Community Comments on the Wheaton Proposal

The site plans and conceptual drawings look very exciting. My only concern is that in the floor plans in one of the residential buildings, there are no 3 bedroom apartments. I understand that a mix of studios, 1 bedroom and some 2 bedroom units are most profitable for an apartment building. From a community and transportation standpoint, I think there is an opportunity to give a few families the ability to live near transit as well as allowing 3 single people to share a unit to make rent more affordable. Thanks for taking this thought into consideration.

Thank you for the meeting at Wheaton High

My suggestions;

Close Reedie Dr. between Triangle lane and Grandview Ave

Make Reedie Dr. 1 lane, 1 way between Georgia Ave and Triangle lane

Environmental;

Both the county and residential buildings need to include green elements especially some sort of solar component on the buildings to lessen need for power generation elsewhere. Some is better than none and it will payback costs over time. From roof top arrays to shade roofs around the town square the **County needs** to set example, as the expanded density now allowed and wanted around Metro stops is an example of long term planning.

Water collection should be included in the initial foundation construction.  Using collected water to irrigate proposed town square green area and plantings.  Permeable pavers so that not all the water in sent into drainage pipe system with all its oil and wastes off pavement and roads.

Landscape Design;

All plantings should consist of native and urban sensitive plants/trees plus food for birds as plantings. The water element is another example.  A wild element is necessary so that the green area is not a sterile area.

Path lighting for night should be all LED (all lighting LED) and all generated by solar panels during the day.  If seating and benches include a solar roof panel for shade is easy  for long term power generation.

Including at least one pole with solar panel with free phone charging etc. to engender people to linger.

Plantings need to soften 12 story buildings including trees (and perennial flower beds) along Grandview plus extra wide sidewalks to make the area seem friendly.  Permeable pavers for environmental reasons while leaving part of extra wide sidewalks easy for snow cleanup.

My son started attending a new school this year, and last night was back to school night so I missed the meeting regarding the Wheaton development plans. I've lived in the Westchester neighborhood for 11 years, and my wife and I were attracted by the proximity to the Metro and the presence of unique restaurants (Ruan Thai, Sabang, Woomi, Hollywood East) and retail (Bonifant Books, Chuck Levin's, Barbarian, Toy Exchange). As you may know, some of those vendors are gone, but I think the current success of Ruan Thai, Nava Thai, Moby Dick and Woomi demonstrate that Wheaton can be home to a commercial area that is a real destination, particularly as new housing is built that can (and does) appeal to young professionals, and more and more single family homes--which have been home to current residents for decades--start to become available (inevitably, many of our neighbors are dying or are poised to move to retirement homes).   
  
I read that the idea behind the Wheaton development is to serve as a gateway to Silver Spring. I'm wondering what that means: I love Silver Spring--I love 8407, Ray's, AFI, and Whole Foods--but when I think of the development, I also think of the Red Lobster that went up next to AFI, and I think if we're playing second fiddle to Red Lobster then we're really in trouble. I love our local restaurants, and would be thrilled if I could find more places to spend my money in downtown Wheaton rather than downtown Silver Spring.   
  
If there's a mailing list for further meetings on this subject, I'd love to be on it. If there are PowerPoint presentations available to the public, I would love to see them. I hope the County will bet on Wheaton's continued growth, rather than a perceived lowest-common denominator (we already have Wheaton Plaza and its food court). Thank you for your efforts on our behalf.

Thank you for all you are doing to keep residents informed and involved in the process of development in our community.

I am a life-long resident of Montgomery County and have owned a house in Wheaton since 1992.  Like most of my neighbors in the Wheaton Hills/Wheaton Woods subdivision, I moved to Wheaton from Adams Morgan, finding Wheaton the most affordable and convenient community on the eastern end of the red line.  Like many of my neighbors, I chose to expand my house rather than move out of Wheaton when my family grew.  I shop at the mom and pop stores, I eat at the restaurants, I attend events in Lot 31.

I couldn't attend the meeting because I am currently out of the country on assignment with the State Department.

I am concerned about a few things in the plan.  The primary one is the location of the public space in the area including Reedie Drive.  I see that the developers recognize the need to re-route the buses, but I guess they don't understand the amount of traffic that road gets between people leaving the mall to go north on Georgia Avenue and people dropping off and picking up people at the Metro.  I imagine they expect the County will close the road for public events, but still, the road limits the usable space and pedestrians and cars will just frustrate each other both trying to use that space.  I don't think that space is not as large in reality as it looks in the drawings.  If that's going to be the plan, I really think they need to re-route the road and develop another outlet to Georgia avenue north with a traffic light.

I think they've missed an opportunity to better connect the area with the mall and its parking garage.  I don't quite understand the purpose of the cage structure, but it appears to be some sort of walkway.  Why not connect it to the overpass to the parking structure.

There are also a couple of things that I do not understand.  It's unclear to me how the design accounts for the Metro station entrance.

There are some things I like -- the wider sidewalks, the grass and trees, the maximum building height of 12 stories.  The 20-story Safeway building is just out of scale and out of character.  I'm hopeful that 12 stories will not overwhelm the surrounding buildings.

These are my thoughts.  I hope you will pass them on to the appropriate people.

The proposed plan for Wheaton is a first step on the right path after several years of planning. I would like to provide the following comments for consideration:

1. The proposed town square on both sides of Reedie is a great Idea. If the WAMATA ever develops, this will be the true the center of Wheaton. Closing Reedie for events is also a great idea.

2. The MNCPPC building lacks appeal. A more interesting design is highly encouraged. The MNCPPC building should be in a magnitude that rivals [the Exchange]. A small building will send the wrong message to future developers. I highly encourage the County to relocate more agencies to the Wheaton new MNCPPC building and have extra floors for private offices (lawyers, etc.) This will make it feasible to develop a larger scale building than proposed. A larger building will also encourage new office tenants to the area. A proposed 7 floor building will be the demise of Wheaton's future.

