

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the amendment describes the limited changes to the general provisions of the existing Sector Plan for the Bethesda Central Business District.

HOUSING

This amendment proposes to encourage the retention of existing housing and the construction of new housing to serve a variety of income levels in the Woodmont Triangle Study Area. This amendment also supports the Land Use and Urban Design Objectives of the existing Sector Plan. In the ten years since the Sector Plan was approved, the cost of housing in the Bethesda CBD has increased significantly. Although many new dwelling units are becoming available, the diversity and supply of housing are not sufficient to serve a variety of income levels.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

This amendment will capitalize on the development and revitalization potential of the study area as a transit-oriented urban neighborhood. Most of the area is within 2,500 feet of the Metro station, a basic guideline for a transit-oriented development (TOD), and it has the mix of uses that meet TOD criteria. Residents of the Battery Lane District and surrounding neighborhoods shop in the Woodmont Triangle, and they take advantage of its location between two Metro stations. In addition, the Woodmont Triangle hosts many public events as part of the Bethesda CBD Arts and Entertainment District program.

REVITALIZATION THROUGH IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC STREETS AND SPACES

This amendment recommends public and private improvements to the streets of the Woodmont Triangle. The improvements will enhance pedestrian safety and access to transit. Improving the pedestrian and bicycle connections between the NIH, the Battery Lane District, the adjacent neighborhoods and the Woodmont Triangle Study Area is a primary objective. Both on-site and off-site improvements would be permitted in the Optional Method of Development according to a prioritized list of public use spaces and amenities. Public use space requirements can be met off-site in the Woodmont Triangle when moderately priced dwelling units are located on-site. This amendment also supports the Capital Improvements Program to improve Norfolk Avenue.

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS

The guidelines for building heights in the 1994 Sector Plan were designed to protect the neighborhoods on the edge of the CBD and to concentrate building height near the Metro station. This amendment continues to support the “step down” of building heights from the Metro station area to the edges of the Central Business District.

Along Norfolk Avenue, buildings will be required to “step back” to provide adequate sunlight onto the sidewalks to promote an active pedestrian environment. The section located on the last page of the Amendment provides an illustration of the “step back” of buildings along Norfolk Avenue. Maintaining adequate sunlight for Veterans Park located at the intersection of Norfolk Avenue and Woodmont Avenue is also an important goal to support active use of this park.

The building height limits shown on page 39 of the existing Sector Plan will be changed for the Woodmont Triangle Study Area. The underlying zones will determine the maximum building height limits, except for properties along Old Georgetown Road, north of St. Elmo Avenue and in accordance with the following table. The following table indicates the maximum allowable building heights in the existing zones. These building height limits are intended to provide the recommended step down from the height limit of 200 feet in the core of the CBD to the nearby neighborhoods with building height limits of 35 to 40 feet.

Guidelines for Maximum Building Height in Selected Zones within the Woodmont Triangle Area

Guidelines for Maximum Building Height	CBD-2	CBD-R2	CBD-1	R-10	PD-44 and 75
Standard Method	60'	60'	60'	NA*	NA*
Optional Method	143'	143'	60'-90'	NA*	NA*

Note: *The building height limits must be compatible with the 3 -10 story heights of the existing buildings in the Battery Lane District.

The modifications to the height limits in the existing Sector Plan are as follows:

- Parcels in the CBD-1, CBD-2 and CBD-R2 zones could be permitted to develop to the maximum height allowed in the zone, if MPDUs are included on site, in accord with the urban design guidelines.
- Two blocks of the Wisconsin Avenue North Corridor District (existing Sector Plan pages 102-107) were limited to 122 feet by the 1994 Plan. The properties are zoned CBD-1 and CBD-R2; they could be allowed to develop to the allowable heights of their respective zones.

