

PHED COMMITTEE #1
February 29, 2016

M E M O R A N D U M

February 25, 2016

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee
FROM: Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Administrator
SUBJECT: Westbard Sector Plan—evaluation of public school and transportation adequacy at buildout; transportation elements

Councilmembers: Please bring your copies of the Draft Plan and Appendix to this worksession.

This memorandum addresses public school and transportation adequacy at the time of the buildout of the Draft Plan, and transportation elements in the Draft Plan. The memo will address issues raised by Councilmember Berliner (©1-4), public hearing testimony, and Council staff. Some technical corrections will be made to the final document, but they are not identified in this memo.

I. PUBLIC SCHOOL AND TRANSPORTATION ADEQUACY AT BUILDOUT

From the outset it must be understood that the sector plan addresses what Westbard should become when it is built out. Measures of public facility adequacy, therefore, examine whether or not there can be sufficient school and transportation capacity at buildout to meet the need generated by existing and future development at buildout. Public facility adequacy at intermediate points between now and buildout are monitored and regulated by the Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP). The current SSP is undergoing its scheduled quadrennial review and will be deliberated by the Council this autumn.

1. Public school adequacy at buildout. Many testified that the housing proposed in the Draft Plan would exacerbate present overcrowding in the public schools in the B-CC and Whitman Clusters. (The current cluster boundary splits the area.) The key critique is presented in the testimony of the Whitman Cluster PTSA (©5-8), challenging the ability of MCPS to accurately forecast school-specific enrollment as well as the student generation rates it uses. Thus the PTSA and others believe the future enrollment predicted from the proposed new housing is underestimated and cannot be accommodated. Councilmember Berliner has raised some of these concerns to the Superintendent (©9-10) and the Superintendent has replied (©11-13).

In response to the call for more discussion of school capacity in master plans, MCPS and Planning staff have developed more thorough evaluations of long-term impacts of proposed development on public school capacity. The text regarding school capacity developed for the Westbard, Bethesda CBD, and Lyttonsville plans—recently updated to reflect 2016 student generation rate—are on ©14-24. **Council staff recommends that the Westbard text be included in the body of the sector plan, and revised if the Council approves a different amount of housing in the Plan.**

Forecast accuracy. First, how accurate have MCPS's forecasts been? The Whitman Cluster PTSA's argument is based on two data points where MCPS has underestimated enrollments: for Bradley Hills ES, where the enrollment in 2011-12 exceeded the 2005 forecast by 42.1%, and for Pyle MS, where the enrollment in 2014-15 exceeded the 2008 forecast by 22.4%.

Council staff undertook a comparison of actual enrollment to the forecast six years earlier for each of the seven schools in the Whitman Cluster over each of the past ten years—a total of 70 data points—in the hopes of understanding this issue more comprehensively. The data are displayed on ©25. The results show that MCPS has fairly consistently underestimated actual enrollment, but by a more modest 10.6%; the two data points highlighted by the Whitman Cluster PTSA are outliers that exaggerate the depth of the problem.

A closer examination of the data reveals a reason for at least half this discrepancy: the consequences of the Great Recession that began during the 2008-2009 school year and had ripple effects for the following five years. Notice that the cluster-wide underestimation was in the 1-8% range before the recession, but rose to the 16-19% range after. The consequences of the recession was first noted by the Superintendent in October 2009:

At this time the stagnant housing market is making it difficult for residents to sell their homes, contributing to less mobility. Consequently, more households are 'staying put' in the county and fewer MCPS students are moving out to other counties and states. Another contributing factor to enrollment change is the increasing share of county enrollment that is enrolled in MCPS. In 2008, 85 percent of students enrolled in Montgomery County were enrolled in MCPS, while 15 percent were enrolled in county nonpublic schools. This was up from 82 percent in previous years. [*Superintendent's Recommended FY2011 Capital Budget and the FY2011-2016 Capital Improvements Program*, October 2009, page 2-4]

In October 2010 the Superintendent reported that an even higher share, 86%, were enrolling in public schools. The Council may recall the spike in enrollment that occurred, suddenly putting the B-CC Cluster into a potential housing moratorium under the SSP public school test. The subsequent three years the share dropped back to 85%, and in October 2014 the Superintendent reported that the MCPS share had ticked up to 86% again.

The point is, that unless you were one of the heroes (or were they anti-heroes?) of "The Big Short," almost no one predicted the recession and its consequences. The forecasts in the table for 2010-2011 through 2014-15—which show that enrollment outpaced the 6-year forecast cluster-wide by 16-19%—were all developed *before* the recession. The 6-year forecast for the 2015-16 school year, which was developed in October 2009, was the first prepared after the recession was underway, but before most understood its ultimate length and breadth. It, too, underestimated the actual enrollment, but by 9% across the cluster.

A basic tenet of statistics is that the greater the disaggregation, the more difficult to predict a result, so it follows that enrollment forecasts at the individual school level are more prone to deviation than for a cluster as a whole. In particular, forecasts for individual elementary schools are more challenging and contain more error over time for two reasons:

- First, the size of the entering kindergarten at elementary schools is not known in advance and has to be estimated based on county birth trends and recent trends in the kindergarten size at the school. A big change in kindergarten size has long-lasting impact on a school's enrollment.
- Second, the geographic area for elementary schools is smaller than secondary schools. Small area forecasting, especially for several years out in the future, is more subject to error than large area forecasting. What may appear to be an enrollment trend when a forecast is being developed may shift the following year requiring new assumptions to be used in the next new forecast. Resident births and housing turnover are the primary factors in enrollment change. The housing market, and related turnover to younger families, is economically sensitive. When a factor in forecasting is economically sensitive, the chance for error increases, because of the limited period of time that economic trends are successfully projected.

Student generation rates. For many years MCPS has used student generation rates that are disaggregated into three regions: North, East, and Southwest. The B-CC and Whitman Clusters comprise the Southwest Region along with the Walter Johnson, Churchill, Wootton, Richard Montgomery, and Rockville Clusters. Within each region MCPS has developed and regularly updates student generation rates at each level (ES, MS, and HS) for four housing types: single-family detached, townhouses, multi-family low- to mid-rise (4 or fewer stories), and multi-family high-rise (5 or more stories). The rates have just been updated in preparation for the 2016-2020 SSP; they are on ©26.

MCPS also regularly checks the addresses of its enrollees as a check against these rates. Data reflecting the current year has been provided for the Westbard area, the Bethesda CBD (B-CC Cluster), and North Bethesda (Walter Johnson Cluster) and are on ©27-29. The actual student generation rates, as compared to the new Southwest Region rates, are summarized below:

	ES Students/Unit	MS Students/Unit	HS Students/Unit
Westbard mid-rise rates (174 units)	0.052	0.029	0.052
Southwest Region mid-rise rates	0.112	0.049	0.062
Westbard high-rise rates (806 units)	0.083	0.048	0.094
Southwest Region high-rise rates	0.048	0.020	0.026

	ES Students/Unit	MS Students/Unit	HS Students/Unit
Bethesda CBD high-rise rates (3,553 units)	0.031	0.010	0.018
Southwest Region high-rise rates	0.048	0.020	0.026

	ES Students/Unit	MS Students/Unit	HS Students/Unit
North Bethesda mid-rise rates (1,252 units)	0.077	0.034	0.032
Southwest Region mid-rise rates	0.112	0.049	0.062
North Bethesda high-rise rates (5,026 units)	0.042	0.014	0.016
Southwest Region high-rise rates	0.048	0.020	0.026

Generally, the actual rates for these samples are lower than the updated Southwest Region rates. In Westbard, the high-rise rates (based on 3 buildings comprising 806 units) are higher than the new Southwest Region rates, while the rates for the mid-rise sample (Kenwood Place, comprising 174 units) are lower. The proposals for Westbard are mainly for mid-rise housing. Council staff agrees with MCPS that the new Southwest Region rates should be used in forecasting enrollment.

Capacity. There are three sector plans underway that would add public school students to this portion of the county: Westbard, Bethesda CBD, and Lyttonsville. MCPS's estimate of students generated by these plans and the potential means for accommodating them is described on ©14-24. Without knowing exactly how they will be accommodated, it is still possible to compare the future enrollment by level, to the total capacity that could be created by additions and school re-openings.

Regarding enrollment, Council staff took the Year 2030 forecasts in the Whitman and B-CC Clusters as representative of the buildout of current master plans in the B-CC Policy Area, and added to them the new students estimated in Westbard, Bethesda CBD, and Lyttonsville. Regarding capacity, Council staff assumed most elementary schools could be increased to 740 students, that Pyle MS could be enlarged to fit 1,502 students, that Westland MS and the new B-CC MS #2 could be enlarged to 1,200 students each, and that additions to B-CC HS and Whitman HS could bring their respective capacities up to 2,407 and 2,398 students, respectively. The results of this comparison are shown below:

Combined Long-Term Enrollment Forecast in the B-CC and Whitman Clusters

	ES Enrollment	MS Enrollment	HS Enrollment
B-CC Cluster in 2030 w/o new plans	3,600	1,900	2,400
Whitman Cluster in 2030 w/o new plans	2,500	1,500	2,300
Westbard Plan	280	120	150
Bethesda CBD Plan	405	170	220
Lyttonsville Plan*	145	60	80
Total	6,930	3,750	5,150

Combined Long-Term Capacity Potential in the B-CC and Whitman Clusters

	ES Capacity	MS Capacity	HS Capacity
B-CC Cluster in 2016	3,864	1,097	1,683
Whitman Cluster in 2016	2,342	1,289	1,891
B-CC HS, planned addition			+724
Whitman HS, planned addition			+507
B-CC MS #2, planned new school		+930	
B-CC MS #2, increase capacity to 1200		+270	
Westland MS, increase capacity to 1200		+103	
Pyle MS, planned addition		+213	
B-CC elementary schools, increase capacities to 740**	+824		
Use 2 closed B-CC Cluster elementary school sites***	+1,290		
Wood Acres ES, planned addition	+229		
Whitman elementary schools, increase capacities to 740****	+1,146		
Use 4 closed Whitman Cluster elementary school sites*****	+2,580		
Total	12,275	3,902	4,805

*The Lyttonsville Plan area is split between the B-CC and Downcounty Consortium (Einstein) Clusters. These enrollment forecasts are for the portion of Lyttonsville that is currently within the B-CC Cluster.

**Except Chevy Chase ES and Somerset ES, which are on sites less than 4 acres.

***Lynnbrook ES and Rollingwood ES. Assume new schools are built on these sites. Assume 740-student capacity at Lynnbrook and 550-student capacity at Rollingwood, which is only 4.07 acres.

****Except Wood Acres ES, which will have a capacity of 757 students with its planned addition.

*****Clara Barton ES, Brookmont ES, Concord ES, and Fernwood ES. Radnor ES is not assumed, as it is a holding school. Assume new schools are built on these sites, with a 550-student capacity at schools with 4 acres or less (Clara Barton and Concord) and 740-student capacity at the others.

Using these assumptions, the high school level is the only level where there would be a shortage in the long term. However, again in the long term, Whitman HS could be enlarged further, to as much as 2,900 students, similar to Blair HS's current 2,920 capacity. Whitman sits on a 30.7-acre site, which is slightly larger than Blair's 30.2-acre site. Increasing Whitman's capacity 2,900 would bring the combined long-term HS capacity to 5,307, which would exceed the enrollment in the long term.

Council staff concludes that there are sufficient opportunities for adding school capacity in the Whitman and B-CC Clusters to accommodate the public school students generated by the housing proposed by the Planning Board in the Westbard Sector Plan—and in the Bethesda CBD and Lyttonsville Sector Plans—even assuming the unlikely occurrence that all the proposed housing would actually materialize. This does not mean that the Council must approve as much density as the Plan proposes; it only means that school capacity is not a reason to approve less.

As noted in the beginning of this section, land use plans should answer the question as to whether there can be adequate public facilities—in this case, school capacity—at buildout, and should also identify parcels for new schools, if necessary. The draft text prepared for the Westbard Sector Plan is as specific as it should be. Some of the additional specifics requested by the Whitman Cluster PTSA (see ©6)—such as re-drawing boundaries, considering non-standard options, prioritizing projects—and under the purview of the Board of Education and do not belong in a land use plan.

2. *Transportation adequacy at buildout.* Every master plan should have a balance between its proposed land use and its proposed transportation network and services. For a quarter century this “balance” has been defined as what would be needed to meet the current adequate public facilities (APF) requirements as described in the SSP. Achieving this balance in a plan is not an academic exercise: if a plan is not balanced, then at some point in the future a proposed master-planned development will be unable to proceed because it will have no means to meet the APF requirements.

In the past quarter century there have been only three “out-of-balance” plans adopted. The Potomac Subregion Plan (most recently revised in 2002) stipulates that its two-lane roads would not be widened, except at intersections; the community is willing to put up with intolerable congestion to retain its pastoral ambiance. The Council has rationalized this by recognizing that relatively little through traffic flows on these roads, and so the future congestion would not significantly affect County residents living outside the subregion.

The second “out-of-balance” plan was the Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan (2013), which forecasts that three intersections will fail Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) at buildout. However, the failure will be at the margin, mainly because the Council included in the plan certain intersection improvements that would bring the sector plan area much closer to passing LATR at buildout. The third plan not to achieve balance was the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan (2014), which assumed more land use and a lower mode share goal than would have been needed to meet the Transportation Policy Area Review (TPAR) test.

To determine whether or not a master plan is in balance, the Council has applied the current SSP transportation tests, but using a long-term time frame. For example, while for subdivision reviews TPAR evaluates the traffic from existing and already subdivision-approved development on a

transportation network programmed 10 years in the future, for master plans TPAR evaluates the traffic generated by the buildout of planned development on the full master-planned transportation network. The master plan TPAR evaluates the buildout traffic conditions during the weekday evening peak period, since the evening peak typically has somewhat more traffic (and, thus, more congestion) than the morning peak. The master plan LATR also evaluates the traffic generated by the buildout of planned development on a network that assumes certain intersection improvements.

The discussion of land use/transportation balance is summarized in the Draft Plan (p. 35) and elucidated in the Appendix (App. pp. 43-50). Meeting the TPAR requirements proves not to be an issue for Westbard. TPAR is measured over the entirety of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Policy Area (the area south of the Beltway, west of Rock Creek, north of the District of Columbia, and east of the Potomac River) and the Westbard Sector Plan is but a very small portion of it. Planning staff notes that though the B-CC Policy Area is near the roadway adequacy threshold based on TPAR testing of the build-out of adopted plans by the year 2040, the proposed development in the Sector Plan would not cause the B-CC Policy Area to fall below the TPAR roadway adequacy threshold for urban policy areas (i.e., 40% ratio of forecast speed to uncongested speed). Furthermore, the Draft Plan would generate marginally *fewer* vehicle trips than the current plan; 2% less in the morning weekday peak hour and 6% less in the heavier evening weekday peak hour.

The Planning staff also performed a LATR test at buildout for six signalized intersections in or near Westbard. All would operate better than the SSP standard for the B-CC Policy Area, which is a Critical Lane Volume (CLV) of 1,600. The only intersection that comes close to reaching this standard is River Road/Little Falls Parkway, which is forecasted to reach 1,501 CLV (6% under capacity) in the morning peak and 1,554 CLV (3% under capacity) in the evening peak. The intersection would still be congested, but not enough to exceed the SSP standard. SSP standards are set to conditions that the Council considers tolerable, not necessarily optimal. Most of the rush hour traffic on River Road is through traffic, so most of those who are negatively affected by congestion on the road are not those who are residing, working, shopping, or otherwise visiting Westbard.

Every new master plan amends prior plans, sometimes even those that do not cover the same geographic area. For example, the Planning staff evaluated the River Road/Willard Avenue intersection, although it found that it would operate tolerably at the buildout of Westbard. Similarly, the last Friendship Heights Sector Plan (1998) evaluated intersections outside its boundary, including the River Road/Little Falls Parkway intersection. That analysis led to that plan calling for two improvements there. One, which has been implemented, was to widen the approach of southwest-bound Little Falls Parkway to 4 lanes: an exclusive left-turn lane, two through lanes, and an exclusive right-turn lane. The other, which has not yet been implemented, is to add a third through lane on River Road in the northwest-bound (i.e., outbound) direction (©30). This third through lane would start prior to the intersection and tie back in after the intersection. Unless the Westbard Plan explicitly states differently (which the Draft Plan does not), then this third outbound through lane would remain in the master plan.

Council staff asked Planning staff to evaluate the traffic and other impacts of this master-planned outbound through lane. It found that the lane would have no effect in the morning peak hour, but it would have a significant beneficial effect in the evening (more heavily trafficked) peak hour at buildout, improving from 1,554 CLV to 1,329 CLV: 17% under capacity (©31-32). This would provide a much

wider margin from the 1,600 CLV standard, should the traffic forecasts prove over time to be underestimated.

Assuming this lane would extend just under 400' from each edge of Little Falls Parkway (©33), this added lane would still fit within the planned 110' right-of-way. However, the Draft Plan calls for this right-of-way also to include an 11'-wide cycle-track and a 10'-wide sidewalk northwest from the intersection. Planning staff notes if this through lane stays in the Plan then the cycle track and sidewalk in the first 400' would likely be replaced by a 10'-wide shared-use path.