3. I encourage adding more commercial space along Triangle Lane to complement the existing shops there.

4. The development should encourage national chains to open shops in Wheaton. This is the only way local small businesses can get more visibility from those who may not otherwise patronize them.

5. Encourage restaurants with outdoor seating to face the proposed town square. This will make the triangle lively every evening.

6. The existing Pawn Shop should be incorporated into the design rather than creating a permanent blockage. If the owner is not willing to sell, maybe encourage him/her to make store frontage face the town square.

7. Adding commercial space on the ground level of the new buildings (Residential and MNCCPC) is essential.

8. Limited the MPDU in the proposed building to the County required amount of 12.5%. Why exceed to 20%. Let the market dictate.

9. Encourage current business owners to improve facade of existing buildings.

10. Limit street parking to minimum and encourage usage of garages.

11. Consider partnering with WAMATA for use of metro garage, which is empty on weekends and evenings. Instead of building all these extra spaces, a partnership is encouraged.

12. Consider having the residential element closer to the Town square and the Park and Planning, which will likely be taller in the back.

13. If the MNCPPC building location remains as proposed, consider having an elevated community space above the lobby that is accessible from the street. Maybe have a coffee shop up there.

14. Incorporate the mall into the design.

15. The metal architecture piece is unique in defining the space. Consider using is as a ramp as well.  
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I am very pleased with the progressiveness and success of Montgomery County Planning, and believe this proposal for downtown Wheaton is proper and well planned. I fear that many residents you all encounter cannot cope with the concept that small sacrifices by a few residents or businesses being displaced, may have to occur to allow for the greater good to prevail. Please do not allow negative sentiments from slowing the area's progress. I recall critics saying that redeveloping Wheaton will push out the diverse businesses geared toward the minority population in Wheaton. I think this concept is flawed because it suggests that the local Hispanic and Asian businesses or residents can only thrive in areas with dated infrastructure and cheap rent. Such a mentality is selling our residents short and assuming their earning potential will not improve with higher end jobs coming to the area.

My only concern is that Wheaton or the nearby Glenmont redevelopment, although great, will not create unique industries, opportunities, or lifestyles that are not commonly found in other similar projects across the nation. I invite Montgomery County planning to be inspired by places like Branson, MO that became committed to being the entertainment hub of the mid-west, and actually crafted their own niche. Wheaton has the potential to host unique Hotels, unique studios (music, dance, design, art, etc.), or even be the culinary training center of the DC area if we wanted to. Please don't take those opportunities as literal, but instead as general proof that we need to consider seeking to make Wheaton (or Montgomery County in general) known for something you can't easily find in the mid-atlantic. I hope to write a letter to the County Executive pressing for consideration of bringing certified olympic training centers to the county as a means of economic development and tourism, maybe consider that for future projects if you see the potential in this concept.

The new plans for the core of Wheaton were just presented with a town square. The crossing of Reedie is good but need more greenery.

Park and planning is designed as a generic glass box. Downtown Wheaton sits on top of the headwaters of Sligo Creek and borders Sligo Creek and Wheaton regional parks and Brookside gardens. Why not a design that highlights and educates about this iconic watershed link. Why not visible greening as part of parks theme? Gardens, water/bio retention, vegetated roofs and walls!

Visit [www.greenwheaton.org](http://www.greenwheaton.org) for more ideas and information.

I'd like to thank you for your presentation, but would like to say that I was extremely disappointed with the proposal for the following reasons:

* the "town center" is not a town center, it is an open space that crosses a main access road - Reedie Drive
  + - the "town center" should be the center with retail on the first floor to activate the center
    - the buildings should be constructed around the center (not lined up on Lot 13)
    - the ugly iron "enhancements" would not be needed if the "town center" was a true town center.
* the Triangle area has very limited access and this proposal does not address the current problems, much less how increased traffic can be handled:
  + - Reedie Drive is one of the two main access roads for the businesses in the Triangle and the proposal wants to reduce the width.
    - there is no left turn onto Grandview Avenue from University Blvd., westbound, which is not addressed with regard to the density increase.
    - Wheaton traffic is horrendous on University Boulevard currently, yet this proposal will add multiple offices and residences without addressing this issue.
    - Ennals Avenue is too close to University Boulevard, whether you are entering or exiting via Veirs Mill Road or Georgia Avenue and this proposal does not plan on adding the Sector Plan suggested extension.
* Triangle Lane
  + - Triangle Lane will have access to an alley for the parking garage (ingress and egress), but Triangle Lane (currently one-way) will end at an alley.
    - Triangle Lane should have street access at both ends.
    - there will be no retail on the Triangle Lane side of the buildings, which means current businesses will look out at brick walls or windows.
    - all sides of the buildings fronting on streets should have some type of activating feature - restaurants, retail, seating, etc.
    - the buildings should enhance the businesses on Triangle Lane, not overtake them.
* Building design
  + - not interesting enough and does not complement the existing character of downtown Wheaton or the character of the proposed residential building.
    - Wheaton has never been a "steel and glass" community - the Silver Spring design is more "Wheaton".
    - residential component should be on the "town center" - perhaps move it to the Mid-County site and push the MNCPPC building back (or vice versa)
    - the design should be closer to what Wheaton residents have been shown for years - the Redevelopment office should have a copy.

I really do appreciate the work you have done, but sincerely hope that you will change the proposal. Wheaton residents have waited a long time for the redevelopment of the downtown area. The design and architecture of this downtown area will influence the future redevelopment of other properties in the area and should be planned with this in mind.

I sincerely hope you can make changes that are both functional and beautiful.