- The building height limit is removed from several properties in the Battery Lane District (see existing Sector Plan pages 90-94). These properties are zoned PD-75 and R-10/TDR. The older, existing buildings range in height from 3 to 10 stories.
- The maximum building height along Old Georgetown Road will remain 50 feet, except for the two blocks south of St. Elmo Avenue and west of Norfolk Avenue.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Optional Method of Development is a tool to encourage housing and to provide public facilities and amenities. In exchange, the developer could provide additional residential density and height. Providing moderately priced dwelling units on-site is a priority for all projects that use the Optional Method of Development.

- **Density** – The properties in the Woodmont Triangle Study Area will be provided the opportunity to develop to the density specified in the CBD-1, CBD-2 and CBD-R2 Zones. With this amendment, CBD-1 mixed-use projects can achieve a floor area ratio (FAR) of three, and those in the CBD-2 and CBD-R2 Zones can achieve a FAR of five. The existing Sector Plan limited the density in the Woodmont Triangle Study Area.
- **FAR** – Building MPDUs on-site is a priority for all projects developing under the Optional Method of Development. All CBD zone parcels in the Woodmont Triangle Study Area will be limited to a floor area ratio of one for non-residential development. Any increase in density up to the maximum allowed must be residential.
- **Public Use Space** – The priorities in the Woodmont Triangle include improvements to the public streetscape, improvements to Battery Lane Urban Park, and support for the Arts and Entertainment District. Optional Method of Development projects may provide their public use space requirement off-site in the Woodmont Triangle, if moderately priced dwelling units are provided on-site. If public use space is located on-site, it should contribute to establishing a variety of spaces in the area. All developments should avoid extensive setbacks of retail from public streets. Public spaces should support retail and an active pedestrian environment.

Planning Board Draft



PUBLIC AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

In the Woodmont Triangle, there is a great need for revitalization of the public spaces, including the rights-of-way. Businesses have seen their clientele decline over the last several years due to the popularity of Bethesda Row, with its pleasant streetscape environment, new buildings, and attractive assortment of uses. The Woodmont Triangle needs improved lighting for public safety, attractive streets and sidewalks, and incentives to expand uses and hours of operation. In addition to new housing, upgraded public facilities help promote revitalization.

The existing provisions of the Optional Method of Development require a minimum of 20 percent of the net lot area of each parcel be devoted to public use space on-site. As permitted in the Optional Method of Development, existing projects in the Bethesda CBD achieved double the density of the Standard Method of Development and provided a combination of on-site and off-site public use space and amenities equal to 40 to 60 percent of their net lot area. Off-site amenities include streetscape in the public right-of way, improvement to parks, and other public facilities.

Public use spaces and amenities approved through the Optional Method of Development will be located to serve the revitalization and improve the vitality of the entire district.

The following list represents the priority amenities and facilities for the Woodmont Triangle. Each project should incorporate items from this list as a first priority. This list is not intended to be inclusive of all the facilities and amenities that may be considered. Sufficient amenities and facilities must be provided in each project to serve the additional density and building height proposed in this Amendment. The amenities and facilities to be approved in each project must contribute to the creation of an outstanding urban neighborhood in the Bethesda CBD. The combination of existing amenities and facilities with the following list will create a strong network of active public spaces.

- Norfolk Avenue Urban Spine – A linear system that includes the Capital Crescent Trail and connects the existing public facilities and amenities including Battery Lane Urban Park, the Whitney Theater, the Bethesda Outdoor Stage, the Imagination Stage, and Veterans Park. Renovation of the Norfolk Avenue Urban Spine includes:
 - Underground utilities
 - Washington Globe street lights and other festive lighting
 - Benches, bike racks, brackets for banners, and trash receptacles
 - Street trees
 - Outdoor seating for restaurants and cafes
 - Public art
 - Special paving for sidewalks

