages a strong sense of neighborliness through community activities, events, and communications.
- **Land Use:** Considers and recommends solutions to issues and concerns relating to land use and construction in the Town. Advises on residential development and redevelopment.
- **Long-Range Planning:** Identifies emerging issues and trends. Monitors county and state activities likely to impact the Town.
- **Public Services:** Addresses traffic and pedestrian safety, parking, utilities, and infrastructure. Advocates for high-quality services and promotes a safe environment for residents.
- **Elections Board** (one vacancy): Oversees all Town elections, including making appropriate provisions for nominations, approving ballots, and supervising the polls.
- **Ethics Commission** (one vacancy): Receives, verifies, and maintains all financial disclosure forms required by the State of Maryland.
- **Water Board** (one vacancy): Hears requests from property owners who have had a water drainage plan denied by the Town.
- **Chevy Chase Fire Department Board** (two vacancies): Addresses issues that may affect the delivery of services to the community and assists with decision making about the fire station.

Red Light Signal Coming to East West Highway Crosswalk

The Maryland State Highway Administration has informed the Town that the new red-light signal at the crosswalk on East West Highway near Maple Avenue will be installed by the end of July. In addition to the new traffic signal, other improvements include marked crosswalks, countdown pedestrian signals, and pedestrian signals activated by push buttons. This improved signalization responds to a long-standing request of the Town to increase pedestrian safety along the corridor, especially given the opening of the Sleaford pedestrian underpass on the north side of East West Highway. We hope residents find this new crosswalk a much safer means to cross this busy state road.



Independence Day Picnic & Parade

July 4, 11:45 a.m.-2 p.m., Lawton Center Grounds



11:45 a.m.: Come to the Lawton Center to decorate your bikes, scooters, wagons, and baby carriages. The Town will provide decorating supplies.

12 p.m.: Parade and Dixieland Band

The parade will begin at 12 p.m. and will be led by the Dixie Land Trio.

12:15-2 p.m.: Picnic

Town residents will be treated to barbeque catered by Red, Hot & Blue and the famous Ben and Jerry's ice cream truck. Vegetarian & vegan options are available upon request. Bring your appetite and a picnic blanket!

Ireland 101: An Evening of History, Music, and Politics, July 12

If you fit into one or more of these categories, be sure to register to attend this special event on Friday, July 12 at 7 p.m.: Irish ancestry; interest in Irish music, history and/or politics; desire to travel to the Emerald Isle or to relive a former trip; curious about the Washington-Ireland Program for Service and Leadership (wiprogram.org); or desire to enjoy an entertaining evening.

This summer, two Town families are hosting university students from the Washington-Ireland Program. The group of 30 very accomplished young adults are well versed in politics and history and exceptionally talented musically. Irish music often has historical roots, so the combination is a natural mix. Come prepared to have some Irish "craic" (fun!) and to enjoy beers (including Guinness) and Irish cheeses. Space is limited. RSVP to bit.ly/TOCCIreland or (301) 654-7144.

Town Musicians' Acoustic Jam, July 19

The Town has many musicians and singers, and we would like to invite all to join an Acoustic Music Jam (no electric, no percussion) that will include bluegrass music as well as folk, traditional, and blues. Town residents who want to play, and those who want to listen, are all welcome to the Town Hall on July 19 from 7 to 9 p.m.

The Community Relations Committee held several of these jams in 2019, and they were a lot of fun and very popular. Music jams are gatherings of musicians & singers who sing and share songs or simply play along in a structured but informal setting. Playing in a group setting always helps a musician to stay sharp, and fledgling musicians or singers can test out their chops and gain skill and confidence in leading a song or playing in a friendly setting. Wine, beer, and snacks will be served.

Musicians and singers, please contact Jim Mich at jamesemich@aol.com or call/text at 301-922-3642. If you just want to come to enjoy the music, please RSVP to bit.ly/TOCCJam or 301-654-7144 so we can get a head count.

Have a Wonderful Summer!

The FORECAST is not published in August, and the Town Council does not meet in August. Please visit the Town website for current news and information. To receive Town news alerts, please sign up to receive Town Crier emails at www.townofchevy Chase.org/list.aspx.

Town of Chevy Chase

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TOWN COUNCIL

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Stephanie Martz, Secretary

Rich Brancato, Treasurer

Joy White, Community Liaison



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Climate and Environment Tip of the Month

THINKING ABOUT SOLAR? HERE ARE TWO GREAT OPPORTUNITIES!

SOLAR SWITCH

Capital Area Solar Switch, a co-op program sponsored by the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, enables you to buy rooftop solar panels at a group discount. And installation is done by a County-vetted company.

In addition to the discounted price, a 30% federal solar tax credit is available, and you can finance your installation using the Montgomery County Green Bank. Register online by July 24 at solarswitch.com to learn more about how it works, whether your roof is suitable. **There's no obligation!**



COMMUNITY SOLAR

If rooftop solar doesn't work for you, **Community Solar** enables you to support the clean energy transition, reduce carbon emissions, and save money. You subscribe to a share of a local solar farm, and Pepco credits you for the energy generated by your share.

In addition, you pay for the energy from the solar share at a 10% discount or more (depending on income) over Pepco rates. A number of TOCC households already subscribe to community solar either through Neighborhood Sun (www.neighborhoodsun.solar; 240-985-8641) or Nautilus Solar (www.nautilussolar.com).