Another option would be merely to add a right-turn lane from outbound River Road to Bethesda-bound Little Falls Parkway. This would provide less congestion relief than adding the lane through the intersection, but it would still improve the evening peak hour buildout CLV to 1,447: 10% under capacity. This option would not interfere with the first 400' of cycle track/sidewalk that the Planning Board recommends.

Council staff recommendation: Either retain the third outbound through lane through the intersection or replace it with just an outbound right-turn lane. The trade-off is between: carrying the cycle track/sidewalk through to the intersection; or having a shared-use path in the last few hundred feet while also providing more congestion relief. In either case there would be land takings within the planned 110'-wide right-of-way, and the construction costs and impacts would be comparable.

Council staff concludes that there can be adequate transportation capacity to accommodate the land use types and densities proposed by the Planning Board in the Westbard Sector Plan. Including one of the above recommendations for the River Road/Little Falls Parkway intersection would provide an even wider margin for error. As noted earlier, this does not mean that the Council must approve as much density as the Plan proposes; it only means that the transportation capacity issue is not a reason to approve less.

II. TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS

1. Streets and roads. There are no other improvements to streets or roads that would add significant capacity in Westbard, although there are some that would improve internal circulation.

Westbard Avenue. The north-south spine of Westbard is Westbard Avenue. Its proposed classification and cross-section is bifurcated: south of Westbard Circle it is proposed to be a 4-lane Minor Arterial, MA-5, and north of it—including the realignment approaching River Road—it would be a 4-lane Business District Street, B-1. However, the southern segment cannot be a Minor Arterial; the County Code clearly states that a Minor Arterial can only have two lanes. Furthermore, the proposed intersection with new road B-2 (see below) would be a more appropriate break point between the mixed use core to the north and the residential area to the south.

The existing cross-section of the southern segment (page 31) has four 11'-wide travel lanes, with the curb lanes used for parking in the off-peak. It also has 5'-wide sidewalks separated from the roadway with grass/tree buffers. The proposed cross-section shows narrowing the roadway by 2', but this would make the curb lanes too narrow for safe driving, considering that 1' is needed as a shy area from the curb. (In subsequent correspondence, Planning staff agrees that the road cross-section here

should remain unchanged.) The proposed plan also calls for 10'-wide shared-use trails on each side of this segment of Westbard Avenue. Ms. Lynne Battle testified against widening the west-side sidewalk to a 10'-wide trail, decrying the encroachment on woods that abut Westland MS.

Council staff recommends no change to the existing cross-section or right-of-way on Westbard Avenue south of the intersection with the proposed B-2, except that the 5'-wide sidewalk on the east side be widened to a 10'-wide shared-use trail. Where a higher-level bikeway is warranted, road cross-sections typically either have: (1) a one-way cycle track in each direction flanked by sidewalks; (2) a two-way cycle track on one side and sidewalks on both sides; or (3) a shared-use trail on one side and a sidewalk on the other (this being the most common configuration outside commercial areas). Council staff sees no special circumstance here that warrants shared-use trails on both sides of Westbard Avenue.

For the portion of Westbard Avenue north of B-2 the Draft Plan shows two optional cross-sections. Both would feature four through lanes (with the outside lanes used for parking in the off-peak) flanked by one-way cycle tracks and sidewalks. Option B would also include a narrow median. Option A has a minimum 100' right-of-way, while Option B has a minimum 110' right-of-way. **Council staff recommends Option B, to provide more flexibility to design in all of the street elements. Furthermore, the diagram on page 30 should show each lane to be 11'-wide—10' for driving plus 1' for the gutter and shy area from the curbs—and the text on page 29 should note that there would be a median.**

Westbard Avenue realignment. Westbard Avenue is proposed to be relocated so that it ties in directly to River Road. This is desirable for at least two reasons: it would provide continuous flow between River Road and Westbard's core without having to negotiate left- or right-turns at the current intersection with Ridgefield Road; and the junction with River Road would become a proper right-angled intersection, much more able to accommodate right-turning vehicles from inbound River Road to Westbard Avenue. **Council staff recommends clarifying the text on page 29 by amending it to read:**

Westbard Avenue, a business district street, heading toward River Road, should be reconfigured to [be reconfigured to prioritize the traffic movement from Westbard Avenue to Ridgefield Road] tie directly to River Road with a right-angled intersection, instead of teeing into Ridgefield Road [to River Road].

The description of this improvement in the table of future capital improvements (Table 4.1.1 on p. 93) similarly should be amended (but with fewer words).

Westbard "Court." Drs. Cynthia Green and Xinsheng Zeng, residents of Westbard Avenue's 1000'-long block between River and Ridgefield Roads, testified about the substantial and long-standing cut-through traffic that has been occurring on their block. Unlike the rest of Westbard Avenue, this block is a Secondary Residential Street and is fronted by 21 single-family homes and three townhouses. Right-turns from inbound River Road are prohibited from 7-9 am, and heavy trucks are prohibited at all times. However, many ignore these prohibitions. It is a natural cut-through route: it is a shorter distance to the core of Westbard, and it avoids the intersection of River and Ridgefield Roads, which is signalized and requires an acute right turn that many larger vehicles cannot negotiate without encroaching on the approach lane. A primary reason for the realignment noted above is to allow this turn to occur smoothly.

The Springfield Civic Association and the residents of this block have written requesting that Westbard Avenue be permanently closed at the River Road end (©34-37). Some master plans have included recommendations for certain streets to be permanently closed, although there is a process (similar to the street abandonment process) that must be followed before a street can be legally closed. Including this as a master plan recommendation would buttress the argument once the street closure is formally requested. **Council staff recommends that the Plan call for the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at its River Road end.** If the Council agrees, the following points should either be included either in the text or the legislative history:

- *The closure should not occur until Westbard Avenue is realigned to intersect River Road with a right-angled turn.* Some vehicles need street space to access the Westbard core; until the River/Ridgefield intersection is realigned, the vehicles may still need to use the residential block of Westbard Avenue. Hopefully the realignment will occur early in the redevelopment of Westbard. At that time this residential block should be re-named to avoid confusion with realigned Westbard Avenue. “Westbard Court,” perhaps?
- *The closed end should have a mountable curb to allow emergency vehicles to access the block directly from River Road.*
- *The closed end should be reconstructed to create a turnaround.* Trash trucks, snow plows, and other large vehicles serving the homes need means to return without backing up this long block.

Kenwood. Kenwood is concerned about existing and potentially greater cut-through traffic, particularly on Dorset Avenue and Brookside Drive. At present, through traffic from Ridgefield Road (what in the future would be realigned Westbard Avenue) to Brookside Drive is prohibited during peak periods, although Kenwood residents report that some traffic still passes through in that direction then. The Kenwood Committee for Westbard/River Road has written about the land use proposed near this intersection (which will be taken up at a subsequent worksession) and has suggests more study of the intersection itself (©38-39).

One suggestion from the Kenwood Committee is to consider physically channeling the left- and right-turning lanes from the realigned Westbard Avenue onto River Road, effectively precluding the through movement to Brookside Drive at all times. Cut-through traffic also could be reduced if the reverse through movement—from Brookside Drive to realigned Westbard Avenue—were also prohibited, at least during peak hours. However, any such prohibition would also hinder Kenwood residents wishing to drive to and from the Westbard core, as well as to Westland MS and Little Falls Library. **Council staff recommends that the Plan encourages the Department of Transportation and the State Highway Administration to work with Kenwood to develop a design and operations at this intersection that better protects Kenwood from cut-through traffic without restricting safe and convenient access between realigned Westbard Avenue and River Road.**

Other nearby neighborhoods. Other neighborhoods have raised concerns about existing or potential cut-through traffic, but none are as obvious as “Westbard Court” and Kenwood. The County has a cut-through traffic regulation which allows for a traffic control scheme that could restrict turns and, in the extreme, close roads if a sufficient through-traffic problem materializes and the affected neighborhoods accept it. The regulation is here:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Traffic/Resources/Files/PDF/exreg17_94am.pdf.

B-2. The Draft Plan recommends a new Business District Street, B-2, connecting from Westbard Avenue south of Park Bethesda to River Road, largely paralleling the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT). It would be an alternative means of access to River Road from the core of Westbard, relieving to some degree the intersection at River Road and relocated Westbard Avenue, and it would provide easy bike and pedestrian access to the CCT. It would have one travel lane in each direction and a parking lane on one side, and sidewalks on both sides, in a fairly narrow minimum right-of-way. The street may be fairly expensive to construct, since it would require acquisition of portions of several industrial properties to build it, even to its modest width. If the properties were to redevelop, the likelihood is that land for the street would be dedicated and that most or all of its construction would be required as a condition of subdivision approval.

Any lane abutting a parking lane or a curb should be no less than 11' wide: essentially it is to provide 10' with a foot of "shy" area between moving vehicles and either a parked car or a curb. **Council staff recommends revising Table 2.3.1 and text on page 29 to note that B-2 would have a minimum right-of-way of 54', and revising the diagrams on page 33 to show the travel lanes being 11' wide.**

B-3. Landy Lane is recommended also as a Business District Street, B-3, running north from River Road to the Washington Episcopal School (WES), from which point it would continue as a "Local" Street north to Little Falls Parkway. However, there is no such classification as "Local" in the County Code; this extension should either be designated as a public street, in which case it should be designed as a continuation of B-3, or a private street. **Council staff recommends that what the Draft Plan shows as a Local Street instead should be a continuation of B-3, with the same cross-section and right-of-way as B-2: one travel lane each direction, one parking lane, and sidewalks on both sides, within a minimum 54'-wide right-of-way.** This would provide even more relief to the River Road/Little Falls Parkway intersection in the long term, and it would be a better alternative for drivers than cutting through Kenwood. It is unlikely that the northern segment of B-3 would be built until or unless the WES property were to redevelop, however.

Road Code Urban Area. The Draft Plan recommends that the sector plan area be designated as a Road Code Urban Area (page 26). Some in the community have raised concerns with the "Urban" designation, but in this context the term simply means that streets built or rebuilt will have narrower lanes and other features that will slow traffic down to speeds that are commensurate with significant pedestrian activity. The map on ©40 shows those areas that are designated Urban, Suburban, and Rural; note that while the areas around Metro stations are Urban, so are the town centers of Olney, Damascus, Clarksburg, and Germantown.

Target speeds. Most recent sector plans have established target speeds for the streets and roads. Target speeds are those that are achieved when their final configuration of the road—and their traffic controls—are implemented. Setting target speeds is important, because while master plans cannot dictate specific traffic operations, they become the goal which the State Highway Administration and the County DOT are charged with achieving as the area develops.

An example is the Long Branch Sector Plan adopted in late 2013. In that Plan the Council set a target speed of 35 mph for the major roads at the edge of the area (University Boulevard and Piney

Branch Road west of University), 30 mph for Piney Branch Road through the center of the area, and 25 mph for all other streets. If River Road will become an active pedestrian area—which will occur if the Council approves the Draft Plan’s land use for the River Road properties—then the current speed limit of 35 mph is somewhat higher than what its target speed should become.

Council staff recommends that the Plan set the target speed on River Road within the sector plan area at 30 mph, and all other streets at 25 mph, except Little Falls Parkway, which should be 35 mph (its current speed limit).

River Road. The Draft Plan calls for River Road to be more bike and pedestrian friendly. This is especially important if the River Road-fronting properties are redeveloped as recommended in the Draft Plan. It correctly observes that:

There are numerous curb cuts along this short segment of roadway that add to traffic stress on River Road. The vast amount of curb cuts contributes to many friction points caused by turning vehicles accessing local businesses, as well as through traffic on River Road. In order to improve operations and enhance the safety on River Road, this Plan recommends that the curb cuts be reduced and driveway access points be consolidated in a logical pattern that allows for improved driveway and intersection spacing. Inter-parcel access should be provided to allow for driveway consolidation. Finally, a median should be provided with left turn lanes for access to the consolidated driveways. [page 26]

Council staff wholeheartedly agrees, but one set of elements is missing: more signalized intersections along River Road to process the consolidated turning traffic, including some inevitable “U” turns. Currently there are three signalized intersections on River Road in the area: at Little Falls Parkway, at the entrance to the Kenwood Station Shopping Center (i.e., Whole Foods, Ledo’s, et. al.), and at Ridgefield Road/Brookside Drive. To accommodate the Planning Board’s vision, ultimately there should be two more signals: at the River Road intersections with B-2/B-3, and at Clipper Lane (B-4). These five signals would be nearly evenly spaced in the roughly 1,900’-long stretch between Little Falls Parkway and Ridgefield/Brookside. A combination of the median, driveway consolidations, and this set of signals would particularly help the current congestion caused at Butler Avenue and the Kenwood Condominium, both of which intersect River Road much too close to Little Falls Parkway to be signalized. Both Butler Avenue and the Kenwood Condominium should ultimately have only right-in, right-out access/egress, but that will only work if there is a median and a signal at Clipper Lane, so that “U” turns would be possible there (and at Little Falls Parkway).

Just as important as these signals are for rationalizing access and egress from the River Road properties is the need to provide more protected (i.e., signalized) pedestrian crossing points. Although there is a ped crossing signed and (barely) marked across River Road beneath the Capital Crescent Trail, without a signal it is an uninviting option for pedestrians. The Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights advocates a signal at B-3 (Landy Lane) in particular, noting that it was a condition of the Council’s approval of the PD-28 rezoning for the senior housing development on WES’s property that SHA be petitioned for a signal. Others have called for more crossings as well. With this set of five signals, no pedestrian would be further than about 250’ from a safe crossing point. This set of signals would also go a long way to achieving the 30 mph target speed recommended above.

Council staff recommends the Plan call for traffic signals on River Road at B-2/B-3 (Landy Lane) and at B-4 (Clipper Lane) when warranted. Recent sector plans have called for signals when

warranted; the Long Branch Plan, for example, recommends several of them. SHA has the final word on this matter, but that does not mean the Council should not press this point in the strongest terms possible. Including in an adopted sector plan achieves that much, at least.

2. Transit. To date Westbard's land use density has not been high enough to warrant substantial transit service. There are no planned light rail or bus rapid transit routes to serve it. Mr. Ralph Bennett testified in favor of extending the Purple Line to Westbard. On one hand this would make a lot of sense: the Georgetown Branch right-of-way is the most direct route from Westbard to Bethesda, where travelers could connect easily to the Red Line north or south via the new southern entrance to the Metro station there, or continue east to downtown Silver Spring, Langley Park, the University of Maryland, College Park, and New Carrollton. The right-of-way is wide enough to accommodate both the tracks and the Capital Crescent Trail, where both would be in the configuration now planned for the light rail and trail between Bethesda and Silver Spring. There would be significant construction costs, especially the reconstruction of the bridges over Bradley Boulevard and River Road.

However, the reason why the Purple Line will not be extended is because of the 1990 decision that the Georgetown Branch right-of-way south of Bethesda Avenue would be developed as a park. Section 4(f) of the Federal Transportation Act of 1966 prevents construction of a transportation facility through park land unless there is no prudent or feasible alternative. It is not a simple exercise to get a 4(f) waiver when a road or transit line must *cross* a linear park; it is well-nigh impossible to get a waiver for a line that would run *along the length* of a park. An example of this point was the decision where to build a section of the Intercounty Connector in Derwood. The County's master plan had called for the ICC to be built along a long east-west stretch of Rock Creek Park; instead the State decided it had to follow a route that avoided the park, resulting in the taking of nearly a dozen homes in the Cashell Estates neighborhood.

As for bus service, there are only two routes currently serving the core of Westbard: the Metrobus Route T2, which runs along River Road to Friendship Heights every 15-25 minutes during peak periods; and the Ride On Route 23, which runs from Brookmont and Westmoreland Hills north to Westbard Avenue, and then to Friendship Heights, also every 15-25 minutes during peak periods. Both routes run less frequently in the off-peak and on weekends. No bus route connects Westbard to Bethesda. The Draft Plan generally urges more extensive and frequent service in the future, and that the private sector consortium provide shuttle services. This may be fine in the shorter term, but once there is a critical mass of density it should be replaced with Ride On service connecting both to Bethesda and Friendship Heights. **Council staff proposes that the Plan state that, when the demand warrants it, the County should initiate a limited-stop bus route running from Bethesda-Westbard-Friendship Heights-Westbard-Bethesda.** The Westbard stop should be at the transit hub recommended on pp. 35-36 of the Draft Plan.

3. Bikeway and pedestrian facilities. The bikeways recommended in the Draft Plan are exhibited on page 32 and the elements are described on pp. 36-39. Other than the recommendation about the bikeway facilities on the southern segment of Westbard Avenue (see above), the only other proposal of concern is designating the B-2 connector as having an on-road bikeway (see LB-2 on page 32). The recommendation is that it would be a shared use roadway, which means that the travel lanes will be wide enough to accommodate a bicyclist riding alongside a motor vehicle. But, as noted above, the travel lanes would only be 11' wide; usually a shared use roadway requires a travel lane that is at

least 14' wide. **Council staff recommendation: Do not designate a formal bikeway on B-2.** This does not mean that B-2 will be unsafe for bikers; it will be a local, narrow road, and so it is expected that speeds will be low enough to be compatible with bikers riding in the travel lane.

