

Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)

January 13, 2022

Marc Elrich, County Executive
Office of **County Executive**
Executive Office Building, 2nd floor
101 Monroe **St.**
Rockville, MD 20850

And
Montgomery County Council
Stella Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Elrich and Members of the County Council:

The 14 members (7 residential and 7 commercial) of the Bethesda Downtown Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) unanimously support the conversion of parking lot 10 (between Walsh and Leland) and a large portion of parking lot 24 (behind the Farm Women's Market) to public parks as proposed in the Bernstein/EYA Farm Women's Market project. The Bethesda Downtown Plan (the Plan) calls for such conversion; the current proposal has broad community support and previously received support from the IAC.

The IAC understands that the proposed parks and the replacement underground parking will be financed in part by Bernstein/EYA and a voluntary contribution from the Town of Chevy Chase, but county funds will be needed to fully fund the project. The IAC urges the county to commit to the allocation of the additional funds needed for this critically important project and to include this project in the Capital Improvements Program for the next fiscal year.

The importance of the proposed parks to the success of Bethesda cannot be overstated. Along Wisconsin Avenue between Bradley Boulevard and Old Georgetown Road, the area closest to the proposed parks, nearly 2,500 new housing units have recently been built or are on their way and thousands of square feet of office, hotel, and retail space have been added, with more coming there and elsewhere in Bethesda. The proposed parks will provide critical public amenities for the many new residents, office workers, and shoppers. As well, the parks will contribute to the success of the proposed retail space in the refurbished and expanded Farm Women's Market. Within walking distance of Bethesda Row, Metro, and the Purple Line, the parks will be a magnet for people from all over the county and beyond to meet, mingle, and relax.

Appointed by the Planning Board, the IAC's role "is to coordinate and monitor the progress of development and address implementation of the recommendations in the Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan." The conversion of the parking lots to parks has our unanimous support.

Sincerely,

Michael Fetchko

Michael Fetchko
Bethesda IAC Co Chair

Matthew Gordon

Matthew Gordon
Bethesda IAC Co Chair

Cc: Casey Anderson
Tina Patterson
Carol Rubin
Gerald Sichy
Partap Verma
Gwen Wright
Stephanie Dickel
Elza Hissel-McCoy
Peter Fosselman