

PS COMMITTEE #2
June 13, 2013

MEMORANDUM

June 7, 2013

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst *SJF*

SUBJECT: **Review:** Recommendations of the Wheaton Public Safety Work Group

Today the Committee will receive an update on the Wheaton Public Safety Work Group's report, "*Turning Vision into Reality: Recommendations to Improve the Quality of Life in our Community.*" Those expected to brief the Committee are:

John Damskey, 4th District Commander, Police Department
Joe Callaway, Chief Operations Manager of the Wheaton Urban District
Ana L. van Balen, Mid-County Regional Services Director
Gam Wijetunge, Mid-County Citizens' Advisory Board Member

BACKGROUND

Last year, Councilmember Riemer and Councilmember Navarro requested that the County create the Wheaton Public Safety Work Group to examine resident concerns about crime and other concerns in Wheaton. The Work Group has developed a draft report outlining its findings, and providing 18 recommendations. The draft report is attached at ©1-21.

DISCUSSION ISSUES

- 1) Most survey respondents want better lighting and better pedestrian safety. What steps can the County and its partners take to provide that?
- 2) The 4th District's new District Community Action Team (DCAT) should be fully operational by the summer. How does the Department envision its use in Wheaton?
- 3) What improvements can be made to State roadways? How does the County partner with the State to make improvements?
- 4) What are the Work Group's next steps?

WHEATON

Turning Vision Into Reality:

*Recommendations to
Improve the Quality of Life
in our Community*

By the Wheaton Public Safety Work Group
April 2013



Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Ana L. van Balen
Director

April 18, 2013

Dear Wheaton Residents, Businesses & Consumers,

Over the past decade we have made tremendous progress in addressing concerns related to public safety in Wheaton. We have implemented many of the recommendations from The Wheaton Public Safety Audit of 2004 that have led to improvements in walkability, communication amongst public safety entities, and overall pedestrian safety in Wheaton. This work has been coupled with that of some property owners who have improved their buildings and parking lots, business owners who have worked on their facades, and new development that has brought change to our landscape. Continued progress is needed as gaps still exist in efforts related to public safety and the perception of crime in Wheaton.

This report attempts to speak to those gaps. It is a result of the work and commitment of the Wheaton Public Safety Work Group whose members include local advisory committee members, business representatives, residents and school representatives and Montgomery County, Montgomery County Council and WMATA staff. We thank them for committing the time to discuss and finalize the recommendations in this report.

Each recommendation suggests investment not just of dollars but of time, communication and collaboration to achieve the standard listed. If successful, it will provide that which the community seeks—to improve not just public safety in Wheaton, but the quality of life that will make this community one in which we are all proud of being a part.

Sincerely,

Ana L. van Balen
Mid-County Regional Director

John Damskey
Commander 4th District
Montgomery County Police

Joe Callaway
Chief of Operation
Wheaton Urban District

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WORK GROUP MEMBERS

Advisory Committee Representatives

Jeannette Feldner, Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee
Gam Wijetunge, Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board
Joseph Capuano, Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Business Owners

Matt Barry, Westfield Wheaton Mall

Residents

Linda Amendt, Brownstones at Wheaton Metro Townhome Association
Chris Farrell, Kemp Mill Civic Association
Diane Lynne, Wheaton Forest Civic Association

School representatives

Kevin Lowndes, Principal Wheaton High School
Mayra Delgado, Parent of student at Wheaton High School

Montgomery County Staff

Ana van Balen, Mid-County Regional Director
Joe Callaway, Wheaton Urban District
Cmdr. John Damskey, MCPD
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Council staff

Adam Fogel, Councilmember Navarro's office
Adam Pagnucco, Councilmember Riemer's office
Dean Christmon, Councilmember Riemer's office

WMATA-Metro Transit Police Department

Cpt. Pete Sepulveda
Lt. Robert Kirkpatrick

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a general perception about the prevalence of crime in Wheaton. As a result, Councilmember Riemer and Councilmember Navarro asked the county to create the Wheaton Public Safety Work Group to identify and better understand resident concerns. Through the creation of the Wheaton Public Safety Work Group, a community survey was developed where it was ascertained that crime was not residents' main concern. Instead, residents would like to see the following changes in Wheaton:

- Improved lighting
- Pedestrian and bike safety and accessibility
- Improving the appearance of the Wheaton Urban District (WUD)
- Communication with the community
- Enhancing county staffing in Wheaton

Since members of the Work Group are not issue experts, it is recommended that additional research be completed. Even so, the following 16 recommendations were developed:

I. IMPROVE LIGHTING

1. The creation of efforts to support lighting standards in commercial areas
2. All pedestrian lighting should be dark sky compliant and energy efficient
3. Uniform lighting styles to create a cohesive and better defined downtown

II. IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN & BIKE ACCESSIBILITY

1. Develop plan to implement a walkable pedestrian network
2. Enhance sidewalks to make them safe for pedestrian movement
3. Designate Wheaton as a Transportation Demand Management District

III. IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

1. Collaborate and work with other community groups on outreach to local businesses on storefront appeal, beautification, and "greening"
2. Study and recommend signage to brand Wheaton and safely direct visitors
3. Strengthen existing entities that support Wheaton Businesses (Chamber, Local 1st)
4. Encourage businesses to reinvest while recruiting businesses that enhance area's appeal
5. Improve and grow the Arts & Entertainment district in Wheaton
6. Discuss potential economic opportunities in Wheaton

IV. COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

1. Increase marketing and promotion of downtown Wheaton
2. Enhance outreach of Wheaton Urban District information
3. Educate community on available MCPD & WUD communication tools and efforts

V. ENHANCING COUNTY STAFFING IN WHEATON

1. Hire additional police for the 4th district CBD
2. Hire additional urban district staff to have a 7-day clean team
3. Restore Regional Center staff

WHEATON YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

WHEATON YESTERDAY

Wheaton's story has evolved over time. The Wheaton Urban District (WUD) was created and encompasses 201 acres around the Wheaton Metro station including numerous small businesses, extensive retail establishments (both large and small), and includes an additional 79 acres belonging to Westfield Shopping Center. In its inception, there were no residential units in the WUD—a map of the WUD can be found in Appendix A. Today, we have 536 units with 908 more to come in the next 2 years. This one change has brought more people to the streets of Wheaton and more voices to raise concerns about what Wheaton should be.

Consequently, a great deal of effort has been taken by the WUD, the Montgomery County Police 4th District and other county Departments to make Wheaton what it is today. In 2000, the police did not have dedicated staff despite the public safety concerns that existed in the WUD. Officers were typically deployed throughout the 4th district with no officers dedicated to the WUD. Today, the 4th District is patrolled by a team of seven officers plus one sergeant.

Similarly, though there was a WUD twelve years ago, there was no staff. Today close to 19 staff work to provide the area a significant amount of services to improve the cleanliness and safety of Wheaton. The table below shows the statistics for the Clean & Safe Team over the last 6 years:

Clean & Safe Team Members per Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<i>Assault</i>	7	6	3	2	2	1
<i>Auto Accident</i>	46	49	46	22	22	15
<i>Buddy Escort</i>	1600	1896	1353	939	1389	819
<i>Business Contact</i>	2929	2752	3300	1867	3837	1089
<i>Citizen Assist</i>	2284	2327	1590	1263	2852	1789
<i>Citizen Complaints</i>	289	293	267	98	298	123
<i>Compliments</i>	n/a	10	39	18	43	11
<i>Contact EMS/PD</i>	65	108	40	11	43	7
<i>Disorderly Conduct</i>	90	113	49	10	39	13
<i>Drinking in Public</i>	180	97	142	50	117	49
<i>Drug Activity</i>	39	34	21	12	17	4
<i>Field Interviews</i>	11	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Fights</i>	9	14	5	1	0	1
<i>First Aid / CPR</i>	4	12	0	0	0	2
<i>Health Related</i>	92	84	16	7	12	7
<i>Homeless Contact</i>	202	84	107	82	92	26
<i>Illegal Dumping</i>	n/a	5	18	2	28	9
<i>Illegal Vendors</i>	11	14	37	20	29	14
<i>Jump Starts</i>	106	109	121	117	249	127
<i>Lock Outs</i>	88	134	115	78	219	113
<i>Loitering</i>	n/a	157	296	195	287	83
<i>Open Cont / Drug Para</i>	n/a	27	367	153	430	86

