

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC)
Tuesday | July 9, 2024 | 7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Hybrid Meeting

In Attendance:

WUDAC: Jim Epstein, Tanya Baskin, Kit Wood, Riana Cole, Nina Koltnow, Philip Daley, Ali Oliver-Krueger, Andrea Hernandez, David Jarrett, Pedro Matamoros, Rob Fox

County Officials: Mid-County Director Luisa Cardona, WUD Operations Manager Crystal Ruiz, Community Projects Manager for Mid-County Regional Services, Talia Beaulieu-Hains; Director of Community Engagement Sidney Cooper

Guests: Kristine Warner with MWPR, representing Wheaton Gateway.

Kathia Chévez (Office of Natali Fani-Gonzalez)

Public: Adrienne Moumin, Erin Antognoli, Andy Cleavenger, Dan Obrzut, Dan Thompson, Misti Spann

I. 7:00 pm Call to Order - Jim Epstein, Chair

II. 7:02 pm Review and Approve May Minutes - Approved

III. 7:05 pm Community Concerns -

A car transport truck at Fennimore and Galt knocked out a street sign, and it is still down. It needs to be taken care of.

Stores on Ennals are struggling with AC problems. Is there anyone in the County who can help these businesses get this addressed?

Luisa offered to act on them both.

IV. Presentations - 7:20 PM -

1. Wheaton Gateway Updates

Goyer Roberts, Shane Pollin, Will Combs: Wheaton Gateway Update:

Last meeting, they showed us what they would submit in a pre-submission meeting, but that meeting has been delayed, due to changes made to increase affordability to 40%, and also to the Council's adoption of the Complete Streets Design Guide. This slows things down by about 6 months.

Takeaways: All groups involved in planning are local stakeholders as well. Top design can be achieved affordably. The project will be positive for human health, the environment, and profit, building beyond code minimum. Construction should start in Q1 of 2026 and take around 36 months for the first phase (two buildings).

What has changed? Increased density: going from 30% to 40% affordable, creating more smaller and fewer larger units. This allows them to increase height (due to allowances based on percentage of affordable units). One building will now be a senior affordable building. This will allow them to build the first two buildings at once and use more varied types of financing. “Affordable” here means mixed income, both higher and lower than 60% of median income.

Q&A: Since 3 and 4 bedroom units have decreased, how are we serving families? *That is not totally accurate. In one building, they are decreasing. In the others, they are sometimes being replaced by 2+ with den. This is more large units than almost any other projects.*

People planning this do not live here and will not have to suffer the traffic consequences. Where is the traffic study? Why has commercial footage been decreased? *We designed this project in response to a sector plan and community input insisting upon greater density at this location. This will allow public transportation, biking, walking to be effective. We are in talks with a private preschool to occupy the first floor of one of the building, which would be a tremendous plus. We are looking at a grocery store for the corner.*

How many parking spaces will there be? Will it be free? *About 1000 overall. It may not be completely free; that would increase car use and traffic. That will be an operational consideration.*

I don't believe you are increasing affordability out of the goodness of your heart. Don't go higher, just increase affordability. You must put businesses in the commercial space. The green space is also not welcoming to the public. *We are doing this in cooperation with Housing Opportunities Commission. Making the buildings MIXED income rather than all affordable housing makes*

it so the project is financially self-sustaining and viable. The raised storm water management is an effort to do so beautifully and invitingly while providing a buffer to busy Viers Mill Rd.

Costs of units? The units that are not at market rate will be affordable for people with 30 - 80% of average median income ; all units will be of the same quality. We are also building a resiliency hub, a place where if the grid goes down, people can charge phones, refrigerate medicines, etc.

There will be another public meeting in the next few months. Get more information at wheatongateway.com.

From chat: *Thank you for everyone's feedback! We are always interested in hearing from anyone, and we encourage you to visit <https://www.wheatongateway.com/contact> and fill out our contact form.*

V. Reports and Updates

1. Elected representatives in attendance -

Kathia Chévez for Council Member Fani-Gonzalez -
Excellent work on Taste of Wheaton.

The Council Member is working on the youth crisis. There will be a community event on July 15th at Aspen Hill Christian Church. We are planning another public safety town hall Sept 25 starting at 6, with state representatives, at the Wheaton Library. See flyer.

2. Wheaton Urban District, Community Engagement Updates

Luisa Cardona and Sidney Cooper, Montgomery County Regional Services Center

- Marketing Survey Responses: most people hear about Wheaton events from friends and family, then social media, flyers, and posters. Our social media reach is way up. Yelp reviews were very positive, and the most shared posts were about children's activities. Results of the survey are on this website.
- Taste of Wheaton survey: hard to tell definitively the demographics - we tended to have more of people who tend to fill out surveys.
- Supporting Youth in Crisis Townhall was well attended. There was a

more positive attitude than the first time. People are very pleased with the pilot program at Wheaton. In general, the main concerns were about why what was happening in Wheaton wasn't happening in other parts of the region.

Other: conversation about moving the large metal triangular sculptures. Potential users of the plaza say the sculptures feel in the way of movement. Could they move across Reddie or up onto grassy flat areas above the plaza? It would be excessively expensive and dangerous to the sculptures. A lot of thought and deliberation went into their current placement.

The fountain in front of the County Building will be turned on for the TGIF concerts. It will help with the heat. The biggest issue is the pH level, which has to be managed by a certified pool person.

2. Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce -

3. Committee Reports - ran out of time

4. Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) -

5. Mid-County Regional Services Center - Luisa Cardona, Director
Lindsey Ford may move relatively soon.

Streeteries: MoCo Streeteries will all be removed. But - WUD's is used by the restaurants exclusively, not exactly public. DOT does not want us to be an exception. Outdoor space owned by business owner can be used for serving tables with a permit. That is not the case for public space.

VII Adjourn 8:55 pm

NEXT WUDAC MEETING: September 10, 2024, 7:00 - 8:30 PM with executive session at 6:30.