Thank you for inviting the community to your presentation and Q&A last Wednesday and for making your presentation slides available online.

My wife and I moved to Wheaton from Columbia Heights two years ago with our two children and have enjoyed building friendships with our wonderfully diverse neighbors. One of the many reasons that we bought a house in Wheaton was the new sector plan and the proposals for redeveloping the city center. We're trying to find a way to play a (very minor) constructive role in encouraging and shaping the redevelopment and would like to submit the following comments for your consideration.

* We liked the concept of reducing the size of Reedie Drive, bridging the street with special brick paving, and closing it on weekends. I (Randall) wonder if this kind of creative thinking could extend to other streets within the central triangle, with consideration of the "night-time economy" that Montgomery County would like to develop. I would think that Triangle Lane and perhaps Grandview Avenue might be natural places for this kind of economy to develop. Could we think through what kind of infrastructure could encourage this kind of evening dining/shopping/walking? For example, we could look at how to encourage outdoor seating by placing special lighting along Triangle Lane for cafes or restaurants (for example, see [Limerick](http://www.thelimerickpub.net/) and [Royal Mile](http://www.royalmilepub.net/)). Perhaps we could close down the store-front parking in the evenings so that restaurants could bring out tables and chairs. Could we look at special kind of bricks or paving on Triangle Lane that would make it feel like both a pedestrian and vehicle shared space?
* Thank you for the interactive water element! Our kids love this kind of fountain the summer and it's a major attraction for families (and stay-at-home parents from all over the area) to come and hang out. We often spend a lot of time in Silver Spring in summers because our son can't get enough of the fountains.
* I agree with the person at the meeting on Sept.18th who complimented the impressive, "signature" feel of North Bethesda Market in White Flint. I would love to see something as creative and iconic in Wheaton. Perhaps this will have to wait until the WMATA site is developed, though. For my part, I liked the idea of a glass building. For a place with government tenants, I feel that the building conveys a sense of transparency and accountability. It can reflect light and make the town square feel brighter and more inviting during the days and at dusk. In the evening, the interior lighting can also give a sense of light at the center of Wheaton (as long as you keep the lights on). The design reminds me of [two](http://www.senteo.net/wp-content/gallery/georgia-ministry-of-justice/future-site-in-tbilisi.jpg) [major](http://www.rzb.de/assets/images/projects/images/WO_Ministry_of_Internal_Affairs_of_Georgia_Tiflis_1.jpg) glass public buildings in Tbilisi, Georgia, both of which look stunning at night. If it would be possible to incorporate the glass/transparency theme in with a more "signature" design, this would be ideal.
* As private citizens who are new to the area, we don't have much of an idea of how the county makes budget decisions. For as much as it is worth, however, we would like to encourage the county to budget the funds so that Permitting and Environmental Services can move to the new Parks and Planning building. Having the three agencies together would help to make Montgomery County an easier place to invest in and create long-term efficiency, as well as helping to catalyze development in an area that has been essentially passed over for 20 years.
* What needs to be done to increase the height of the Stonebridge/Carras building and make more commercial space available? Part of the intention of bringing Permitting and Environmental Services together with Parks and Planning was to create a hub that other related private businesses like law firms could cluster around. If the developers believe that it would make financial sense to build more floors to accommodate commercial customers, how can the county and community help to support this?
* I appreciate that the developers have provided a connection to the Viers Mill pedestrian bridge to connect with the Westfield Wheaton Mall. However, that current pedestrian bridge is difficult and unpleasant to enter right now. You either have to wait for a claustrophobic elevator or mount a set of concrete stairs. I can't tell from the plans but I wonder if the [green plot of land](https://maps.google.com/maps?q=39.03797,-77.052314&ll=39.037503,-77.051625&spn=0.006658,0.009645&sll=39.038018,-77.052253&layer=c&cbp=13,8.75,,0,-3.26&cbll=39.037726,-77.051932&t=h&panoid=6g6JoSdcn45s9s0OwHguxg&z=17) behind the Mid-County building and next to the pedestrian bridge can be regraded so that it is raised to the level of the proposed park, creating a new, more direct entrance to the pedestrian bridge and Mall. Alternately, you could look at constructing a short bridge from the park to the top of the pedestrian overpass. My hope would also be for WMATA/Westfield to overhaul the bridge and connection with the Mall to match the design and ambiance of the park and encourage pedestrian traffic.
* Likewise with the connection across Georgia Avenue, I wonder if the developers and State Highway Administration could work on a new intersection at Reedie and Georgia that will encourage (and protect) pedestrian traffic across Georgia. This means wider, better-marked crosswalks and signage that can create a better a link between the town center and Veterans Park and the neighborhoods on the east side of the Exchange building.
* I think it would be a good idea to have discussions with the county and community about creating distinct boundaries for entering the center of Wheaton along the major arterials. Not only would this potentially invite drivers to *stop*in Wheaton for shopping or eating but it could also cause them to *slow down* as they recognize that they are entering an urban area with many pedestrians. With the number of pedestrian deaths in the Wheaton vicinity recently, encouraging drivers to slow down naturally (without frustrating them) should be important. One idea would be to extend colored brick paving all the way up Reedie and across the intersections with Georgia and Viers Mill roads, creating a safer, more obvious path for pedestrians to cross and a natural urban boundary for drivers. Brickwork across Georgia and Viers Mill could also lead the eye into the town center itself.