All improvements in Westbard should encourage safe biking and walking. Therefore, it would be appropriate to have the Plan designate Westbard as a Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area (BPPA). According to State law, a BPPA is a geographic area where the enhancement of bicycle and pedestrian traffic is a priority. Currently the County's master plans recommend more than two dozen areas as BPPAs: like Road Code Urban Areas, they are not just Metro station areas, but also town centers (e.g., Germantown, Clarksburg, Damascus, and Olney Town Centers), and small commercial centers where there is sufficient pedestrian activity (e.g., Veirs Mill, Long Branch, Montgomery Hills, Aspen Hill, and Colesville). Certainly Westbard would fit the bill as a BPPA. **Council staff recommends that the Plan designate the Westbard Sector Plan area as a Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area.**

4. Executive Branch comments. Comments from the Executive and three departments arrived just prior to this memorandum's deadline (©41-51). Most are technical in nature, suggesting certain corrections and clarifications. Council staff will address the more significant comments at the worksession.

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 1

CHAIRMAN
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

February 16, 2015

TO: Nancy Floreen, Chair, Planning, Housing, Economic Development Committee
George Leventhal, Member, Planning, Housing, Economic Development Committee
Hans Riemer, Member, Planning, Housing, Economic Development Committee

FROM: Roger Berliner

SUBJECT: Westbard Sector Plan

I believe the goals of the Westbard Plan are laudable: revitalization of the Westbard Shopping Center; increasing affordable housing in this part of the county; creating green, public gathering spaces; and greatly enhancing environmental and stormwater protections are all important objectives.

And I am convinced achieving these objectives does not have to come at the expense of the surrounding neighborhoods nor at the cost of overburdening our already stretched infrastructure. The plan put forth by our planning board is too aggressive. It can and should be substantially pared back by almost half. In doing so, the Council will allow the Westbard community to experience a more organic and gradual transformation. To that end, I am writing to you today to share some of my thoughts on how I believe we could achieve these objectives and to respectfully ask for your Committee's consideration during the upcoming worksessions.

1. **Significantly reduce the overall number of net new units to approximately 1,200 units** - about half of what was proposed in the Planning Board Draft. To achieve this, I recommend the following:
 - a. **Do not upzone properties in the River Road Corridor**, but implement a floating zone for those properties that wish to seek redevelopment in the future and are integral to public policy goals of the plan such as the restoration of the Willett Branch.. The process involved in pursuing development under a floating zone provides ample opportunities for public input and that of the Planning Department, Planning Board, and Council to assess the pace and impact of earlier development.



- b. **Eliminate the floating zone for the Little Falls Library parcel.** The Executive Branch has stated that there are no plans to redevelop the Little Falls Library site in the foreseeable future. If and when the building needs to be razed or needs major structural renovations, the issue of redeveloping with affordable housing can be revisited.
 - c. **Eliminate the CRT floating zone for the IM-zoned properties in the South River District.** The properties provide essential services to the Westbard and surrounding communities and the light industrial zoning should be retained.
- 2. **Protect the integrity of existing residential areas by implementing appropriate zoning and height adjustments for properties adjacent to new development.**
 - a. **Limit redevelopment on the Manor Care site to townhomes**
 - b. **Retain the 35' height limit on the Park Bethesda parcel closest to the Westwood Mews Condominiums** and include language in the plan that calls for sensitivity to the adjacent residential community when siting the new townhomes on this property.
 - c. **Reduce the height on the Westwood II parcel** in order to provide a better transition to the single family neighborhood of Springfield.
- 3. **Include strong language reflecting the current development plan for Washington Episcopal School.** Reduce the FAR on this property, especially the commercial allowance, as it does not reflect the negotiated plan under the previous PD-28 zoning. Limit any new residential units to the senior residential project already planned and negotiated for the parcel and ensure that any new development plan incorporate the previously approved binding elements for this property.
- 4. **Use the civic space to be provided by Equity One as a senior center.** 24% of Westbard residents are 65 years of age or older, double the countywide average. It is my understanding that Equity One has agreed to provide the County public use space in its new center. I recommend we consider using that space for a senior center since the closest senior center to Westbard is in Silver Spring. There is not a single county senior center west of 270.
- 5. **Affordable Housing:** I support the affordable housing goals of the plan as well as the desire for a better mix of residential options in the Westbard area. There are currently only 43 affordable income restricted units in the area and we need to do better. Even if the overall scale of the plan is reduced, an estimated 190-250 net new affordable/workforce units could be realized in addition to the 185 units of senior housing already approved for the Washington Episcopal School site.
- 6. **Transportation & Transit:** Given Westbard's proximity to major metro and some of our urban nodes, we should increase transit options as well as provide for improved multimodal connections and pedestrian safety:
 - a. **Expansion of current Ride-On Route 23 and WMATA's T-2 Route** should be strongly encouraged if ridership projections support such expansion. Enhanced bus shelters, real time arrival information, and direct service to Bethesda should be added.
 - b. **Private shuttles to and from Metro** should be required of new development and required at site plan.

- c. **The realignment of Westbard and River Road** should be a required element of the plan in order to better protect the Springfield community from cut through traffic and truck traffic in particular.
 - d. The proposed **connector road between Westbard Avenue and River Road and enhanced access to the Capital Crescent Trail** on the Park Bethesda property should be a required element of the plan.
 - e. **Expanded and improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities** should be a strong requirement of the plan. In addition to the complete streets framework outlined in the plan, **pedestrian safety improvements to River Road** should be implemented regardless of redevelopment in the corridor. Each pedestrian crossing should be evaluated for repainting, the addition of reflective lighting, and additional signage and requests made to State Highway Administration. Implementation of traffic calming measure on River Road should be evaluated.
 - f. Include strong language urging the implementation of a **traffic light at River Road and Landy Lane** by the State Highway Administration.
7. **Schools:** Reducing the scope of the plan by approximately half will significantly reduce, but not eliminate, concerns regarding the impact of the plan on our already overcrowded schools.
- a. **While the expanded school analysis in the Appendix (pp. 111-114) is commendable, more of this information should be included in the primary Sector Plan document.** The 1/8 of a page devoted to schools on page 12 of the Draft Plan is inadequate. In addition, additional details relating to the viability of school sites for additional capacity and lease information for current closed schools referenced should be included.
 - b. Although MCPS has significantly refined its generation rate formulas and techniques in recent years, debate centered around this topic continues. I have written to MCPS and asked if they would **consider a shift to cluster specific student generation formulas** vs. the more regional formulas used today. The Whitman Cluster PTA Leadership, using MCPS GIS data, has demonstrated a large discrepancy between historical projections for the Cluster using the regional formula and the actual numbers of students emerging from multifamily buildings within the cluster. This discrepancy needs to be understood, accounted for, and documented in the plan as appropriate.
 - c. The Whitman Cluster PTA leadership, MCPS staff, and I will be meeting soon to review student generation numbers as they relate to current infrastructure capacity and future/planned capacity projects. I will keep you abreast of those discussions.
8. Refine the zoning recommendations and consider reducing the FAR for parcel 1, the Westwood Shopping Center, in alignment with the plan's redevelopment goals for the property. Doing so would provide greater certainty for the community that the new project will be built out at a neighborhood scale.
9. **The restoration of the Willett Branch and accompanying greenway/parkland must remain an integral part of this plan.** Whenever possible, the restoration work should be required of property owners at time of redevelopment. A Capital Improvement Project (CIP) description form should be developed for that portion that must be completed by the Department of Parks

10. **Public amenities in this plan must not be compromised.** Language in the plan must make it clear that the various new green/public gathering spaces recommended in the Draft Plan must be dedicated at the time of site plan approval. The **Civic Green** in the Westbard District should be no less than ½ acre. If the Planning Department does not believe, for some reason, that public amenities outlined in the plan can be required of property owners at site plan, an amenity fund should be considered to account for the public amenities.

11. **Preserving and Enhancing Local Retail:** Strengthen and add language clarifying the desire to minimize disruption to existing local retail establishments and to retain existing local retailers to the extent possible. New retail options should be neighborhood- serving rather than regional or destination retail entities. It is highly encouraging that Equity One has stated in writing their commitment to relocate local retailers into their new space to the extent possible at existing rental rates (plus CPI). If temporary relocations must occur, all county resources, including the services of the County's *Small Business Navigator*, should be employed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these suggestions. I look forward to joining you and working with you to achieve the optimal results for our residents and county as we finalize the Westbard Sector Plan.

cc: Councilmembers
Marlene Michaelson
Glenn Orlin

February 2, 2016

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Whitman Cluster Comments on the Westbard Sector Plan

President Floreen, Vice President Berliner, and County Councilmembers:

The seven schools in the Whitman Cluster open their doors daily to more than 6,100 students. The cluster serves largely suburban residential communities characterized primarily by detached single family homes. Families across the cluster have a wide range of opinions on the current content of the draft Westbard sector plan, but stand united in our concern over the plan’s impact on schools.

Throughout the last 19 months, local residents have repeatedly and consistently emphasized the importance of addressing the sector plan’s impact on schools. Yet the draft of the sector plan currently under consideration, which is 94 pages long, only includes 2 paragraphs about schools, as follows:

There is concern among local residents that the Sector Plan will result in enrollment increases that will overcrowd the existing public school system that presently serves the Westbard Sector Plan area. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has several approaches for addressing increased student enrollment:

- *Re-open closed school sites.*
- *Build additions to schools capable of expansion.*
- *Consider minor redistricting.*
- *Locate a new school site.*
- *Provide significant additional infrastructure to support MCPS recreation.*

(Section 1.2.4., page 12)

Public Schools – The Long Range Planning Division of the Montgomery County Public School system has several options for addressing increases in student enrollment.

(Section 2.2.2., page 22)

In March 2015, many of the County Councilmembers participated in a symposium held at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School on “Infrastructure and Growth.” Residents from across the county, including many PTA leaders from the Whitman Cluster, participated in the symposium, and their message was clear: the county needs to better coordinate development and school planning. It was our hope that a new planning paradigm would emerge from the symposium – one in which planning for schools was fully integrated in the sector planning process. The Westbard sector plan provides an opportunity to demonstrate this new coordinated planning effort, but the current draft clearly fails in this regard.

What little the plan does include on schools is dreadfully generic. The “several approaches for addressing increased student enrollment” are not at all specific to Westbard, and could easily be copied

and pasted into any sector plan in the county. For the plan to demonstrate improved coordination between MCPS, planners and the Council, it must be more specific and answer the following questions:

- Which school(s) in the Whitman Cluster could absorb Westbard's enrollment burden?
- Will it be necessary to redraw the boundaries within our cluster? If so, what are the potential boundary change options?
- Which school(s) could potentially receive an addition?
- Where can new schools (elementary, middle and high school) be built to relieve the burden on our schools and those in our neighboring clusters?
- Which former school sites could realistically be reopened?
- Will it be necessary to redraw boundaries between different clusters? If so, what are the potential boundary change options?
- What other, non-standard options will MCPS consider (e.g., an intermediate school for 5th and 6th graders, or a local charter school)?
- How will the different options be prioritized?

A "Westbard Sector Plan Appendix" released by the Planning Department last week provides additional information on the various school options, but does not offer the level of specificity indicated above. Furthermore, the appendix was not released publicly before the Planning Board approved the sector plan on December 17, 2015. Therefore, it is unclear whether it is officially part of the sector plan since the public never had the opportunity to review and comment on its contents and because it did not exist at the time of the Board's vote.

The Planning Board was clear in explaining why the plan places so little emphasis on schools, despite being a top priority identified by local residents: MCPS demographers "have analyzed the Westbard plan and concluded that the school system can accommodate the additional students generated by the plan's recommendations for new housing."¹ **The plan, therefore, should demonstrate the analysis and thought that has been given to schools and explain HOW exactly the school system can accommodate these additional students.**

Part of the problem is that the Planning Board puts blind faith in MCPS demographers. MCPS said we will be fine, so we must be. But where is the due diligence? This plan should demonstrate the same level of impact analysis and mitigation for schools as it does for transportation, housing and the environment. Furthermore, such blind faith in MCPS is ill-advised. While MCPS has historically done a fine job of projecting system wide enrollment, its school specific enrollment projections are highly erratic. In the Whitman cluster alone, six-year projections that are used for capacity planning purposes have been as much as 42% off from actual enrollments.² At Pyle Middle School, the six-year projections have been off by as much as 271 students.³ Over the last 14 years, our six-year projections cluster-wide have been off by an average of 14% – that is more than 800 students cluster-wide! How can we understand our future capacity needs, with such unreliable enrollment projections?

More applicable to Westbard, however, is MCPS's ability to estimate the impact of the potential new residential development. The problem here is that MCPS does not use cluster specific student

¹ This quote comes from "The Montgomery County Planning Board Newsletter," an email response from Planning Board Chair Casey Anderson to people who submitted comments to the Board on the sector plan, January 7, 2016.

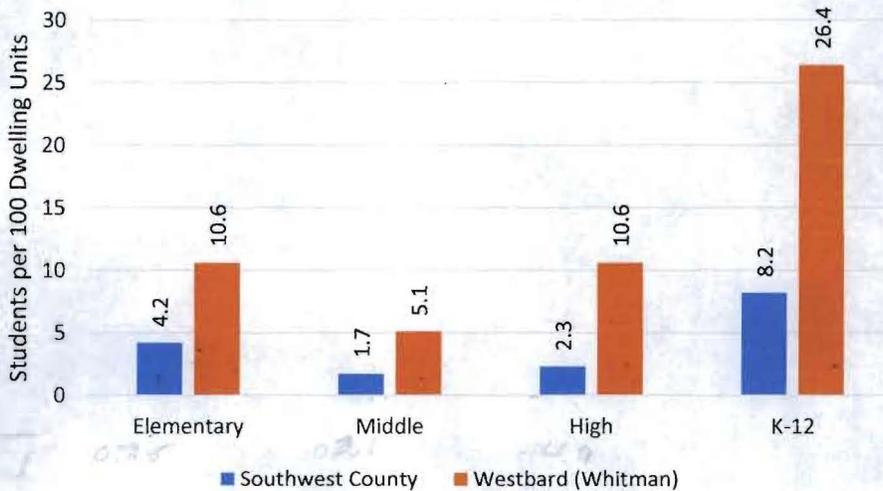
² The 2005 projection for Bradley Hills Elementary School for the 2011-12 school year was 368. The actual enrollment in 2011 was 523.

³ The 2008 projection for Pyle Middle School for the 2014-15 school year was 1,208, but the actual enrollment in 2014 was 1,479.

generation rates in calculating the estimates. Despite having detailed spatial data that allows for the calculation of student generation rates within individual clusters by housing type, MCPS continues to use "southwest" regional rates to estimate the impact of new development in Westbard. **We argue that MCPS's claim to be able to accommodate the Westbard sector plan's enrollment impact is flawed because it ignores facts demonstrating the draw of the Whitman cluster.**

Updated figures released last week by the Planning Department show the potential for 2,480 new residential units in Westbard. The figures further indicate these could add 407 new students to the Whitman and Bethesda-Chevy Chase clusters collectively.⁴ To calculate this, MCPS uses generation rates averaged across the entire southwest region of the county. Fortunately, multi-family housing in Westbard (moderately priced dwelling units, workforce housing units, and market rate units) offers relatively affordable options to families wanting to move to the highly coveted Whitman cluster, but unable to purchase a \$1+ million single family home in one of the surrounding neighborhoods. This is clearly demonstrated in the graph below, which shows that **multifamily housing on the Whitman Cluster side of Westbard generates two to five times more students than the rates used by MCPS to estimate the sector plan's impact on enrollment.** *Using these localized generation rates, we believe the plan could add as many as 760 students to our local schools!*

High-Rise Student Generation Rates



Data source: Montgomery County Planning Department

We have been told repeatedly that only three sets of Westbard property owners⁵ have demonstrated any interest in redeveloping their properties after the plan is adopted. One important thing to note, however, is that all three of these sets of properties would send students to schools in the Whitman Cluster (Wood Acres ES, Pyle MS, and Whitman HS). In other words, the impact on our cluster is imminent and will be seen immediately.

⁴ See page 113 of the newly released Westbard Sector Plan Appendix, located at <http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/westbard/documents/Westbard%20Appendix%201.19%20Final.pdf>.

⁵ Equity One, Capital Properties (owner of the Park Bethesda site), and collectively the owners of the American Plant and the Roof Center properties.

Our cluster is already experiencing overcrowding at all levels. Four of our five elementary schools are well over capacity. Whitman High School has used all of its available capacity and has no classrooms left to accommodate future growth. A feasibility study conducted last year outlined options for an expansion to meet projected growth at the high school, but those projections do not yet include the imminent enrollment impact from Westbard.

Our biggest concern, however, relates to Pyle Middle School, which has:

- the highest enrollment, at 1,521 students, of all middle schools in the county;
- a program capacity of 1,289 (but a gymnasium intended for only 1,000 students), giving it the highest utilization rate of all middle schools in the county;
- an enrollment bigger than seven high schools in the county (in fact, it is the second largest middle school in the state);
- the smallest plot of land (not adjacent to a park) of all middle schools in the county, thus limiting options for expansion; and,
- the least amount of space per student among all secondary schools (middle schools and high schools) in the county.

