

# Bethesda Downtown Plan Technical Appendix

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# Appendix A: Existing Conditions

The existing conditions or “Briefing Book” was prepared in the Spring of 2014 at the beginning of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Update. The Briefing Book provides an analysis of the existing conditions in Downtown Bethesda as prepared by staff and identifies; Historic Resources, Social and Cultural Resources , Transportation and Access, Environment, Parks, Open Spaces and Trails, Urban Design, Land Use and Development, Demographics and Economic and Market Data. The analysis also includes the plans and policies relevant to the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Update. While the Briefing Book was not comprehensive of every detail in Bethesda, it provided a basis for the framework of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.





# BETHESDA

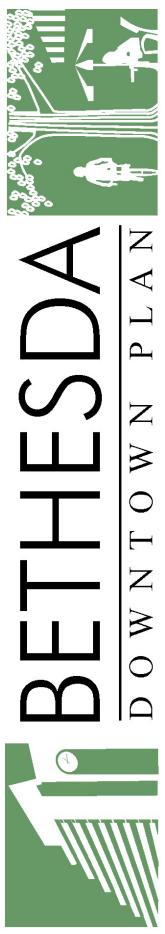
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## BRIEFING BOOK

SPRING 2014

■ MARYLAND - NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION





The Bethesda Downtown Plan Briefing Book summarizes the existing conditions of the Bethesda Downtown as of March 2014. It is intended to be used as a reference for the community for the Bethesda Downtown Plan launched in Fall 2013.

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# Introduction

Bethesda is a thriving urban center located in southern Montgomery County. What began as a crossroads village in 1871 now boasts over 10,000 residents, and is home to the two largest employers in the county. With numerous restaurants, shops, art galleries, and entertainment choices, including performing arts, live music, and movies, Bethesda is a county arts and entertainment destination and a center of the nightlife economy.

The development of Bethesda has been guided by a series of Master and Sector Plans. These plans, each created through a public process, identify general goals, intents, and priorities for development throughout the defined Plan Area (about 450 acres for Downtown Bethesda), and include specific recommendations for individual properties within the Plan Area, for land use and zoning, urban design, transportation, open space, the environment, and historic preservation.

Prepared by the Planning Department and the Planning Board and approved by the County Council, these Plans inform the Planning Department, community, and Planning Board in their review of proposed development projects, to ensure that development is consistent with the Plan goals, intents, and recommendations.

This Briefing Book summarizes the existing conditions in Downtown Bethesda from a variety of perspectives, and condenses the recommendations of the existing 1994 Sector Plan. It is intended to offer a concise and legible context to inform the discussions that will create the next Bethesda Downtown Plan.

Bethesda Downtown District Boundaries



- Bethesda CBD Plan Boundary
  - Bethesda Purple Line Station
  - Plan Boundary
  - Capital Crescent Trail
  - Purple Line
- Planned Purple Line Station
  - Metro Station
  - Proposed Metro Station

# Existing Conditions

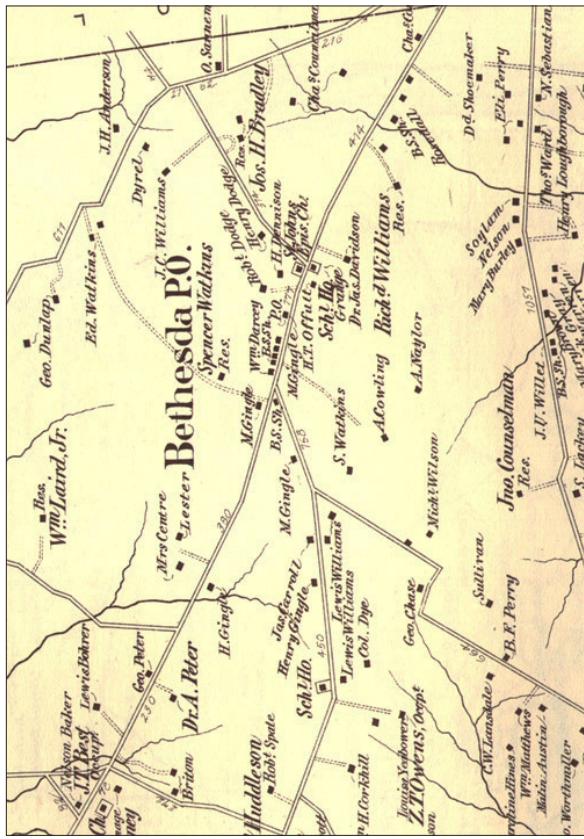
HISTORIC CONTEXT

The area now known as the Bethesda Central Business District, originally called Darcy's Store, was a small crossroads community surrounded by farms into the post-Civil War era. Most of the early buildings from this period were demolished as Bethesda grew following the extension of the Tennytown and Rockville Railroad Company streetcar line along Wisconsin Avenue to Alta Vista in 1890.

In the 1890s, the Chevy Chase Land Company began buying farmland for residential development, and by 1912 very little land in the area remained in agricultural production. The B&O Railroad's Georgetown Branch, opened in 1910, further stimulated Bethesda's commercial growth and led to the development of related industries, such as coal yards, lumber yards, a planing mill, and an ice plant, in Bethesda.

Bethesda's first real estate boom, from 1922 to 1926, was prompted in part by the increased popularity of automobiles as a means of commuting, and led to the subdivision of more former farmland and escalating land values. By the late 1920s, Bethesda had three filling stations, a drug store, a hardware store, a variety store, a grocery store, two feed stores, two barber shops, and three small lunchrooms, and at the close of the 1930s, twenty-three auto-related businesses were located in Bethesda. About a dozen early twentieth century buildings remain to reflect Bethesda's transition in the 1920s and 1930s from a rural crossroads to an automobile-oriented, suburban community.

The development of the National Institutes of Health complex in 1938, and the Bethesda Naval Hospital in 1940, spurred additional commercial activity in Bethesda during World War II. Following the war, a second wave of home building took place. As Bethesda's residential areas matured, the downtown continued to grow and prosper, with a significant number of commercial buildings being constructed using various mid-century modern architectural expressions.



G.M. Hopkins. *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including the County of Montgomery Maryland*, Philadelphia, 1879. Courtesy of the Montgomery County Historical Society

Sites Previously Designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation:

**Bethesda Farm Women's Market (#35/14-1), designated 1979/ 1986 / 7155 Wisconsin Avenue**

A group of Montgomery County women formed the Farm Women's Cooperative as a self-help response to the severe economic conditions of the Great Depression. In 1932, they held the first market in an empty storefront, selling fresh produce and home-made products directly to suburban families. The one-story, 4,750 square-foot frame building at 7155 Wisconsin Avenue was built in 1934 to house the market and has been in continuous use as a farm market ever since. It remains an important link to the County's agricultural heritage. The environmental setting is the entire of 29,967 square foot parcel.



*Bethesda Farm Women's Market, 7155 Wisconsin Avenue*

**Madonna of the Trails Sculpture (#35/14-2), designated 1981/1986 located next to the Bethesda Post Office / 7400 Wisconsin Avenue**

This sculpture, Madonna of the Trails, depicts a pioneer woman and her children. It was erected on Wisconsin Avenue in 1929 by the Daughters of the American Revolution as one of twelve such sculptures across the country marking the route taken by settlers to the West. It commemorates this country's pioneer women and their role in the country's westward expansion. The sculpture was moved during the construction of the Bethesda Metro Center from its place on the south corner of the old Bethesda Post Office to its current location north of the old Post Office. The environmental setting consists of the footprint of the sculpture only.



*Madonna of the Trails located at 7400 Wisconsin Avenue*

## Bethesda Theatre Complex (#35/14-4), designated 1979/1986 / 7715-7723 Wisconsin Avenue



This Art Deco movie theater was designed in 1938 by John Eberson, a nationally noted theater architect. Its distinctive tower, marquee, and banded brick façade are characteristic of this style of architecture. The environmental setting is the entire 17,497 square foot parcel.

*Bethesda Theatre complex, after adaptive re-use*



*Bethesda Theatre complex, before adaptive re-use*

## Bethesda Post Office (#35/14-5), designated 1986 / 7400 Wisconsin Avenue



*Bethesda Post Office at 7400 Wisconsin Avenue*

Built in 1938 of native Stoneyhurst stone, this post office was constructed as a Works Progress Administration project. The builders were the Sofarelli Brothers of Jamaica, New York. The architectural style of the structure is Neo-Georgian, featuring a hipped roof, cupola, and arched windows. The environmental setting is the entire 13,211 square foot parcel. This building is no longer used as a post office.

## Wilson's Store and Post Office (Bethesda Community Paint and Hardware Store) (#35/14-7), designated 1986 / 7250 Wisconsin Avenue



Wilson's Store and Post Office at 7250 Wisconsin Avenue

This site is the only remaining commercial structure from Bethesda's early crossroads history. The two-story frame store was built in 1890, on the site of the original Rockville Pike toll booth, and is a good example of turn-of-the-century rural village commercial architecture. Originally the community's general store and post office, this property became a popular hardware store for several generations of Bethesda families in the 20th century. The store building was relocated 50 feet to the south, and restored for retail use in 1988 as part of the Apex Building's development. The environmental setting is limited to the footprint of the building.

## Brooks Photographers Building (#35/14-6), designated 1994 / 7349 Wisconsin Avenue



This three-story brick building is a narrow, Colonial Revival commercial structure built in the late 1920s by Dr. Benjamin Perry. Dr. Perry had his office on the first floor and a residence above. The building was later occupied by Bethesda's first dentist, Dr. Clendenin. Brooks Photographers, a longtime Bethesda business, was located in the building for decades. The environmental setting is the entire 10,338 square foot parcel.

Brooks Photographers Building at 7349 Wisconsin Avenue

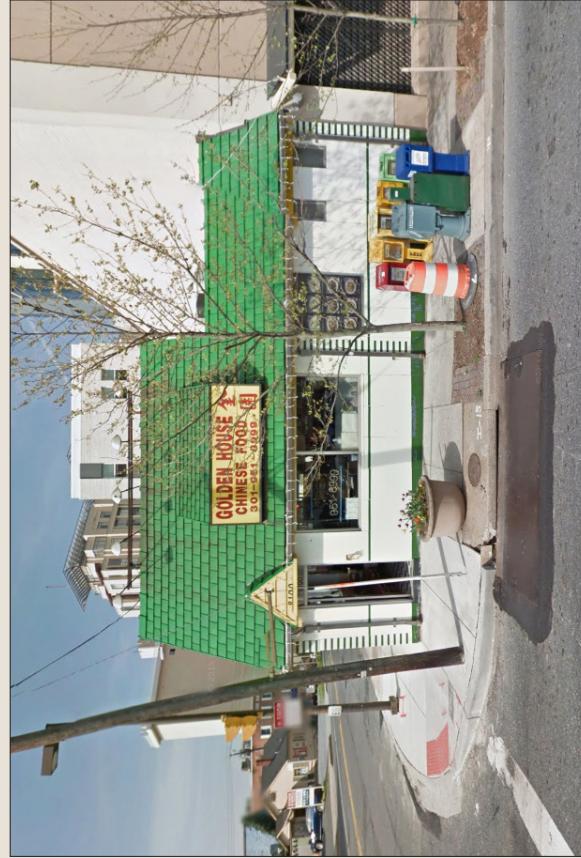


Mrs. Withers' House, 7740 Old Georgetown Road

Leslie W. Beall, one of the first grocers in the Bethesda area, built this two-and-a-half story frame, American Four Square house with Colonial Revival features and a tile roof in 1925. Mrs. Withers is Leslie Beall's daughter. The environmental setting is limited to the footprint of the structure.

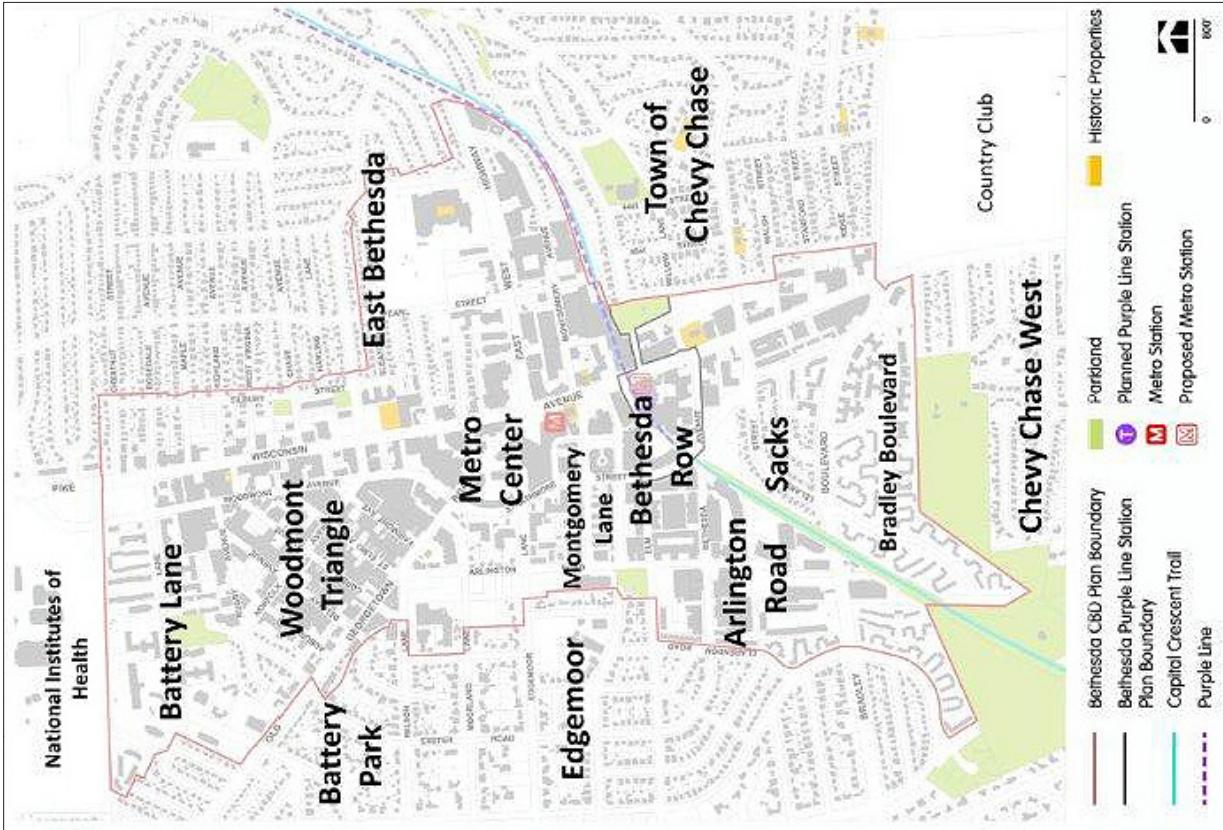
### Little Tavern (#35/14-3), designated 1994 / 8100 Wisconsin Avenue

This early chain of hamburger restaurants is of cultural interest as a pioneer of the now ubiquitous fast food industry. The Bethesda eatery, believed to have been constructed in 1939 in the "Old English Cottage" style adopted by the chain. The structure integrates the latest materials and technology of the "modern" age—vitrolite, tile, Formica, aluminum alloys, and neon signage. At the time of its designation, it was one of four Little Tavern restaurants existing in the County, two are in Silver Spring and the fourth is in Wheaton. Its green roof is its identifying symbol, much as the orange roof of Howard Johnson's roadside restaurants of the same period attracted customers. Today the setting is the entirety of its parcel. Today the building houses a Chinese takeout restaurant.



Little Tavern, home of the "Bag of Burgers", 8100 Wisconsin Avenue

## Neighborhoods



## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Bethesda CBD has many social and cultural resources that serve the community. They range from civic organizations, such as Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce and the Bethesda Urban Partnership, the Woodmont Triangle Action Group, to regular community events and continuing education opportunities.

Several faith-based organizations have a physical presence in Downtown Bethesda. They include Beth-El Congregation of Montgomery County; Bethesda Presbyterian Church; Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church and St John's Episcopal - Norwood and its Opportunity Shop.

Citizens of Bethesda have access to various groups, such as garden, fitness and book clubs:

- Fitness programs at the Regional Services Center
- Continuing education classes at the high school
- Writing classes at the Writer's Center
- Dance classes at Du-Shor or Dansez Dansez
- Knitting classes at Knit and Stitch
- Martial arts classes
- A school of culinary arts

Downtown Bethesda is a designated Arts and Entertainment District which is directed by the Arts and Entertainment District Board. The District supports the following visual and performing arts:

- |                 |                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Visual Arts     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gallery B</li><li>• Studio B</li></ul>                                                   |
| Performing Arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waverly Gallery</li><li>• Marin-Price Galleries</li><li>• Upstairs Art Studios</li></ul> |

## Art Education

- Artworks
- Studio Neptune
- Dance Studios**
  - C-Unit Studio
  - Dance Bethesda
  - Dansez! Dansez!
- Live Theater**
  - Bethesda Blue and Jazz Supper Club
  - Round House Theater
  - Imagination Stage
- Film & Digital**
  - Regal Cinemas
  - Landmark's Bethesda Row Cinema
  - Cine (organization supporting Film Digital TV Media)

## Music Studios/Shops

- Bach to Rock
- Musikids
- Golden School of Music
- Potter's Violin Shop

In addition, Bethesda has a collection of outdoor public art that includes over 20 installations and an additional 12 poetry benches by a local artist.