I would love to see the town center design connect downtown Wheaton with**Brookside Gardens** and **Wheaton Regional Park**, two of the primary distinctives of Wheaton. This might mean *much more green* in the town center, reflecting the feel of Brookside in particular, with perhaps even a part of the square that is designed by Brookside and changes seasonally. Perhaps the interactive water element that is included in the town center could be integrated in with a more nature-oriented feel that would distinguish it from water elements in Silver Spring and other areas. Perhaps you could replace the metal frames around the park with [gables](http://flic.kr/p/9E3uos)and a mix of [walkways/natural elements](http://flic.kr/p/bKrgA4) instead of the metal sculpture that is suggested in the design. I'm not sure how this would integrate with the urban feel of the glass building, though. If we can link the town center, Brookside, and Regional Park together, people might start to feel that going to Wheaton means *green/relaxing, good food and shopping,*and *comfortable to park and walk*. A trip to Wheaton could mean a stroll in Brookside and then dinner downtown. This would also work off the strength of our local civic group, Green Wheaton. Just a thought!

As a longtime resident and community activist for more than 37 years, in Wheaton and the County, I am pleased to see these positive steps moving forward with a redevelopment that will lead to a revitalized Wheaton Urban District.  I also appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on this proposal.  They are as follows:

**The Town Center/Square Space**

The openness of the Town Square to the Metro entrance is a concern.  The proposed frame Structure between the Square and Metro needs to be open as it is now to walking through and crossing Reedie Drive.  The view to the town square should not be obstructed from Reedie or Grandview avenues. How open is the Frame Structure? I would suggest that the Frame Structure be cut back to start just after the Metro Entrance to provide a view to the green space from Georgia Avenue and walk through on Reedie Drive.  The Frame Structure seems to be a bit overpowering for the space, too tall.

**Visibility of the Town Square from Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Avenues.**

The Town Square is not  visible from Veirs Mill Road going north unless a right turn on Reedie Drive is made.  Thinking of the Sector plan for the area, we must be also thinking of what will happen when new development is planned for the corner of Reedie Drive at Veirs Mill Road on that corner.

Take down the Frame Structure at Reedie Drive and Grandview adjacent to the Office Building. This would open up that corner.

Signage and way finding signs are going to be a key factor for people walking from south Georgia/Veirs Mill unless there is a way to open up at the rear of the Frame Structure between the Metro Bus bays and the Buildings on Veirs Mill Road.

**Bus Routes and Rerouting**

Currently there are no bus stops on Reedie between Grandview and Georgia, however, it may pose a traffic problem at two intersections, Grandview and Reedie and Grandview an Ennalls Avenue. Current streets and curb sites are too narrow with bump-outs for pedestrians.  A walkable Wheaton is also one of the goals of the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee and redevelopment of the area.

**Building Design**

Please consider building into the design of the buildings, some components that will complement the stark glass windows.  Wheaton is a unique neighborhood and needs the buildings to reflect that uniqueness in a special way.  Not just another tall building that looks like every other urban area in Montgomery County.  We want Wheaton to become a destination for its unique businesses, restaurants, and other spaces that cannot be found in any other part of the County.  This is a special place for everyone including night life, community activities and meeting spaces in the evenings.  These buildings being in so close to the Town Square, especially the residential building, can be the example for the sites that are to be developed in the area in the future.

**Small Businesses on Triangle Lane**

Will Triangle Lane be widened in this plan?  There needs to be some kind of greening or other enhancements to focus on that area to draw people in.  These new buildings will tower over these businesses.  There should be spaces for outdoor seating and activity to draw in customers from the Town Square. This will be especially needed during construction.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

I currently serve on the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC) as a resident representative.  The following comments are my personal views and do not reflect the opinion of the WUDAC.

The proposed plan for downtown Wheaton fails to put the town square at the center of redevelopment and the town square is cut in two by Reedie Drive.  Putting the square on the perimeter, on the southern edge of the county property opens it to the bus bays and their noise and fumes.  More troubling though, the future of the square will be in jeopardy when WMATA eventually develops its air rights over the Metro and bus station.  Unless the County makes a covenant with the citizens to never reduce the size of the town square, it is likely to be reduced when WMATA develops its air rights.  Since the county and WMATA are not ready to collaborate in Wheaton redevelopment, the plan needs to recognize and account for the potential development of WMATA (and other surrounding property.)  Toward that end, the new MNCPPC building should be placed where the Mid-country Regional Center now stands where it will provide a strong buffer between the town square and the Metro and buses.  Because that site is lower in elevation, the new MNCPPC building will be able to rise much higher without overshadowing the surrounding shop buildings than if it were placed where the contractors currently propose.  The other major deficiency of the plan is that it fails to do anything about Reedie Drive, Grandview, or Triangle Lane, perhaps because the contractors did not want to have to negotiate with local businesses over parking spaces.  Reedie Drive needs to be absorbed by the construction of the MNCPPC building.  It needs to disappear.  Otherwise it will forever divide the square.  Eliminate that section of Reedie or run it underneath the building and public space.  All cars approaching from East, West and North should be funneled into the underground parking and the streets that surround the square should become pedestrian walkways and allow restaurants and shops to set up outside seating.  Traffic should not cut through the heart of the square.  The plan we have been given would doom the town square and fail to take this opportunity to make the triangle pedestrian friendly.  Please consider placing the MNCPPC at the southern edge between the square and the Metro/busses, eliminate Reedie Dr., and turn Triangle Lane and Grandview into pedestrian walkways.

I attended a public forum a couple weeks ago in Wheaton High School regarding the proposed re-development of Wheaton and construction of the Park & Planning building. I appreciate the opportunity to submit my comments.

I think there are many favorable aspects of this plan.

1) Town square over current Mid-County Regional Building site, green space over WMATA property, re-grading Reedie Ave and widening the sidewalks (10 feet) are essential to attracting foot traffic to downtown Wheaton.

2) Glass facade Park & Planning building with first floor layout that includes hearing room leading out to town square will encourage community participation in public events.

3) Underground garage that adds 200 or 300 more parking spaces than exist today are crucial to accommodating workers and residents in the new buildings.