A feasibility study is currently underway for Pyle, but like the study for Whitman, MCPS is planning for projected enrollments that do not yet include the impact of Westbard's all but certain redevelopment.

In conclusion, we ask that the County Council not adopt a sector plan that doesn't include a detailed, geographically specific analysis of the impact of the plan on schools and specific potential solutions to mitigate that impact.

Sincerely,

Jennifer McCarthy
Sally McCarthy
Yvonne VanLowe
Whitman Cluster Coordinators

Cathy Scherr
President, Walt Whitman HS PTSA

Mary Karen Wills
President, Thomas W. Pyle MS PTSA

Heather Kraus
Laura Miller
Co-Presidents, Bannockburn ES PTA

Darcy Bellerjeau
President, Bradley Hills ES PTA

Anh LyJordan
President, Burning Tree ES PTA

Amy Moore
President, Carderock Springs ES PTA

Jason Sartori
President, Wood Acres ES PTA



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 1

CHAIRMAN
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

January 22, 2016

Mr. Larry Bowers
Superintendent
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Superintendent Bowers,

I am writing to you to shine a spotlight on the impact of current student generation projections related to the Draft Westbard Sector Plan recently transmitted to the County Council from the Planning Board. As you know, this is an issue of great concern for many parents in the Whitman and Bethesda-Chevy Chase Clusters.

While there is great appreciation for the willingness of MCPS to recently refine their projection formulas according to geographic area, there remains significant concern that those formulas are not yet fine-tuned enough and there is empirical evidence at the cluster level to substantiate these concerns.

As you can appreciate, many of our county schools are pushing the limits of targeted enrollment thresholds as outlined in Board of Education policy. This is true for several schools at various levels in both the B-CC and Whitman Clusters. While we are all grateful for the badly-needed planned capital projects for these clusters, projections show that even after these projects are built, capacity for future growth will remain scarce. As a result, the need for accurate projections of future student enrollments is paramount, especially in the context of the pending Westbard Sector Plan and in the case of the B-CC Cluster, the Bethesda Downtown Plan currently under consideration.

The vast majority of informed, active PTA leaders feel strongly that a more localized approach to forecasting is needed in this era of infill development, significant turnover of existing neighborhoods, and the general desirability of our county's schools. There is also a strong desire to see approved master plans and individual development site plan applications better utilized in MCPS' forecasting and planning process.

Please let me know if you are willing to consider further refining your student projection methodology in order to achieve a more granular picture of each cluster's capacity needs. As always, I appreciate your collaboration on these sets of issues as we all work together to plan for and ensure a bright future for all our county's schools.

9

Thank you in advance for your consideration and for your attention to this important issue. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Berliner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roger Berliner
Councilmember, District 1

cc: Michael Durso, President, Board of Education
Members of the Board of Education
Bruce Crispell



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MARYLAND
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org

February 10, 2016



The Honorable Roger Berlinér, Vice President
Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Councilmember Berlinér:

Thank you for your January 22, 2016, letter in which you raise concerns about the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) enrollment forecast, suggest the "need for accurate projections of future student enrollment", and request that MCPS "consider further refining your student projection methodology". I understand that these concerns have arisen as a result of the Westbard Sector Plan, and I am aware that the community has been concerned about the plan's impact on schools, as well as other community implications.

As we have tried to emphasize in the past, funding levels for the MCPS Capital Improvements Program (CIP) have simply not allowed us to keep pace with enrollment increases. It is in this context that communities have become doubtful about our ability to coordinate development with public facilities. In addition, the gap between funding and capital needs raises concerns in the community about planning for more development at this time. I also am concerned about the impact the county executive's recommended funding for MCPS' FY 2017-2022 CIP, if approved by the County Council, will have on the projects we have requested to relieve overcrowding and address growth in the county.

The fact is enrollment projections for schools have indicated the need for additional capacity long before we, as a county, have been able to afford it. Due to this lag in addressing known capacity needs, a perception has grown that inaccurate enrollment forecasts are to blame for space deficits. No matter how often we explain that limited funding is the main source of capacity shortages, there persists a view that more accurate forecasts would deliver capacity sooner. I hope that we can work together to address the concerns of community members who presume our slow response to capacity needs is indicative of poor planning, when we know it is chiefly a result of funding decisions. It is important to acknowledge the reality of our capital needs and limited funding.

Naturally, we need to be vigilant in forecasting, and we are vigilant. Following are several examples of how our forecasting methodology addresses your suggestions, and how improvements to accuracy are being pursued. In support of enrollment forecasting the MCPS Division of Long-range Planning collaborates with the Montgomery County Planning Department in the following ways:

- Through its collaboration with the Development Applications and Regulatory Coordination Division, and with the comparable units in the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville,

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

850 Hungerford Drive, Room 122 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850 ♦ 301-279-3381

Division of Long-range Planning staff receives notice of preliminary plan submissions, reviews, and approvals. New housing development plans are factored into enrollment forecasts once they have plan approval. Developers and builders are contacted periodically to update construction schedules.

- Division of Long-range Planning staff currently is collaborating with the Research and Special Projects Division on a study of housing turnover to see if it is possible to better predict this important component of enrollment change. This study is included in the work being done for the new Subdivision Staging Policy.
- Division of Long-range Planning staff also collaborates with the Research and Special Projects Division to develop student "yield" rates based on housing types. Rates for the county as a whole and three sub-areas are developed. This process was refined in 2013 by matching our student records with the county parcel file, providing a nearly 100 percent match of our students to the type of housing in which they reside. This allows us to estimate the number of school-age children that will be generated by various housing types. The new matching method substantially enhanced what was previously accomplished by a survey of 2,000 county households, known as the Census Update Survey.
- Division of Long-range Planning staff collaborates with the Functional Planning and Policy Division to prepare the Subdivision Staging Policy annual school test, and in the review of the policy on its four-year review cycle. Division of Long-range Planning staff currently is participating in meetings and community forums as the review period begins.
- Division of Long-range Planning staff work closely with Montgomery County Planning Department staff and the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville planning staffs as master plans are being developed. This coordination enables planners to understand the utilization levels at schools that would be affected by new residential development. Today, in most cases, plans are being developed in areas with no available school capacity, or in areas with schools that already are overutilized. Developing new plans in this context often results in community opposition to the plans or the size of the proposed development.
- As master plans are being developed, Division of Long-range Planning staff identifies where new school sites need to be provided. Nearly all our schools are located on sites that were identified in master plans and dedicated to the Board of Education. This demonstrates that plans have been largely successful in reserving sites for schools.

In addition to collaboration with the Montgomery County Planning Department, Division of Long-range Planning staff routinely samples housing in very small areas to identify local student yield rates for housing types. In urban areas of the county, individual multifamily buildings have been sampled repeatedly. These samples are then compared to the student yield rates previously described for larger sub-areas of the county. Any variance in yield rates can be addressed by this highly localized approach. In the development of the plans, such as the Westbard Sector Plan, this sampling has been carried out and the results shared with planners and the community.

The Honorable Roger Berliner

3

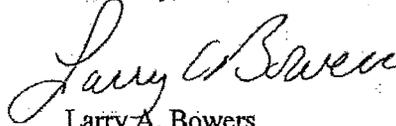
February 10, 2016

Finally, in the past year, at your request and the request of Mr. Casey Anderson, chair, Montgomery County Planning Board, Division of Long-range Planning staff has drafted more detailed "public schools" sections for master plans. These sections indicate the way MCPS may address enrollment increases that will result from planned housing developments. The Westbard Sector Plan includes this type of expanded public schools section.

MCPS will continue to strive for accuracy in forecasts and explore ways to improve this accuracy. We also will continue to work with the Montgomery County Planning Department to identify ways to improve the master planning process and to communicate to the community about what the needs of MCPS are in master plans and sector plans as they are being developed. Finally in response to a request from your office, MCPS staff will contact the Whitman Cluster Parent Teacher Association leadership to set up a time to meet to discuss their concerns about the student yield projections and the student assignment options related to the Westbard Sector Plan.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



Larry A. Bowers
Interim Superintendent of Schools

LAB:AMZ:JS:bmr

Copy to:

Members of the Montgomery County Council
Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board
Members of the Board of Education
Dr. Navarro
Dr. Statham
Dr. Zuckerman
Mr. Crispell
Mr. Song

Westbard Sector Plan—Public Schools Section

February 24, 2016 update to reflect new 2016 “Southwest Area” Student Yield Rates

The Westbard Sector Plan is within the service areas of schools in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase (B-CC) and Walt Whitman clusters. In the B-CC Cluster, the plan is within the service areas of Somerset and Westbrook elementary schools, Westland Middle School, and Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. In the Walt Whitman Cluster, the plan is within the service areas of Wood Acres Elementary School, Thomas W. Pyle Middle School, and Walt Whitman High School. Enrollment increases have been occurring at all these schools, and a variety of strategies would be considered to accommodate additional students resulting from the plan.

The plan provides for a net total of up to 2,480 new housing units, with approximately 65 townhouses and 2,415 multifamily mid-rise units. Based on average student generation rates for this area of the county, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) estimates at full build out, the new housing would result in approximately 280 elementary school students, 120 middle school students, and 150 high school students. Build out of the plan requires redevelopment of many properties and is estimated to take 20 to 30 years. Some properties identified for more housing units may not redevelop at all during the life of the plan. The number of students resulting from the plan would be lower if not all the housing units provided for in the plan are built.

Because the full impact of the plan on school enrollment will not be felt for many years, it is not possible to precisely gauge the impact on public schools. School enrollments in the area will change over the 20- to 30-year time frame of the plan. MCPS enrollment forecasts and associated facility plans and capital projects focus on a six-year timeframe—not a 20- to 30-year period. Therefore, the following descriptions of options to accommodate additional students from the plan describe current enrollment projections and capital projects. Following these comments, the approaches MCPS may employ to address enrollment increases are provided. All approaches require Board of Education approval.

Elementary Schools

At the elementary school level, Somerset and Westbrook elementary schools recently had additions completed. Site constraints indicate that no further additions are feasible at these two schools. Enrollment at Somerset Elementary School is projected to be above capacity for all but the last two years of the six-year forecast period. Enrollment at Westbrook Elementary School is projected to remain within the capacity of the school. An addition at Wood Acres Elementary School will be completed in August 2016, and the school is projected to remain within capacity for the six-year forecast period. The new addition will take the school to the high end of the desired size for elementary schools.

If there is insufficient surplus capacity available at Somerset, Westbrook, and Wood Acres elementary schools by the time new housing occupancies occur in the plan area, then MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional elementary school students:

- Determine if there is surplus capacity or the ability to increase the capacity of elementary schools in the B-CC or Walt Whitman clusters and reassign students to a school(s) with

space available. Options in the B-CC Cluster for increasing the capacity of elementary schools are limited by recent additions and site constraints. However, in the Whitman Cluster it is feasible to increase the capacity of Bannockburn Elementary School that has a service area adjacent to the Wood Acres Elementary School service area. Two additional elementary schools in the Walt Whitman Cluster, Burning Tree and Carderock Springs elementary schools, also are small by current standards and could be increased in capacity.

- If the capacity of existing elementary schools, even with additions built, is not sufficient to address increased enrollment, then the opening of a new elementary school would be considered. A new elementary school could be provided in one of two ways:
 - A former operating elementary school could be reopened. There are two former operating elementary schools in the B-CC Cluster—Lynnbrook and Rollingwood elementary schools. (Lynnbrook is identified as a future operating elementary school in the Bethesda Downtown Plan.) There are four former operating elementary schools in the Walt Whitman Cluster that could be considered—Clara Barton, Brookmont, Concord, and Fernwood elementary schools. This list does not include the former Radnor Elementary School because it is used as an elementary school holding center and is needed for the MCPS revitalization/expansion program.
 - Construct a new elementary school. There currently are no future elementary school sites in the B-CC and Walt Whitman clusters; therefore, a site-selection process would need to be conducted for a new elementary school and collocation and/or purchase of a site may be required.

Middle Schools

At the middle school level, Westland Middle School is projected to be over capacity by more than 600 students in the coming years. A second middle school, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2, is scheduled to open in August 2017. The boundaries for the new middle school and changes to the Westland Middle School service area will be acted on in November 2016. It is anticipated that there will be space available at both middle schools after the new middle school opens.

Thomas W. Pyle Middle School is projected to be over capacity by more than 200 students in the coming years and to enroll over 1,500 students. An addition is scheduled to open in August 2020 that will increase the capacity to 1,502 students. However, there will be little space available at the school even with the addition. Also, the middle school will be at the high end of desired size for middle schools.

If there is insufficient surplus capacity at Thomas W. Pyle Middle School, Westland Middle School, and the new B-CC Middle School #2 by the time new housing occupancies occur in the plan area, then MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional middle school students:

- Construct an addition at B-CC Middle School #2 or Westland Middle School. Both schools are capable of supporting additions.

- Determine if there is surplus capacity or the ability to increase the capacity of middle schools adjacent to the B-CC and Walt Whitman clusters and reassign students to a school with sufficient capacity. Middle schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster include Newport Mill, North Bethesda, Thomas W. Pyle, and Sligo middle schools. Middle schools adjacent to the Walt Whitman Cluster include Cabin John, Herbert Hoover, North Bethesda, and Westland middle schools.
- Construct a new middle school. There currently are no future middle school sites identified in the B-CC and Walt Whitman clusters or in adjacent clusters; therefore, a site selection process would be conducted for a new middle school in the region and collocation and/or purchase may be required.

High Schools

At the high school level, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School is projected to be over capacity by more than 700 students and to enroll up to 2,500 students in the coming years. An addition is scheduled to open in August 2018 that will increase the capacity to 2,407 students. The school will then be at the high end of the desired size for high schools. In addition, site constraints will not enable further expansion of the school.

Walt Whitman High School is projected to be over capacity by more than 300 students and to enroll over 2,300 students in the coming years. An addition is scheduled to open in August 2020 that will increase the capacity to 2,398 students. The school will then be at the high end of the desired size for high schools.

If there is insufficient surplus capacity at B-CC and Walt Whitman high schools by the time new housing occupancies occur in the plan area, MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional high school students:

- Determine if there is surplus capacity or the ability to increase the capacity of high schools adjacent to the B-CC and Walt Whitman clusters and reassign students to a school with available space. High schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster include Albert Einstein, Walter Johnson, and Walt Whitman high schools. High schools adjacent to the Walt Whitman Cluster include Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Winston Churchill, and Walter Johnson.
- Reopen a former high school, Woodward High School, which is located on Old Georgetown Road in Bethesda. This is the only former high school in the MCPS inventory. The facility currently houses Tilden Middle School; however, Tilden Middle School will be relocated to its original Tilden Lane location when its revitalization/expansion project is completed in August 2020. The Woodward facility will become a holding center for middle schools undergoing revitalization/expansion projects. Long term, another holding center for middle schools undergoing revitalization/expansion projects is planned at the former Broome Jr. High School which is located in Rockville.

- Construct a new high school. There currently are no future high school sites identified in this area of the county; therefore a site selection process would be conducted for a new high school in the region and collocation and/or purchase may be required.

Bethesda Downtown Plan—Public Schools Section
February 24, 2016 update to reflect new 2016 “Southwest Area” Student Yield Rates

The Bethesda Downtown Plan is within the Bethesda-Chevy Chase (B-CC) Cluster and within the service areas of Bethesda Elementary School, Westland Middle School, and Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. Enrollment increases have been occurring at all these schools and a variety of strategies would be considered to accommodate additional students resulting from the plan. The plan includes the reopening of a former elementary school.

The plan provides for up to 8,450 new high-rise multifamily housing units. Based on average student generation rates for this area of the county, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) estimates that at full build-out the new housing would result in approximately 405 elementary school students, 170 middle school students, and 220 high school students. The number of students resulting from the plan would be lower if not all the housing units provided for in the plan are built.

Build out of the plan is estimated to take 20 to 30 years to build-out and requires redevelopment of many existing land uses. Redevelopment of existing land uses extends the time period for build-out, compared to development of land not already in residential or commercial use. In addition, some areas identified for redevelopment may not redevelop at all during the life of the plan. Based on past experience, it is unlikely that full build-out will be reached during the life of the plan.

Because the full impact of the plan on school enrollment will not be felt for many years, it is not possible to precisely gauge the impact of the plan on public schools. School enrollment in the area will change over the 20- to 30-year time frame of the plan. In addition, MCPS enrollment forecasts and associated facility plans and capital projects focus on a six-year time frame—not a 20- to 30-year period; therefore, the following options to accommodate additional students from the plan describe current enrollment projections and capital projects. Following these comments, approaches MCPS may employ to address enrollment increases are provided. All approaches require Board of Education approval.

Several capital projects have recently increased the capacity of elementary schools in the cluster. Rock Creek Forest Elementary School was revitalized and expanded in January 2015. Additions at Bethesda, North Chevy Chase, and Rosemary Hills elementary schools were completed in August 2015. At the middle school level, the August 2017 opening of Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2 will address overutilization at Westland Middle School as well as relieve Chevy Chase and North Chevy Chase elementary schools of overutilization as they are reorganized from the current Grades 3–6 to Grades 3–5. At the high school level, an addition is scheduled to open in August 2018 that will increase Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School’s capacity to 2,400 students.