<i>Others</i>	n/a	9	185	112	989	492
<i>Panhandler</i>	230	147	226	157	322	64
<i>Parking situation</i>	203	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Police / Rescue Assist</i>	103	57	36	11	19	9
<i>Public Intoxication</i>	494	450	338	179	535	52
<i>Public Urination</i>	145	121	56	26	81	32
<i>Safety Related</i>	429	322	249	56	221	57
<i>Sexual Activity</i>	26	21	25	8	16	3
<i>Street Robbery</i>	6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Suspicious Activity</i>	n/a	11	65	28	45	15
<i>Theft from Vehicle</i>	6	12	7	1	2	1
<i>Vandalism</i>	130	70	57	22	74	13
<i>Victim Assists</i>	15	9	5	0	2	9

It is no wonder that Wheaton gets a mixed review today. For everything that many enjoy, others find limiting or inaccessible.

Positive Aspects

Funky, eclectic
Easily accessible by different modes of transportation
On the brink of redevelopment
Limited levels of urban crime
Urban district services

Negative Aspects

Different and scary
State roads limit walkability and biking accessibility
Could impact small business community
Huge perception of crime
Limited in their reach

These comments come from residents, consumers and also from others who come through Wheaton. And yet, Wheaton continues to change.

WHEATON TODAY

Thousands of people come through and to Wheaton by Metro & Bus:

RAIL RIDERSHIP

Average Weekly – 23,200
Average Monthly – 92,700

BUS RIDERSHIP

4,209 average daily boardings and
4,083 average daily alightings

Westfield Wheaton Mall has seen an increase in visitors over the last couple of years:

Year	Number of visitors
2000	6,432,061
2007	7,059,873
2012	8,650,253
2013	10 Million Projected from opening of Costco

Due to Wheaton’s past, many often ask if Wheaton has crime today? The answer is yes, hence the WUD requires a greater focus of law enforcement resources. As a result, this area of the 4th

District has numerous specialized units that address crime and quality of life issues through directed patrol and crime suppression initiatives. While these units have a positive impact on crime, they have responsibilities countywide and their deployments to the CBD are often short in duration, as other areas of the County are also in need of their assistance.

The table below provides a glimpse of what is happening in the WUD but to understand the crime statistics requires a context especially with other urban districts in Montgomery County. There is no fair comparison between each jurisdiction due to the geographic size, demographics, access to other parts of the county and the resources that may exist to support their need. Therefore, looking at raw data does not provide the full picture of what is occurring in each jurisdiction. Even so, the following table offers a simplistic view of crimes in 2012 for each area in Montgomery County:

Urban Districts	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Residential Burglary	Commercial Burglary	Auto Theft	Theft from Vehicle
Bethesda	14	13	20	20	19	135
Rockville	17	8	30	18	19	54
Silver Spring	54	22	67	25	42	144
Wheaton	54	33	38	19	28	88

WHEATON TOMORROW

Many have envisioned an exciting and vibrant future for this commercial business district. In fact, the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission states in the January 2012 Approved and Adopted Wheaton Sector Plan that, "*Wheaton is envisioned as a major mixed-use center for the Georgia Avenue corridor and eastern Montgomery County*" (p. 9). Their major recommendations focus on the following four principles (p. 12):

1. Capitalizing on Wheaton's diversity
2. Improving connectivity
3. Implementing design features to add value to the area
4. Incorporating natural and built environments into its existing framework.

There are several projects that will help implement these changes while also altering the landscape of Wheaton both physically and in number of people they will draw into the area:

- Patriot Realty/Foulger Pratt Mixed-Use Development with 482 residential units
- Washington Property Co. Development with 238 residential units
- Lowe Enterprises Development with a projected 190 residential units
- County project that will build a new headquarters for the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission and a new Town Square

For many, these projects offer an opportunity to reconsider what Wheaton has to offer the region. We are excited they have chosen to invest in Wheaton but that investment will have to expand in order to continue addressing the long term concerns of our community. It will take all stakeholders—from residents to business to property owners including the county—to help revitalize and redevelop Wheaton into a better, safe, and thriving center for all.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