Bethesda downtown has several 'third places', which refer to locations other than work or home, where people can relax and socialize. Outdoor locations within Bethesda serving as popular gathering places are the plaza in front of the Barnes and Noble and Veterans Park. When a street is closed for a special event such as Norfolk Avenue for the Taste of Bethesda, it becomes a focus of community activity. Bethesda has one of the first public Wi-Fi Hotspots in Montgomery County.

Bethesda offers nearly 200 restaurants with a wide range of cuisine including:

- Afghan
  - Vietnamese
  - Thai
  - Cajun and Creole
- Italian
  - Chinese
  - Lebanese
  - Irish
- Mexican
  - Persian
  - Greek

Bethesda is home to numerous fashion boutiques, home design shops, salons and community services. There are nearly 700 retailers and businesses downtown.

Bethesda is known for their regular community events which primarily focus on the arts and are hosted by the Bethesda Urban Partnership:

- Taste of Bethesda
- Imagination Bethesda
- The Bethesda Literary Festival
- Bethesda Outdoor Movies: Stars on the Avenue
- Winter Wonderland
- Weekly Summer Concert Series Veterans Plaza
- Bethesda Film Fest
- Studio B Exhibits
- The Bethesda Fine Arts Festival
- Dance Bethesda
- Trawick Prize Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards
- Play In A Day
- Bethesda Painting Awards
- Parks Half Marathon
- Farmer's Market
- Woman's Farmer's Market

There are several schools associated with Downtown Bethesda. They include:

- Bethesda Chevy Chase High School
- The Bethesda Elementary School
- Sidwell Friends Lower School
- Oneness Family School International Peace Academy.

## TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS



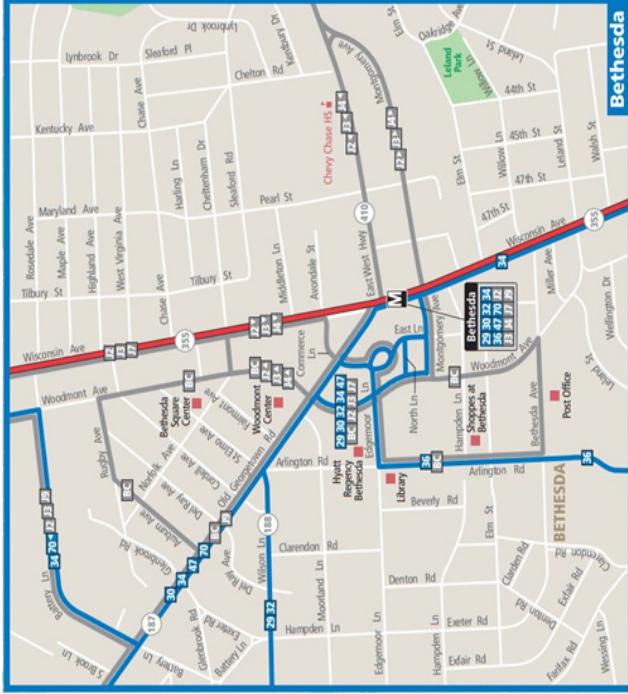
### Introduction

The Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan is oriented around a multimodal transportation network and is located in close proximity to the Capital Beltway (I-495). It is oriented around three major highways: Old Georgetown Road (MD 187), Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355), and East-West Highway (MD 410). Radiating from these major roadways is a local street grid that is designed to promote safe and efficient travel throughout the community.

Bethesda is one of the most pedestrian-oriented communities in Montgomery County. As a result of its scale and access to transit, the Downtown area currently exceeds the 1994 Sector Plan goal for Non-Automobile Drive Mode Share (NADMS) with 39.6% of all peak-hour trips made by modes other than single occupancy vehicles. Fewer single occupancy vehicle trips during the morning and evening peak travel periods mean better overall mobility and less traffic congestion in the Downtown area.

## Public Transportation

- The WMATA Metrorail Red Line currently serves the community via the Bethesda Station
- The Purple Line, a proposed 16-mile long Light Rail service, is anticipated to begin operations in the year 2020 and will connect Bethesda with New Carrollton
- WMATA Metrobus and Montgomery County Ride On provide regional and local bus service to the community. These two agencies operate 13 bus lines in the Bethesda Downtown area with an average daily bus ridership of 16,000
- The Bethesda Circulator provides a free shuttle service within the Downtown. Between July 2012 and June 2013, the Bethesda Circulator carried 307,822 passengers, which was an increase of 6% over FY 2012.



## Transit Routes by Ridership

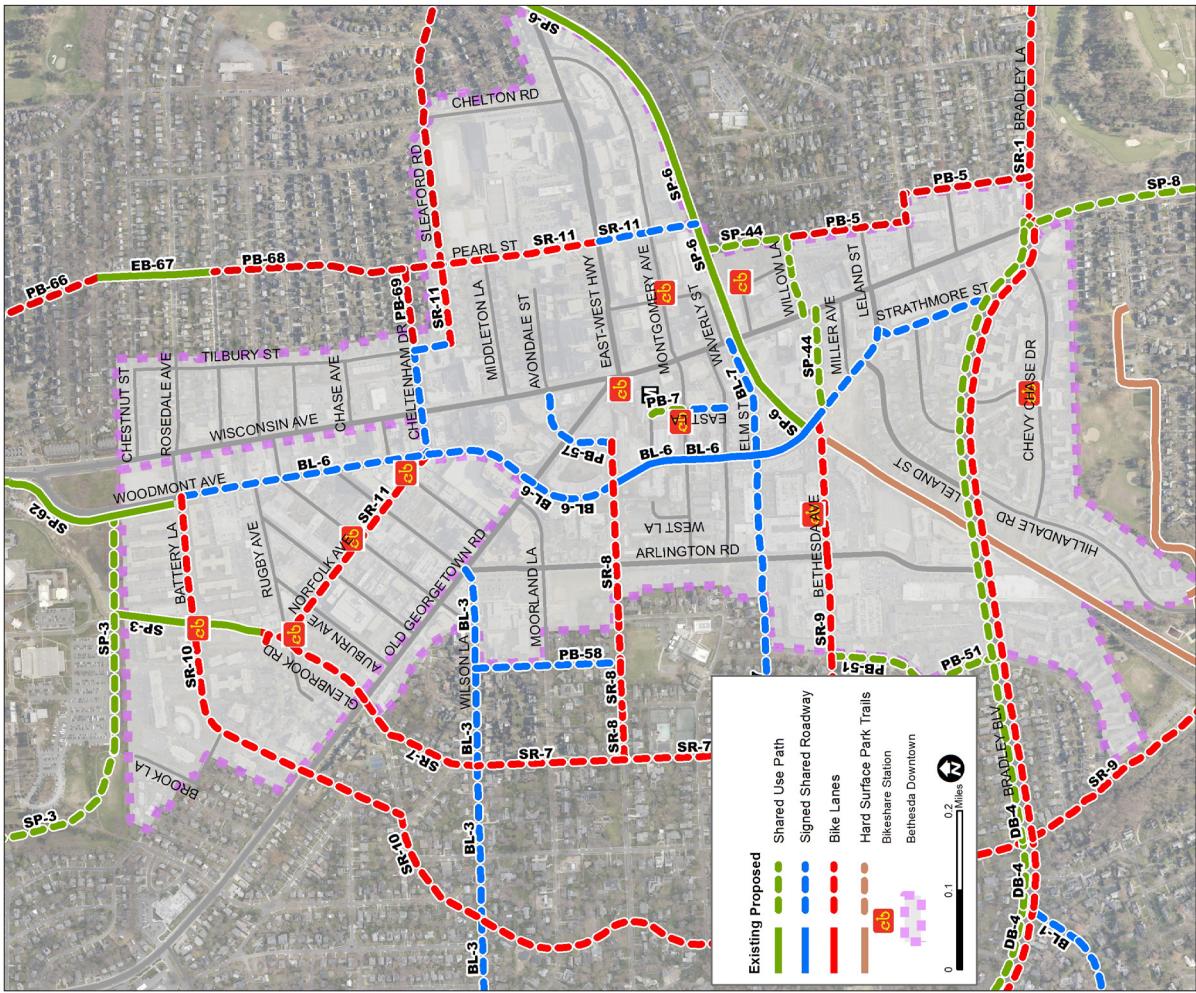
Rank	Route	Average Weekday Ridership	Name	Destination
1	Bethesda Metrorail	10,608	Metrorail Redline	Shady Grove/Glenmont via Downtown DC
2	WMATA - J2	4,566	Bethesda/Silver Spring Line	Montgomery Mall/Silver Spring Metrorail Station
3	RideOn - 34	2,907	34	Aspen Hill/ Friendship Heights
4	RideOn - 47	1,558	47	Rockville Metrorail Station/ Bethesda Metrorail Station
5	WMATA - J3	1,402	Bethesda/Silver Spring Line	Montgomery Mall/Silver Spring Metrorail Station
6	WMATA - J4	1,259	Bethesda/Silver Spring Line	Bethesda Metrorail Station/ College Park Metrorail Station
7	Bethesda Circulator	985	BC	Local Circulation
8	WMATA - J1	957	Bethesda/Silver Spring Line	Montgomery Mall/Silver Spring Metrorail Station
9	RideOn - 70	733	70	Germantown/Bethesda Metrorail Station
10	RideOn - 30	730	30	NIH Medical Center/Bethesda Metrorail Station
11	RideOn - 29	680	29	Friendship Heights Metrorail/ Bethesda Metrorail
12	RideOn - 36	447	36	Bethesda Metrorail Station/Bradley Blvd - River Road
13	WMATA - J9	369	I-270 Express	Lakeforest Transit Center/ Bethesda Metrorail Station
14	RideOn - 32	250	32	Bethesda Metrorail Station/ Carderock Naval Facility
15	WMATA - J7	127	I-270 Express	Lakeforest Transit Center/ Bethesda Metrorail Station

## Bethesda Downtown Plan Intersection Level of Service



This map illustrates the Vehicle-to-Capacity (V/C) Ratio for Downtown Intersections studied within the last three years (2011-2013). The V/C Ratio provides a measure of traffic congestion that ranges from "No Congestion" (0.00) to "Saturation" (1.00). No Downtown intersections are overburdened by traffic and all are within the policy area congestion standard

Bethesda Downtown Plan Bicycle Facilities



Bikeway Network

Bethesda offers some of the best bicycle facilities in the County through the provision of regional shared use paths and on-road bike lanes. As a result of these bicycle facilities, the League of American Bicyclists recognized Bethesda as a "Bicycle Friendly Community" in 2012. Bicycle and pedestrian travel is integral to circulation within the Downtown area and is anticipated to play a principal role in promoting intermodal transportation over the lifespan of the Downtown Sector Plan.

In fall 2013, the Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) program expanded from the District of Columbia into Bethesda, Silver Spring, Takoma Park, and Rockville. These stations are anticipated to facilitate improved transportation within the Sector Plan area and better integrate the Bethesda Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods. A map of proposed and existing bike share stations is provided in the Bethesda Downtown Plan Bicycle Facilities Map.

### Bethesda Traffic Volume 2011-2013

	Intersection	Congestion Standard	AM Congestion	PM Congestion
1	MD 355/ Woodmont Ave (north)	1600	1362	955
2	MD 355/ Battery/Rosedale	1800	828	790
3	MD 355/ Cordell	1800	693	579
4	MD 355/ MD 410/ MD 187	1800	1131	1257
5	MD 355/ Montgomery Ln	1800	876	1039
6	MD 355/ Leland St	1800	807	1224
7	MD 355/ Bradley Blvd	1800	1333	1425
8	MD 410/ Waverly	1800	1172	1525
9	MD 187/ Battery Ln	1600	1180	1311
10	MD 187/ Wilson/ Arlington	1800	931	1406
11	MD 187/ Commerce	1800	475	700
12	Woodmont Ave/ St Elmo Ave	1800	546	573
13	Woodmont Ave/ Battery Ln	1800	879	695
14	Bradley Blvd/ Hill/Leland	1800	829	937
15	Woodmont Ave/ Bethesda Ave	1800	566	692
16	Montgomery Ln/ Pearl St	1800	706	951
17	Woodmont Ave/ Montgomery Ln	1800	399	398
18	MD 355/ Cheltenham	1800	842	803
19	MD 187/ Woodmont Ave	1800	974	1088
20	MD 410/ Montgomery Ave	1800	1034	836
21	MD 187/ Auburn St	1800	786	1015
22	Woodmont Ave/ Edgemoor Ln	1800	877	654
23	Woodmont Ave/ Cordell Ave	1800	589	483

### Pedestrian Facilities

- Walkscore.com recognizes the Bethesda Downtown area as a "Walker's Paradise"
- The intersection with the highest daily, AM, and PM peak pedestrian volumes is Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355)/ Old Georgetown Road (MD 187)/ East-West Highway (MD 410). The morning, evening, and off-peak periods are defined as 6:30 a.m.–9:30 a.m., 4:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m., and 9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m., respectively.

## Bethesda Downtown Plan 2011-2013 Pedestrian Volumes

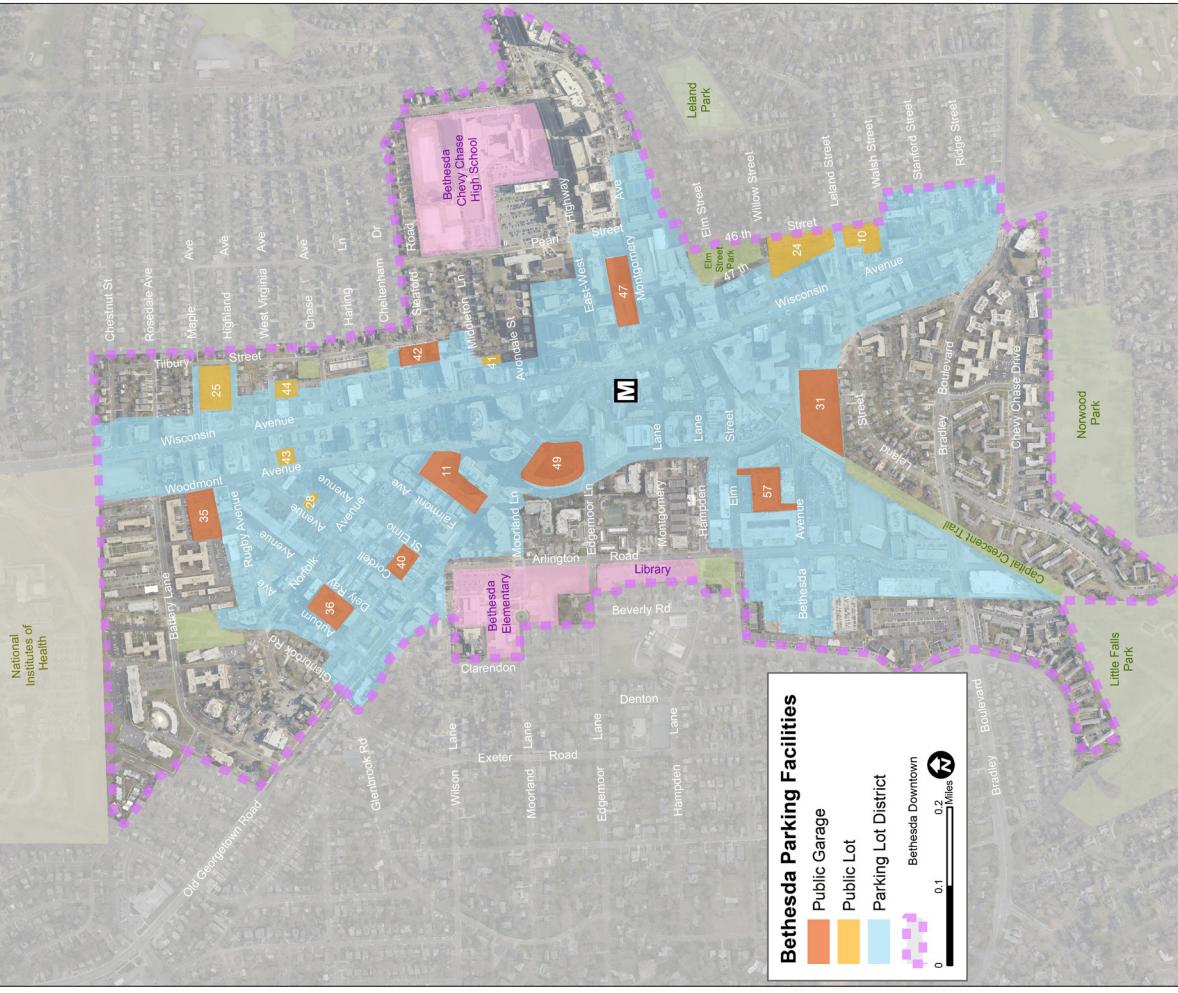


### Transportation and Access

Bethesda is a pedestrian-oriented community that offers a wide variety of employment, commercial, and recreational amenities within walking distance of transit facilities and residences. This pedestrian accessibility is demonstrated in the community's "walkscore," a proprietary Internet application ([www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)) that rates the degree to which neighborhoods are accessible to and proximity to neighborhood services. While primarily intended for individuals making real estate decisions and not a scientific measure of accessibility, the walkscore application provides a means to compare Bethesda with other communities around the country.

Based on Walkscore's criteria, the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan area is rated a "Walkers Paradise" with a score of 95/100. For comparison, the greater Bethesda/ Chevy Chase Policy Area is rated a "Car Dependent City," with a score of 47/100, while the City of Rockville is rated "Somewhat Walkable" with a score of 51/100. New York City is rated "Very Walkable" with a score of 88/100.