Elementary Schools

Despite the recent additions to elementary capacity in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase (B-CC) Cluster, there will be little surplus capacity in the future. In order to accommodate the additional elementary school students from the plan, MCPS would explore the following options to serve additional students:

- Determine if there is surplus capacity, or the ability to increase the capacity, of elementary schools in the B-CC Cluster and reassign students to a school(s) with space available. However, at this time it does not appear that there will be enough capacity to serve all students that may result from the plan build-out. In addition, site constraints at B-CC Cluster elementary schools will limit the ability to increase capacity more than it already has been increased.
- Determine if there is surplus capacity or the ability to increase the capacity of elementary schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster and reassign students to a school with sufficient capacity. Elementary schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster include, in clockwise order, Wood Acres, Bradley Hills, Wyngate, Kensington-Parkwood, Flora M. Singer, and Woodlin elementary schools.
- If reassignments and increasing the capacity of existing elementary schools are not sufficient to address increased enrollment, then the opening of a new elementary school would be considered. A new elementary school could be provided in one of two ways:
 - Reopen a former elementary school in the B-CC Cluster. There currently are two formerly operating elementary schools in the cluster that could be considered—Rollingwood and Lynnbrook elementary schools. The former Lynnbrook Elementary School is located adjacent to the draft plan area and is identified as the plan’s location for an elementary school.
 - Construct a new elementary school. There currently are no future elementary school sites identified in the B-CC Cluster; therefore, a site-selection process would be conducted for a new elementary school and collocation and/or purchase may be required.

Middle Schools

At the middle school level, Westland Middle School serves the plan area. Westland Middle School is projected to be over capacity by more than 600 students in the coming years. A second middle school, referred to as Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2, is scheduled to open in August 2017. The boundaries for the new middle school, and changes to the Westland Middle School service area, will be acted on in November 2016. It is anticipated that there will be space available at both middle schools after the new middle school opens.

If there is insufficient surplus capacity at Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2 or Westland Middle School by the time new housing occupancies occur in the plan area, then MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional middle school students:

- Build an addition at Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2 or Westland Middle School. Both schools are capable of supporting additions.
- Determine if there is surplus capacity, or the ability to increase the capacity, of middle schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster and reassign students to a school with sufficient

capacity. Middle schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster include, in clockwise order, Thomas W. Pyle, North Bethesda, Newport Mill, and Sligo middle schools.

- Construct a new middle school. There are currently no future middle school sites identified in the B-CC Cluster or adjacent clusters. A site selection process would be conducted for a new middle school in the region and collocation and/or purchase may be required.

High Schools

At the high school level, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School serves the plan area. Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School is projected to be overcapacity by more than 700 students and to enroll up to 2,500 students in the coming years. An addition to the school that will increase the capacity to 2,400 students is scheduled for completion in August 2018. The school will then be at the high end of the desired size for high schools. In addition, site constraints will not enable the further expansion of the school.

If there is insufficient surplus capacity at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School by the time new housing occupancies occur in the plan area, then MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional high school students:

- Determine if there is surplus capacity or the ability to increase the capacity of high schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster and reassign students to a school with sufficient capacity. High schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster include, in clockwise order, Walt Whitman, Walter Johnson, and Albert Einstein high schools.
- Reopen a former high school in the vicinity. A former high school, Woodward High School, is located on Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, Maryland. This is the only former high school in the MCPS inventory. The facility currently houses Tilden Middle School; however, Tilden Middle School will be relocated to its original Tilden Lane location when its revitalization/expansion project is completed in August 2020. The Woodward facility will then become a holding center for middle schools undergoing revitalization/expansion projects. Long term, another holding center for middle schools undergoing revitalization/expansion is planned at the former Broome Jr. High School in Rockville.
- Construct a new high school. There currently are no future high school sites identified in this area of the county; therefore, a site selection process would be conducted for a new high school in the region and collocation and/or purchase may be required.

Lyttonsville Sector Plan—Public Schools Section

February 24, 2016 update to reflect new 2016 “Southwest Area” Student Yield Rates

The Lyttonsville Sector Plan is within the service areas of schools in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase (B-CC) and Albert Einstein clusters. In the B-CC Cluster, the plan is within the service areas of Rock Creek Forest Elementary School and the paired elementary schools of Rosemary Hills, Chevy Chase, and North Chevy Chase. At the secondary school level, the plan is within the service areas of Westland Middle School and Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. In the Albert Einstein Cluster, the plan is within the service areas of Woodlin Elementary School, Sligo Middle School, and the base area for Albert Einstein High School in the Downcounty High Schools Consortium. Enrollment increases have been occurring at all these schools, and a variety of strategies would be considered to accommodate additional students resulting from the plan.

The plan provides for a net total of up to 4,441 new multifamily high-rise housing units and 67 townhouse units. The portion of the plan in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster includes 2,806 multi-family high rise housing units and 67 townhouse units. Based on student generation rates for this area of the county, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) estimates at full build-out the new housing in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster portion of the plan would result in approximately 145 elementary school students, 60 middle school students, and 80 high school students.

The portion of the plan in the Albert Einstein cluster includes 1,635 multi-family high rise housing units. Based on student generation rates for this area of the county, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) estimates at full build-out the new housing in the Albert Einstein cluster portion of the plan would result in approximately 125 elementary school students, 50 middle school students, and 65 high school students.

Build-out of the plan is estimated to take 20 to 30 years. In addition, some of the development requires construction of the Purple Line. Some properties identified for more housing units may not redevelop during the life of the plan. The number of students resulting from the plan would be lower if not all the housing units provided for in the plan are built. Based on past experience, it is unlikely that full build-out will be reached during the life of the plan.

Because the full impact of the plan on school enrollment will not be felt for many years, it is not possible to precisely gauge the impact of the plan on public schools. School enrollment in the area will change over the 20- to 30-year time frame of the plan. In addition, MCPS enrollment forecasts and associated facility plans and capital projects focus on a six-year time frame—not a 20- to 30-year period; therefore, the following options to accommodate additional students from the plan describe current enrollment projections and capital projects. Following these comments, approaches that MCPS may employ to address enrollment increases are provided. All approaches require Board of Education approval.

Elementary Schools

At the elementary school level a considerable amount of capacity has recently been added to schools, or will be in the next few years. Rock Creek Forest Elementary School was revitalized

and expanded in January 2015 and additions at Bethesda, North Chevy Chase and Rosemary Hills elementary schools were completed in August 2015. In addition to these projects, Chevy Chase and North Chevy Chase elementary schools will reorganize in August 2017 from serving Grades 3–6 to serve Grades 3–5. At Woodlin Elementary School an addition is scheduled for completion in August 2020.

Even with the capital projects described above, current projections indicate that for the next six years there will be little space available at the elementary schools serving the plan area. If there is insufficient surplus capacity at these schools by the time new housing occupancies occur in the plan area, then MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional elementary school students:

- Determine if there is surplus capacity, or the ability to increase the capacity, of elementary schools in the B-CC and Albert Einstein clusters and reassign students to a school(s) with space available. However, at this time it does not appear that there will be enough capacity to serve all students that may result from the plan build-out in either the B-CC Cluster or Albert Einstein Cluster elementary schools. In addition, site constraints at B-CC and Albert Einstein Cluster elementary schools will limit the ability to increase capacity.
- Determine if there is surplus capacity, or the ability to increase the capacity, of elementary schools adjacent to the B-CC and Albert Einstein clusters and reassign students to a school with sufficient capacity. Elementary schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster service area include, in clockwise order, Wood Acres, Bradley Hills, Wyngate, Kensington-Parkwood, Flora M. Singer, and Woodlin elementary schools. Elementary schools adjacent to the Albert Einstein Cluster include, in clockwise order, Rosemary Hills, Rock Creek Forest, North Chevy Chase, Kensington-Parkwood, Veirs Mill, Sargent Shriver, Weller Road, and Glenallan elementary schools.
- If reassignments and increasing the capacity of existing elementary schools is not sufficient to address increased enrollment, then the opening of a new elementary school would be considered. A new elementary school could be provided in one of two ways:
 - Reopen a former elementary school in the B-CC or Albert Einstein clusters. There are currently two formerly operating elementary schools in the B-CC Cluster that could be considered, including Rollingwood and Lynnbrook elementary schools. (Lynnbrook is designated as a future operating school in the Bethesda Downtown Plan.) There currently are five former operating elementary schools in the Albert Einstein Cluster that could be considered, including the former Dennis Avenue, Forest Grove, Macdonald Knolls, Pleasant View, and Woodside elementary schools.
 - Construct a new elementary school. There currently are no future elementary school sites identified in the B-CC and Albert Einstein clusters. A site selection process would be conducted for a new elementary school and collocation and/or purchase may be required.

Middle Schools

At the middle school level, Westland and Sligo middle schools serve the plan area. Westland Middle School is projected to be over capacity by more than 600 students in the coming years. A second middle school, referred to as Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2 is scheduled to open in August 2017. The boundaries for the new middle school, and changes to the Westland Middle School service area, will be acted on in November 2016. It is anticipated that there will be space available at both middle schools after the new middle school opens. Enrollment at Sligo Middle School is projected to reach the school's capacity in the next six years.

If there is insufficient surplus capacity at the middle schools by the time new housing occupancies occur in the plan area, then MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional middle school students:

- Build an addition at Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2, Sligo, or Westland middle schools. All three middle schools are capable of supporting additions.
- Determine if there is surplus capacity, or the ability to increase the capacity, of middle schools adjacent to the B-CC and Albert Einstein clusters and reassign students to a school with available space. Middle schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster include, in clockwise order, Newport Mill, Sligo, North Bethesda, and Thomas W. Pyle middle schools. Middle Schools adjacent to the Albert Einstein Cluster include, in clockwise order, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2, North Bethesda Middle School, the Middle Schools Magnet Consortium—Argyle, A. Mario Loiederman, and Parkland middle schools—E. Brooke Lee, Silver Spring International, and Takoma Park middle schools.
- Construct a new middle school. There currently are no future middle school sites identified in the B-CC and Albert Einstein clusters, or adjacent clusters. A site selection process would be conducted for a new middle school in the region and collocation and/or purchase may be required.

High Schools

At the high school level, Bethesda-Chevy Chase and Albert Einstein high schools serve the plan area. Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School is projected to be over capacity by more than 700 students and to enroll up to 2,500 students in the coming years. An addition to the school that will increase the capacity to 2,400 students is scheduled for completion in August 2018. The school will then be at the high end of the desired size for high schools. In addition, site constraints will not enable further expansion of the school. Albert Einstein High School is projected to be over capacity by more than 400 students and to enroll up to 2,200 students in the coming years. A feasibility study for an addition is scheduled.

If there is insufficient surplus capacity at Bethesda-Chevy Chase and Albert Einstein high schools by the time new housing occupancies occur in the plan area, then MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional high school students:

- Build an addition at Albert Einstein High School.

- Determine if there is surplus capacity, or the ability to increase the capacity, of high schools adjacent to the B-CC and Albert Einstein clusters and reassign students to a school with sufficient capacity. High schools adjacent to the B-CC Cluster include, in clockwise order, Walt Whitman Walter Johnson, and Albert Einstein high schools. Albert Einstein High School is part of the Downcounty Consortium (DCC) and capacity levels and the feasibility for additions would be considered at the four other DCC high schools, including Montgomery Blair, Northwood, John F. Kennedy, and Wheaton high schools.
- Reopen a former high school in the vicinity. A former high school, Woodward High School, is located on Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, Maryland. This is the only former high school in the MCPS inventory. The facility currently houses Tilden Middle School; however, Tilden Middle School will be relocated to its original Tilden Lane location when its revitalization/expansion project is completed in August 2020. The Woodward facility will then become a holding center for middle schools undergoing revitalization/expansion projects. Long term, another holding center for middle schools undergoing revitalization/expansion is planned at the former Broome Jr. High School in Rockville.
- Construct a new high school. There currently are no future high school sites identified in this area of the county. A site selection process would be conducted for a new high school in the region and collocation and/or purchase may be required.

Whitman HS Cluster: Comparison of Actual Enrollment to 6-Year Forecast

	School Year											
Walt Whitman HS	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Avg %	2016-17
Actual Enrollment	1890	1868	1849	1936	1958	1944	1918	1928	1903	1978		?
Forecast 6 years earlier	1828	1927	1911	2039	2001	1907	1815	1820	1650	1830		1841
Enrollment % of Forecast	103.4	96.9	96.8	94.9	97.9	101.9	105.7	105.9	115.3	108.1	102.7	?
Pyle MS	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Avg %	2016-17
Actual Enrollment	1276	1303	1291	1335	1292	1338	1370	1411	1479	1516		?
Forecast 6 years earlier	1293	1228	1216	1225	1267	1222	1170	1194	1208	1347		1342
Enrollment % of Forecast	98.7	106.1	106.2	109.0	102.0	109.5	117.1	118.2	122.4	112.5	110.2	?
Bannockburn ES	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Avg %	2016-17
Actual Enrollment	362	352	356	366	368	361	390	401	405	420		?
Forecast 6 years earlier	457	372	393	395	354	338	371	393	363	355		366
Enrollment % of Forecast	79.2	94.6	90.6	92.7	104.0	106.8	105.1	102.0	111.6	118.3	100.5	?
Bradley Hills ES	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Avg %	2016-17
Actual Enrollment	394	424	459	478	498	523	508	578	632	627		?
Forecast 6 years earlier	361	369	390	400	394	368	401	463	483	508		613
Enrollment % of Forecast	109.1	114.9	117.7	119.5	126.4	142.1	126.7	124.8	130.8	123.4	123.6	?
Burning Tree ES	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Avg %	2016-17
Actual Enrollment	508	518	496	514	506	497	506	502	493	497		?
Forecast 6 years earlier	464	435	476	485	532	438	450	459	461	492		491
Enrollment % of Forecast	109.5	119.1	104.2	106.0	95.1	113.5	112.4	109.4	106.9	101.0	107.7	?
Carderock Springs ES	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Avg %	2016-17
Actual Enrollment	312	297	299	317	353	368	410	424	418	406		?
Forecast 6 years earlier	338	281	296	300	327	315	332	330	314	365		391
Enrollment % of Forecast	92.3	105.7	101.0	105.7	108.0	116.8	123.5	128.5	133.1	111.2	112.6	?
Wood Acres ES	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Avg %	2016-17
Actual Enrollment	622	625	646	734	733	738	767	789	713	660		?
Forecast 6 years earlier	546	523	579	616	631	575	566	618	651	744		741
Enrollment % of Forecast	113.9	119.5	111.6	119.2	116.2	128.3	135.5	127.7	109.5	88.7	117.0	?
Average % in Cluster	100.9	108.1	104.0	106.7	107.1	117.0	118.0	116.6	118.5	109.0	110.6	?

25

Montgomery County Student Generation Rates for Housing Types

February 24, 2016

Upcounty (3)	Factors (number of students generated per unit)			
	Elementary	Middle	High	Total (K-12)
Single Family Detached *	0.422	0.177	0.191	0.790
Single Family Attached *	0.216	0.085	0.097	0.399
Single Family Detached **	0.214	0.122	0.169	0.505
Single Family Attached **	0.253	0.115	0.149	0.516
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise *	0.073	0.025	0.035	0.132
Multi-Family High Rise *	0.095	0.046	0.059	0.201
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise **	0.192	0.069	0.089	0.350
Multi-Family High Rise **	0.064	0.029	0.038	0.131

Southwest (2)	Factors (number of students generated per unit)			
	Elementary	Middle	High	Total (K-12)
Single Family Detached *	0.323	0.163	0.154	0.640
Single Family Attached *	0.144	0.064	0.073	0.281
Single Family Detached **	0.195	0.111	0.145	0.451
Single Family Attached **	0.184	0.083	0.118	0.385
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise *	0.077	0.031	0.056	0.164
Multi-Family High Rise *	0.030	0.011	0.010	0.050
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise **	0.112	0.049	0.062	0.223
Multi-Family High Rise **	0.048	0.020	0.026	0.093

East (1)	Factors (number of students generated per unit)			
	Elementary	Middle	High	Total (K-12)
Single Family Detached *	0.248	0.109	0.130	0.487
Single Family Attached *	0.169	0.072	0.094	0.336
Single Family Detached **	0.207	0.099	0.135	0.442
Single Family Attached **	0.209	0.099	0.138	0.446
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise *	0.036	0.013	0.013	0.063
Multi-Family High Rise *	0.030	0.008	0.009	0.048
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise **	0.240	0.096	0.128	0.464
Multi-Family High Rise **	0.078	0.031	0.041	0.150

County-Wide	Factors (number of students generated per unit)			
	Elementary	Middle	High	Total (K-12)
Single Family Detached *	0.358	0.161	0.168	0.687
Single Family Attached *	0.201	0.081	0.095	0.377
Single Family Detached **	0.205	0.109	0.148	0.462
Single Family Attached **	0.231	0.106	0.141	0.478
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise *	0.067	0.024	0.037	0.129
Multi-Family High Rise *	0.036	0.013	0.014	0.064
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise **	0.194	0.076	0.099	0.370
Multi-Family High Rise **	0.062	0.025	0.033	0.120
Multi-Family Low to Med Rise ***	0.085	0.031	0.051	0.167
Multi-Family High Rise ***	0.038	0.013	0.016	0.067

* Residential structure built between 2005 and 2015

** Residential structure built any year

*** Residential structure built between 2003 and 2013

Students in Multi-family Housing in Westbard Sector Plan Area

Yields from February 22, 2016

School Service Area	Complex Name & Unit Type	Address	Number of Units	Students Residing in Units			Student Generation Ratio (#of Students/ # Units)		
				Elementary	Middle	High	Elementary	Middle	High
High-Rise Units									
Wood Acres ES	Park Bethesda (Apts.)	5325 Westbard Ave.	258	15	15	24	0.058	0.058	0.093
Wood Acres ES	Westwood Tower (Apts - HOC)	5401 Westbard Ave. (Apts)	212	33	10	34	0.156	0.047	0.160
Somerset ES	The Kenwood (Condos)	5101 River Road	336	19	14	18	0.057	0.042	0.054
TOTALS			806	67	39	76	0.083	0.048	0.094
Mid-Rise Units									
Wood Acres ES	Kenwood Place	5301 Westbard Circle	174	9	5	9	0.052	0.029	0.052
TOTAL				9	5	9	0.052	0.029	0.052

27

<u>Southwest Rates from 2013</u>			
	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>High</u>
Multi-family High-rise	0.042	0.017	0.023
Multi-family Mid-rise	0.075	0.031	0.047
<u>Prelim. Southwest Rates from 2016 *</u>			
	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>High</u>
Multi-family High-rise	0.052	0.022	0.029
Multi-family Mid-rise	0.100	0.043	0.054

* Roberto Ruiz still has to get these reviewed and approved.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Multi-family Communities and Number of Students
February 12, 2016

All buildings are high rise, and are in the Bethesda ES, Westland MS, and Bethesda-Chevy Chase HS service areas.