4) Frame "armiture" structure dividing town square from bus bay is a nice architectural touch though seemingly unnecessary if $$ could be spent elsewhere.

There are some negatives to this plan.

1) Unenthused by the prospect of additional "luxury" rental units in Wheaton. How many people are moving to Wheaton? High supply will ultimately lower rents throughout Wheaton.

2) Planning Board recommended  a "day care" facility in the P&P building. This is not displayed in the ground floorplan of the site. I know many parents (including myself) who are looking for a reputable and larger childcare facility in Wheaton. I don't want to leave my kid in someone else's house.

3) Concerned about the facade and structure of retail businesses on Triangle Lane. These won't complement the new Wheaton structures. Have small business owners made their voices heard?

4) Lastly, and this is a big one, why can't we incorporate small retail spaces into the plan? Hence, instead of two larger retailers / restaurants along Grandview ave (i.e. Michael's Arts & Crafts and Potbelly), we could have 4-6 small businesses that will attract smaller businesses. I think Wheaton is and can remain a small business hub in Montgomery County. Wheaton has to be unique for people to come and want to live here. We need more restaurant choices (not just Peruvian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai, and fast food). If you want to fill up the apartments behind P&P, then you need to bring in more of Elevation Burger, Panera Breads, etc…

First, I join with everyone in welcoming this first step towards getting something positive going in Wheaton after many years of talk and little action.

However, I am disappointed in the lack of creativity and unique character of the selected proposal and the fact that the county is fast-tracking a proposal that will do little to realize the long term vision for Wheaton that many stakeholders have invested collaborative energy into creating.

The Procurement Process does not seem to be an appropriate vehicle for determining these first steps in Wheaton. Rather than seeking unique proposals for each site based on a set of specific uses, needs, and criteria and selecting a proposal based on site-specific quality stakeholders are now asked to accept the better of the bids proffered – not the best, most creative, exemplary design for creating an image of Wheaton as a future destination place but the better of a limited number of bids.

Personally, I suspect that the shift from the original CIP for the MNCPPC headquarters on Lot 13 was prompted by housing developer expressing interest in finding available property for housing development rather than a strategic plan to invest in the best project to achieve Sector Plan goals.

That said and having reviewed the proposal, my opposition to this project focuses on three components:

 **Functionality as the town center:**

- How functional will it be for hurrying Metro riders to have to compete with town center activity during their work commutes – anyone who has been in a peak hour pedestrian stream can certainly relate to this.

- When (not if) the surrounding WMATA property redevelopment is being planned – the openness of the proposed town center at the RSC site will likely be compromised by an arrangement of high density, high rise buildings and the open vista of the elevated bridge could be facing a solid wall.

- I am surprise that the County’s premiere design voice (the Planning Department) would encourage redevelopment of the RSC site out of the context of an overall design plan for this signature site. Certainly the public space would evolve more creatively if developed in the context of its surroundings, not vice-versa.

- It is not inconceivable that WMATA would be interested a public-private partnership with the county RSC site as part of an overall development plan and it would be in the public interest for this option to be available at that time. I think it is also likely that the RSC site would be considerably more valuable as part of a larger development than as part of the town center site. It is also not inconceivable that the county decision-makers would relinquish some or all of the ‘town center’ under these circumstances.

- The majority of the ‘center’ is proposed for the RSC site – barely visible by drive-by traffic on Veirs Mill or Georgia, and would be further obscured by the industrial looking elevated walkway. An unobscured line-of sight to increase visibility of the Town Center is important to attracting visitors and making events successful

- A town center as originally proposed located on the first third of Lot 13 bordering on Reedie Drive (without the elevated walkway) would be visually seen by drive-by traffic and an invitation to explore.

- One large site rather than a bi-furcated site with an active roadway between the pieces would be more a flexible venue for a variety of year-round public events.

- It would be less disruptive to pedestrian and vehicular traffic to close off Grandview for large events rather than closing Reedie Drive.

 **Pedestrian and traffic circulation and connectivity:**

- Reedie Drive is not only designated in the Sector Plan as a major route for northbound buses going towards Amherst but it is also a direct access route for Georgia Avenue patrons going to the mall. By crossing Georgia at Reedie, the buses can easily serve the residential communities along Amherst on the way to points west and north. If buses are routed to University via Grandview would not be as convenient for these communities.

- Directing bus traffic up Grandview has several disadvantages including the limited stacking area from Veirs Mill onto Reedie (see page 5) and requiring an immediate left onto Grandview; the four way stop intersection at Grandview and Ennals; and the short stacking space between the lights at Grandview and University and University and Georgia.

 **Need vs. Want:**

- Most of the larger properties (between University and Blue Ridge, along Georgia, Lindsey, HOC Ambassador) have been rezoned to CR and to date project developers have all opted for housing rather than commercial/retail. There are currently nearly 1,000 housing units in the pipeline.

- This potential housing source will provide a significant part of the Sector Plan housing need projection. There is no need for additional housing on Lot 13.

- Wheaton needs jobs -- Wheaton’s fixed footprint (not nearly as flexible as the 8787 Georgia site) limits the possible sites where a mix of uses can function together – and Lot 13 is the one place in the whole Sector Plan area where extraordinary effort should be invested to make this a hub of day and night activity, well within walking distance of current and projected housing.

- I understood that one purpose of the MNCPPC relocation was to stimulate the development of this hub – not to just consolidate their office space. More emphasis should be placed on using this public investment to demonstrate best practices in design, energy efficiency, shared uses, environmentally sustainable green initiatives, and the like. As most of the proposed housing is very conventional (i,e., standard sizes, 1 and 2 bedrooms, etc.) – this development could include unique alternative housing such as studios, lofts, open plan spaces, etc., that might attract the younger work force looking for affordable space in a vibrant active environment (small eateries, unique retail, night life, and the like). I find nothing unique in the housing component of the proposal that cannot now or would be available as surrounding sites redevelop.