## Bethesda Downtown Plan Parking Facilities



## Parking

Downtown Bethesda, part of the County Parking Lot District, has eight public parking garages and eight public parking lots with a total public parking capacity of 6,180 vehicles. With the development of Parking Lot 31 the Downtown area will have an additional public garage with 940 parking spaces.

### FY13 Bethesda PLD Garage Usage Summary

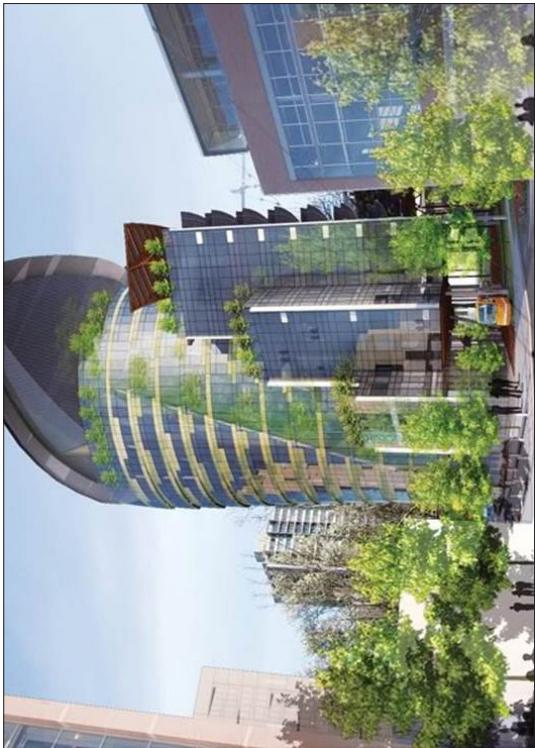
Garage/Lot	Capacity	Percent Occupied
Garage 11	1095	48%
Garage 35	487	78%
Garage 31	940	Under Construction
Garage 36	729	55%
Garage 40	327	89%
Garage 42	337	47%
Garage 47	814	72%
Garage 49	949	75%
Garage 57	890	84%
Lot 10	94	78%
Lot 24	210	77%
Lot 25	124	50%
Lot 28	18	98%
Lot 41	18	57%
Lot 43	37	79%
Lot 44	51	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6180</b>	<b>68%</b>

## ENVIRONMENT

The following pages demonstrate the existing conditions of the receiving watersheds, impervious cover, tree canopy cover, and stormwater management.

The evaluation should be used as a baseline in the preparation of recommendations to provide greater ecological services and address environmental impacts of development.

Below are representative images of green technology.



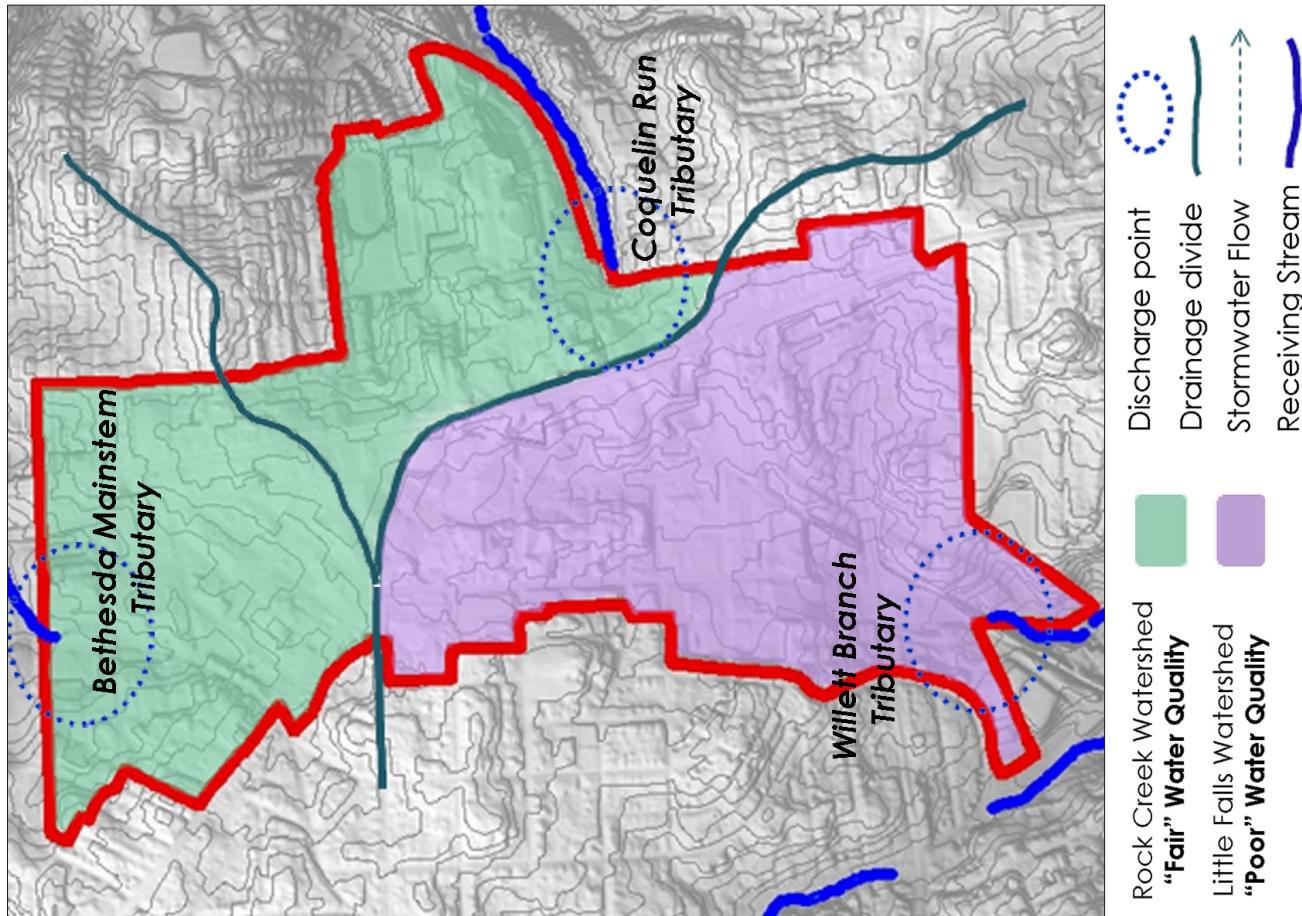
### Watersheds and Water Quality

Montgomery County is part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, a national treasure constituting the largest estuary in the United States and one of the largest and most biologically productive estuaries in the world. A watershed is the extent of land where precipitation converges to a single point. A subwatershed refers to a smaller drainage area within the larger watershed.

In Bethesda, there are two watersheds that feed into the Chesapeake Bay: Rock Creek and Little Falls and subwatersheds: Bethesda Mainstem, Coquelin Run, and Willett Branch.

The Department of Environmental Protection uses a Stream Conditions Index to measure the biological community (fish and insects) of streams. The results of the monitoring are used to determine if the stream is poor, fair, good, or excellent condition.

- In Bethesda, Little Falls watershed was rated as "poor" with low fish and insect counts.
- The Rock Creek Watershed was rated "fair" overall.



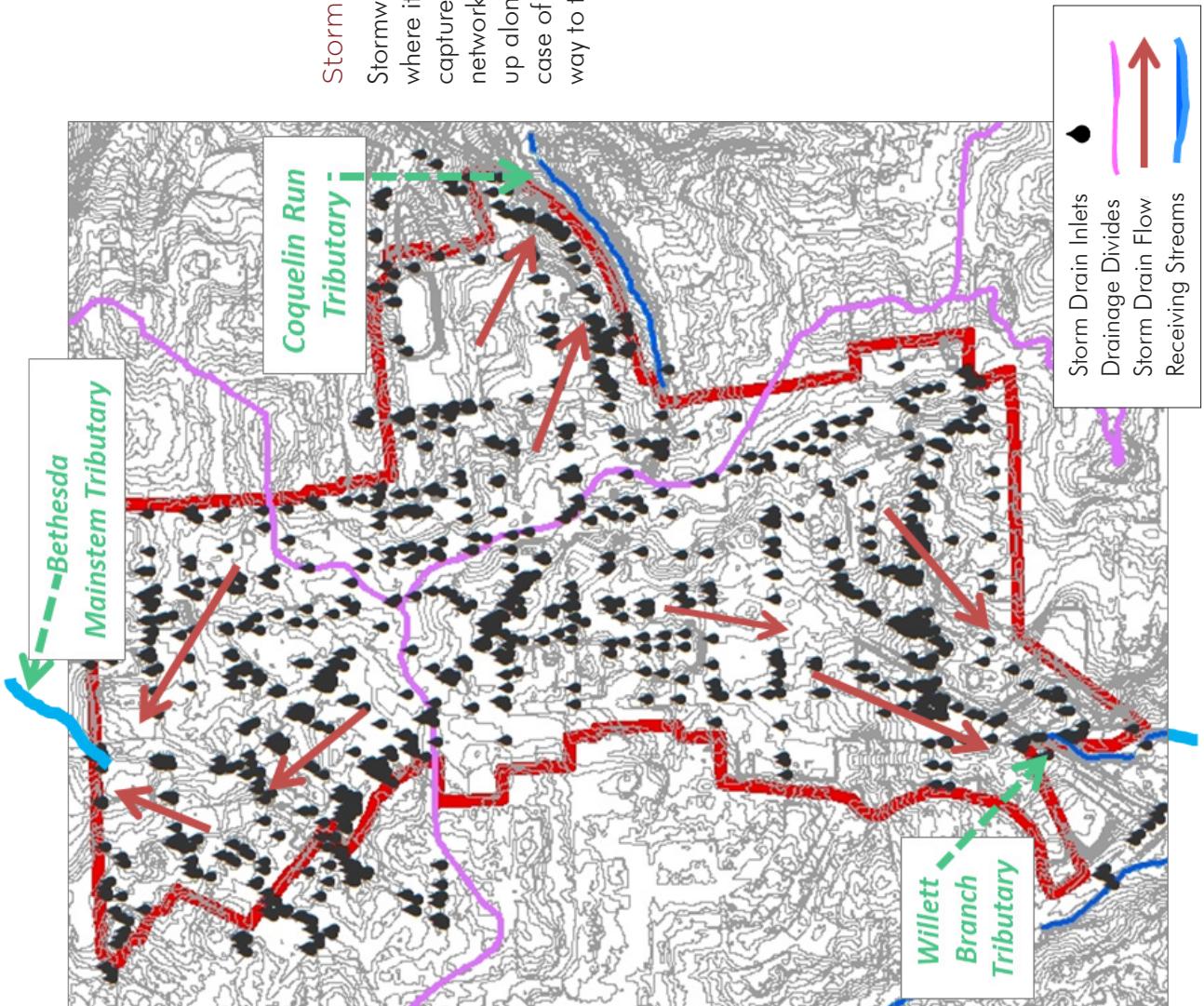
### Impervious Cover

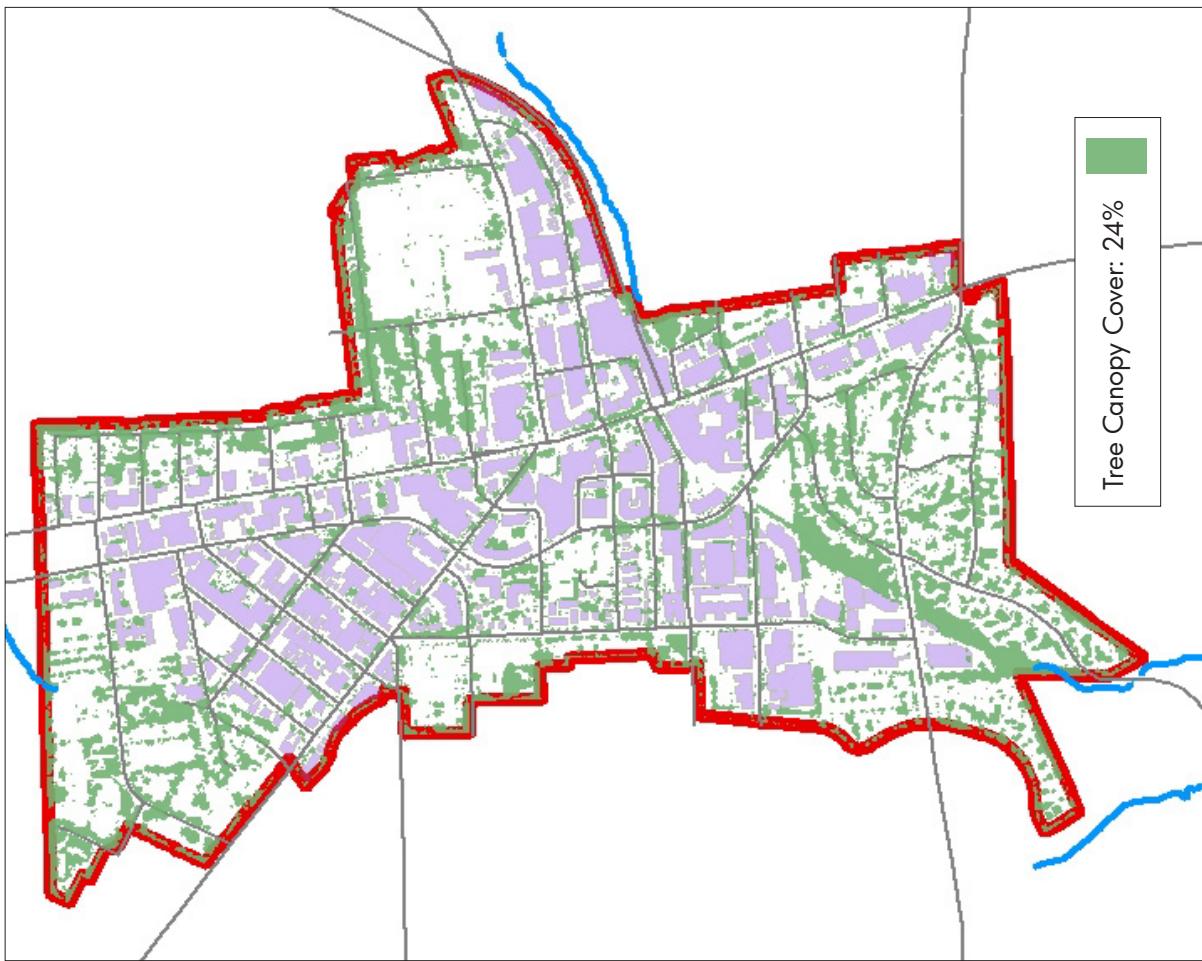
Impervious cover refers to anything that prevents water from soaking into the ground. Examples include roofs, driveways, roads, streets, and parking lots. During storm events water flows swiftly across impervious surfaces taking with it pollutants such as sediments, oils, de-icing salts, sand, pet waste, lawn fertilizers, and other pollutants.

High percentages of impervious cover are linked with lower stream water quality. When surfaces are porous they can absorb water where it is filtered through ground. This filtration allow for pollution removal, aquifer replenishment, reduced flooding, and better stream quality.

Within the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, the total impervious cover is nearly 67 percent overall. Of that, 38 percent is pavements associated with roads and parking lots. The higher the percentage of imperviousness of an area, the more stormwater management facilities are needed to treat the runoff. All new construction requires its own stormwater facility.







### Tree Canopy

Tree canopy cover includes leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above.

The tree canopy cover in Bethesda Downtown covers approximately 24 percent of the Plan area. Yet in the commercial properties, tree cover represents less than 3.6 percent. Increasing tree canopy will provide multiple benefits.

#### Environmental benefits:

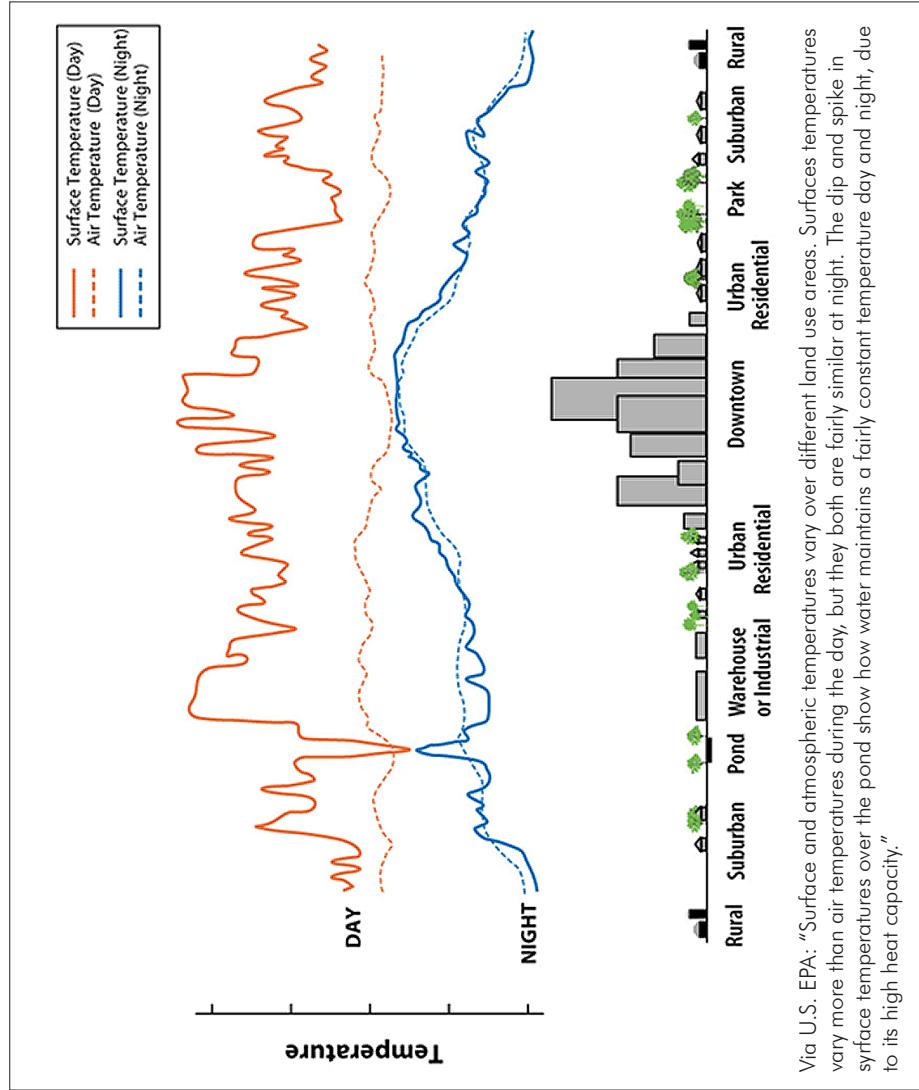
- Improved air quality
  - Carbon sequestration
  - Wildlife nesting and foraging areas
  - Reduction of urban heat island effect
- #### Human benefits:
- Decrease stress
  - Improve quality of life
  - Buffer pedestrians from vehicle traffic
  - Increase property value
  - Shade buildings to reduce energy demands

## Urban Heat Island Effect

In urban areas, the combination of lower tree cover and dark, heat absorbing pavements and roof coverings collect solar heat. When the heat is released, it raises air temperatures of the surrounding area producing a 'heat island'. Urban heat islands can be as much as 22 degrees Fahrenheit higher than their surrounding greener areas.