PUBLIC AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

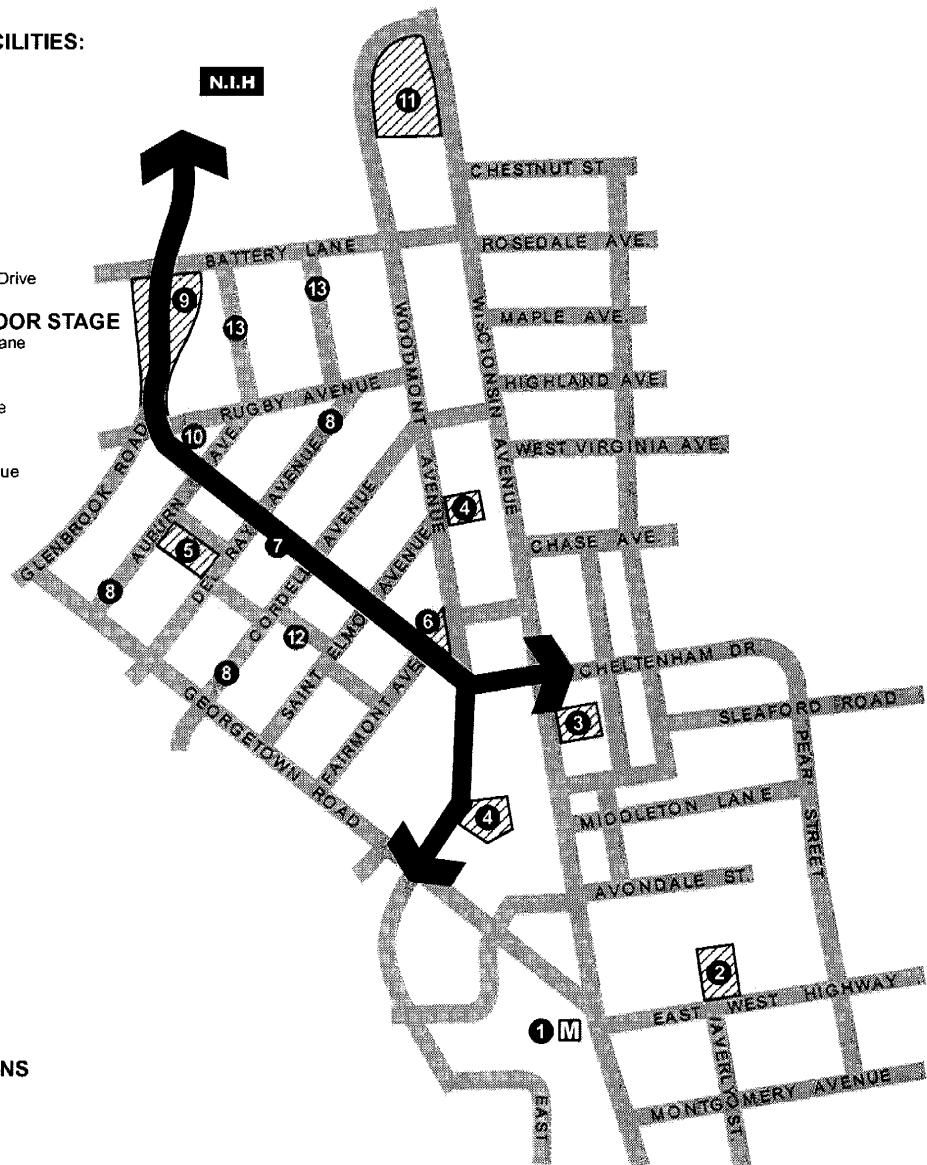
EXISTING AMENITIES AND FACILITIES:

- 1 METRO STATION PLAZA**
Wisconsin Avenue and East West Highway
- 2 ROUND HOUSE THEATER**
East West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue
- 3 WHITNEY THEATER**
Wisconsin Avenue and Cheltenham Drive
- 4 BETHESDA PLACE OUTDOOR STAGE**
Wisconsin Avenue and Commerce Lane
- 5 IMAGINATION STAGE**
Del Ray Avenue Near Norfolk Avenue
- 6 VETERANS PARK**
Norfolk Avenue and Woodmont Avenue

PROPOSED AMENITIES AND FACILITIES:

Woodmont Triangle Amendment

- 7 NORFOLK AVENUE URBAN SPINE**
Woodmont Avenue to NIH
- 8 STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**
All Streets in the Woodmont Triangle
- 9 BATTERY LANE URBAN PARK IMPROVEMENTS**
Between Norfolk Avenue and Battery Lane
- 10 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS**
Rugby Avenue and Norfolk Avenue
- 11 NIH GATEWAY PARK**
Wisconsin Avenue and Woodmont Avenue at NIH
- 12 PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS**
Fairmont Avenue to Auburn Avenue
- 13 NEW URBAN STREETS**
Between Battery Lane and Rugby Avenue
- 14 OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES AND AMENITIES**
See Text



Streetscape Improvements – Provide the Bethesda streetscape improvements on other streets such as Cordell Avenue in the Woodmont Triangle Study Area

- **Battery Lane Urban Park Improvements – Improve Battery Lane Urban Park as the major green space and public park in the Woodmont Triangle. A future facility plan should be completed by a developer, in coordination with the Park Development Division, in exchange for additional density under the Optional Method of Development, or as part of a CIP project. This facility plan will be the guiding document for all future development and improvements within the park including other potential developer funded projects. Objectives of the facility plan may include the following:**
 - Improve the entrance to the park from Norfolk Avenue using public right-of-way or potential acquisition to increase the visibility and promote safe use of the park
 - Widen the existing bicycle trail through the park to 10 feet and improve it as necessary to reinforce its importance in linking the Bethesda Trolley Trail and Capital Crescent Trail
 - Create a new gathering area for picnics and small performances through potential expansion of the park
 - Incorporate art or an arts and science theme into the site furnishings
- **Intersection Improvements – Provide intersection improvements to Rugby Avenue/Norfolk Avenue to improve the pedestrian and bicycle connection to Battery Lane Urban Park**
- **NIH Gateway Park – Improve the NIH green space or Gateway Park located between Wisconsin and Woodmont Avenues as off-site open space**
- **Pedestrian Connections – Establish north-south, mid-block pedestrian connections for the blocks located between Old Georgetown Road and Norfolk Avenue**
- **New Urban Streets – Provide new north-south urban streets between Battery Lane and Rugby Avenue for improved pedestrian and vehicular circulation**
- **Other Public Facilities and Amenities – Establish a network of diverse urban spaces when including public use space on-site.**

In addition, the Woodmont Triangle area is an important part of the Bethesda CBD Arts and Entertainment District. Within the Study Area, there are currently over 20 art galleries, music stores, and dance and music schools. This amendment supports the continued use of the Optional Method of Development to provide public art, art facilities, and public gathering spaces. These other public facilities and amenities could be managed by a non-profit organization. The arts-related space needs include the following:

- **Arts incubator space – An older, stand-alone building or portion of a building open to the public and preferably located on Norfolk Avenue, to provide studio space for emerging visual and performing artists.**

- Exhibit, teaching and lecture space – Spaces within existing or new buildings that could provide flexible space for a variety of functions.
- Space for the arts, such as dance studios, a black box theater, and live/work space for artists – Large spaces for the Arts and Entertainment District that could be leased at moderate rates to non-profit arts organizations. Live/work spaces could be provided as part of the affordable housing program.
- Indoor youth recreation facility – Flexible space to provide a variety of social and recreational programs open to the public.

Through the combination of new housing, improved public facilities and the development of an arts theme, the revitalization process proposed for the Woodmont Triangle also capitalizes on its close relationship to the Metro to achieve Master Plan goals.

GREEN BUILDING TECHNOLOGY

This amendment recommends incorporating emerging green building methods and practices into new development and redevelopment. Development that follows U.S. Green Building Council standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) contributes significantly to the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. LEED standards promote use of locally sourced and recycled materials, encourage wise use of energy, and reduce air and water pollution through innovative methods such as green roofs. Redevelopment of existing sites can increase both visual and environmental quality by use of green roofs, green walls, integrating planters and vegetation into exterior levels of buildings and using recycled and locally sourced materials in buildings.

CONCEPT FOR NORFOLK AVENUE AND BATTERY LANE URBAN PARK