A Wheaton Public Safety Community Survey¹ was conducted to ascertain what concerns the community has of Wheaton. It was important first to understand how residents, businesses and consumers viewed Wheaton today. Over 400 people responded from diverse sectors of the community. Here are the results:

Impressions of Wheaton:

- Over 48% had a positive impression
- 30% had an average impression
- Only 23% had a very negative impression

Feelings of safety throughout the day:

- 95% feel safe during the day
- 71% feel safe in the evening (5-9pm)
- 60% do not feel safe late at night (9pm-3am)
- 85% feel safe to and from their destination

For those who felt that safety is a concern, they stated that the following would improve their experience in Downtown Wheaton:

- 55% stated to add more lighting
- 53% stated to improve pedestrian safety
- 45% stated to improve appearance of commercial area
- 44% stated to hire more police
- 38% stated to increase community awareness of police efforts
- 37% stated to install cameras
- 28% stated to hire additional Wheaton Urban District staff
- 24% stated to improve bicycle safety
- 24% stated to augment communication with the community
- 18% stated to create public safety announcements
- 14% had other responses

The survey responses highlight five issue areas:

1. Improved lighting
2. Pedestrian and bike safety and accessibility
3. Improving the appearance of the commercial business district
4. Communication with the community
5. Staffing recommendations for the county

Recommendations would engage four stakeholder groups: property owners, small businesses, county departments and consumers/residents. Wheaton will thrive when all stakeholders exert

¹ A copy of the survey questions can be found in Appendix B

influence for the main recommendations listed in this report. The chart below demonstrates how stakeholders interplay with each of the main recommendations:

Stakeholder	Recommendations
Property Owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Lighting • Improving the appearance of the Wheaton urban district
Business Owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Lighting • Improving the appearance of the Wheaton urban district • Communication with the community
Montgomery County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Lighting • Pedestrian and bike safety and accessibility • Staffing recommendations
Consumers/Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Lighting • Pedestrian and bike safety and accessibility • Improving the appearance of the Wheaton urban district • Communication with the community • Staffing recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE WHEATON'S QUALITY OF LIFE

I. IMPROVE LIGHTING

"In particular, while there is no statistically significant evidence that street lighting impacts the level of crime, especially if crime displacement is taken into account, there is a strong indication that increased lighting - perhaps lighting uniformity - decreases the fear of crime."

U.S. Department of Justice Study of Street Lighting and Crime, July 1977 By James M. Tien, Principal Investigator, Vincent F. O'Donnell, Arnold I. Barnett, and Pitu B. Mirchandani

In Wheaton, the issue of adequate lighting should be analyzed from the perspective of what is appropriate for public versus private properties. Public lighting within the Wheaton Urban District exceeds the recommended lighting of 0.5fc (footcandle) to 1.0fc for sidewalks and 2.0fc for parking lots. And yet, the Dark Sky Society recommends that lighting goals should include the following:

- Provide for safety of nighttime traffic operation
- Provide the pedestrian a safe and secure feeling
- Deter crime
- Lighting should be dark sky compliant
- Storefront lighting should average 2.0fc not to exceed 5fc.

In Montgomery County, the lighting codes do not address the amount of lumination required on private properties, let alone on commercial properties in a business district. For example, Arlington County has general criteria (or minimum) of 1.5fc for all properties in commercial areas. This one lighting standard could help address concerns that were raised as far back as 2004² and would help create uniformity of lighting eliminating dark spots throughout the WUD. Therefore, the work group recommends the following:

1. The creation of efforts to create lighting standards in commercial areas/regardless of public or private properties and the allocation of appropriate resources to assure compliance. One way of achieving this is through the creation of a code for minimum and maximum lighting standards.