Increased temperatures result in greater amounts of energy needed to cool buildings:

- In Maryland, 55 percent of this energy is supplied by coal, a fossil fuel emitting sulfur dioxide ( $\text{SO}_2$ ), nitrogen oxide ( $\text{NO}_x$ ), particulate matter ( $\text{PM}$ ), carbon monoxide ( $\text{CO}$ ), and mercury ( $\text{Hg}$ ).
- These pollutants are harmful to human health, contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog), fine particulate matter, acid rain, and climate change.



Via U.S. EPA: "Surface and atmospheric temperatures vary over different land use areas. Surfaces temperatures vary more than air temperatures during the day, but they both are fairly similar at night. The dip and spike in surface temperatures over the pond show how water maintains a fairly constant temperature day and night, due to its high heat capacity."

## PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS

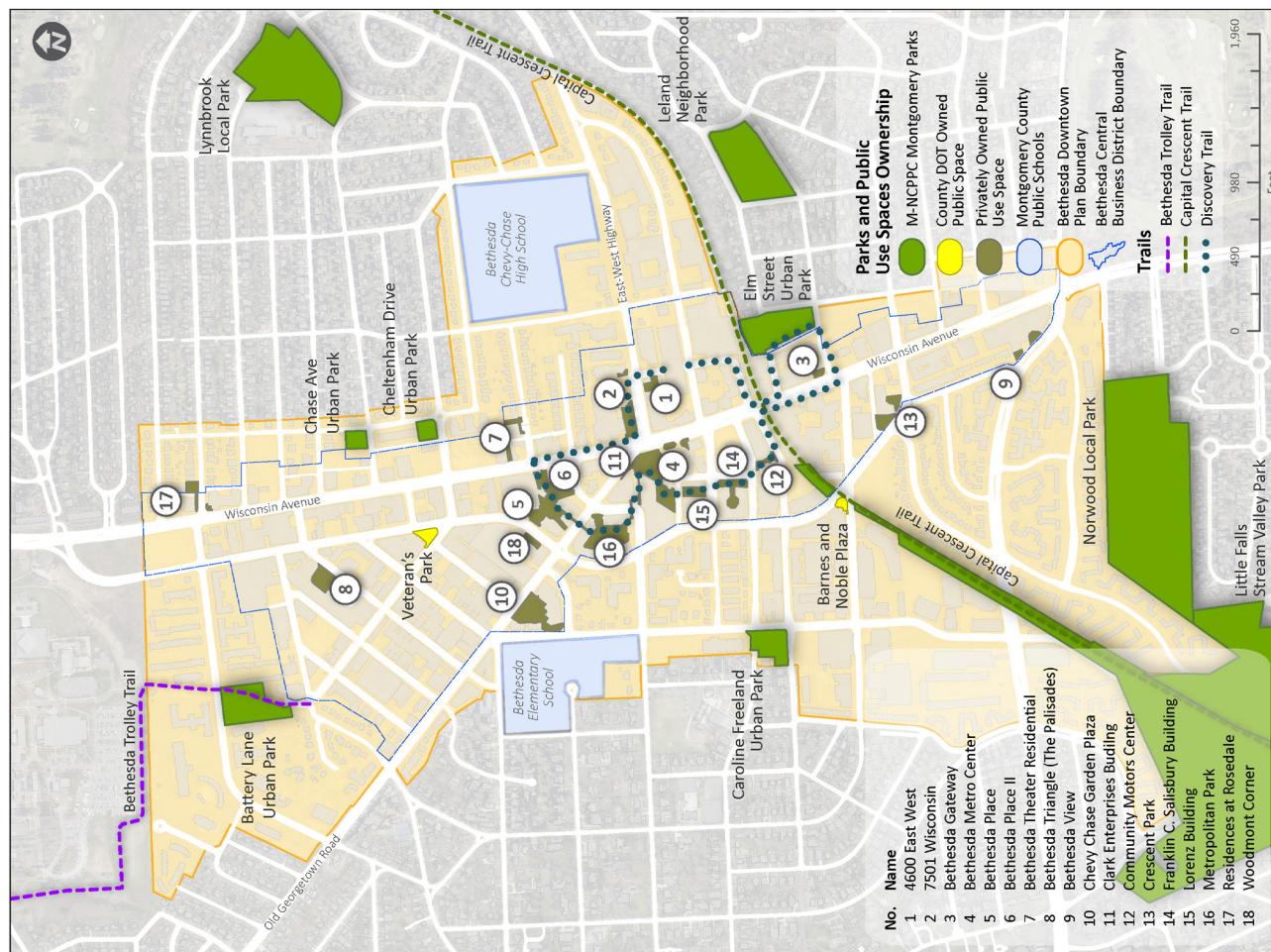
In urban areas such as Bethesda, parks and open spaces provide important health, social, aesthetic, economic, and environmental benefits:

- Visual relief from the built environment and a sense of place;
- Opportunities to connect with nature;
- Places to gather, play and socialize; and
- Wildlife habitat, improving air quality, and protecting water quality.

The Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission parks are located on the perimeter of the downtown core, acting as buffers between the urban area and residential neighborhoods, while the urbanized area itself possesses few traditional green park-like open spaces.

The optional method developments of the 1980's produced many privately provided public use spaces that serve as plazas. The 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan recognized that the public use spaces need to be improved to be safer, more visible, and welcoming to the public. However this recommendation still have not been fulfilled.

The Bethesda Downtown Plan will seek to address the failings of some of the open space areas from the 1994 Sector Plan.



## **Plan View of Elm Street Urban Park**



## **Existing Parks and Open Spaces**

### **Public Parks**

M-NCPCC Parks within a mile of downtown Bethesda include:

- Battery Lane Urban Park
- Bethesda Pool
- Capital Crescent Trail
- Caroline Freeland Urban Park
- Chase Urban Park
- Cheltenham Drive Urban Park
- Elm Street Urban Park
- Leland Neighborhood Park
- Little Falls Stream Valley Park
- Lynnbrook Local Park
- Norwood Local Park

### **Caroline Freeland Urban Park:**

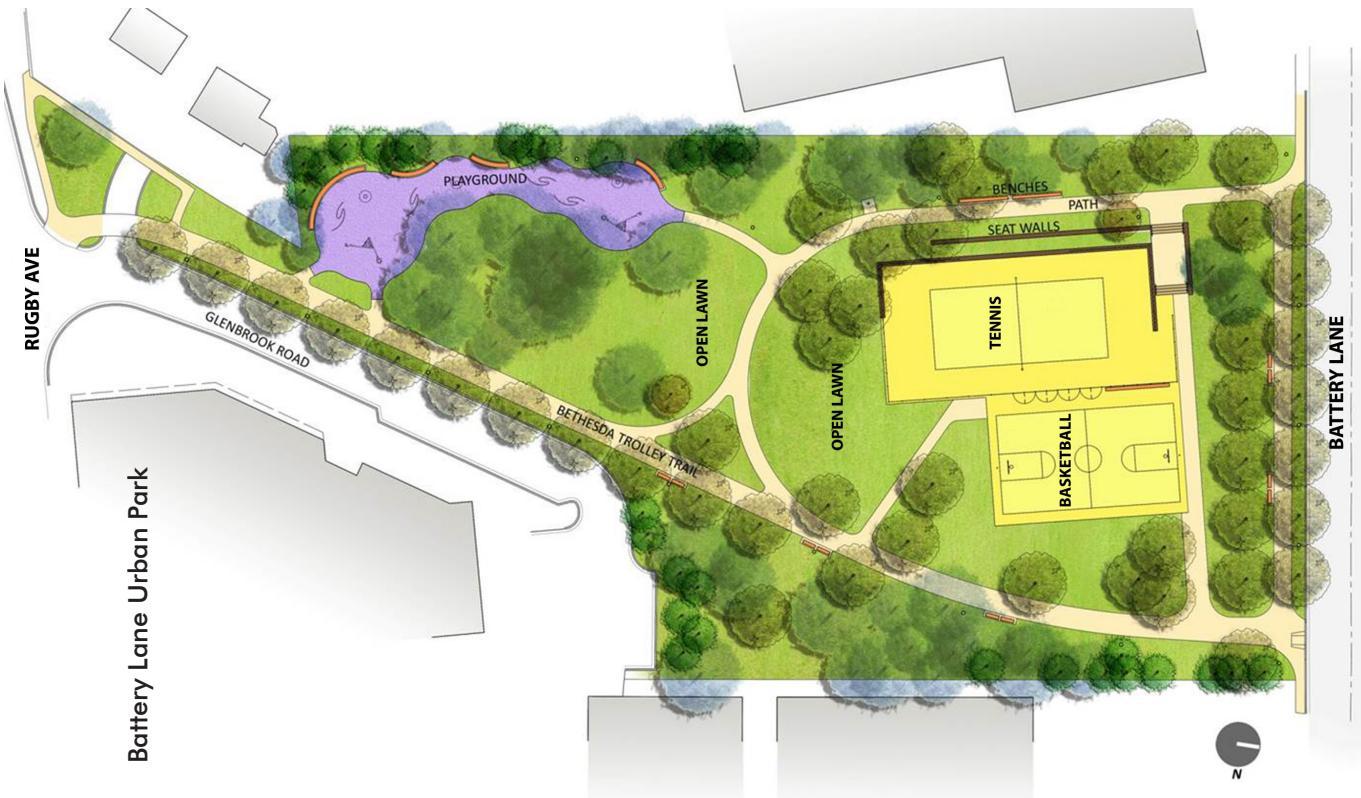
Currently in the planning stages for a renovation to be reviewed by the Planning Board in the winter of 2014 – 2015.

### **Elm Street Urban Park:**

- Located adjacent to the Purple Line's western terminus
- 2.1 acres in size
- Located within the Town of Chevy Chase along the eastern edge of the Bethesda Central Business District

Current and future projects that will affect this park:

- Developer-funded improvements to renovate the northern section of the park
- Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) Surface Route
- A new Bikeshare station
- A proposed new tunnel recommended in the Bethesda Purple Line Station Minor Master Plan Amendment; and the Purple Line project



### Battery Lane Urban Park

- Underwent a facility planning process in 2008 – 2009
- Approved renovation plan for the park includes: a wider pedestrian pathway
- a larger playground for 2 – 10 year olds, and retains the basketball and tennis courts
- Courts have been re-configured to allow for a lawn area
- These park improvements will be implemented through developer contributions



### Open Space Owned by Other Public Agencies

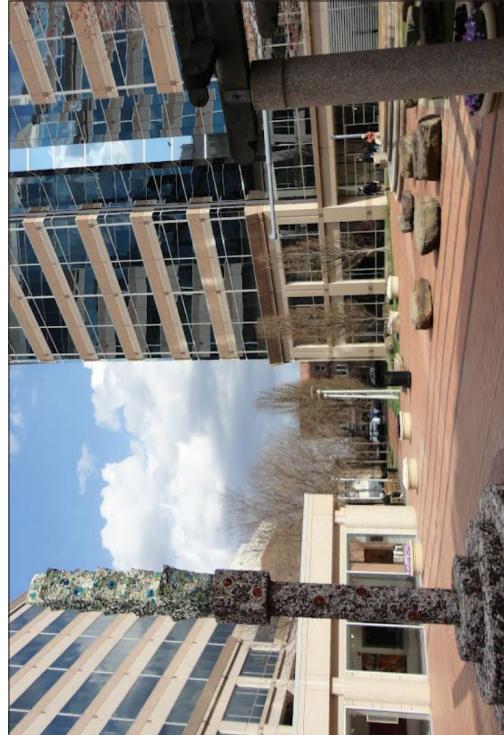
Two additional well-used open spaces that are not owned by M-NICPPC are Veterans Park, at the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Norfolk Avenue, and the plaza outside of Barnes and Noble, at the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue. Both of these spaces are Montgomery County Department of Transportation Rights-of-Way successfully converted to public plazas with seating, landscaping, and water features. In addition, the Montgomery County Recreation Department runs the Bethesda Pool, which is just south of downtown Bethesda.



*Example of successful public use space: MCDOT owned closed right-of-way at Veterans Park*

### Privately-Owned Public Use Space

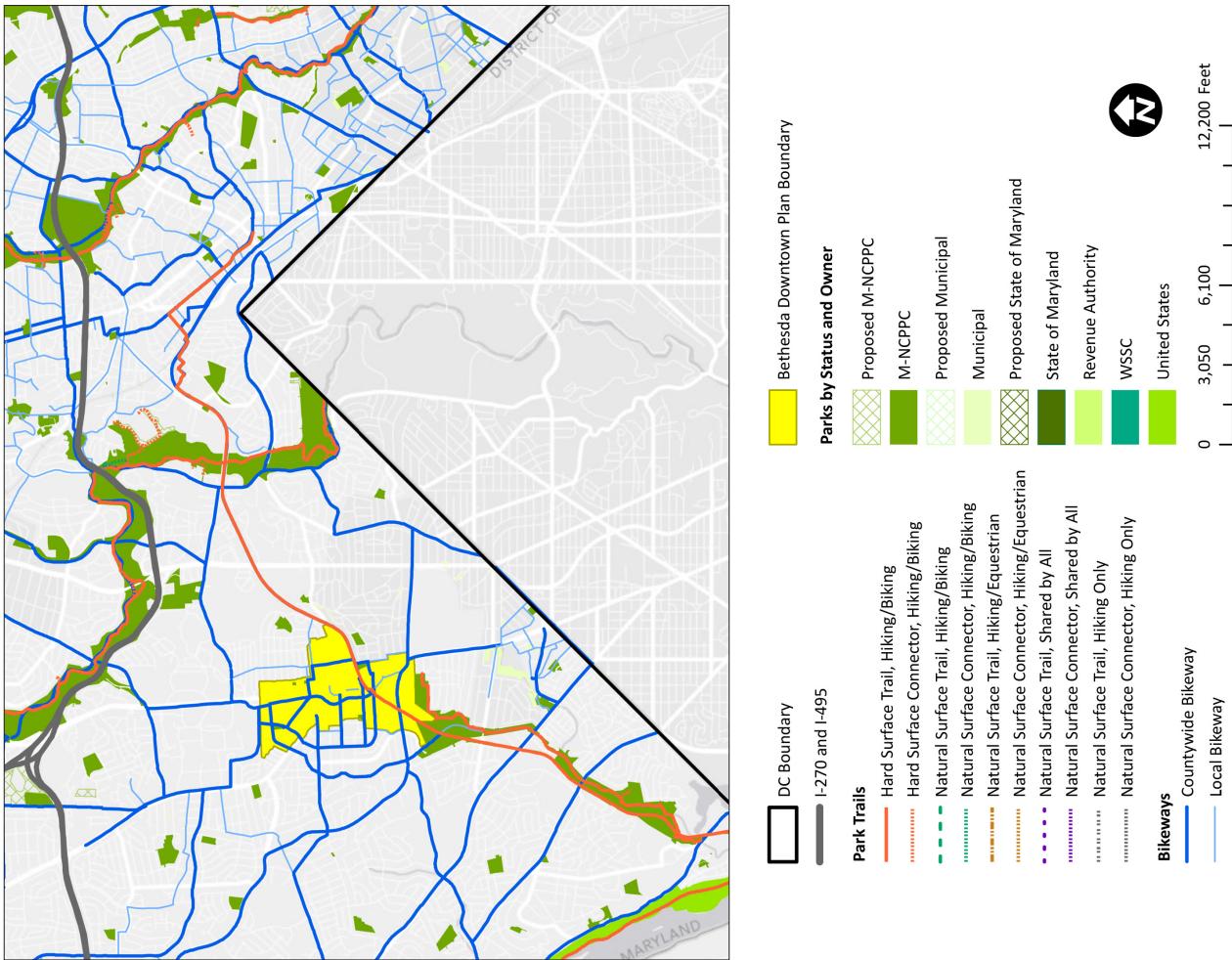
For the last two decades, commercial and residential development provided a number of privately-owned and publicly accessible open spaces, in the form of plazas, larger sections of sidewalk, and landscaped seating areas. Many of these spaces, which act as the primary network of public spaces in downtown Bethesda, are not perceived as public space because they are either elevated above the street level or are partially hidden from the street within an interior courtyard.