NAME	ADDRESS	UNITS	STUDENTS				GENERATION RATE			Overall
			ES	MS	HS	Total	ES	MS	HS	
The WhitNey	7707 Wisconsin Ave.	235	7	8	8	23	0.030	0.034	0.034	0.098
Metropolitan	7620 Old Georgetown Rd.	307	23	9	11	43	0.075	0.029	0.036	0.140
Crescent Plaza	7111 Woodmont Ave.	149	3	1	0	4	0.020	0.007	0.000	0.027
Rosedale Park	4720, 4721 Rosedale St.	215	4	2	6	12	0.019	0.009	0.028	0.056
The Chase	7500 Woodmont Ave.	255	3	2	2	7	0.012	0.008	0.008	0.027
The Edgemoor	4821 Montgomery Ln.	54	3	1	1	5	0.056	0.019	0.019	0.093
Edgemont at Bethesda Metro	4903 Egemoor Ln.	122	5	2	1	8	0.041	0.016	0.008	0.066
The Adagio	6820 Wisconsin Ave.	92	3	0	1	4	0.033	0.000	0.011	0.043
Topaz House	4400 East West Hwy.	360	13	4	17	34	0.036	0.011	0.047	0.094
The Riviera	4242 East West Hwy.	68	1	0	4	5	0.015	0.000	0.059	0.074
The Seasons	4710 Bethesda Ave.	247	2	1	0	3	0.008	0.004	0.000	0.012
The Palisades	4835 Cordell Ave.	310	16	4	4	24	0.052	0.013	0.013	0.077
Bethesda Place	7701 Woodmont Ave.	100	6	0	1	7	0.060	0.000	0.010	0.070
Upstairs at Bethesda Row	7131 Arlington Blvd.	180	5	0	1	6	0.028	0.000	0.006	0.033
Lionsgate	7710 Woodmont Ave.	158	1	0	0	1	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.006
Eighty-Two Hundred	8200 Wisconsin Ave.	245	3	1	3	7	0.012	0.004	0.012	0.029
Fairmont Plaza	4801 Fairmont St.	112	1	0	0	1	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.009
Triangle Tower	4853 Cordell Ave.	260	2	0	1	3	0.008	0.000	0.004	0.012
The Middlebrooke	5015 Battery Ln.	84	8	1	2	11	0.095	0.012	0.024	0.131
Totals		3553	109	36	63	208	0.031	0.010	0.018	0.059

Walter Johnson Cluster Multi-family Housing Samples

Yields from February 11, 2016

School Service Area	Complex Name	Address	Number of Units	Students Residing			Student Generation Ratio (#of Students/ # Units)		
				Elementary	Middle	High	Elementary	Middle	High
Ashburton ES	Grosvenor Park	10201 & 10401 Grosvenor Place and 10500 Rockville Pike	1235 high rise	30	9	10	0.024	0.007	0.008
	Avalon at Rock Springs	Rock Forest Drive	414 mid-rise	41	18	23	0.099	0.043	0.056
	Jefferson at Inigo's Crossing	5405 Tuckerman Lane	473 high rise	36	11	16	0.076	0.023	0.034
Garrett Park ES	The Grande	5801 Nicholson Lane	546 high rise	32	13	10	0.059	0.024	0.018
	Meridian at Grosvenor Station	5230 Tuckerman Lane	301 high rise	16	1	3	0.053	0.003	0.010
	North Bethesda Market West	11351 Woodglen Drive	201 mid-rise	21	5	1	0.104	0.025	0.005
	North Bethesda Market East	11418 Rockville Pike	187 high rise	5	2	1	0.027	0.011	0.005
Luxmanor ES	The Gallery at White Flint	11710 Old Georgetown Road	453 high rise in two buildings	11	2	8	0.024	0.004	0.018
	The Sterling	11700 Old Georgetown Road	197 high rise	10	5	8	0.051	0.025	0.041
	Wentworth at N. Beth. Cntr. (LCOR)	5411 McGrath Boulevard	312 high rise	16	3	3	0.051	0.010	0.010
	Aurora at N. Beth. Cntr. (LCOR)	5401 McGrath Boulevard	341 high rise	13	8	1	0.042	0.026	0.003
	Midtown North Bethesda	5750 Bou Avenue	230 high rise	2	2	3	0.009	0.009	0.013
	Windsor Villa	11750, 11800 Old Georgetown Rd.	261 mid-rise	16	5	7	0.061	0.019	0.027
	Strathmore Court	5440 Marinelli Road	202 mid-rise	14	13	8	0.069	0.064	0.040
	The Monterey	5901 Montrose Road	432 high rise	38	11	17	0.088	0.025	0.039
	Persei Apts	900 Persei Place	174 mid rise	4	1	1	0.009	0.002	0.002
	Pallas	11550 Old Georgetown Road	319 high rise	3	3	0	0.007	0.007	0.000
TOTALS			1,252 mid-rise	96	42	40	0.077	0.034	0.032
			5,026 high rise	212	70	80	0.042	0.014	0.016
			6,278 all units	308	112	120	0.049	0.018	0.019

29

indicated that a median, a slightly wider sidewalk, and a new traffic signal (if warranted by DPWT) at The Hills Plaza/Willard Avenue intersection should be provided. The Sector Plan also recommends a Class II or III bike lane along Willard Avenue.

- **Obtain additional right-of-way and provide a center median on Willard Avenue between Friendship Boulevard and Wisconsin Avenue as part of future redevelopment.**

The Plan recommends that as part of future redevelopment of the Hecht's site, a total of 90 feet of right-of-way should be dedicated for constructing a six-foot center median with left-turn lanes on Willard Avenue between Friendship Boulevard and the Hills Plaza. (See Figure 42, Promenade B.) This may require relocating the curb along the Hecht's frontage. In addition, a total of 90 feet of right-of-way should be provided to construct a twelve-foot center median and wider sidewalks on Willard Avenue from The Hills Plaza to Wisconsin Avenue if the properties located in the southwest corner of the Wisconsin/Willard Avenue intersection are assembled and redeveloped. This will require abandoning the old Willard Avenue right-of-way and relocating the curb. The median will improve pedestrian safety, enhance the visual environment in the Town Center with additional landscaping, and provide continuity with Wisconsin Circle. Wider sidewalks are needed to accommodate large numbers of pedestrians walking between commercial areas and to the Metro station. (See Figure 42, Promenade A.)

- **Modify the intersection of River Road and Little Falls Parkway.**

Two modifications are proposed here. One is to remove the narrow median on the southeastern leg of River Road and provide an additional through lane on River Road's northwest-bound approach (i.e., toward Westbard.) The narrow median exists only to reinforce the separation between the southeast-bound and northwest-bound flows; it is not a pedestrian refuge, and there is no crosswalk on its side of River Road. The other proposed change is to re-stripe the southwest-bound approach of Little Falls Parkway to provide two through lanes and separate left- and right-turn lanes. Neither improvement would widen the roadway beyond the present curb lines, so there would be no incursion into Little Falls Park.

- **Recommend to the District of Columbia consideration of the modification of the River Road/Western Avenue intersection.**

Both legs of Western Avenue have four lanes, with two approach lanes and two lanes with which to receive traffic. (The southwest leg has a short additional right-turn lane.) The proposed improvement would re-stripe these lanes so that there would be three approach lanes on each leg (one left lane, one through lane, one right lane), and one receiving lane on each leg. The exclusive left-turn lanes created by the re-striping would eliminate the inefficient split-signal phasing resulting from the existing shared through left-turn lanes on the Western Avenue intersection approaches. A very minor widening at the east corner of the intersection—one or two feet—may be needed to allow a wide enough berth for trucks turning left from southeast-bound River Road to northeast-bound Western Avenue.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

February 17, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Glenn Orlin, Ph.D., Deputy Administrator
Montgomery County Council

VIA: Robert Kronenberg, RLA, Division Chief
Area 1 Planning Division

FROM: Matthew Folden, AICP
Area 1 Planning Division

SUBJECT: Westbard Sector Plan
River Road/ Little Falls Parkway: Additional River Road "Through-Lanes"

This memorandum summarizes staff's analysis of both the benefits and potential constraints of adding an additional northwest bound through-lane (toward Westbard) on River Road at Little Falls Parkway, as recommended on page 91 of the Approved and Adopted 1998 Friendship Heights Sector Plan. Based on the land use densities recommended in the December 2015 Planning Board Draft of the Westbard Sector Plan, staff estimates that an additional northbound through-lane on River Road would:

- 1) have no appreciable impact on the anticipated 2040 Critical Lane Volume (CLV) during the AM peak (estimated to remain at 1,501 CLV), and
- 2) reduce the anticipated 2040 Critical Lane Volume (CLV) during the PM peak from 1,554 CLV to 1,329 CLV.

BENEFITS ANALYSIS

In its current configuration, the River Road (MD 190) right-of-way is approximately 90-feet wide on the west side of Little Falls Parkway and 100-feet wide on the east side of Little Falls Parkway. The current Planning Board Draft Sector Plan recommends that the future right-of-way be a minimum of 110-feet wide. Generally speaking, an additional northwest bound through-lane could be accommodated within the existing right-of-way and existing curb-to-curb pavement section, however, lane widths would need to be reduced to a width of 11 feet. This lane reduction is also consistent with the intent of the draft sector plan's recommendation to designate Westbard an Urban Road Code Area (see Sec. 49-32(g): Lane Width).

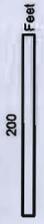
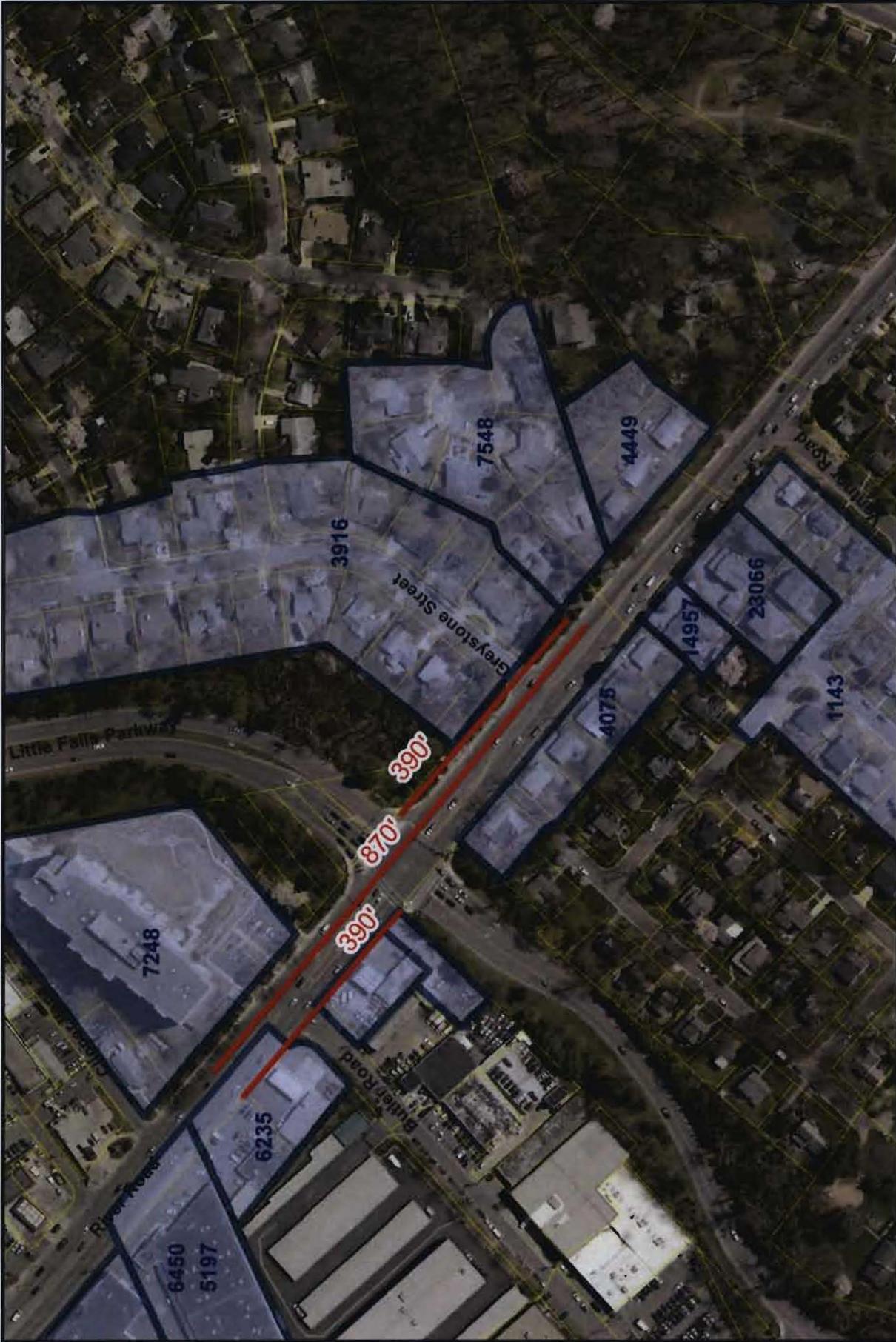
For the purposes of this analysis, staff assumed that implementation of the additional through-lane would require a total distance of approximately 870 linear feet, extending 435 linear feet in each direction from the center of the intersection (390 linear feet from the stop bar). This configuration would carry the additional through-lane just beyond the adjacent intersecting streets on either side of the River Road/ Little Falls Parkway intersection and would provide storage for approximately 18

additional vehicles during the red signal phase on River Road¹. To the west of the intersection, the additional through-lane would extend along the entire frontage of 5110 River Road, a "Shell Gasoline Station," and would include within its limits the intersection of River Road and Butler Road. To the east of the intersection, the additional through-lane would extend along the entire frontage of 5401 Greystone Street, a "single family residence," and would include within its limits the intersection of Greystone Street. Further study may deem necessary longer through-lanes.

CONSTRAINTS/ IMPACTS ANALYSIS

Although there is sufficient right-of-way in both the existing and anticipated future condition to accommodate the additional northwest bound through-lane, its addition may negatively impact pedestrian and bicycle facilities recommended in the draft plan. Depending upon the ultimate lane widths through this section, it may be necessary to consolidate the plan's recommendation for both separated bicycle lanes and sidewalk into a single shared use path along the north side.

¹ $((390' \text{ storage} - 30' \text{ adjacent intersection clearance}) / 20' \text{ vehicle length}) = 18 \text{ vehicles}$



Westbard Sector Plan
 River Road/ Little Falls Parkway Operational Analysis



P.O. Box 644
Glen Echo, MD 20812
January 21, 2016

The Honorable Nancy Floreen
President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

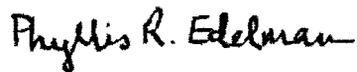
Dear Council President Floreen and Members of the County Council:

On behalf of the Springfield Civic Association, I am writing to support the request of residents on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue to have written into the Westbard Sector Plan that this road be closed at the existing intersection of Westbard Avenue and River Road.

