



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

October 4, 2013

Mr. Henriot St. Gerard, Chair  
Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee  
2424 Reedie Drive  
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

Dear Mr. St. Gerard:

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC) following up on this summer's walking tour of the Wheaton Urban District. As a participant of that tour, I was encouraged by the diverse attendance, the many speakers, and the numerous suggestions to make Wheaton a more vibrant and walkable community. I have had an opportunity to consider the specific recommendations you shared in your letter and would like to offer the following responses to the three major categories that you outlined.

Pedestrian Access and Safety

I acknowledge that one of the biggest challenges in making all of Wheaton a cohesive, walkable community is the fact that it is divided by three major State highways. To that end, I am committed to having the County's Department of Transportation (MCDOT) continue to partner with the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA) with the common goal to enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility within the Wheaton Urban District with particular attention being given to the area around Georgia Avenue and Reedie Drive where significant new development is occurring.

With regard to your request to ensure adequate pedestrian access during construction, I have asked MCDOT and the Department of Permitting Services to work together to ensure that the requirements of the County Code governing the maintenance of sidewalks during construction will be met before permits are issued. Additionally, by copy of this letter I am forwarding your concerns to Brian Young, MSHA's District Engineer so that he may address this issue along State highways.

Arts and Entertainment

Wheaton certainly has a rich history of arts and entertainment. Much has already been coordinated to develop the arts in Wheaton as well as incentivize development in the future. Currently, Montgomery County offers Arts and Entertainment opportunities through the Wheaton Urban District events and festivals. Moving forward, the county expects the Wheaton Urban District to continue fulfilling their role in developing Arts and Entertainment opportunities for Wheaton even after the town square is built. For this reason, it would be important to coordinate with the Wheaton Urban District staff on additional opportunities for events at any of the public spaces in Wheaton including Veterans Park and Garage 45.

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In addition, Montgomery County is currently investing resources to further develop Wheaton through the Wheaton Redevelopment Program CIP Project. Through this effort, scheduled projects include the headquarters of the Park and Planning building, some aspect of private investment, and a town square. The town square would be the county's investment in an Arts and Entertainment venue for Wheaton residents.

Even so, Wheaton has been designated by the State of Maryland as an Enterprise Zone and an Arts and Entertainment District. The Enterprise Zone Real Estate Property Tax Credit is an incentive for businesses to locate or expand facilities in a designated enterprise zone. The benefits under the Arts and Entertainment District designation are similar but focused specifically on the following:

- 1) property tax credits for new construction or renovation of certain buildings that create live-work space for artists and/or space for arts and entertainment enterprises;
- 2) an income tax subtraction modification for income derived from artistic work sold by "qualifying residing artists";
- 3) an exemption from the Admissions and Amusement tax levied by an "arts and entertainment enterprise" or "qualifying residing artist" in a district.

Both designations offer the private sector incentives to pursue development, including development of Arts and Entertainment venues in Wheaton.

#### Parking and Lighting

The lighting in all our County garages is designed to the same standard. This standard exceeds industry standards used throughout the country. The lighting levels in the Amherst Garage in Wheaton are the same as any of our Bethesda or Silver Spring garages. That said, the Department of Transportation, Division of Parking (MCDOT/Parking) has recently completed an extensive relighting project in most of our garages including the Amherst Garage. We have installed new fluorescent lighting system to provide a more even light distribution and eliminate the "cave" effect of dark ceilings and corners. I am happy to say that this modification also cut electric usage by over 30 percent. I would suggest that the perception of limited lighting in the area may have more to do with the construction related to the Safeway project and the resulting currently limited side walk lighting in the area. Part of this project will update streetscape and street lighting. This update should help address your concern.

You also asked about the affect of the Wheaton Redevelopment Project on parking. In preparation for the redevelopment of Public Parking Lot 13, MCDOT/Parking will, as a standard practice, draft, implement and manage a Parking Mitigation Plan. The outline of this plan was presented at the Wheaton Community Meeting held on June 12, 2013. We will take every measure to ease the impact of the redevelopment project on parking availability for the local business and residential communities. For your information please find enclosed the aforementioned Parking Mitigation Plan.