*Example of underutilized privately owned publicly-accessible open space at Bethesda Place (I&II).*

## Existing Trails

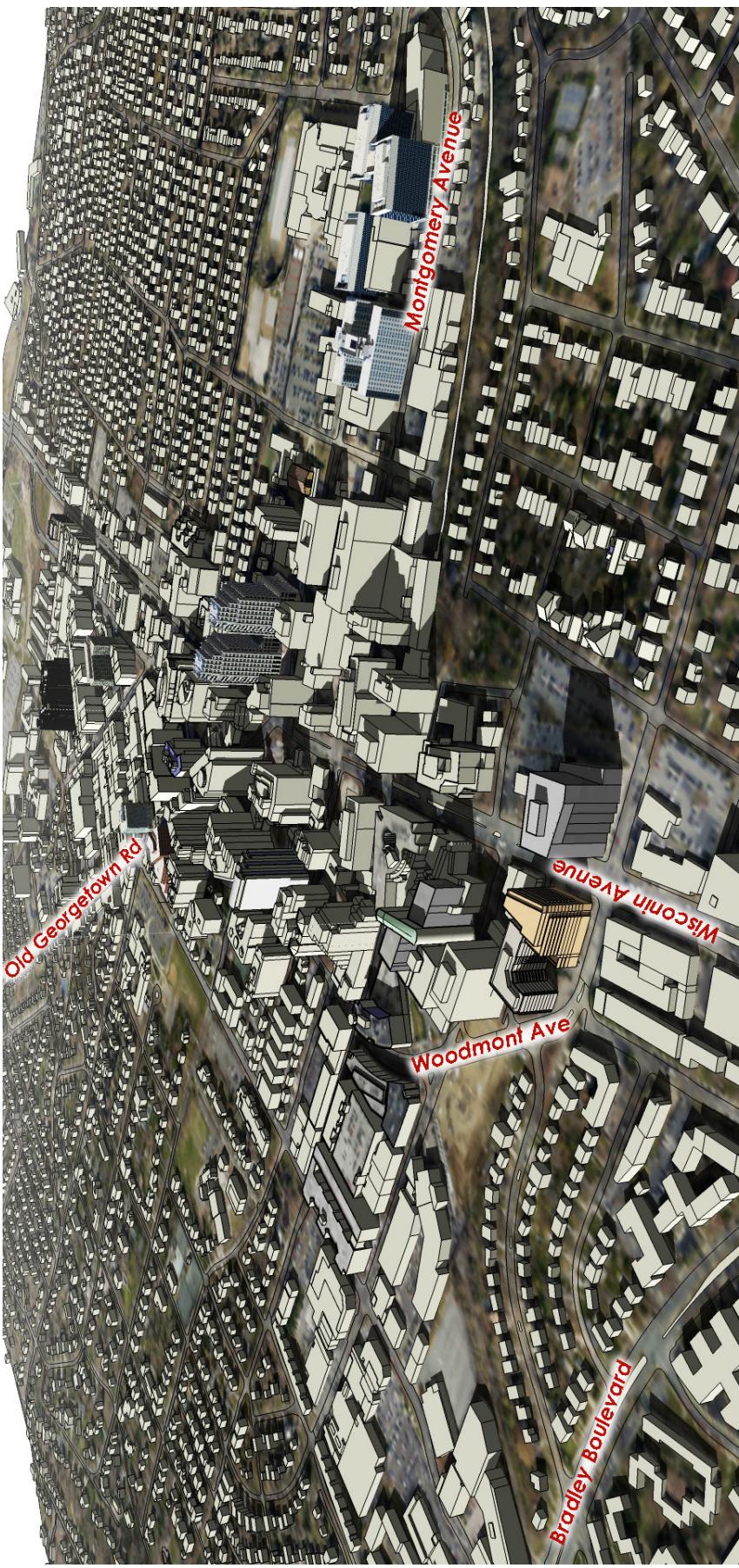
The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) is a significant, anchoring feature of downtown Bethesda's open space network. Originally a spur of the B & O Railroad between 1889 and 1985, the section between Georgetown and Bethesda was formally dedicated as a hiker-biker trail in 1996. The eleven mile hard-surface trail begins at the Georgetown waterfront in Washington, DC and runs directly into the heart of Bethesda at the intersection of Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues. At this intersection the trail continues north to join the Georgetown Branch Trail (SP-6 in the 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan) and then across to the Metropolitan Branch Trail (SP-12) in Silver Spring. The CCT/GBT also links to the Rock Creek Trail just east of Jones Bridge Road. All of these park trails and bikeways are used year-round by cyclists, runners, walkers, in-line skaters, and are vital corridors for commuters and recreational trail users alike.



## URBAN DESIGN IN BETHESDA

Urban Design is the discipline of analyzing and designing the connections and relationships between building, streets and open spaces and how they affect the quality of life of the people that live in them. The urban fabric of Bethesda Downtown is characterized by tall buildings centered around the Bethesda Metro Center, stepping down in height to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. There are several areas of the downtown that have retained low rise, two and three story buildings, especially in the Woodmont Triangle District, giving those area the feel of a small town shopping district.

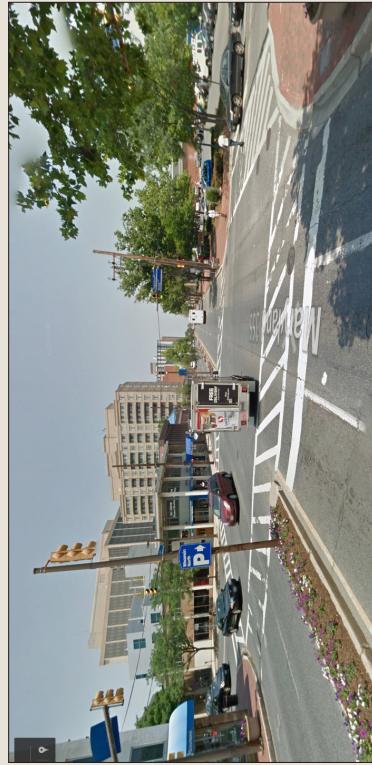
As described in the section on open space (pages 24-28) Bethesda features an array of open spaces, including fountains, lush landscaping and creative public art. However many of these spaces suffer from under-use.



## Streets

- Most of the streets in the Bethesda Downtown are pedestrian friendly, thanks in part to the implementation of the Bethesda Streetscape Standards, a County approved set of guidelines for the design of the sidewalks in the Bethesda CBD. There are three major roads that intersect in Downtown Bethesda and carry a significant amount of commuter traffic through Bethesda:
- Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355)
  - East-West Highway/Montgomery Avenue (MD 410)
  - Old Georgetown Road (MD 187)
  - Secondary roads serve as local roads carrying local traffic:
  - Woodmont Avenue
  - Norfolk Avenue
  - Arlington Road
  - Bethesda Avenue
  - Parts of Woodmont Avenue, Old Georgetown Road and East West Highway are one-way, giving them the character of commuter streets.

### Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355)



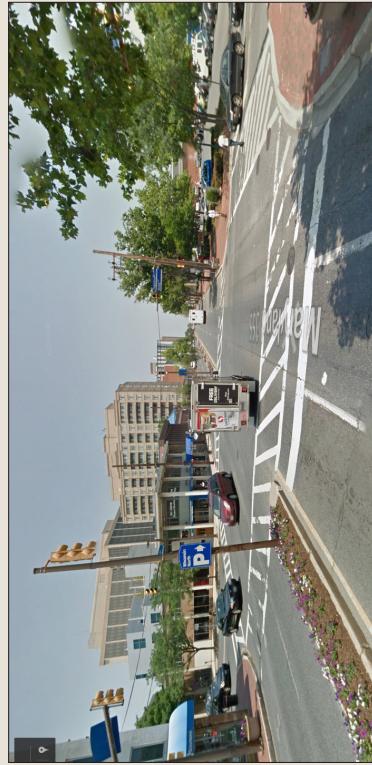
This major thoroughfare is characterized by:

- Narrow pedestrian refuge (median)
- Crosswalks consisting of painted stripes, no change of material to indicate to cars they are approaching a pedestrian priority area.
- Narrow medians in many places -not wide enough to accommodate street trees.



At Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road the pedestrian refuge is narrow and the crosswalks are marked by painted stripes.

### Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355)



*Wisconsin Avenue is a difficult road to cross because of six lanes of traffic and narrow medians (pedestrian refuges)*



At Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road the pedestrian refuge is narrow and the crosswalks are marked by painted stripes.

## Old Georgetown Road

Between Commerce Lane and Woodmont Avenue, has active interesting streetscapes:

- Bethesda Streetscape Standards, wide sidewalks and active, engaging storefronts
- The Bethesda Streetscape Standards have been fully implemented and results in a more pleasing pedestrian environment
- One way traffic at this segment of Old Georgetown Road results in higher speed traffic - this street is perceived as a vehicular highway and not a shopping street.

Between Woodmont Avenue and Arlington Road:

- The section has a Shell gas station and a public parking garage located directly on the street.
- The streetscape standards have been implemented along the this section of Old Georgetown Road. There is some vacant retail space on the ground floor with breaks in the street wall.



*Old Georgetown Road between Commerce Lane and Woodmont Avenue is activated by wide sidewalks and interesting store fronts*



*Old Georgetown Road between Woodmont Avenue and Arlington Road has implemented the Bethesda streetscape standards.*

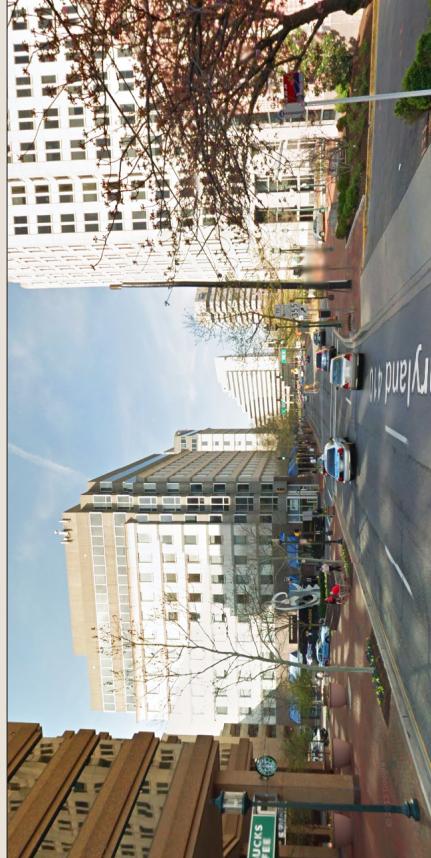


*A public parking lot fronts directly on the street*

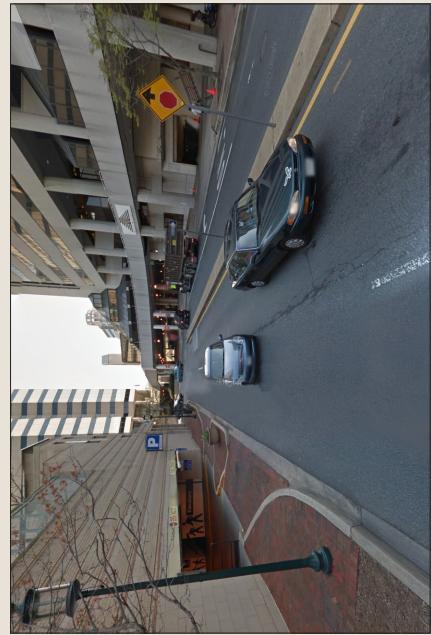
- Includes wide, active, sidewalks near intersection with Wisconsin Avenue
- Many street level store fronts provide opportunities for window shopping
- One way traffic at this segment of East-West Highway results in higher speed traffic that acts as a detriment to the pedestrian environment
- Narrow sidewalks at intersection of Pearl Street in front of Our Lady of Lourdes Church



East-West Highway at Pearl Street



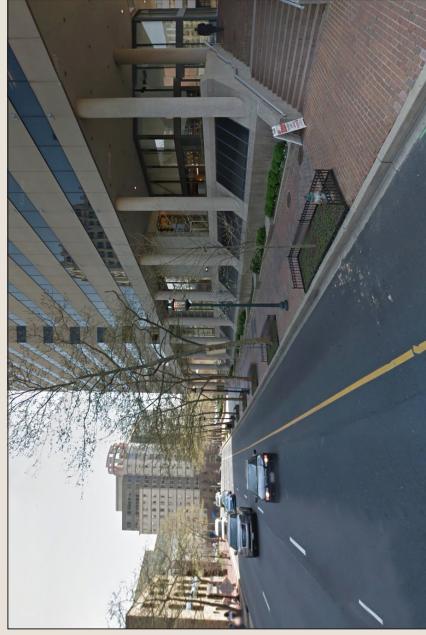
East-West Highway at Waverly Street. Street widens to three lanes.



*Edgemoor Lane around the Metro Center - blank walls and garage entryways*



*Blank walls and narrow sidewalks at East Lane*



*Old Georgetown Road around the Metro Center*

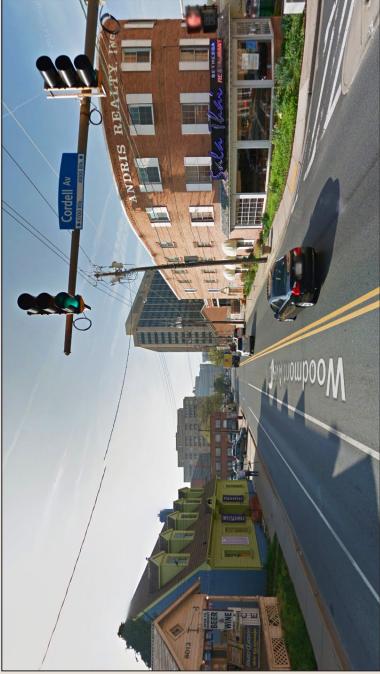
- Edgemoor Lane characterized by concrete walls, glass facades and large garage or loading entries
- Old Georgetown Road – Bethesda Metro Center side -Tall columns with ventilation shafts dominate street frontage. There is no integration between building and sidewalk
- Montgomery Avenue - There is very little integration between existing buildings and sidewalks. At East Lane there are narrow sidewalks and blank building walls.
- Montgomery Avenue one-way traffic, creating a higher speed automobile oriented environment



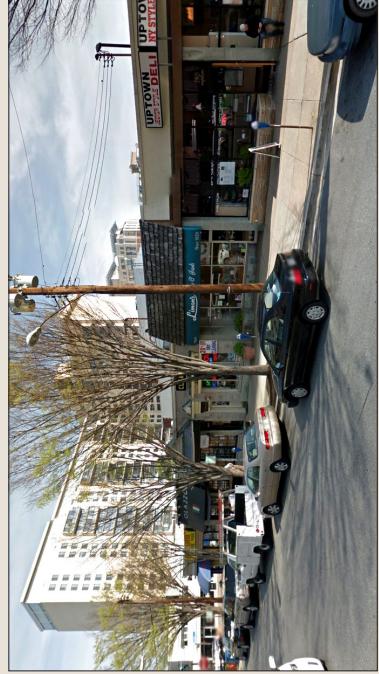
*Old Georgetown Road around the Metro Center*

Woodmont Avenue in Woodmont Triangle. Where redevelopment has taken place, sidewalks are wide and spacious. Where redevelopment has taken place the sidewalks are narrow.

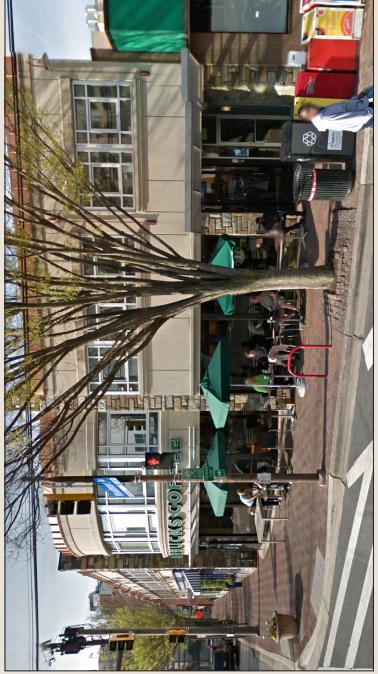
- Characterized by older urban fabric
- Narrow concrete sidewalks adjacent to street
- No street trees in many places
- Overhead utilities in place
- Wider sidewalks with street trees exist where redevelopment has taken place
- Overhead utilities in place



Old Georgetown Road between Commerce Lane and Woodmont Avenue is activated by wide sidewalks and interesting store fronts



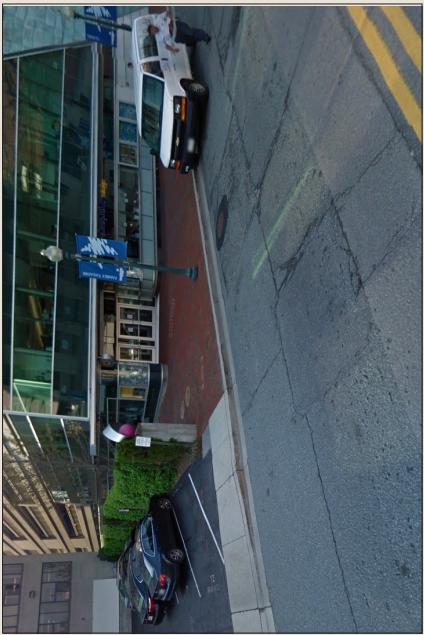
Old Georgetown Road between Woodmont Avenue and Arlington Road has implemented the Bethesda streetscape standards.