We support the closure of this intersection for all of the reasons the residents have stated in their letter and in conjunction with the realignment of Westbard Avenue. With the realignment of Westbard Avenue so that it flows directly into River Road at what is now the intersection of River Road and Ridgefield Road, and with the closure of this block at the intersection of River Road, this block of 21 single-family homes and three townhouses will be shielded from the cut-through traffic it currently receives and the additional cut-through traffic that will be generated as a result of new retail and residential development expected along Westbard Avenue. Making these two changes together will preserve the quality of life and safety for the entire Springfield neighborhood including this block at the edge of the sector plan.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Best regards,



Phyllis R. Edelman
Pres., Springfield Civic Assn.

5512 Westbard Ave.
Bethesda, MD 20816
February 19, 2016

The Hon. Nancy Floreen
President, Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Floreen and Members of the County Council:

We, 21 homeowners of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue in Bethesda (out of the 21 single-family homes and three townhouses on the block) whose signatures appear below, request that the Montgomery County Council include in the Westbard Sector Plan a proposal to close Westbard Avenue at River Road. We recognize and understand that if the road must be accessible to emergency vehicles, mountable curbs or other structures could be used.

We believe that closing Westbard Avenue at River Road for all but emergency vehicles is warranted for the following reasons:

1. **High volume of cut-through traffic.** Despite speed humps and traffic controlling signs on our residential block, there is a high volume of non-local, cut-through traffic between River Road and Massachusetts Avenue. This cut-through traffic includes tractor-trailers and delivery trucks going to the Westbard retail area and other sites; construction trucks and commuters headed to and from D.C., moving vans, gasoline tankers, and school buses. Although our residential block has signs stating "NO THRU TRUCKS OVER 7,000 LBS G.V.W.", this restriction is routinely ignored at all hours of the day and night. Over a three-hour period during the morning rush hour on February 11, a homeowner counted 122 cars and 14 trucks (including four large tractor trailers) turning onto our street, despite the sign prohibiting right-hand turns from eastbound River Road during 7 a.m.–9 a.m. Mon.-Fri.
2. **Safety concerns for pedestrians.** We are concerned for pedestrian safety, especially for the 15 children who live on our block of Westbard Avenue and who must cross Westbard Avenue and/or Ridgefield Road to get to the school bus stop on the corner of Ridgefield Road. A teenager was injured at this intersection while crossing the street, and vehicles frequently disregard the pedestrian crossing light.
- **Traffic safety hazard.** The lack of a traffic light at the intersection of River Road and Westbard Avenue is hazardous for cut-through traffic turning left from our block onto westbound River Road, which entails crossing eastbound traffic moving from a 45 m.p.h. zone.

The redevelopment throughout the Westbard sector, especially along the commercial areas and high-rises planned along Westbard Avenue, will generate a higher volume of traffic. We anticipate that there will be more cut-through traffic and commercial trucks coming down our residential block, further degrading our quality of life and jeopardizing the safety of pedestrians of all ages.

We support the realignment of Westbard Avenue to run directly from River Road (at the existing intersection at Ridgefield Road) toward the shopping center, as shown in the draft Westbard Sector Plan (Dec. 2015, p. 63). Consistent with this change, we ask that Westbard Avenue be closed at the River Road intersection and that this recommendation be included in the Westbard Sector Plan. We will work with the Springfield Civic Association, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the State Highway Administration as needed to support a sector plan recommendation to close this intersection.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Cynthia P. Green, Ed Bos, Susan Zeng

Cynthia P. Green, Ed Bos, and Susan Xinsheng Zeng on behalf of the 5500 Westbard Ave. homeowners

I am a homeowner on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue, and I support a proposal in the Westbard Sector Plan for closing off Westbard Avenue at River Road.

Date	Name (please print)	House Number on Westbard Avenue	Signature
2/19/16	CYNTHIA P. GREEN	5512	<i>Cynthia P. Green</i>
2/19/16	^{ELLEN EDMOND} Eduard Bos	5508	<i>Eduard Bos</i>
2/19/16	Xinsheng Zeng	5514	<i>Xinsheng Zeng</i>
2/19/16	Hasan JAVADI	5516	<i>H. Javadi</i>
2/19/16	Patricia A. Quinn	5524	<i>Patricia A. Quinn</i>

Date	Name (please print)	House Number on Westbard Avenue	Signature
2/19/16	Djordje Jankovic	5528	
2/19/16	Jennifer Nader	5509	
2/19/16	RICHARD VAUGHAN	551	
2/19/16	Jose Martin	5515	
19 FEB 16	ROBERT GYROWARD JULIE SATTERFIELD	5500	
2-19-16	Jawad M. Farzaneh Safieh Farzaneh	5519	
2-19-16	KISKA WILLIAMS	5502	
2-19-16	Bijal Doshi	5504	
2-19-16	Donna J. Wasyluk	5506	DONNA L. WASYCKIWSKI
2-19-16	ALISON MCLURE MARTIN VAN NIEUWERK	5510	
2-19-16	Jerme E. Broderick	5507	
2-19-16	Raquel Shaibani	5517	
2-19-16	Yehui Chang	5522	
2-19-16	Adrienne Chen-Yang	5521	
2-19-16	Kamil Dybczak	5518	
2/19/16	FARUQ & ALICIA KHADOORI	5526	SIGNED VIA E-MAIL

Kenwood Committee for Westbard/River Road
Addendum to our letter of this same date
February 21, 2016

Nancy Floreen, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th floor
Rockville, Md. 20850

Dear President Floreen and Members of the Council:

In addition to our letter (Feb. 21) that explains our position and concerns about the Westbard Sector Draft, we would like to discuss further our thoughts about the reconfigured road that combines Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road. We would like language to be written into the plan that states "cut through traffic has to be mitigated for the protection of neighborhoods."

We risk repeating ourselves when we say that we do not agree with Page 8 of the Sector Draft that states: "Realign Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road to create a clear GATEWAY into the retail area and protect single family homes." This is listed in section 1.2.3 as a Public Benefit. This is not a public benefit. It only benefits the developer who wants a "gateway" into the retail shopping center. We feel that if this 'revitalized shopping center' is to "retain neighborhood scale" (page 6), it does not need a realigned road that will create a "clear gateway". **The realigned road will create a conduit for increased traffic and will not protect the surrounding neighborhoods. This road is for the benefit of the developer only. Montgomery County taxpayers should not pay for this road.** We feel that the realigned road will create even more cut through traffic at our neighborhood entrance at Brookside and River Road which is a straight shot across River Road from Ridgefield Road.

Regardless of any realignment in that road and intersection, the planned development at the corner of Ridgefield Road and River Road is way too much density on both sides of Ridgefield Road.

The Manor Care site (parcel #2 page 63) is currently zoned at 35 feet. The new height proposed is at 55 feet and because the road is realigned, more land is given to the developer that allows more density. This is unacceptable. **The plan is for 40 townhomes to be built on that site. That is too much density next to single family homes! Look at that area and envision 40 townhouses, it is bad planning practice.**

On the other side of Ridgefield Road is Westwood II (parcel #3,pg. 63). That is currently zoned at a height of 45 feet. The new height proposed is 90 feet. The reason given for this additional height is because the realigned road narrows the land and the developer wants that height. **The plan calls for a 90 ft. building right across from single family homes. We estimate the number of residential units in that building at approximately 150. Again, look at the area right across the street from 40**

townhomes. Think of 150 residential units. That is irresponsible density and bad planning practice.

Realignment of any road will not take care of density of this magnitude. Consider how many residents and cars (we are not near mass transit) those sites will hold. No matter what you do to that road, you can't put that much density in that spot.

Before any decision can be reached regarding this area several important preparatory exercises should be done:

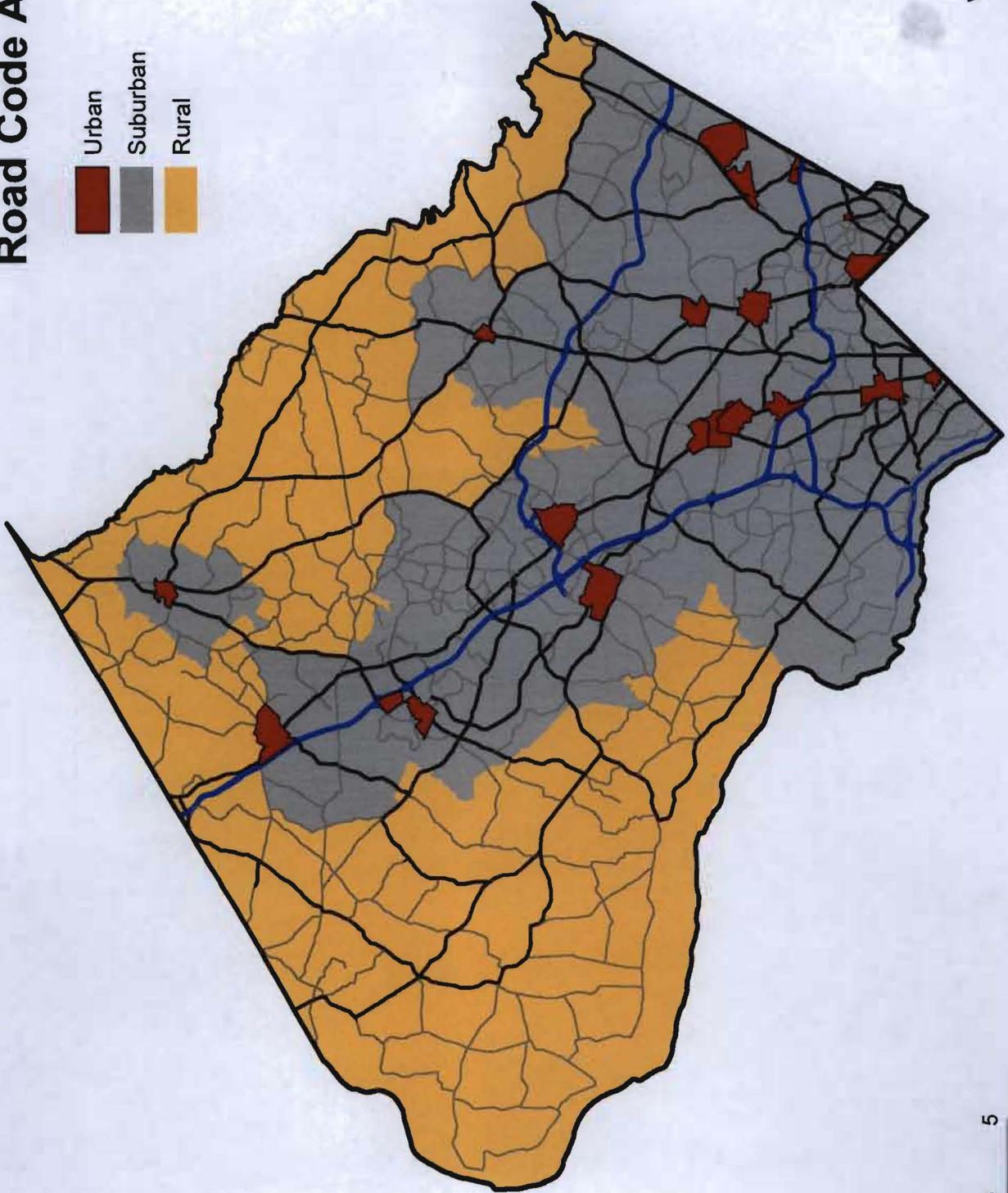
- 1. A complete study by DOT should be done re. cut through traffic up Ridgefield Road into Springfield and from River Road through Ridgefield Road (Springfield) to Westbard Ave.**
- 2. A complete study by DOT re. cut through traffic into Kenwood from Ridgefield Road through Brookside Drive to Bradley Blvd. , through Dorset to Little Falls Parkway into Somerset, through Dorset off River to Little Falls Parkway.**
- 3. This study should look at the impact of the added density that is proposed on that corner of Ridgefield and Westbard. The study should investigate where the residents of the 40 town homes and 150 residential units on that corner will enter and exit their homes.**
- 4. The intersection of Ridgefield and River should be studied by the State of Maryland re turning lanes from east and west. These lanes are not adequate to handle increased traffic of any kind.**
- 5. Accurate traffic studies should be done to estimate how many cars will use this "gateway" to the shopping center.**
- 6. A study should be done to 'offset' the intersection so that cars cannot go straight through the entrance to the Kenwood neighborhood.**
- 7. Consider channelizing the northbound approach so vehicles are physically directed to go either inbound or outbound on River Road.**
- 8. Consider making Ridgefield as it goes into the Springfield neighborhood into a cul de sac. We think that road restrictions to protect homes and neighborhoods are necessary.**

We conclude that the density is egregiously high for the intersection at Ridgefield and Westbard. There will be even more density on the Ridgefield/Westbard Road from more buildings on Westbard proposed at 90 ft. and 110 ft. No road realignment will mitigate the problem. We strongly urge the Council to lower heights and density significantly (by a lot more than half) in order to protect the neighborhoods that already exist.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Patricia Depuy Johnson
Co-chair/ Kenwood Committee for Westbard/River Road

Road Code Areas



General Comments:

- While MCDOT offers a number of comments on this plan, we want to emphasize that we generally support many of these elements and ideas in creating a vibrant urban community. The comments are generally geared toward technical considerations and clarifications to avoid future confusion & discrepancies.
- It is important to include a safety component in all transportation projects involving County roadways and for each modal element referenced in the Transportation Sections.
- Many of the comments provided here were shared with M-NCPPC through MCDGS on October 14, 2015 but have not been addressed in the Planning Board Draft or by written response. MCDOT would like M-NCPPC staff to share a point-by-point response to comments made on the Staff Draft, or otherwise provide point-by-point responses to the comments made on this draft. Furthermore, sharing a document utilizing Track Changes between versions would help simplify & speed up agency reviews. **We have bolded those comments that are more urgent in nature and should be included in Executive Branch testimony at the Council Public Hearing, particularly the lack of any reference to or delineation of defined responsibilities of County versus Private sector for project implementation in Section 4.3 Capital Improvements on pages 92 and 93.**
- **There is a reference to the fact that the Bethesda-Chevy Chase policy area is “inadequate under the (TPAR) roadway” but no reference to the fact that is inadequate under TPAR transit tests”. The plan should identify the current status transit adequacy, as well as discuss specific recommendations to address this condition.**
- All references to improved pedestrian connections, access and/or safety should also include improved bicycling/cyclist connections, access and safety.
- All references to River Road should add “MD 190” and references to Massachusetts Avenue should add “MD 396”.
- References to “Bike share” should be updated to “Bikeshare”
- Additional discussion should be added regarding the relationship with whether new local and business streets will be public or private streets, and if so under what conditions.

Element/Page Specific Comments:

- Page 8, section 1.2.2, bullet one “Transforming existing streets into multi-modal transitways”. Clarify the intent of this statement. “Transitway” often has the specific definition of providing dedicated transit lanes for premium, high frequency bus service. This certainly should not be the intention for all streets in the Westbard plan area.

- Page 8, section 1.2.3, fourth bullet “pedestrian trail”. This trail should be open to all non-motorized use groups.
- Page 8, section 1.2.3, fourth bullet. Please provide the framework for establishment of the noted “amenity fund”
- Page 10:
 - Why are these recommendations considered short-term? Consider separating out and provide a statement that developers will fund certain projects.
 - How does realigning Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road protect the neighborhoods? Don’t we want to integrate neighborhoods with the commercial which will reduce dependence on the automobile? Wouldn’t providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities that connect this Master Plan area with the adjacent properties help reduce dependence on autos?
- Page 11:
 - Clarify criteria for projects being short-term versus long-term and implementation responsibility.
 - Is it fitting to reference a generational title (such as Millennials in the last Housing item) in a document with a potential lifetime that could span generations?
- Pages 11, 12: Is there any indication as to how access points should be consolidated along MD 190 (River Rd)? Through larger conglomerated lots? Through frontage roads or access roads? Through requirements that lots share access points? Through forcing access to side-streets (and if so: what streets)?
- Page 12:
 - Regarding the discussion about private shuttle buses to Metrorail - WMATA must permit these buses to use their site. There may not be enough space at the Metrorail station. They are costly to operate.
- Page 24, 4th paragraph: includes a statement that says: *“While the automobile still needs to be accommodated, data trends, at least in this area, indicate a shift in mode choice or commuting patterns away from the automobile.”* Define what “the area” is. Add more specificity for the source(s) of these data and what those trends entail. Consider ending last sentence after transportation facilities, deleting “,other than just road capacity”.
- Pages 25, 26:
 - Consider clarifying what is meant by “right-sizing the vehicle parking supply”, as providing excess capacity is unlikely to shift non-auto modes much more than providing adequate parking. Does the plan intend to constrain parking to more significantly impact NADMS?
 - Given the references to complete streets and assertion that roads will accommodate all modes, consider including a map showing bicycle level of traffic stress.
- Page 26:
 - As a general rule, it should be noted that provision of multi-modal transportation options (see the second bulleted goal) is already required by

the County Code and Council Resolution 16-809/Executive Regulation No. 31-08AM (Context Sensitive Road Design Standards).

- 2.3.2, River Road: Reduction in travel lane width on River Road / MD 190 is subject to SHA approval.
- 2.3.2, Westbard Avenue (MA-5): what DOT design standard is proposed? Why is a non-standard R/W width proposed?
- *Pages 26-29 Roadway Classifications*
 - Please note any changes to existing classification in functional class table.
 - Consider adding a reference to closest current roadway design standard and recommended modifications either in this table or in cross-sections.

