Wheaton Sector Plan

Preliminary

Recommendations

Montgomery County Planning Board  12-03-09
Wheaton

Central Business District

Westfield Wheaton Mall

Wheaton Sector Plan Area
Wheaton Community
Wheaton
Wheaton

Wheaton’s mall renovated by new owner: Westfield Group

Since 1990
Wheaton

Housing
95% absorption rate

723 housing units between 2004-2008

133 multifamily units renovated by Montgomery Housing Partnership

Some one to two-story retail stores
Demographics
Wheaton’s population is comparatively older than that of the County

Children are uncommon in the community (only 10% of the population is under 18 years of age)

Wheaton is more diverse than the County as a whole (52% of population is minority)
Wheaton

Substantial block of Generation X & Y (ages 18 to 44) — typically single, living with housemates, or young families without children

The number of **households** in Wheaton is forecasted to increase by 69%

Nearly all of the anticipated population and household growth will be in **new multifamily housing**
Wheaton

Zoning must accommodate Wheaton’s future housing needs
Wheaton

Market Analysis
Wheaton
Strengths

- transit capacity
- ethnic food
- music culture
- shopping mall
Wheaton Weaknesses

- lack of established Class A office market
- a predominance of small property owners with minimal resources for redevelopment
- more attractive development options elsewhere in the region
- Westfield Mall not integrated into the Core
- needs improved physical environment to be competitive
Wheaton property owners lack incentives to redevelop

- low vacancy rates
- competitive retail rents
- emotional ties to family businesses

Weakness
Wheaton

lack of existing office market makes it difficult to capture new class A facilities.
Wheaton

Weakness

more attractive development options in the region
Wheaton

Wheaton’s strengths contribute to attracting new residential development

Over the very long term Wheaton could support approximately 7,100 new housing units under the high scenario

A strong local residential community supports retail
Wheaton

**High rise** housing and office will be difficult to construct due to achievable rents/ pricing/financing.
Wheaton

Development Scenarios Modeling
## Wheaton

### Transportation Modeling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Additional Employees</th>
<th>Additional Households</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COG 2030 Forecast</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>+ 800 employees</td>
<td>+ 3,200 households</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Scenario</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>+ 3,000 employees</td>
<td>+ 4,300 households</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Scenario</td>
<td>26,300</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>+ 16,100 employees</td>
<td>+ 4,600 households</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Low Scenario:** Estimated amount of development Wheaton might capture over the next 15-20 years

**High Scenario:** Aggressive estimate if most of the properties were assembled and redeveloped to their maximum development potential
Wheaton

Results of Transportation Modeling

Assuming a 30% non-auto mode share, the existing transportation infrastructure is sufficient to accommodate the high scenario.

The intersection of Georgia and Arcola Avenue is already failing and continues to do so in either scenario.

The intersection of Georgia and Plyers Mill Road fails under the high scenario.
Vision
Transit-Oriented

Mixed-Use
low scale development
some mid and high rise

Compact

Ethnic flavor

residential and retail community
with significant retail, entertainment, and services
Wheaton Development Opportunities

- WMATA
- Privately Owned Assembled Properties
- County Owned Properties
- M-NCPPC Property
- Westfield Group

Revitalization
Wheaton

Need for public intervention to spur greater commercial revitalization

County’s Request for Qualification Properties
(11+ acres)
Wheaton
limited availability of *easily* developable sites

Revitalization

Publicly Owned
Privately Owned
County’s Request for Qualification Properties (11+ acres)
Wheaton

Development Activity

1. Avalon Bay
   320 residential units

2. Safeway Site
   57,000 sf Safeway
   500 residential units

3. First Baptist Church of Wheaton
   225 residential units

4. Triangle Park Shopping Center

M Metro
Recommendations
Wheaton

- Confirm most existing residential zones
- Confirm the existing CBD Zones
Wheaton Overlay Zone