A public parking lot fronts directly on the street

## Cross Streets in Woodmont Triangle

- Quiet two lane streets with on-street parking
- Many utilities underground
- Where development has taken place, right-of-way dedications allow for installation streetscape per the Bethesda Streetscape Standards. This includes wider sidewalks, brick paving, street trees, pedestrian lighting and furniture



Auburn Ave development, to the right, results in wider sidewalks

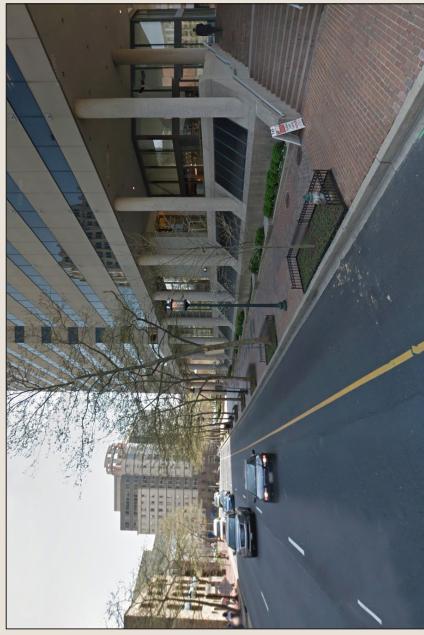


Del Ray Ave - narrow sidewalks to left, wider sidewalks to right, where redevelopment has taken place

## Arlington Road

Arlington Road acts as the dividing line between downtown Bethesda and the adjacent residentially zoned neighborhood to the west.

- In some places has brick sidewalks separated from the street by a planting panel with tree and ground cover
- In other places there is an existing concrete sidewalk directly adjacent to the curb
- Heights step down here as the CBD transitions to the edges



Old Georgetown Road around the Metro Center



Old Georgetown Road around the Metro Center

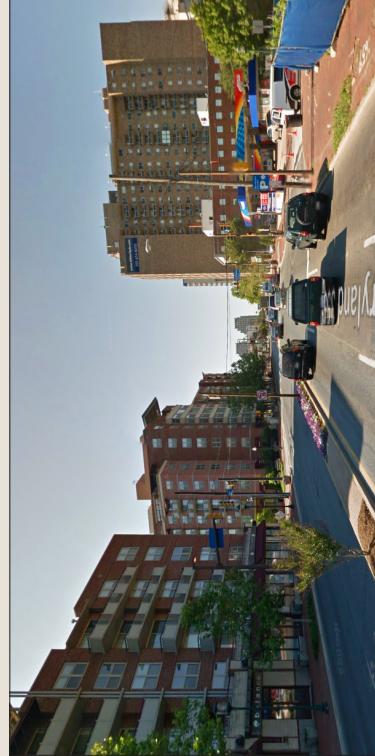
## Buildings

Buildings along Wisconsin Avenue differ in character north and south of Bethesda Metro Center:

- Many of the newer buildings north of Metro Center lack the fine grained detail that makes the street front interesting for pedestrians
- South of Metro Center the newer building have a level of texture and detail that makes them more interesting to the pedestrian
- Where development has not taken place along Wisconsin Avenue the buildings are of a low-rise suburban character
- The newer building on the north end of Wisconsin Avenue have interesting ground level detail, such as ground-floor entries, detailed store front designs and attractive signage
- Balconies on the newer buildings provide eyes-on-the-street
- Many of the older residential buildings along Wisconsin Avenue lack interesting windows or balconies



*Many of the buildings on Wisconsin Avenue lack fine grain detail that makes the street front interesting*



*Wisconsin Avenue looking south from Battery Lane*



*Wisconsin Avenue looking south from Maple Avenue*



Wisconsin Avenue from West Virginia Avenue



*This street frontage is dominated by a wide driveway, large expanse of blank walls on the ground floor and a dull facade*



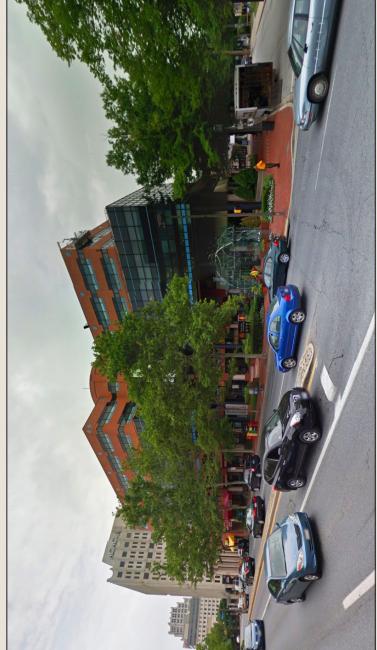
Cordell Avenue from Wisconsin

- The hotel front at Metro Center is characterized by a large driveway, curb cuts and porte cochere
- Several of the cross streets along Wisconsin Avenue are characterized by blank walls along the street

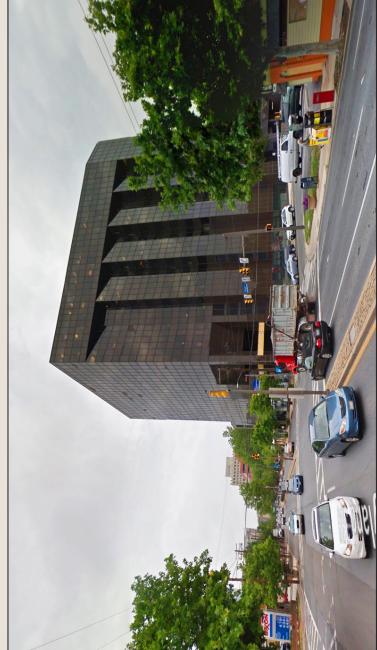
- Along the south end of Wisconsin Avenue many of the newer buildings are characterized by glazing or glass curtain walls that extend to the ground floor.
- Street level facades along Wisconsin, between Bethesda Avenue , Leland Avenue and Walsh Street are characterized by brick walls or opaque glazing



*Wisconsin Avenue looking South at Walsh Street*



*Wisconsin Avenue looking north at Bethesda Avenue*



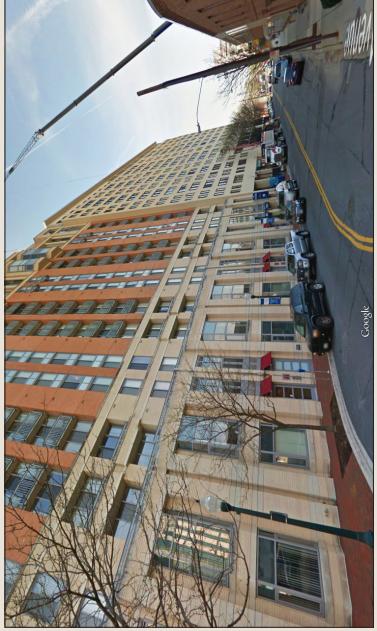
*Wisconsin Avenue looking north at Leland Avenue*



*Wisconsin Avenue looking South at Stanford*



*Wisconsin Avenue looking north at Stanford Street*



*Del Ray Avenue*

- The new building on the south side of Del Ray Avenue is characterized by ground floor windows and doors that add interest to the streetscape
- Older buildings with stone facades provide an interesting texture to the urban fabric

There is an abundance of public open spaces in downtown Bethesda that were provided through the 20% Public Use Space requirement in the optional method of development for CBD zones. Because of the 20% requirement, many of the spaces serve as buffers to higher density development, pedestrian linkages or forecourts to the building entrances.

- Majority of open spaces in Downtown Bethesda are separated from the street.
- changes in elevation that makes it difficult to see into the park
- Located in the interior of the block
- Screened from streets and sidewalk by walls or plantings. Activating uses fail to enliven these spaces, retail uses tend to dry-up, doing little to draw people into these spaces



Detailed maps and descriptions of the existing open spaces in Bethesda Downtown can be found at:  
<http://www.mcallas.org/publicspace>



Elm Street

Most of the pedestrian activity in Bethesda takes place on the sidewalk or in public space that are directly connected to the sidewalk:

- Bethesda Row
- Elm Street
- Bethesda Avenue
- Bethesda Lane – a pedestrian mews or street
- Veterans Plaza - a triangle plaza at the intersection of Norfolk and Woodmont Avenue



Bethesda Avenue



Veterans Plaza

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Bethesda Downtown has a well-established Central Business District, several residential neighborhoods and many office buildings. Multi-family residential and mixed-use developments are the two dominant land uses.

- They constitute approximately 40 percent of the land area in the Bethesda Downtown
  - The single-family and multi-family residential developments are primarily located along the edges of the planning area
  - Mixed-use projects are generally in the Central Business District along Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road.

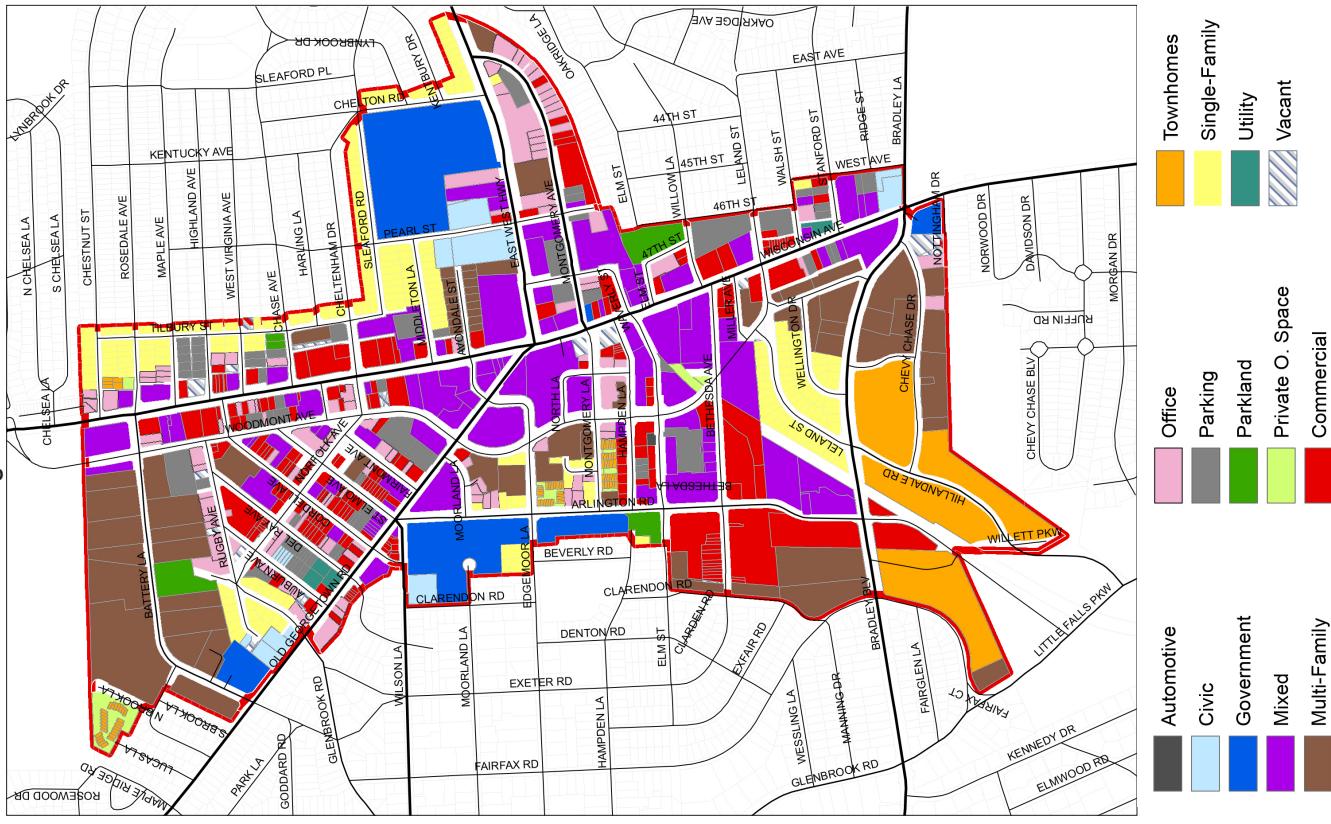
There are many civic and government uses:

- Schools
  - Fire and police stations
  - Religious organizations
  - A public library

## Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Acres	Percentages
Automotive	0.14	0.04
Civic	8.5	2.51
Government	29.74	8.8
Mixed Commercial or Residential with retail	66	19.53
Multi-Family	68.11	20.15
Office	23.47	6.9
Parking	19.95	5.9
Parkland	5.37	1.5
Private Open Space	3.01	0.89
Commercial	48.24	14.27
Townhomes	28.19	8.34
Single-Family	32.26	9.54
Utility	1.34	0.39
Vacant	3.56	1.05

Bethesda Downtown Existing Land Use

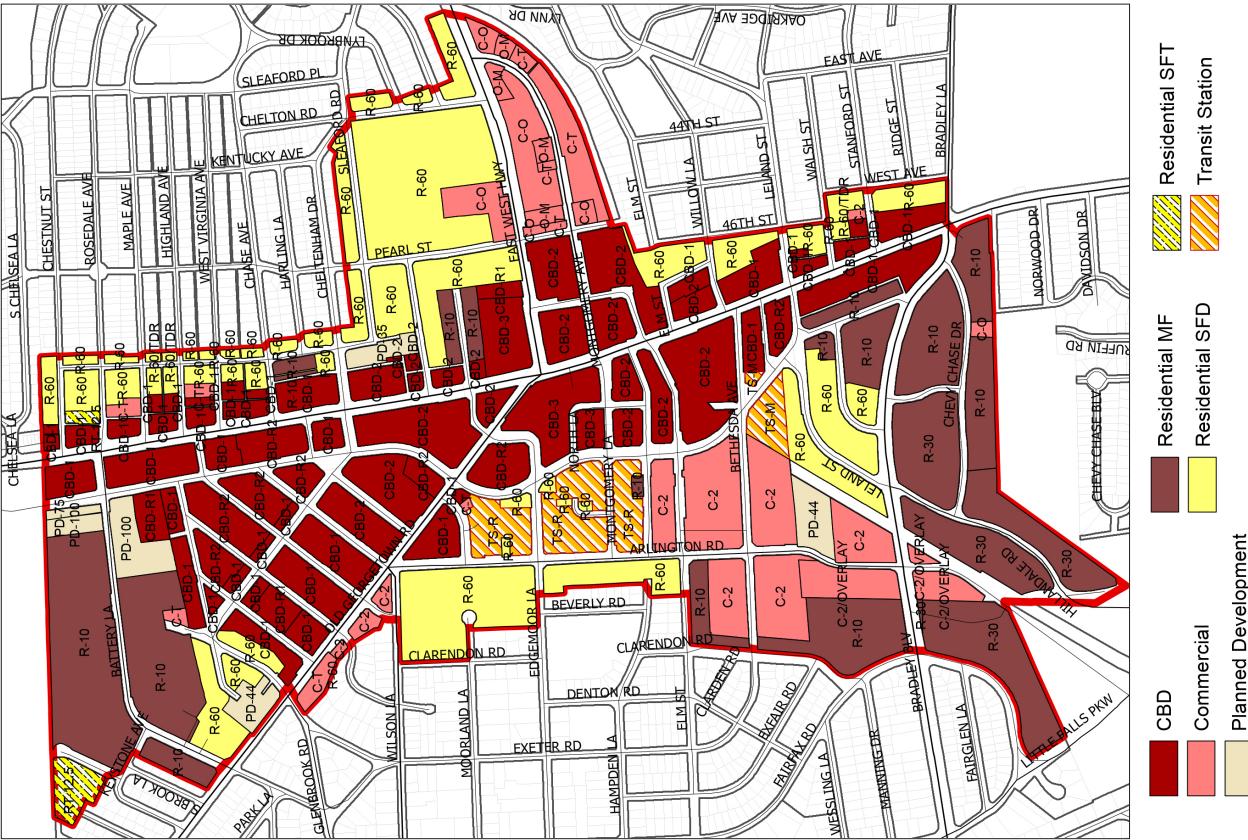


Land Use	Acres
CBD-0.5	CBD
CBD-1	CBD
CBD-2	CBD
CBD-3	CBD
CBD-R1	CBD
CBD-R2	CBD
C-1	Commercial
C-2	Commercial
C-2/OVERLAY	Commercial
C-O	Commercial
C-T	Commercial
O-M	Commercial
R-10	Residential MF
R-10/TDR	Residential MF
R-20	Residential MF
R-30	Residential MF
R-H	Residential MF
R-150	Residential SFD
R-150/TDR	Residential SFD
R-200	Residential SFD
R-200/TDR	Residential SFD
R-40	Residential SFD
R-60	Residential SFD
R-60/TDR	Residential SFD
R-90	Residential SFD
R-90/OVERLAY	Residential SFD
R-90/TDR	Residential SFD
RE-1	Residential SFD
RE-1/TDR	Residential SFD
RE-2	Residential SFD
RE-2/TDR	Residential SFD
RE-2C	Residential SFD
RE-2C/TDR	Residential SFD
RMH-200	Residential SFD
RT	Residential SFT
RT-10	Residential SFT
RT-12.5	Residential SFT
RT-15	Residential SFT
RT-6	Residential SFT
RT-8	Residential SFT
R-60	Residential SFH
R-60 TDR	Residential SFH
TMX-2	Transit Station
TS-M	Transit Station
TS-R	Transit Station