The parking model in Wheaton's Parking Lot District (PLD) supports a healthy turnover of spaces designed to accommodate the parking needs of the business and residential communities. We currently manage 1,471 public parking spaces in the Wheaton PLD. All public parking spaces are operated as "shared parking spaces" that are open to the general public and are not restricted for the

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exclusive use of any one business. Most on-street parking spaces and spaces on the lower level of garage are operated and managed to serve the needs of adjacent business that require shorter parking durations (less than 2 hours). Longer duration meters are located on upper levels of the garage and in the surface parking lots. The current parking inventory in Wheaton is comprised of 933 long-term spaces (4 hours or more) and 538 short-term spaces (less than 4 hours). Only 8 percent (122 spaces) of the current inventory of parking spaces are designated as 1 hour. A majority of these spaces are located on-street in areas with high parking demand. A shorter duration is recommended in these areas to facilitate vehicle "turn-over" and increase space availability. MCDOT/Parking routinely monitors parking utilization and we do make duration changes where appropriate. We are happy to review the utilization of the short-term spaces in the garage.

You also raised a concern regarding public safety in Wheaton. As you may know, the Montgomery County Police is the agency directly charged with maintaining public safety throughout the County. Both the Wheaton Urban District and the PLD support the Police effort with the Clean and Safe Team and our PLD contract security staff but the resources and capability of both is very limited. We have forwarded your concerns to the Police as the primary agency.

Feel free to contact Xavius daSilva-Thompson, Chief, Management Services and Property Development, MCDOT, Division of Parking Management, at 240-777-8740 if you have any additional questions, comments or concerns. Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,  
**Original signed by**  
**Isiah Leggett**

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

IL:kmh

Enclosure

cc: Bryan Young, MSHA

bcc: CECC 123-14  
CE Read File  
Holmes/Tyree  
Ana Lopez van Balen  
Siebert/Ham  
Wolanin/Mahoney  
Fred Lees

# I. Parking Mitigation

## INTRODUCTION:

Montgomery County Division of Parking Management (MCDOT) will develop a comprehensive Parking Mitigation Plan based on approved construction plans, existing parking capacity, and historical parking utilization analysis and stakeholder participation.

The measures of the Parking Mitigation Plan will be specific to the sites identified in the redevelopment project. However, the plan will encompass the following general measures:

### Parking Mitigation General Measures:

1. Promote safety  
(For motorist and pedestrians to utilize the designated parking locations)
2. Establish alternative parking locations and availability of parking spaces,  
(When lot 13 and Lot 34 go offline alternative parking locations will be designated in addition to the number of spaces available for use at each location)
3. Provide convenience of easy to find the parking locations,  
(Way finding program whereby directional signage is strategically placed through the community to improve the ability for motorist and pedestrians to reach their chosen destinations)
4. Minimize the projects impact in the Central Business District and surrounding areas, by maintaining a normal parking environment as much as possible.  
(The goal here is to reduce the impact of the projects on the business community and surround areas through implementing several measures that directly address the parking and information needs of the Wheaton community as a whole)  
  
(The DOT in cooperation with other County and non County organizations will accomplish this goal through various public engagement activities)

Implementation of these measures is a formal process that involves the following components to develop a Parking Mitigation Plan and Process:

**Key Components of Parking Mitigation Plan:**

1. Introduction (Purpose and Description of Plan)
2. Observations and Analysis
3. Short - Term Parking Space Alternatives
4. Long - Term Parking Space Alternatives
5. ADA Parking Space Alternatives
6. Carpool Parking Space Alternatives
7. Residential Parking Enforcement
8. Transit Services
9. Solutions Summary

**Parking Mitigation Plan Process:**

1. Review Approved Construction Plans
2. Develop First Draft of Parking Mitigation Plan
3. Present Draft of Parking Mitigation Plan to Stakeholders
4. Finalize Parking Mitigation Plan
5. Release Public Notification of Parking Mitigation Plan
6. Manage Parking Mitigation Plan

Public Notification of the final Parking Mitigation Plan will be released by the Montgomery County's Public Information Office and made available on the Department of Transportations, Division of Parking Managements webpage.