2. All pedestrian lighting (both public and private) should be dark sky compliant and energy efficient

3. Uniform lighting styles to create a cohesive and better defined downtown—private properties should be encouraged to adopt these styles where appropriate

II. IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN & BIKE SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

There are varying perspectives on how to approach this topic that is still a relatively new goal especially for the county. Yet there are some generally accepted practices that help to illuminate

² From the Wheaton Public Safety Audit of 2004

and frame the conversation in Wheaton. Specifically, there are several aspects to consider when discussing pedestrian and bike safety:

1. Develop plan to implement a walkable pedestrian network
2. Enhance sidewalks to make them safe for pedestrian movement
3. Designate Wheaton as a Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area

For the pedestrian expert, these categories may be vastly oversimplified, but these are places to start the conversation specifically considering the challenges in Wheaton—an area enclosed by three state roads that are each six lanes wide. So each area should be approached independently and simultaneously from each other:

1. Develop plan to implement a walkable pedestrian network: Specific proposed improvements stem from remaining recommendations from the Wheaton Metro Area Pedestrian Study Report of 2004:

- Support logical pathways & connections along pedestrian desire lines—where people walk—such as at Price-Ennalls Avenue extension
- Design new facilities to create desire lines proximate to safe crossings (i.e. building entrances, walkways between buildings, etc.)
- Promote pedestrian crossing safety
 - Implement traffic calming features—curb extensions, circles, islands—especially at redeveloped sites
 - Implement non-traversable features—raised medians with landscape—to prevent uncontrolled, mid-block crossings generated by new sites
 - Provide through-block pedestrian connections especially at locations with long blocks (i.e. Georgia Avenue & Price Street)
 - Upgrade Pedestrian Facilities
 - Strategically implement accessible countdown pedestrian signals
 - Provide lead pedestrian intervals at crosswalks which allows the ‘walk’ signal for pedestrians to appear three or more seconds before the green signal for drivers
 - Improve sidewalks to standard widths and close “gaps” in sidewalk continuity
 - Upgrade handicap ramps to meet ADA standards (including detectable warning surfaces)
 - Redesign pedestrian-related signage and pavement markings to have greater conspicuity (i.e., high visibility crosswalk, fluorescent-green signage).
- Locate transit facilities proximate to safe crossings (i.e. bus stops and station entrances)
- The Wheaton Sector Plan recommends reducing traffic to 30 miles per hour on state roads and 25 miles per hour on county roads³. It is recommended that speed limits be appropriately set based on prevailing pedestrian demands in the WUD.

2. Enhance sidewalks to make them safe for pedestrian movement: According to Jeff Speck in his book *Walkable City*, “*What makes a sidewalk safe is not its width, but whether it is protected by a line of parked cars that form a barrier of steel between the pedestrian and the roadway.*” Parked cars are only one type of barrier for pedestrians, and all should be considered moving forward—from landscaping, street furniture, or other design features. Increasing street

³ Taken from Wheaton Sector Plan 2012 p. 62

parking though has other benefits to consider. It would reduce the six lanes on each state road to four and would help reduce traffic speeds for pedestrians crossing the roads. This is a standard practice in most commercial business districts during off-peak hours and is recommended in the Wheaton Sector Plan. Doing this would not only allow for increased pedestrian safety, but would leave room for bike lanes—which is another goal that the community has requested. On street parking would also better serve the business community—the 2012 Wheaton Redevelopment Small Business Survey identified Parking as businesses’ primary concern. Hence the following are recommended:

- Provide buffers between higher speed traffic and where pedestrians walk (sidewalks) or congregate (bus stops)
- Provide wide sidewalks to accommodate increased pedestrian volumes
- Remove obstructions on sidewalks – from telephone poles in the middle of a walkway to illegal signing
- Ensure designated pedestrian crossings are safe and appropriately signed, marked and controlled
- Reinvest in the Wheaton Streetscape Guidelines
- Locate driveways away from major intersections, where they may impact traffic operations and conflict with pedestrians
- Find opportunities to provide inter-parcel access points to reduce site ingress/egress volume and reduce conflicts with pedestrians

3. Designate Wheaton as a Transportation Demand Management District: the county strives to support alternative transportation, healthy lifestyles and a cycling culture. For this reason, they have started Transportation Demand Management Districts. These “refer to a set of public policy strategies and programs aimed at providing convenient and affordable alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle to maximize use of a region’s alternative transportation resources.”⁴

A comprehensive cycling plan is a piece of what the county studies, which is a key recommendation for the work group. Specifically, they would like to see bike access through a combination of means: on separated paths, bike lanes, and on regular lanes (or streets) that have slower speeds. Therefore, the work group recommends the following:

- Upgrade roadways and facilities in consistency with the Countywide Bikeway Functional Master Plan (i.e. bike paths, bike lanes, shared roadways, etc.)
- Designating funds for the creation of bike lanes
- Provide informational signage for cars, bikes and pedestrians to facilitate a transition to bike lanes
- Support additional bike racks at convenient and accessible locations throughout the WUD
 - Develop a bicycle station with secure bicycle parking and related amenities at the Wheaton Metro Station.⁵
- Add Wheaton to the bike sharing routes with stations close to large developments
- Promotional funds to encourage people to bike!