Office development never occurred

Site plan review for standard method projects became a point of controversy

Viewed as a complicated zoning regulation and a disincentive to redevelop

Remove the existing Retail Preservation Overlay Zone

Create other mechanisms to protect small business
Wheaton Overlay Zone

2006

Overlay zone amended in 2006

Allows optional method development

Exempts buildings less than 20,000 square feet from site plan review

Allowed increased building height

Requires set aside floor area for small businesses

There has been no development using the optional method since these changes were made
Wheaton

Mechanisms to preserve and support mom-and-pop businesses

Amend the CBD zones to require street level retail if specified in a master or sector plan

Allow small properties to transfer density to CBD redevelopment sites, which could help small properties capture value while retaining their current buildings
Wheaton
Rezone non-CBD properties to mixed-use
Wheaton  Westfield Mall
Wheaton

Option A

Retain the **C-2 commercial zone** on the Westfield property

**Advantages**

- Simplest and cheapest to expand existing uses

**Disadvantages**

- Reflects the existing use, not Plan vision for mixed-use
- No residential
- Site plan review generally not required for regional shopping center
- No required amenities
Wheaton

Option B
Rezone the mall site from C-2 to mixed-use

Rezone the entire site to CR or CBD
Wheaton

Option B

Mixed-use on the Westfield property

Advantages

• Regulatory controls (Standard and Optional Method of Development)
• Site Plan Review
• Project Plan Review
• Public Use Space
• Amenities, including environmental benefits
• The most control over urban design
Wheaton

Option B

Disadvantages

• Perceived complication with Westfield's business operations and expansion
• Increased cost of review process
• Longer approval process
• Multiple CR Zones may prove complicated for Westfield
Wheaton

Option C

Rezone the mall site frontage from commercial to mixed-use

- Rezone a portion of the Westfield property from C-2 to mixed-use (CR or CBD)
- Retain the C-2 commercial zone on the remainder of the Westfield property
Wheaton

Option C

Mixed-use frontage along Veirs Mill Road

Advantages

• Regulatory controls (Standard and Optional Method of Development) on portion most likely to develop
  • Site Plan Review
  • Project Plan Review
  • Public Use Space
  • Amenities, including environmental benefits
  • The most control over urban design
Wheaton

Option C

Disadvantages

• Perceived complication with Westfield's Business operations and expansion

• Increased cost of review process

• Longer approval process
Public Realm
Wheaton Public Realm

Transform Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard, and Veirs Mill Road into boulevards
Wheaton Public Realm

Establish a network of enhanced pedestrian priority streets
wider sidewalks + outdoor eating + more trees and landscaping + lighting + street furniture
Wheaton Public Realm

Create an open space system

- most prominent open space and civic focal point on parking lot 13
- Neighborhood green on parking lot 14
- Urban square on parking lot 17
- Refurbish or relocate park and Veteran’s Memorial
- Other public use space associated with new development
Future Parking Lot 17
Connectivity

Walkable CBD Grid

Connections to Adjacent Communities
Wheaton Connectivity

Improve connectivity within the planning area to Metro, adjacent communities, and nearby regional parks and trails.
Complete the street network to improve connectivity.

Provide through-block pedestrian connections.
Provide for bus rapid transit subject to the County’s study.
Environmental improvement will be made incrementally through redevelopment.

- Water quality
- Stormwater management
- Air quality
- Energy generation
- Carbon storage
- Energy use reduction
- Urban heat island
Community Facilities
3+ acre sites for consideration – elementary school

1. Crossway Community Center - 7.049 A
2. Lindsay Ford - 3.373 A
3. WMATA - 3.83 A
4. WTOP - 12.31 A
5. Wheaton Forest Local Park - 9.3 A
6. Toys R Us - 4.078 A
7. Westfield - 4 A, 72 A

Public Properties
Private Properties
CBD Properties

Wheaton Community Facilities
Westfield - 4 acres within a 72-acre site

Private Properties
CBD Properties
Action

approval to prepare the Draft Wheaton Sector Plan

Draft Plan to the Planning Board in January, 2010