Starting in 2008, planners began rewriting the Zoning Code to modernize antiquated, redundant zoning regulations, and create new tools to help achieve goals in community plans. Many of the zones listed here will be revised or reclassified. Details can be found at:

<http://montgomeryplanning.org/development/zoning>

Bethesda Downtown Existing Zoning



## Staging of Bethesda Downtown as adopted in 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan

	<b>Recommended Goals</b>	<b>Goals Achieved</b>
	<b>Stage 1</b>	
Jobs	5,000 new jobs above the 1993 job level [The 1994 Bethesda CBD Plan estimated the actual number of jobs in the Bethesda CBD area to be below 30,000]	As per the Planning Board discussion on 04-08-2004, Stage 1 was achieved in 2004 when there were approximately 706 less jobs than the stage 1 level. As per the estimates provided by the Research Division of the M-NCPPC, the Bethesda CBD area had approximately 35,000 jobs in 2004. (Figure extrapolated from rounds 7.1 and 8.2 forecasts)
Housing Units	2150 new units above the 1993 housing level [The 1994 Bethesda CBD Plan estimated approximately 5,200 housing units in the Bethesda CBD area]	As per the Planning Board discussion on 04-08-2004, Stage 1 was achieved in 2004 when there were approximately 33 units less than the stage 1 level
	Establish Transportation Management Organization (TMO); all employers with over 25 employees to participate in the TMO	Bethesda Transportation Solutions, a division of the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) is the Transportation Management Organization for the Bethesda CBD. In 1999 a contract was signed between Montgomery County, and the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. to create Bethesda Transportation Solutions.
Policies and Programs	Maintain a constraint long term parking policy; limit the supply of employee parking in Bethesda; employee parking to be planned to serve the proportion of employees expected to arrive by automobile, including car or van pool; provide an adequate supply of short-term parking for retail use	The constraint long-term parking policy is being implemented through the Planning Board's development review process.
	Increase non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) for employees to 32 percent	The non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) is measured by annual workplace surveys of CBD employees conducted by Bethesda Transportation Solutions. The threshold of 32 percent NADMS was achieved in 2002, when the mode share was 34 percent.
Bike Lane and pedestrian system improvements	Bicycle network Route A2 along Bethesda Avenue, Willow Lane, and Elm Street Park, including pedestrian improvements at Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues (As class 1); bicycle network Route C along Woodmont Avenue, Hampden Lane and East Lane (As class 1); bicycle network Route H along Wilson Lane, Clarendon Road, and Edgemoor Lane. (As class 1 and class 3); other bicycle network routes; pedestrian system improvements at prominent intersections.	Many of the bike and pedestrian improvement projects in the Bethesda Downtown area are included in CIP Project # 500119; Notice to proceed for concept design refinements was issued on 1/14/2013; phase I planning complete by 03/18/2014
Streetscape Improvements	Streetscape improvements along northern Wisconsin Avenue; streetscape improvements in the Metro Core District, including: Woodmont Avenue, from Old Georgetown Road to Cheltenham Drive, and East-West Highway, from Waverly to Pearl Streets.	Many of the Bethesda Downtown area streetscape projects are included in CIP Project # 500102; the CIP project is dormant, pending funding, which is currently slated for FY'16, to resume design.
Intersection improvements	Intersection improvement at Connecticut Avenue and East-West Highway; and intersection improvement at Cedar Lane and Jones Bridge Road on Rockville Pike	These intersections have been improved as part of the County CIP and BRAC process.
Jobs	5,000 jobs above the 2004 level of commercial development already approved; as per the estimates provided by the Research Division of the M-NCPPC, the Bethesda CBD area had approximately 35,000 jobs in 2004-2005. (Figure extrapolated from rounds 7.1 and 8.2 forecasts)	As per the M-NCPPC estimates in 2014 Bethesda downtown area has approximately 38,305 jobs.
Housing Units	No stage II limit to housing was established (as per 04-08-2004 PB discussion)	7210 (2010 numbers) + 1700 units under construction = 89 10
	Increase the effectiveness of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs	The County's TDM programs are managed by MCDOT through the Traffic Mitigation Agreement (TMAG) document that is required as part of the development review process. MCDOT also works with Bethesda Transportation Solutions to incentivize participation in TDM programs.
Policies and Programs	Maintain a constraint long-term parking policy Increase non-auto driver mode share for employees to 37 percent Additions to the bicycle network and pedestrian improvements Programming of the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley Increased transit service Intersection and roadway improvements inside and outside the CBD	A constraint long-term parking policy is maintained through various planning programs and policies. As per the 2013 CBD employees survey, the non-auto mode share was 39.6 percent. A number of bike and pedestrian improvement projects have recently been completed: MD 355/ MD 410 pedestrian improvements; pedestrian bridge over MD 187; bike lane improvements in the Woodmont Triangle area and on Woodmont Avenue. Design is currently underway for the Purple Line, a proposed 16-mile light rail line with 21 stations, which will run from Bethesda to New Carrollton. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is the lead agency for the Purple Line project. In 2013, the State announced that the Purple Line would be designed, built and operated by a private firm. On January 8, 2014, the MTA announced that four "teams" will be invited to submit proposals to design, build, construct, finance, operate and maintain the Purple Line. The Bethesda downtown has a very robust transit service. The area is served by 13 bus lines and 1 metro rail line with an average weekday ridership of approximately 26,600. Various intersection and pedestrian improvements have been completed inside and outside the Downtown area: Woodmont/ Montgomery Ln, Woodmont/ Bethesda Avenue and MD 185/MD 410 intersection improvements.

Project Name	Location	Development Activity						Notes	Board Approval Date
		Office	Retail	Hotel	Residential Units	Application Type	Project Number		
4990 Fairmont Ave	On Fairmont Ave, east of Old Georgetown Road		7,000		72	Site Plan	820140060	Application Accepted Date: 10/29/2013	under review
7340 Wisconsin Ave	On Montgomery Ave, west of Wisconsin Ave		15,000		225	Project Plan	920140010		12/12/2013
Bethesda Commerce	7535 Old Georgetown Road at Commerce Lane		5,000		120	Site Plan	820130240		9/9/2013
Woodmont View	NW Quadrant, intersection of Woodmont Ave and Battery Lane	3200		47	Site Plan, Site Plan Amendment	820090010, 82009001A			7/11/2013
Edgemoor	On Montgomery Lane, at the intersection of West Lane			4	Site Plan	820130150	Under Construction		7/11/2013
7100 Wisconsin Ave	Northwest quadrant of Wisconsin Ave and Woodmont Ave	6,500		145	Site Plan	820130230			7/11/2013
7900 Wisconsin Ave	Between Wisconsin Ave & Woodmont Ave, at Cordell Ave	21,630		450	Site Plan	820130170	Density Transfer		6/27/2013
West Chevy Chase Ht.	On West Virginia Avenue, 194 feet east of Wisconsin Ave		4,062			Site Plan	820130090	Site Plan Approval for an existing 4,062 sf building for commercial uses; built	5/9/2013
Koseian Properties	On Wisconsin Ave, south of intersection with Woodmont Ave	12,075		6,215		Preliminary Plan	120110390		5/9/2013
Bethesda Center	West side of Wisconsin Avenue & Norfolk Ave	253,787		196,357		Site Plan	820120210		4/4/2013
4831 West Lane	On West Lane				100-120	Development Plan Amendment	DPA 13-01		3/7/2013
4901 Hampden Lane	On Hampden Lane				40	Development Plan Amendment	DPA 12-02	Under Construction	11/13/2012
7001 Arlington Ave	On Arlington Road, south of Bethesda Ave		7,000		140	Site Plan	820120140	Under Construction	11/1/2012
Glen Aldon	On Battery Lane, east of the intersection with Woodmont Ave				692	Local Map Amendment	G-909		8/31/2012
4900 Fairmont Ave	SW Quadrant, intersection of Fairmont Avenue and Norfolk Ave		7,000		250	Site Plan	820120120	Under Construction; Density Transfer	6/14/2012
8300 Wisconsin Ave	NW Quadrant, intersection of Battery Lane and Wisconsin Ave		55,000		360	Site Plan, Site Plan Amendments	820060360, 82006036A, 82006036B	Under Construction	5/3/2012
Woodmont 7200	North Side of Bethesda Ave between Wisconsin Ave and Woodmont Ave; East side of Woodmont Ave between Elm Street and Bethesda Ave	755,739		81,165	182,950	Site Plan, Site Plan Amendment	820090080, 82009008A, 82009008B (B under review)		4/12/2012
Woodmont Central Phases 1A, 1B & 2	Two locations - Southwest quadrant, intersection of Battery Lane and Wisconsin Ave, and the southwest quadrant, intersection of Rugby Ave and Del Ray Ave		81,107		30,295	Site Plan, Site Plan Amendment	820110020, 82011002A	Under Construction; Density Transfer	4/21/2011
Air Rights Center - 7300 Pearl	West side of Pearl Street at Capital Crescent Trail	149,600					82007001C		12/2/2010
4500 East-West Hwy.	On Pearl Street, West of East-West Hwy.	210,000		13,300		Site Plan	820090150	Under Construction	7/23/2009
Safeway Store	5000 Bradley Blvd.		43,097			Site Plan	820090170	Built	7/23/2009
Monly	On Fairmont Avenue, South of Norfolk Ave		7,700		200	Site Plan	820090110	Under Construction; Density Transfer	7/2/2009
Lot 31	On Bethesda Ave, south of Woodmont Ave		40,000		250	Site Plan, Site Plan Amendment	820070180, 82007018A	Under Construction	9/20/2007
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>1,462,308</b>	<b>369,490</b>	<b>379,307</b>	<b>3,660</b>				

## DEMOCRAPHICS

### Past and Future Growth

#### U.S. Census & Council of Governments Cooperative Forecast round 8.2

##### 2010 Downtown Bethesda population:

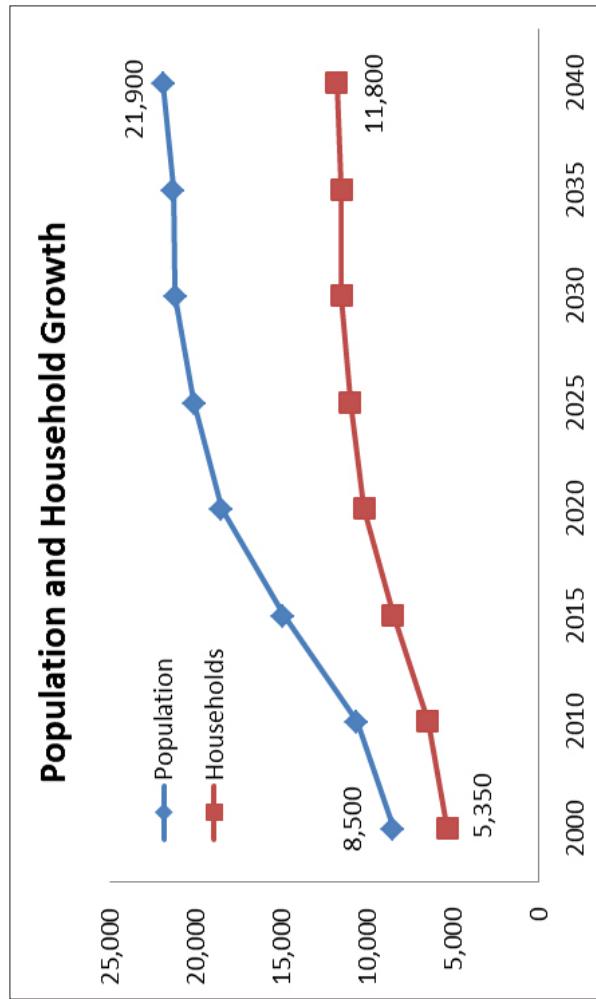
- 10,610, a 25 percent increase since 2000
  - During this period, the area gained over 1,100 households (21 percent) totaling 6,484 in 2010.
- Increases of 11,300 people, 5,300 households, and 14,200 jobs are forecasted for Downtown Bethesda between 2010 and 2040.

Thirty years of growth (2010 to 2040) in Bethesda Downtown will account for:

- 5 percent of the County's total forecasted population growth (230,400)
- 5 percent of the household increases (99,200)
- 7 percent of the anticipated employment gain countywide (204,800)

The population and households in Downtown Bethesda are expected to increase at a faster pace than the County's rate during the forecasted years. Between 2010 and 2040:

- Population in the area is expected to double
- Households will increase by 82 percent
- Employment rise by 38 percent
- Grow 24 percent in population
- Grow 28 percent in households
- Increase 40 percent in employment



## 2010 DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

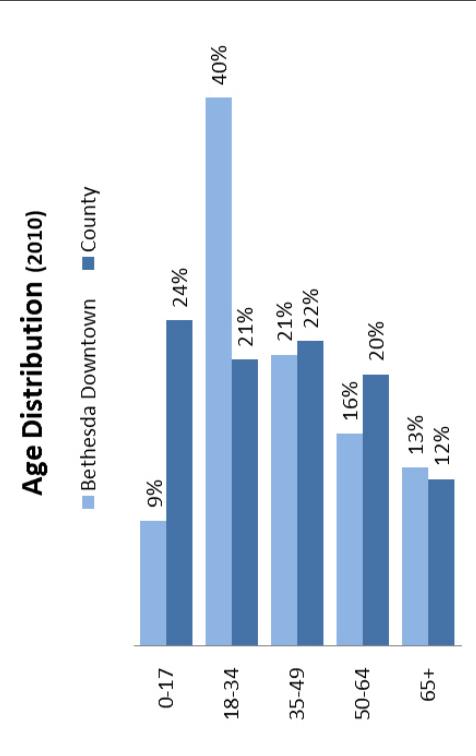
### 2010 U.S. Decennial Census

The age distribution is generally comparable to the County, though with a larger proportion of residents between 22-34, which is about 40 percent, double the County average.

#### Population characteristics:

- 70.1 percent non-Hispanic white
- Highly educated (83.4 percent have bachelor's or graduate degrees, compared to about 57 percent for the County)
- Average household income of \$206,766 (60% higher than the County average)
- Three-quarters of the Downtown's households are renter-occupied compared to one-third (32 percent) of households in the County.

The low average household size of 1.62 reflects the high percentage of single person households (55 percent) in the Downtown area. The high concentration of non-family households (70 percent) compared to the County's (31 percent) is one reason for the low number of children in the area.



Forecast Summary (2010 to 2040)												Percentage Change	
	2010		2040		2010 to 2040 Growth	Bethesda Downtown Plan	County Study Area	Bethesda Downtown Plan	County Study Area	Bethesda Downtown Plan	County Study Area	Percentage Change	
	Downtown Plan	Bethesda Study Area	County Downtown Plan	Bethesda Study Area									
Population	10,600	30,400	972,600	21,900	45,000	1,203,000	11,300	14,600	230,400	107%	48%	24%	
Households	6,500	13,900	361,000	11,800	20,300	460,200	5,300	6,400	99,200	82%	46%	28%	
Employment	37,700	65,600	510,300	51,900	81,500	715,100	14,200	15,900	204,800	38%	24%	40%	

The population and household forecasts for the Bethesda Downtown Plan and Study Area are derived by adding the 5-year growth from the Round 8.2 COG Cooperative Forecast to the 2010 base compiled from the Decennial U.S. Census. The employment forecast is from the Round 8.2 COG Cooperative Forecast. The Bethesda Downtown Plan is defined by 3 Traffic Analysis Zones (662, 663, and 637) and the Study Area includes 11 Traffic Analysis Zones (635-638, 641, 661-665, and 670).

Source: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Cooperative Forecast Round 8.2, 2010 U.S. Decennial Census; Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Department.

POPULATION (2010)	Bethesda		County		Tenure	Households by Type	Household Size	Downtown Plan count	Downtown Plan percent	Study Area count	Study Area percent	Bethesda count	Bethesda percent	County count	County percent
	Downtown Plan count	Downtown Plan percent	Study Area count	Study Area percent											
Total Population (% of County)	10,610	1.1%	30,423	3.1%	971,777										
<b>Age Distribution</b>															
0-4 years	366	3.4%	1,535	5.0%	63,732	6.6%									
5-17 years	618	5.8%	4,809	15.8%	169,798	17.5%	Owner-occupied	1,531	23.6%	7,822	56.4%	241,465	67.6%		
18-21 years	142	1.3%	572	1.9%	36,928	3.8%	Renter-occupied	4,953	76.4%	6,036	43.6%	115,621	32.4%		
22-34 years	4,144	39.1%	5,708	18.8%	168,523	17.3%									
35-49 years	2,280	21.5%	6,572	21.6%	218,387	22.5%	Family households	1,969	30.4%	7,499	54.1%	244,898	68.6%		
50-64 years	1,663	15.7%	6,474	21.3%	194,640	20.0%	Nonfamily households	4,515	69.6%	6,359	45.9%	112,188	31.4%		
65 years and older	1,397	13.2%	4,753	15.6%	119,769	12.3%									
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin Combined</b>															
Not Hispanic:	9,681	91.2%	28,397	93.3%	806,379	83.0%									
White	7,434	70.1%	24,270	79.8%	478,765	49.3%	3-persons	487	7.5%	1763	12.7%	60,216	16.9%		
Black	600	5.7%	895	2.9%	161,689	16.6%	4 or more persons	269	4.1%	2407	17.4%	98,912	27.7%		
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,341	12.6%	2,420	8.0%	135,104	13.9%	Average household size	1.62		2.18		2.70			
Other race	306	2.9%	812	2.7%	30,821	3.2%									
Hispanic or Latino ( <i>may be of any race</i> )	929	8.8%	2,026	6.7%	165,398	17.0%									

The 2010 Census data was compiled from block level data aggregated within the Traffic Analysis Zones boundaries defining the Bethesda Downtown Plan (3 TAZ) and the Bethesda Study Area (11 TAZ).