Pages 26, 31:

- The proposed section on page 31 sums to a total of 77 ft. of ROW demands, but on page 26 the ROW is given as 74 ft. Consider whether the text on page 26 should similarly reflect such a range.
- There are no design standards for a 4-lane minor arterial. Clarify the purpose and intent of this classification, as the associated design standards can affect such things as access restrictions.
- Consider whether the text or diagram for MA-5 should reflect how additional ROW beyond 77 ft. would be utilized, as the maximum is given as 100 ft. on page 31. How is the additional 23 ft. intended to be used?
- Page 27:
 - The intersections of M-2, B-2, and B-3 will pose immense operational difficulties, particularly if signalized. These will likely have to be operated on a single controller & should be reflected as such in any intersection models.
 - While it can certainly be done, be mindful that intersections along curves (as is the case along Westbard Ave) can pose operational problems -- for pedestrians & bicyclists, in particular -- and especially if un-signalized.
 - Ensure the alignment of B-2 near MA-5 allows for adequate horizontal curvature.
- Page 27, 29 Clarify the nature of the Local (New Street) designations, particularly along the extension of B-3. Should be treated as a Secondary Residential? Is it anticipated to be a private street, and if so: is its presence integral toward achieving an adequately functioning transportation network? What is the obligation of developers toward providing the new Local Streets? The plan appears to indicate that they **should**, which may not be enforceable.
- Page 28: Clarify the Plant Strips on the outside of the ROW: are these to be in private ROW? Under Public Improvement Easements? Consider whether utilities are to be accommodated in the public ROW or if developers will be obligated to provide PUEs through private ROW.
- Page 29:
 - Table 2.3.1 (Roadway Classification) is incomplete; there are no specific standards for each road, which makes it difficult to determine what to require of potential developers. They should identify the proposed current

- context sensitive roads design standards and improvements (on proposed County roads) should match or at least relate to MCDOT context sensitive roads design standards.
- The table does not include M-1 (MD 396, Massachusetts Avenue) or Little Falls Parkway, which abut the southern and eastern borders of the plan area.
 - **In an e-mail response from M-NCPPC staff to MCDOT staff received on January 5, 2016, specific references to the relationship of the proposed cross-sections to the existing MCDOT sections was provided and should be included in the adopted plan as follows:**
 - Westbard Avenue (River Road to Westbard Circle)– Option A: MC-2005.03 modified. The modifications are to convert the parking lane to a cycle track (separated bike lane), a narrower tree strip, and a wider sidewalk.
 - Westbard Avenue (River Road to Westbard Circle) – Option B: MC-2005.04 modified. The right-of-way requested is 2 feet less than the MCDOT section. There is a narrower median with no left turn lane opportunity, the parking lane is converted to a cycle track, narrower tree strip, and wider sidewalks. The intent here is to keep the utility poles where they are but still reduce the travel lanes by implementing a raised median.
 - Westbard Avenue (Wetsbard Circle to Massachusetts Avenue) MC-2004.20. The right-of-way request was 74' in the table, which is three feet less than what the graphic depicts with the numbers. It was assumed that there would be 6-foot tree strip on both sides and not 8 and 7 feet. The modifications to the MCDOT section are a wider right-of-way, convert and widen the parking lane to a travel lane/parking lane, and convert and widen the wide sidewalk to a 10-foot shared use path.
 - New Connector Road (Westbard Avenue to River Road) MC-2005.01. Modification is to reduce the curb to curb area slightly.
 - Private Streets: MC-2005.02. Modification is in the tree strip and sidewalk areas. The curb to curb is what is recommended in the Montgomery County cross section.
 - Page 29-30 Westbard Ave Option B (page 30) calls for a 110' ROW, whereas the table and text on page 29 call for a 100' ROW. While it is noted that page 29 specifies a minimum ROW, in practice it can be difficult to enforce larger ROWs on developers without a very strong case, such as an engineered design and a timeline for implementation. The text on page 29 offers no information as to why Option B would be chosen over Option A, which both weakens enforcement of a wider 110' ROW and also lacks any clear direction to MCDOT as to when or why Option A versus B would be utilized.
 - Pages 27-33: Be mindful that due to the proximity between B-2 and the Capital Crescent Trail, it is possible that any ROW demands necessary to meet the proposed 52 ft. section may need to come from the west side, beyond the typical

“26 ft. from centerline” assumption. Additional ROW to account for grade differentials between B-2 and the CCT may also be necessary, or be mindful that costs associated with any retaining walls could increase construction costs of B-2 significantly.

- Pages 27-34:
 - Consider additional discussion of private sector/development responsibilities in the provision of the new Local Streets? The plan appears to indicate that they “should”, which may not be enforceable.
 - There does not appear to be any elaboration on B-3 or B-4: their ROW, cross-sections, function, and intent. Of additional interest is their relationship with the new Local Streets: would B-3 and B-4 be public or private streets, and if so under what conditions?

Pages 28, 30, 31, 33, 34 (typical sections):

- Consider removal of the specific lane width dimensions and keep the overall width. See general comment “The plan should consider adding a reference to closest current roadway design standard and recommended modifications either in this table or in cross-sections.”
- County design standards include a 2 ft. strip between the sidewalks and the edge of the ROW. None of the cross-sections shown reflect this buffer area.
- Who will maintain the pervious surface and BMPs? Can the BMPs be included in the tree lawn?
- P.30: The document should provide a typical section for MA-5/Westbard Avenue (from Massachusetts Avenue to Westbard Circle).
- P.30: The lane widths on both typical sections do not comply with Bill 33-13.
- P.30: Westbard Avenue cross section – the ultimate design of the cycle tracks including whether they are elevated or not will be subject to MCDOT approval.
- P.31: recommend providing maintenance strip behind the sidewalks on both sides of the road by reducing the widths of the lawn panels and/or sidewalks, consistent with design standards.
- Page 31 - Consider adding a bikeway facility to the Westbard Avenue “At the Mews” cross-section. Table 2.3.2 on page 37 and figure 2.3.5 on page 32 show this as a bicycle lane but no bikeway is reflected in the cross-section on page 31
- P.33: Are these typical sections for B-2? If so, they should be labelled accordingly.
- P.33: No design standards exist for a 52 ft. Business District Street. The standard that most closely reflects the design requires a 60 ft. ROW.
- P.33: The preceding comment notwithstanding, both cross-sections shown have the same dimensions within the ROW allocation, but list the total ROW differently: the top reads 54 ft. and the bottom reads a minimum of 52 ft. While both are technically accurate given the variable thru lane

widths, it would be preferable that 54 ft. be used for both. This will provide a more enforceable condition for cases where 11 ft. lanes are preferred, and with this being a two-lane road: 11 ft. lanes may be more preferable near intersections and driveways to provide for adequate turning radii.

- P.34: Since this section of the road is intended to be privately maintained, we defer to the Planning Board for approval of this typical section.
- Page 32:
 - The bicycle facilities map seems to be in the wrong location (within the document); it should be relocated to Section 2.3.4 (“Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities”).
 - Why doesn’t the Capital Crescent Trail have a designation on this drawing or in Table 2.3.2 on page 37?
 - Local Bike Lane facilities should be labelled Cycle Track, to agree with the typical section on p.30. Also, the “Westbard Avenue/Ridgefield Road (LB-1) discussion calls these facilities “Separated Local Bike Lanes” – which one is correct? Consistent terminology should be employed throughout the document. (This comment also applies to CT-5 on River Road.)
 - The plan should provide a typical section for MA-5 [which incorporates LB-1].
 - New Connector Road (LB-2): The discussion calls for “On-road shared Lane.” Is this term the same as “shared roadway?”
 - There is no discussion of bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between the Master Plan area and the adjacent neighborhoods to the north and west.
 - Consider showing the connection between Westbard Ave (or potentially B-2 / LB-2) with the CCT, as described on page 38. Consider how grade differentials may be accommodated: sloped areas may require significant ROW, and retaining walls will significantly increase project costs.
- Page 34
 - Please reference minimum preferred block size?
 - Identify on a map in this plan where the American Plant Food Company and Roof Center property referenced in the text are located.
 - The reference to connecting properties through either a vehicular road or pedestrian and bicycle connection may result in the provision of a lesser desired facility.
 - Confirm the intent of the last paragraph. Is this prohibition on “exclusive right-turn lanes” referring to channelized right-turns, or to all right-turn lanes of any type – forcing right-turns to share lanes with other movements? In either case, ensure that any intersection analyses account for such right-turn treatments, particularly if right-turns must share lanes with other movements (as would be the case with the latter). If the latter definition (no right-turn lanes at all), consider how existing right-turn

lanes should be treated: is the intent that they should be removed over the lifetime of the plan?

- Page 35:
 - **To confirm: 2024 TPAR for the BCC Policy Area is presently inadequate as of January 2015 update for transit and roadways, but this plan states that by 2040 the BCC Policy Area will be adequate for both?**
 - Consider specifying that the bus routes connect Westbard only to the Friendship Heights Metro Station. Bethesda Metro is not directly served by any bus lines servicing the plan area.
 - Consider changing the text as follows: “Transit service that is frequent and, if possible *feasible*, branches into the nearby communities”. Furthermore, this text currently appears to imply a greater weight for bus routes to be planned to include diversions through neighborhoods, as compared to more direct routes that may not meander into neighborhoods but can offer a faster & more direct path. These roads may be too narrow to handle buses on the road. Why not provide pedestrian walkways through the sites that can lead to Westbard?
 - Clarify the statement “The increased use of private transit will help justify the increase in public bus service” and what is meant that “private service should be integrated with other transit serving the [Plan area]”. Given that the only transit planned to serve the Plan area consists of local bus lines: would shuttles serve local developments and the local bus lines? It is unlikely that anything requiring such a transfer would garner much ridership, particularly if – upon using the local buses – there is another transfer required with the Red Line (and more critically in the reverse direction, where bus headways may not make transfers from the Red Line desirable). However, shuttle service serving Bethesda or Friendship Heights directly could negatively affect ridership on public bus lines.
- Pages 35-36: Clarify the role and potential implementation of the transit hub, considering Westbard Ave currently has only one bus line (Ride-On 23) and bike facilities will also be a part of the redevelopment of the Giant site as a matter of standard practice. Is this to occur in partnership with new transit lines, or to unify private lines such as shuttles (note last comment on page 35).
- Page 36:
 - “Wide sidewalks” and “sidewalks should of sufficient width” should be related to actual preferred sidewalk widths along existing and proposed streets.
 - There is discussion about improved bicycling and walking connections within the Westbard area but not to the adjacent single-family neighborhood.
 - The discussion about providing signal priority measures (for bus priority strategy) – if the buses on River Road are part of this recommendation, the

MSHA will need to be consulted regarding any signal priority issues along their roadway.

- Page 37:
 - Reference whether additional right-of-way is needed for the bicycle facilities.
 - LB-1 has two different roadway cross-sections and potential bikeway facility types noted on pages 30-31. Please clarify what bikeway type is planned for the roadway section noted on page 31 and include in Table 2.3.2 in table
 - Why are SR-50, SR-69, DB-2, and the Capital Crescent Trail not included in Table 2.3.2 (Bikeway Classification Table)?
 - Table 2.3.2 – What is a Park On-Road Trail?
 - Please include bikeway classifications for each new master planned street in this table.
- Page 38,
 - Intersection Improvements, first column, last paragraph – best practices should be based on best practices from the transportation planning field should be changed to transportation planning and engineering or just delete the reference to transportation planning.
 - Bike Share – all references to Bike Share should be changes to Bikeshare
- Page 39, Transportation Demand Management
- The TDM section could be enhanced by considering the following elements that could ultimately be considered as conditions of future development approvals:
 - Appointment of a Transportation Benefits Coordinator to provide for distribution of information and promotional materials and facilitate planning of TDM-related outreach events within the project.
 - Provision of Real-Time Transit Information display(s) and opportunity for other transit and alt-mode-related information in key locations within the project (e.g., information on car sharing, bike trails, bike parking facilities, etc.)
 - Provision of preferentially-located car/van pool parking spaces and car-sharing parking spaces on-site
 - Provision of secure, weather-proof bicycle parking facilities for residents of multi-unit buildings and employees in office and major retail projects. Consider requiring provision of bicycle storage areas in garages for resident and/or employee use (e.g., bike cage) as well as a small bicycle repair station.
- The following design elements intended to facilitate use and promotion of non-auto modes of transportation should be incorporated into building design for major projects:
 - Design building frontages/lobbies to provide two-way visibility for transit vehicles, shuttles and taxis
 - Provide electric and water connections in outdoor gathering areas to enable outreach events to be staged more readily

- Provide kiosks in active outdoor commercial areas to provide opportunity for information and assistance
 - Provide concierge/reception desk in lobbies with an area where TDM information and passes can be obtained – e.g., transit timetables, loading of SmarTrip cards
- The parking discussion in section 2.3.5 could be enhanced by consideration of the following:
 - Due to the proximity to the Bethesda and Friendship Heights CBD's, the plan should consider the use of paid parking at market rates as a tool for reducing auto impacts and increasing use of alternative transportation modes. We recommend:
 - A comprehensive study of parking in the area, the costs of parking, and additional opportunities for paid on-street and off-street parking
- Page 43 - 44
 - Please note the facilities, if any, associated with the Urban Greenway concept
 - Re: the hard surface trail connecting the Capital Crescent Trail and the Whole Foods Site, where would this be located? Should this be referenced in the bikeway facilities section – if not additional detail should be given on the potential facility type associated with this trail connection and the urban greenway trail sections noted on Map 2.4.2
- Page 45
 - What is meant by “small streets” in the Goal 2 Recommendations?
- Page 65-66 – The pedestrian linkages through Equity One and the connection to Willett Branch discussed should provide access for walking and bicycling.
- Page 69 – Re: provision of 15-20 foot wide sidewalks along River Road – Cross sections, design standards and related right-of-way needs for River Road / MD 190 should be better defined in the Transportation Section
- Page 72, last bullet, first column. Please note the intent of the recommendation “Designate River Road as a Greenway road”.
- Page 74, section 3.3.2, recommendations – these recommendations are transportation recommendations not necessarily urban design, parks, trails and open space.
- Page 77, “reclaim paved areas of the CCT and use them for greenway parking..” Consider re-wording to better describe excess paved areas.
- Page 83, Bullet two – “Provide a mid-block crosswalk” should be replaced with “Provide an improved pedestrian crossing”
- **Page 93, Table 4.1.1: Capital Improvements Program – Reference to potential developer/private sector contribution to the Capital Improvements Program listed projects should be added as a table attribute and/or clearly noted in the section text.**



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Scott E. Goldstein
Fire Chief

MEMORANDUM

January 11, 2016

TO: Greg Ossont, Deputy Director
Department of General Services

FROM: Scott E. Goldstein, Fire Chief *Scott Goldstein*

SUBJECT: Westbard Sector Plan – Planning Board Draft

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Planning Board Draft Westbard Sector Plan dated December 2015.

Based upon staff review of the draft plan, I have both edits/additions and technical comments to offer. The following edits/additions are identical to those appearing in my August 31, 2015 memo concerning the Public Hearing Draft, as they have not been incorporated into the Planning Board Draft:

- Section 2.2.3 – “Other Public Facilities” (p. 23): The second sentence of the “Fire and Rescue” bullet should be revised as follows: “Fire and rescue stations in Bethesda, Chevy Chase and Cabin John also provide service to the Westbard area as needed.” A third sentence should be added stating: “Provision of emergency medical services within the Westbard area will be enhanced when the engine located at Glen Echo Fire Station 11 is upgraded to a four-person paramedic engine in accordance with Fire and Rescue Service deployment plans; thus providing advanced life support first-responder services in addition to fire suppression services.”
- Historical Note (p. 78): The last sentence of the second paragraph would have greater accuracy if revised as follows: “.... ignited by a fire at the fuel storage tanks located on Butler Road in close proximity to”

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Office of the Fire Chief

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Greg Ossont
January 11, 2016
Page 2

I also have the following technical comments:

- Westbard Avenue - Option B roadway section (p. 30): Pavement must be at least 28-ft wide to allow for on-street parking. The proposed 6-ft median leaves only 11 feet available for emergency vehicular access on the inside drive-lanes if parking is allowed in the outside 10-ft lanes.
- Westbard Business - Private Street Section (p. 34): Allows for 7-ft wide parking lanes (i.e., 7'-8' is shown in the Section). The County Road Code as well as Fire Department Vehicular Access and Water Supply Executive Regulation 29-08AM identify 8-ft wide on-street parking lanes.

Additionally, I would like to point out that pedestrian and bicycle-friendly roadway designs, as proposed in this draft plan, are narrower and therefore more difficult for large fire-rescue apparatus to traverse, particularly turns at intersections; thus slowing response (i.e., increasing response time).

If you need further information or have questions, please contact me on 240-777-2468 or Planning Section Manager Scott Gutschick on 240-777-2417.

SEG/sag/ld

cc: Scott Gutschick, Planning Section Manager, MCFRS
Amy Donin, Planning Specialist, DGS