- To decide in 2013 what the market wants or needs in 7, 10, or 20 years is to settle for an expedient solution rather than providing flexible long term planning towards specific goals.

- Apparently the data suggests that there is currently no ‘market’ for office space – now is the time to create a future market rather than rely on old trends. Shouldn’t this project be an investment in the long term evolution of Wheaton rather than the expedient short term solution that will constrain the future creative potential of this crucial site.

- To be sustainable over the long term Wheaton needs a better ratio of jobs to housing (and not just jobs in the retail sector at the mall). Economic development policies should focus on the small professional groups serving the FDA biotech activity to the north and the institutional needs of the biomedical and science activities in the Bethesda-White Flint corridor. More emphasis should be placed on a diversity of office spaces – forget the class titles (Class A, Class B) and plan for creative alternative buildings, rather that thinking there is no market because data focuses on primarily on Class A buildings. It is time to challenge our economic development staff to think outside the box and learn from repurposing projects being built throughout the country.

- The recent Night Life survey indicates a desire for a more active core – Lot 13 is the core and a massive housing project will not provide the foundation for a stimulating multi-generational activity hub.

- What is the demonstrable public benefit in disregarding the recommendations in the recently adopted Wheaton Sector Plan for a lack luster proposal that will not satisfy the needs and expectations of stakeholders and residents for a vibrant and diverse Wheaton.

These are my personal views and I hope they will be considered as you go forward. Some of my comments are illustrated on the following two drawings.

The Wheaton page of the DOT website now includes a list of comments from the two public meetings (Silver Spring and Wheaton) recently held.

In the interest of transparency and openness I request that prior to proceeding with contract negotiations, you schedule another public meeting to discuss County responses to the already documented comments shown on the website and to include whatever comments are received by the end of October 2nd. Grouping these consolidated comments into categories by similarity and discussing them in the context of the Sector Plan would provide the format for this discussion. Stakeholders are interested in knowing what weight is being given to the various criteria, about the traffic and parking concerns, about attracting jobs, and other considerations relevant to Sector Plan recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide citizen feedback on the StonebridgeCarras/Bozzuto proposal for Lot 13 and the Regional Services Center. I am somewhat hesitant to submit this comment, as my hope is for a lively town square + redevelopment as quickly as possible. My wish is for this and other community comments to make the project better and not create unnecessary delays, but I am not convinced that the plan in its current state is what is best for Wheaton.

I. The current proposal to put the town square on the current RSC site is a mistake - For decades, the Wheaton community has been calling for a town square on Lot 13. There are valid reasons why the community wants this. First, the town square would be surrounded by already activated retail on Grandview and Triangle lane. To me, being surrounded by retail (new or existing) gives a town square life. By secluding the town square across the street on the RSC site, the proposal puts the town square right up against an undeveloped noisy bus station to the south and an access/garbage area directly to the east. In addition, I believe it was misleading for the developer when initially presenting the plan with the grassy WMATA area that abuts Georgia and Reedie in their proposal. There is little indication that WMATA would/would not readily provide perpetual access to that area. In short, by placing the town square on the current RSC site means the following: bus bays to the south, WMATA undeveloped grassy area to the west, a street to the north, and a garbage staging area to the east. This simply does not make for an attractive option.

II. There are too many unanswered questions with WMATA property - Who knows how long that site will remain in its current state, and once it is developed, what confidence should we have that the best use for the WMATA site will incorporate well with a town square on the RSC site? For example, if another office project, rather than mixed-use retail/housing went up on the WMATA size, then the town square would simply morph into an office plaza because it will be surrounded solely by office space. A new park and planning building on the current RSC site would provide a much needed buffer between the bus area/future WMATA development and the town square. Further, putting the town square up against apartments on Lot 13 would help ensure activity after 5pm.

III. Still another issue is one of timing. By placing the town square on the RSC site, it seems to me that the town square will be the last thing developed. The RSC building will have to be active until the new building is completed. By placing the town square on Lot 13, it could be possible to simultaneously work on the town square along with the other components.

IV. No inclusion of additional office space – During council sessions, it was mentioned that one advantage of bringing park and planning to Wheaton was that private sector companies that regularly conduct business with park and planning could also make the jump to Wheaton. The StonebridgeCarras proposal precludes the possibility of this by not including any commercial space.

V. No inclusion of Lot 34 – Since the community was not privy to any of the proposals, it is impossible to know whether the other proposals included plans for Lot 34. However, this was not included as part of the RFP and it is disappointing to see it completely ignored in the StonebridgeCarras plan.

VI. Lack of details from Bozzuto - It's difficult to provide any comment about this part of the project. Details were lacking.

Despite my comments above, I am very excited about the future of Wheaton. I hope the Wheaton Redevelopment Team will take into consideration all the comments by the community to ensure that the project meets and exceeds our vision. I also urge you to attend the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC) and Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee (WRAC) meetings to keep in touch with the community.

Rather than write a long statement, I want to express my concerns with the proposed plans for Wheaton redevelopment.    
  
For me, the bottom line is twofold:  
  
(1) There needs to be a significant number of residences physically located within the heart of the town center.  Otherwise, the opportunities for 24/7 business/retail and walkability at night are decreased dramatically.  People who live here support our businesses, want more than just a 9-5 presence in the heart of Wheaton, and want to feel safe walking in the area as nighttime rolls in.  Foot traffic at night from people looking to spend money on local businesses or simply to take a stroll helps achieve those goals.  
  
(2) Splitting a town center with a road is a bad idea.  It makes the area unwalkable and wastes space that could be used more productively by the whole community.  The MNCPPC building should be south of Reedie (where the County building is already located) and this section of Reedie should be closed to drivers.    
  
