



Jeffrey Z. Slavin
Mayor

TOWN OF
SOMERSET

4510 Cumberland Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-657-3211
town@townofsomerset.com



Rich Charnovich
Town Manager/Clerk-Treasurer

October 31, 2016

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

Re: Downtown Bethesda Plan

Dear President Floreen and Members of the County Council,

Elected officers in the Town of Somerset have some concerns about the proposed Downtown Bethesda Sector Plan which is currently being considered by the County Council. Our Town is very near Downtown Bethesda and will be affected by decisions the Council makes about the level of development. We are concerned about the proposed level of density for Downtown Bethesda, and we support many of the issues raised by Bethesda residents during your recent hearings.

Specifically Bethesda residents have asked you to do three things, which we also endorse.

1. Stage development to assure parks, schools, and traffic are in balance with growth. We would add a concern about adequate fire and safety services staged to growth in Bethesda.
2. Mitigate the impact on nearby residential neighborhoods. Ensure development near those neighborhoods is compatible in use with residential areas.
 - Ensure there are appropriate transitions from the central business district to the neighborhoods.
 - Provide for a Greenway where appropriate that provides a meaningful transition space.
 - Ensure that there is ample open space in downtown Bethesda, including dedicating the existing county owned surface parking lots to open space and parks.

3. Focus tall buildings near Metro and not at the edges. There are plenty of properties away from residential areas where large buildings can be constructed, and there is no need to site any properties that will degrade the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. In addition, we don't want to see a canyon wall all the way from the Bethesda Metro to Bradley Boulevard.

We appreciate the care with which the Council considered the Westbard Sector Plan and the responsiveness of the Council to concerns raised by residents who live nearby. We ask that you are similarly responsive to the concerns of the residents of Downtown Bethesda and nearby neighborhoods like ours.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Z. Slavin
Mayor



Marnie S. Shaul
Council Vice-President

Barbara Zeughauser
Council Member