Source: 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, Summary File 1, U.S. Census Bureau; Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Department.

	POPULATION (2010)		HOUSING (2010)		Downtown Plan		Study Area		Bethesda		County	
	Downtown Plan count	Downtown Plan percent	Study Area count	Study Area percent	Downtown Plan count	Downtown Plan percent	Study Area count	Study Area percent	Bethesda count	Bethesda percent	County count	County percent
Total Population (% of County)	10,610	1.1%	30,423	3.1%	971,777							
<b>Housing Units</b>												
Housing units (% of County)					7,210	1.9%	14,922	4.0%	375,905			
Households (% of housing units)					6,484	89.9%	13,858	92.9%	357,086	95.0%		

EDUCATION, OCCUPATION & INCOME (2012)		Bethesda Study Area	Montgomery County
		estimate	percent

## EDUCATION, OCCUPATION & INCOME

### 2008-2012 American Community Survey

- Study Area's average household income is \$206,766, 59 percent higher than the County's \$130,415 in 2012
- Over half (54 percent) of Bethesda's adults age 25 and older earned a graduate or professional degree compared to 30 percent countywide

- Three out of five employed residents in the Bethesda Study Area fill management, business, or science occupations compared to over half (56 percent) countywide

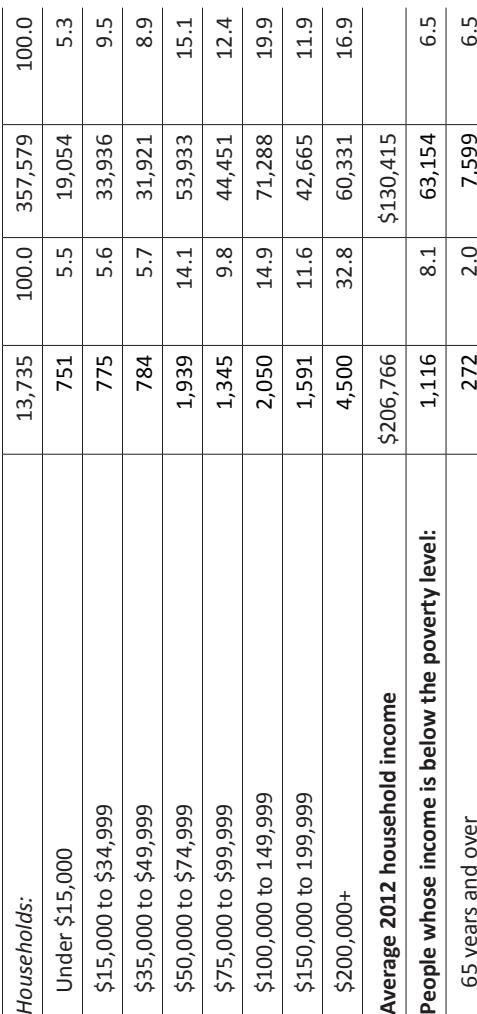
### Educational Attainment

<i>Persons 25 years and older:</i>	22,563	100.0	667,634	100.0
Less than high school diploma	514	2.3	59,814	9.0
High school graduate	952	4.2	94,335	14.1
Some college or associate degree	2,286	10.1	133,578	20.0
Bachelor's degree	6,583	29.2	177,612	26.6
Graduate or professional degree	12,228	54.2	202,295	30.3

### Occupation

<i>Civilian employed population:</i>	17,811	100.0	522,564	100.0
Management, business, science, and arts	13,328	74.8	292,855	56.0
Service	1,672	9.4	79,642	15.2
Sales and office	2,338	13.1	98,390	18.8
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	179	1.0	30,405	5.8
Production, transportation, and material moving	294	1.7	21,272	4.1

## Household Income (2012)



Study area defined by 10 U.S. Census tracts: 46, 47, 48, 03-48, 06, 50, 53, 54, and 55-02.

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau; Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Department.

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

### 2008-2012 American Community Survey

- An even split of single-family (52 percent) and multi-family (48 percent) housing characterizes the broader study area encompassing the Bethesda Downtown
- Nine out of ten mortgaged households in the Bethesda Study Area paid \$2,000 or more in monthly owner costs
- The average owner cost of \$4,660 was two-thirds higher than the County's average of \$2,880
- The average rent in the Bethesda area was \$1,916 in 2012, over \$300 more per month than the average rent for the County
- Incomes in Bethesda are a better match to the area's high housing costs than was typical countywide:
- 20 percent of mortgaged households and 30 percent of renters paid 35 percent or more of the household's income on housing costs
- Countywide, the rate of housing cost burden was 27 percent for owners, and 41 percent for renters in 2012

HOUSING (2012)	Bethesda Study Area	Montgomery County		
	estimate	percent	estimate	percent
<b>Units in Structure</b>	<b>14,756</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>375,318</b>	<b>100.0</b>
1-unit, detached	7,035	47.7	182,216	48.5
1-unit, attached	659	4.5	68,403	18.2
2 to 19 units	1,111	7.5	61,977	16.5
20 or more units	5,951	40.3	62,722	16.7
<b>Selected Monthly Owner Costs</b>				
<i>Housing units with a mortgage:</i>	<i>5,688</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>192,382</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Less than \$1,000	54	0.9	5,945	3.1
\$1,000 to \$1,499	221	3.9	18,916	9.8
\$1,500 to \$1,999	233	4.1	32,133	16.7
\$2,000 or more	5,180	91.1	135,388	70.4
<b>Average monthly owner costs</b>	<b>\$4,660</b>		<b>\$2,880</b>	
<b>Gross Rent</b>				
<i>Occupied units paying rent:</i>	<i>5,710</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>110,399</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Less than \$1,000	481	8.4	14,564	13.2
Less than \$500	243	4.3	4,614	4.2
\$500 to \$749	100	1.8	3,186	2.9
\$750 to \$999	138	2.4	6,764	6.1
\$1,000 to \$1,499	1,460	25.6	38,983	35.3
\$1,500 or more	3,769	66.0	56,852	51.5
<b>Average monthly rent</b>	<b>\$1,916</b>		<b>\$1,606</b>	
<b>Households Spending More Than 35% of Income on Housing Costs</b>				
Homeowners with a mortgage	1,136	20.1	52,361	27.3
Renters	1,711	30.3	44,912	41.1

Study area defined by 10 U.S. Census tracts: 46, 47, 48-03-48-06, 50, 53, 54, and 55-02.

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau; Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Department.

## ECONOMIC AND MARKET DATA

### At-Place Employment

#### The Bethesda Downtown Area:

- Has an estimated 38,300 jobs in 2014, up from 35,000 in 2005.<sup>1</sup>
- Two major federal medical and research campuses adjacent to downtown Bethesda supply an additional 37,000 jobs:
  - The National Institutes of Health (30,000)
  - Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (6,900)

#### Job Sectors:

- Professional, Scientific & Technical Services industry (20 percent)
- Administrative & Support Services (13 percent)
- Health Care (13 percent)
- Hotel/Restaurant (10 percent)
- Finance/Insurance (10 percent)
- Retail (8 percent)

#### Commuting Statistics:

- Roughly two percent live and work in Bethesda
- Most people working in the plan area commute from other areas in Montgomery County Washington, D.C. accounts for nine percent of in-commuters
- Twenty -six percent of people working in the area are under the age of 30, down slightly from twenty-eight percent in 2005.

*Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, Research & Special Projects Division analysis of Round 7.1 and Round 8.2 MWCOG Employment Forecast estimates.*

## **Major employers in the Bethesda Downtown District (Second quarter 2013)**

Business establishments ranked by numbers of employees

Establishment	Line of Business	Employment Range
Clark Construction Group, LLC	Commercial building construction	500+
Development Alternatives, Inc.	Other technical consulting services	250 to 499
ASINWorks, Inc.	Payroll services	250 to 499
Capital Health Care Associates, Inc.	Temporary help services	250 to 499
EagleBank	Commercial banking	250 to 499
WeddingWire, Inc.	Electronic shopping	100 to 249
Realty Management Service, Inc.	Residential property managers	100 to 249
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists	Professional organizations	100 to 249
Options for Senior America	Home health care services	100 to 249
Walker & Dunlop, LLC	Real estate credit	100 to 249
American Capital, Ltd.	Investment banking and securities dealing	100 to 249
University Research Co., LLC	Portfolio management	100 to 249
The Calvert Group	Miscellaneous financial investment activities	100 to 249
Medallion Hotel Corporation	Hotels and motels, except casino hotels	100 to 249
Lerch Early & Brewer Chfd	Offices of lawyers	100 to 249

*Source: Montgomery County Planning Department analysis of DLLR Quarterly Census of Earnings and Wages data (2Q 2013)*

### Office Space

- 190 office properties totaling 8.3 million square feet in Downtown Bethesda
- Nearly half of the total office inventory (4.2 million square feet) is concentrated in 19 large Class A office buildings in the CBD
- As of the end of 2013, the average office vacancy rate in downtown Bethesda was 10.7 percent (11.3 percent for Class A space alone)
- The average office rent per square foot was \$36.84 (\$42.75 for Class A space)
- There is one Class A office condominium building at 4500 East-West Highway under construction, with delivery expected in July 2014

Office Market Statistics (2007 to 2014)						
Period	2007 (4Q)	2008 (4Q)	2009 (4Q)	2010 (4Q)	2011 (4Q)	2012 (4Q)
Properties	197	197	198	198	199	190
Inventory (SF)	8,333,797	8,322,272	8,332,272	8,332,272	8,337,346	8,318,686
Occupied (SF)	7,667,025	7,706,865	7,584,489	7,452,417	7,428,208	7,382,692
Vacant (SF)	666,772	615,407	747,783	879,855	909,138	935,994
Vacancy (%)	8.0%	7.4%	9.0%	10.6%	10.9%	11.3%
Average Asking Rent (per SF)	\$35.07	\$35.50	\$33.65	\$34.09	\$34.98	\$34.88
						\$36.84

*Source: Montgomery County Planning Department analysis of CoStar data.*

# Plans and Policies

## PLANNING FRAMEWORK

### 1990 Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment

- Identified the Georgetown Branch right-of-way as the location for both the Silver Spring & Bethesda Trolley and the Capital Crescent Trail;
- Recommended the Apex Building (“Embassy Plaza Building”) site as the location of the Bethesda trolley station, and includes specific design recommendations for the design and function of the various station elements.

### 1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan

- Addressed the larger Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, deferring specific recommendations for Downtown Bethesda to the 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan;
- Reconfirmed the existing residential character of Bethesda-Chevy Chase, while supporting development of new residential and employment centers near metro stations;
- Promoted increased transit use as the primary way to serve increased commuter traffic.

### 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan

- Continued the vision of Bethesda as a bustling downtown ringed by quiet neighborhoods;
- Encouraged residential development with a range of housing types;
- Sought to increase the diversity of employment and shopping opportunities to serve current and future workers and residents;
- Organized Downtown Bethesda into seven districts, with unique land use, zoning, and urban design characteristics;
- Continue the focus of the most intense development around the Metro Station Core Area;
- Introduced the “garden” and “cultural district” themes;

### 1990 Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment

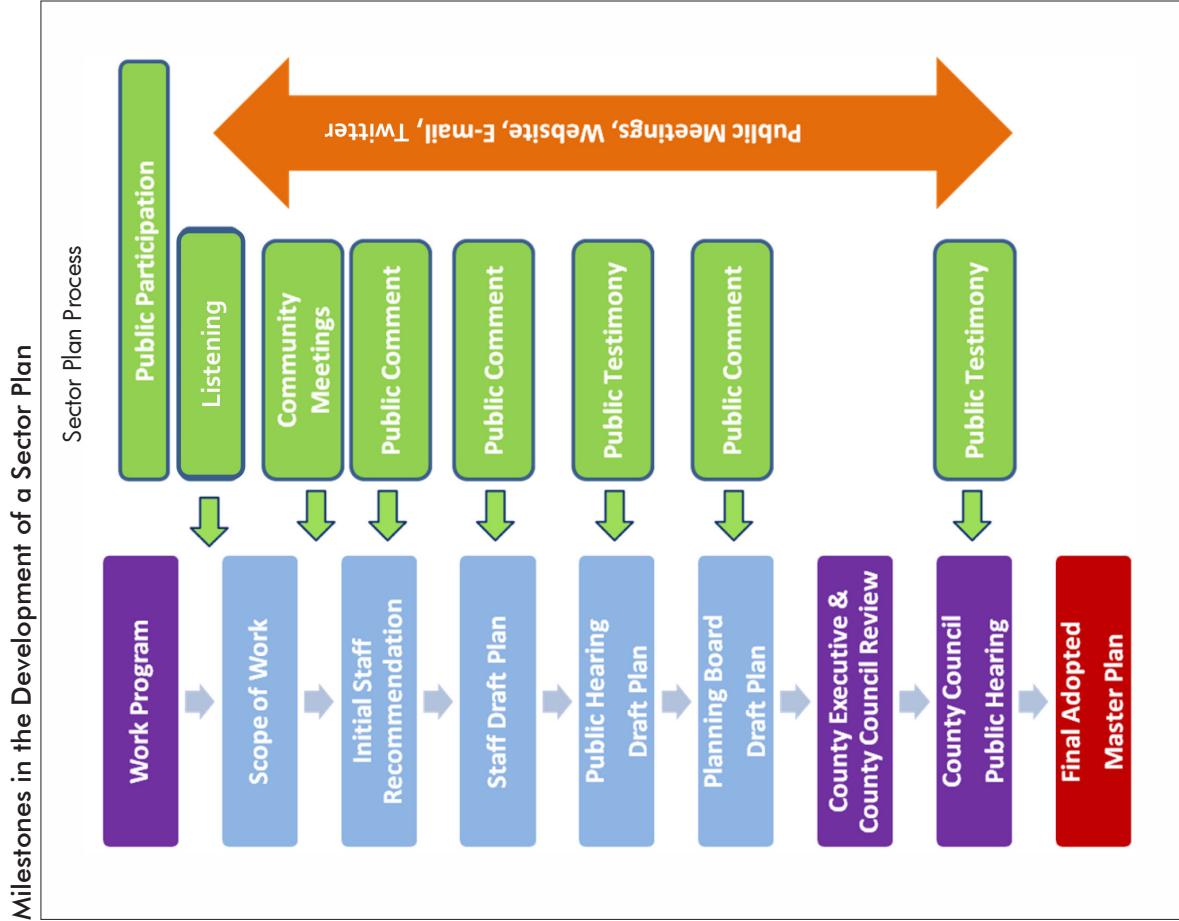
- Provided design guidelines for new development;
- Recommended four sites for the Master Plan of Historic Preservation
- Promoted expanded transit, pedestrian, and bicycle use;
- Recommended roadway and intersection improvements to address traffic congestion;
- Identified strategies to address air and water quality, storm water and solid waste management, and noise.

### 2006 Woodmont Triangle Amendment to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan

- Encouraged expanded residential redevelopment in the Woodmont Triangle area while retaining “the qualities and ambience of the small-scale retail that distinguishes” the area from the rest of the CBD;
- Removed the minimum lot size standard to encourage redevelopment of smaller lots in the Woodmont Triangle;
- Facilitated the transfer of buildable density between properties in the Woodmont Triangle, allowing concentration of development on properties receiving the density while reducing development pressure on properties sending the density.

### 2010 Purple Line Functional Plan

- Updated the 1990 Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment;
- Identified the alignment, mode, and station locations for the Purple Line within Montgomery County;
- Confirmed the location of the Bethesda terminal station under the Apex Building at Elm Street and Wisconsin Avenue, in the existing Capital Crescent Trail tunnel.



### 2014 Bethesda Purple Line Station Minor Master Plan Amendment

- Incentivized the redevelopment of the block around the proposed Purple Line Station to allow for construction of an improved station design for both the Purple Line and the southern entrance to Metro's Red Line;
- Recommended construction of a new Capital Crescent Trail tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, adjacent to the Purple Line Station, between Woodmont Plaza and Elm Street Park;
- Reinforced the importance of the design of Woodmont Plaza, at the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue, as key to any redevelopment of the block around the station.

### **Additional Studies**

Additional studies and programs have been initiated by various agencies for the Bethesda CBD area.

**2010 Purple Line Functional Plan:** The goal of the Functional Plan is to identify the specific alignment and station locations within the County so that existing and future planning studies will have the benefit of adopted policy guidance as to the location, function and general operational characteristics of the Purple Line. The Plan reconfirms the location of the Bethesda terminal station under the Apex Building and reinforces as key features of the station the pedestrian connections to the Bethesda Metro station south entrance, Elm Street, and Woodmont Plaza.

### **1990 Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment: The Master Plan amendment**

The 1990 Approved and Adopted identifies the Georgetown Branch right-of-way as the location for both the Silver Spring & Bethesda Trolley and the Capital Crescent Trail, and the Apex Building (nee "Embassy Plaza Building") site as the location of the Bethesda trolley station. The Plan recommends the connection of the Bethesda trolley station and the Bethesda Metro station south entrance, and includes specific design recommendations for the design and function of the various station elements.

Learn More, Contact Us/Stay Connected:

email: [bethesdaplan@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:bethesdaplan@montgomeryplanning.org)

website: [bethesdowntownplan.org](http://bethesdowntownplan.org)



# Bethesda Downtown Briefing Book

Spring 2014