Thank you for considering this email.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposal advanced by StonebridgeCarras and Bozzuto.  I would like to begin by noting that the comments that follow should be read as suggestions and recommendations, rather than as a rejection of this proposal.  If the options were only approval or rejection of the existing proposal, I would approve the proposed design.  However, I believe it can be improved, and the comments that follow are put forward with that goal in mind.

First, the steel and glass design of the building seems appropriate for an office building, but it does not match any of the existing architecture in the area.  Perhaps other materials (red brick or the like) could be incorporated into the design to make it feel like it's part of the landscape, rather than something completely distinct.  The proposal did not include much in the way of architectural design for the residentail building, so it is a little difficult to know what would match that building's design.  The buildings obviously serve different purposes and therefore shouldn't look identical, but they should work together as the anchor for Wheaton for decades to come.

Second, I would like to see more grass and plant life in the design.  Perhaps it would be possible to include ivy as an adornment to some of the features (maybe on the armature or even on portions of the outside of the office building).  Another possibility would be to include planter boxes beneath the armature, perhaps around some picnic tables or other seating areas.  It may also be possible to install grass in more of the town square area, rather than pavement.

Third, I think with the increased traffic expected on Grandview, it may be necessary to eliminate the current street parking spaces that are available.  I think Grandview will be difficult to navigate for pedestrians and vehicles if there are parked cars on both sides of the street, in addition to two-way traffic and increased traffic in and out of the office and apartment buildings.  It may also be advisable to make the proposed "alley" a one-way street toward Grandview with a traffic light at the intersection to ensure that drivers can safely turn left onto Grandview while also providing an opportunity for pedestrians to cross.

Fourth, it is very important to ensure there is good lighting on the Triangle Lane side of the office and residential buildings.  That area will be covered in shadows much of the day and we need to ensure that people feel safe walking along that area.  Also, it appears the turning radius for vehicles from Triangle Lane into the alley is narrow (particularly if the car is then turning into the parking garage).  However, this may simply be the scale of the drawings being distorted.  Please ensure that vehicles will be able to enter the alley and garage from Triangle Lane (making a U-turn, essentially) without having to stop and adjust their angle of entry.

Fifth, the design needs to allow for easier access to Grandview on the north side of the project.  Currently, there is only a narrow alley (which exits to Ennalls or Georgia) for traffic to leave if vehicles do not exit onto Grandview from the parking lot.  It may be necessary to leave room for a vehicular exit on the north end of the residential property to allow traffic to leave.  I realize that it is anticipated that only those cars parking on the north end of Triangle Lane will need to leave, but there will be drivers who don't realize they need to exit through the alley between the buildings (or who are looking for a shortcut or to avoid a line of cars) and will continue north.  There are also several existing businesses there that will only be able to exit through the alleys to Ennalls and Georgia after the new construction.  Perhaps it would be possible to have the building sit over the exit, making it essentially a tunnel, so that the building's footprint on the upper floors continues to occupy the entire area.

Sixth, it would be a wonderful amenity if the county building allowed rooftop access to the public.  A small cafe or bar could be added to generate revenue.

Seventh, the design clearly wants to make the public hearing room of the office building accessible to the public.  It would be a nice addition if the windows for this room were capable of being opened to allow people to move in and out of the building there.  You often see this type of design with cafes or restaurants, where the windows are actually floor-to-ceiling doors.  This would truly make the area publicly accessible, and would also permit organizers to host events that are both indoor and outdoor at the same time.

Eighth, the current sidewalks have a number of black stains on them; I think these are old pieces of gum, but it's possible they are tar or some other material.  Is there any way to treat the sidewalks and paved areas with a material to prevent this from happening?  It is very unattractive, and we want to preserve this as a clean, safe area as much as possible.

Ninth, the county needs to do a better job of collecting and removing trash, both from the trash cans in the area and from the dumpsters in surrounding businesses.  I'm not sure how frequently the trash from these cans and dumpsters is collected, but I know at least once a week, and usually more often than that, there's a pretty bad smell that hangs in the area.  If we're intending this to be a place where the public wants to gather, we need to make it as hospitable as possible.

Finally, I would prefer a united town square design, rather than the curent plan to have Reedie Drive cut through it.  I know this is complicated and it may not be feasible.  However, it may be possible to relocate the proposed office building to the site where the current Mid-County Services building is, thereby allowing the square to be located entirely on the south end of Lot 13.  Another option would be to have the office building span over Reedie Drive so that traffic flowed beneath the building (similar to what I suggested above for the north end of the residential building).  A series of steps on the north side of Reedie would allow visitors to access the building (think of the entrance to the Supreme Court or the Capitol), and would also ensure pedestrians could safely cross Reedie by being above the traffic.  If buses are no longer permitted on Reedie, the clearance for vehicles would not need to be more than around 10', so there would not be a significant grade change from one side to the other.

Again, these are suggestions on how to improve a good design and proposal.  Some of these suggestions may not be feasible from an engineering perspective, but hopefully still serve as a different way of looking at an issue that may be resolved through a better approach.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment, and please let me know if you have any questions.

**Comments on the proposed redevelopment plans for Downtown Wheaton: Lot 13 and new consolidated headquarters for the Park & Planning Department (MNCPPC-MC)**

**October 2, 2013**

We appreciate this opportunity to provide comments on the proposed design for Lot 13 and the new Park and Planning headquarters slated for downtown Wheaton.

**Summary of our Comments**

The future success of downtown Wheaton will be heavily influenced by the design of this project. To echo what other commentators have noted: The Montgomery County Park and Planning Commission headquarters, and its adjacent public plaza need to be convivial, green, and beautiful places. The building and plaza need to do more than merely “comply” or “be consistent with” the principles of the Wheaton Sector Plan: **Diversity; Connectivity; Design; and Environment**. Rather, this project needs to ***embody these principles***.