⁴ Taken from Transportation Demand Management Implementation, Funding & Governance by the Office of Legislative Oversight: Report Number 2009-6 p. i

⁵ Taken from Wheaton Sector Plan 2012 p. 68

III. IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF THE WHEATON URBAN DISTRICT

Concerns regarding Wheaton's appearance ranked 3rd in the Community Survey. Programs exist which address this community concern. One such nationally recognized model is the Main Street Program which has been revitalizing communities throughout the country for more than 30 years.

The Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC) is an 11-member Committee whose mission is to advise the County on all issues affecting the Wheaton Urban District. Members represent businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, residents, and the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB). WUDAC's focus this year is adaptation of the Main Street model as a strategy for Wheaton's revitalization and redevelopment. The Main Street concept consists of four principles, Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Development that are already tenets of Wheaton revitalization and represent some of the core aims of WUDAC's mission.

Below is a list of recommendations that combine WUDAC's goals with what the community is seeking in improving the appearance of the Commercial Business District (WUD). These goals are divided in two areas:

Design

1. Collaborate and work with other community groups to outreach to local businesses on storefronts, beautification, and "greening."

Storefronts:

- Encourage façade improvements through public-private programs
- Educate property owners and businesses about incentives that exist for façade/property improvements
- Instruct business owners about the value of de-cluttering storefronts.
- Create a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) program. CPTED is defined as the proper design and/or use of the built environment which results in reducing crime and the fear of crime. This would include a policy requiring CPTED standards to be evaluated during plan review by the Dept. of Permitting Services. It would also include the development of awareness materials.⁶
- Develop public events that encourage improving area:
 - Community Clean Up days
 - Best window display contest
 - Develop an ongoing marketing program focused on preventing litter/trash/ waste

Beautification:

- Promote installation of public art

⁶ From the Wheaton Public Safety Audit of 2004

Greening:

- Promote seasonal landscapes throughout the WUD in both public and private properties.
- Reinvigorate Wheaton Streetscape Guidelines

2. Study and recommend signage to brand Wheaton and direct visitors and residents to specific points of interest are throughout the WUD.

- Gateway signs: Five gateway signs are recommended on Georgia Ave., University Boulevard, and Veirs Mill Rd. They will have the new Wheaton logo and will suggest to all visitors along these major arteries that Wheaton is transforming.
- Seasonal banners: seasonal banners are recommended with new logo to further the new Wheaton brand.
- Way-finding signs: way-finding signs are recommended to inform and direct visitors where they are and how to navigate the urban district to get to key places of interest, from the Westfield Wheaton Mall, to the Library and Recreation Center, to the Regional Park and trail to Sligo Creek, and to parking facilities.

Economic Development

1. Strengthen existing entities that support Wheaton Businesses (Chamber, Local 1st)

2. Utilize innovative county incentives to encourage existing businesses to reinvest and expand, while recruiting for new businesses to locate in downtown Wheaton.⁷

- Create an awareness campaign for small businesses around Wheaton of available and existing resources such as those available through Small Business Services and the Small Business Reserve Program
- Engage property owners/landlords in how they can lease their properties with new businesses that can compliment the offerings in Wheaton

3. Help develop the Arts & Entertainment district in Wheaton through diverse strategies:

- Establishing an arts organization to serve local youth
- Incentivize pop-up boutiques/galleries

4. Identify County Officials and other business leaders to discuss potential economic opportunities that exist in and around the Wheaton Urban District

IV. COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

The survey results demonstrate that the community desires to have regular updates on what is happening of Wheaton. Though the Urban District has increased its efforts, it still has limited means to share information in the community in the languages represented in the community. For this reason, the work group recommends the following:

⁷ From the Wheaton Public Safety Audit of 2004

1. Increase marketing and promotion of downtown Wheaton via businesses and community partnerships, advertising, and media outreach.⁸

2. Further outreach of Wheaton Urban District monthly newsletter through printed and translated newsletters.

3. Educate community on available communication tools of police:

- Redirect people to police website: mymcpnews.com website.
- Get people connected to MCPD Facebook and Twitter account. These sources are regularly monitored by the Public Information Officer (PIO) for the community to get real time responses.
- Develop Public events: National Night Out event
- Helping neighborhoods create Neighborhood Watch programs
- Designate and supply a WUD Police/Clean and Safe Office in downtown Wheaton that is accessible to the public.⁹
- Bilingual training for all public safety personnel in downtown.¹⁰
- Outreach to communities to encourage use of 911, 311, and police involvement to report, prevent, deter, and punish criminality.

These tools are vital for people to utilize if they are to recalibrate their perception of Wheaton. These tools combined with efforts to increase reporting of crime by citizens are important in addressing concerns that range from loitering, disorderly conduct to sexual harassment:

V. ENHANCING COUNTY STAFFING IN WHEATON

The community also was interested in seeing more feet on the street both for the police and the urban district. Hence the work group force recommends the following:

1. Hire more police

Increase the number of dedicated (WUD-only) officers in downtown Wheaton to a total of 12 officers plus 2 sergeants. The increase in personnel should be matched by an increase in equipment to include five bicycles, preliminary breath testers (PBTs) and phones for all officers.¹¹

2. Hire additional Urban District staff: Expand Clean Team coverage to seven days per week, especially as density increases in Wheaton.¹²

3. Restore Mid-County Regional Center staffing.

⁸ From the Wheaton Public Safety Audit of 2004

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

CONCLUSION

The Wheaton community is evolving. The need expressed by the community may change as new development addresses many of the concerns expressed by residents in this report. For this reason, we hope that recommendations are revisited in five and ten years to ensure that gaps are not created overtime or overlooked that can impact the vitality of the Wheaton community.

LIST OF RELATED DOCUMENTS

1. Wheaton Metro Area Pedestrian Report of 2004:

<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/DGS/Dir/OPD/resources/pedestriansafetystudy.pdf>

2. Wheaton Public Safety Audit of 2004:

<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/DGS/Dir/OPD/resources/publicsafetyreport.pdf>

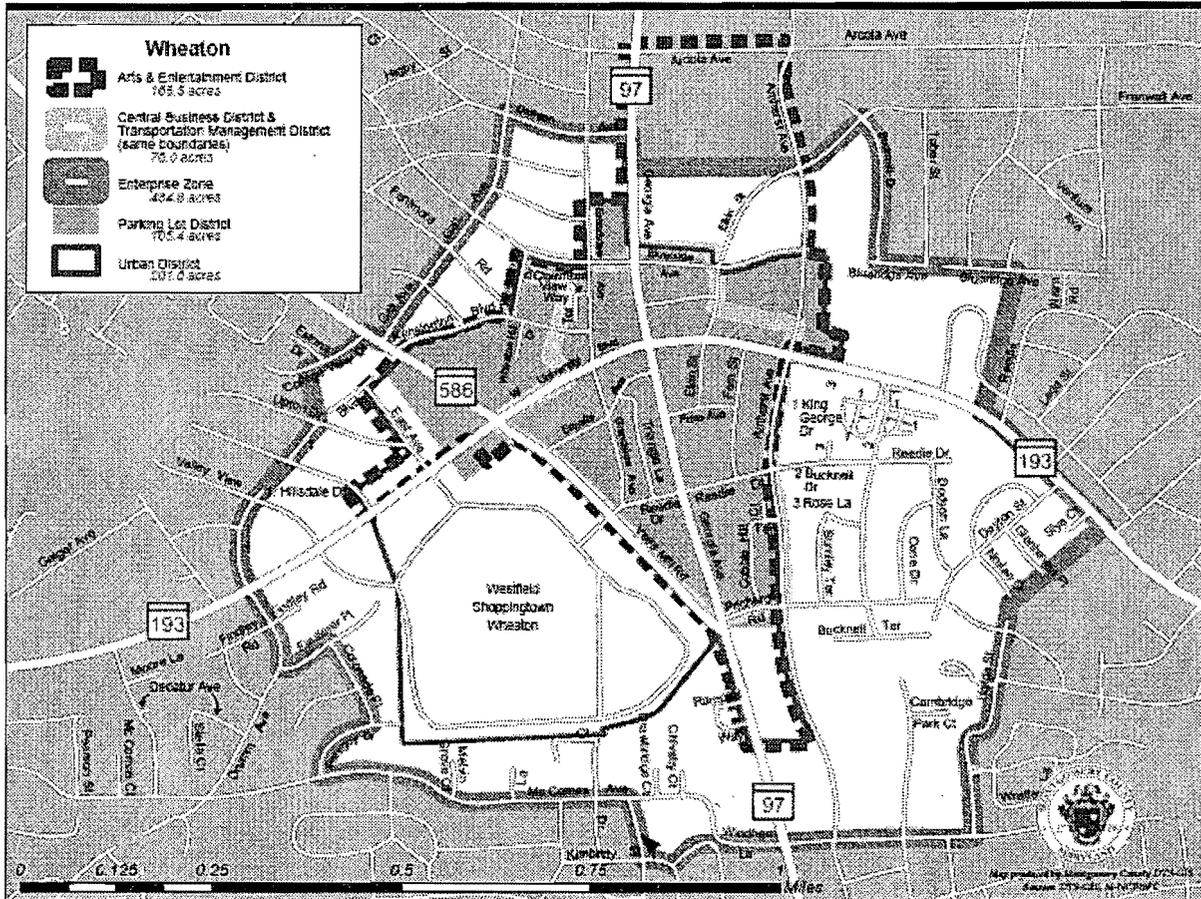
3. Wheaton Sector Plan:

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/viewer.shtm#http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/wheaton/documents/wheatonWUDplanningapprovedandadopted_web.pdf

4. Transportation Demand Management Implementation, Funding & Governance by the Office of Legislative Oversight: Report Number 2009-6:

<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/olo/reports/pdf/2009-6.pdf>

APPENDIX A: WHEATON URBAN DISTRICT MAP



APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONS

The Wheaton Urban District is studying ways of improving public safety, quality of life, and perceptions of Downtown Wheaton. Please assist us with our efforts by filling this survey and forwarding it to neighbors, business and organizations in Wheaton. We ask that responses be submitted by Dec. 14th. Thank you in advance for you input!

1. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

2. What category below includes your age?

- 17 or younger
- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-above

3. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?

- Yes, Hispanic or Latino
- No, Hispanic or Latino

4. Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or some other race?

- White
- Black or African-American
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- From multiple races
- Some other race (please specify)

5. What is your involvement with Wheaton?

- Resident Yes No
- Worker Yes No
- If you are a resident, please specify what neighborhood:

6. How frequently do you visit Downtown Wheaton?

- Daily
- Once or twice a week
- Once or twice a month
- Once or twice a year

- I never go to Downtown Wheaton

7. What activities have you participated in while in Downtown Wheaton? (check all that apply)

- Dining out
- Shopping
- Going to the metro
- Festivals
- Farmers market
- Obtaining services (dry cleaning, going to the bank, etc.)
- I do not come to Downtown Wheaton
- Other (please specify)

8. What is your overall impression of Downtown Wheaton?

- Extremely positive
- Somewhat positive
- Average
- Somewhat negative
- Negative
- Comments:

9. Overall, do you feel safe in Downtown Wheaton?

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------------|----------|
| • During the day | Very Safe | Somewhat Safe | Not Safe |
| • In the evening | Very Safe | Somewhat Safe | Not Safe |
| • Late at night | Very Safe | Somewhat Safe | Not Safe |
| • To and from destination | Very Safe | Somewhat Safe | Not Safe |
| • Comments: | | | |

10. If safety is a concern, which of the following would improve your experience in Downtown Wheaton? (check all that apply)

- Hire additional Wheaton Urban District Ambassadors (red shirts)
- Create public safety announcements
- Increase community awareness of police efforts
- Augment communication with the community
- Improve pedestrian safety
- Address biking safety
- Add more lighting
- Install cameras
- Improve appearance of commercial business district
- Hire more police
- Nothing, I have no concerns
- Other (please specify)