Most importantly from our perspective, this project needs to contribute to the restoration of Sligo Creek of the Upper Anacostia as required by the Wheaton Sector Plan, through full use of Environmental Site Design practices, and especially through use of green walls, green roofs, and urban trees. The current design of this project falls far short of achieving these environmental design elements; thus its contribution to the restoration of Sligo Creek and the Anacostia is unclear. We therefore request that this design be rejected-- and that a new design, that fully embodies all four of these fundamental Sector Plan principles, be drawn up and vetted with the public.

**Discussion**

In light of the Wheaton Sector Plan principles, and after looking at the details, our initial excitement was significantly dampened. Considering the extremely tight public comment deadlines, we are focusing only on a few key aspects of the proposal. Please see below our design comments specifically related to the Park & Planning headquarters building itself.

Proposed Building Design Fails to Embody Park and Planning’s Environmental Mission and the Wheaton Sector Plan Environmental Restoration Principle.

The featureless glass and steel box currently proposed for the Park and Planning Headquarters does not in any way reflect the agency’s mission to “improve the quality of life by conserving and enhancing the natural and built environment for current and future generations.”

As a married, young professional with a newborn who owns a home within walking distance to downtown Wheaton I would like to express my disappointment in the initial proposed redevelopment for the town center with the residential and office space. Specifically, the lack of new retail being incorporated into the office and residential building is especially **disconcerting**! If the lack of new retail is supposed to help limit the negative impact on existing businesses then that is something that needs to be readdressed as the people who live within walking distance want new retail. This newly proposed plan is DEFINATLY not what the residents of Wheaton want! The public space area proposed is acceptable but the lack of new retail in the proposed office and residential is unacceptable.

Having a county office that will have workers during the day, Monday through Friday from 8a to 5p, is a great start for improving foot traffic during the day. But after people leave work the area will be dead without new retail. Unless the developers take a page out of the book that Arlington did in Shirlington with the U.S. Patent and Trade Office (<http://www.costar.com/News/Article/Patent-and-Trademark-Office-Pre-Leases-168500-SF/98526>). The bottom floor retail now consists of restaurants with available outdoor seating that draws additional people to the building at nighttime and during the weekends.

I lived in Shirlington for 9 years and one of the best aspects of living there was the sense of community that fostered in the Village of Shirlington (<http://villageatshirlington.com/>). I lived in Shirlington prior to their expansion and I lived through the construction phase (<http://www.arlingtonvirginiausa.com/development/major-projects/development-shirlington/>) that nearly doubled that area with a grocery store, hotel, and additional shopping and restaurants. When my wife and I moved to Wheaton, we choose the area with the wish and hope that we could have something similar here in the future. The ability to walk to downtown and be able to eat outside, shop, and/or just spend time outside exploring the area and enjoying the landscaping/nature. I should be able to walk to downtown Wheaton and be able to dine al fresco and then walk over to the park area and spend time outside with my family or friends. We do support local eateries and shops from time to time, but most are rundown and uninviting. The way to get people to downtown Wheaton is to offer a range of restaurants that people want to eat at and they will then spend their time walking around the area and possibly shopping at the local stores or trying one of the already established restaurants.

We hope that Wheaton and the city leaders that are supposedly looking out for the people that will be living, working, and playing in the area take advantage of the opportunity to build something special and capitalize on Wheaton’s potential ability to serve retail, commercial, and residential markets that are either not served or underserved and also create a physical setting that is unique in its character and image. Please re-evaluate the current proposal and offer the residents what they want. Thank you for your time and consideration.

At one point during the Sept. 18 presentation on the Wheaton redevelopment projects, a representative of the StonebridgeCarras/Bozzuto development team said, "We really believe strongly in the value of mixed use development. This is about creating a community in which people will live, work, shop and play." That upbeat message, however, lacked an acknowledgement of the importance of creating a community where people who need help can quickly access social services.

  That's what Wheaton area residents have now in the Mid-County Regional Services Center, home to several vital social service organizations. Our nonprofit,  Mid-County United Ministries, Inc. has a food pantry and social services office on the second floor of the center. It's been a busy place the last few years as the area's needy and working poor struggle to stay whole in a sluggish economy. As you are aware, the regional center is eliminated under the proposed development plan to make way for green space and a town square. It's not clear from the Sept. 18 presentation what happens to the social service groups now housed at the agency. There was no one from the county's Department of Health and Human Services who spoke at the meeting.

  The regional center's director, Ana Lopez van Balen, has assured us that county officials are taking steps to find new space for the center's social services. That sounds heartening, and we endorse addressing the social services issue in an inclusive manner from the outset of the Wheaton development process.  We stand ready to participate in and assist such an approach.

We want this development project to be a great success for Wheaton, and one that deepens its spirit of community. We think one of the best ways to bring that about is to make sure that the heart of Wheaton is big enough for all its residents, including the ones who need help.

  Thanks for taking the time to read this.

The proposed plan for redevelopment at Wheaton’s core is a much-needed step forward.  There are several positive aspects to the plan and some areas that could be improved.  On the plus side:

* The use of WMATA land and straddling of Reedie Drive has the potential to create a sizable public space right at the entrance to the Metro – something that’s lacking throughout the County. Done right, this could help to make Wheaton a destination and a gateway to Brookside Gardens and Wheaton Regional Park.
* The glass-enclosed public meeting room on the square is a nice concept for reinforcing the notion of transparency in government.

This site, however, must be used to reshape Wheaton’s core in the vision of the sector plan and the visioning processes that have taken place over the years.  Parking lot 13 is the absolute premium development opportunity in all of Wheaton and it needs to be leveraged to the max.  Wheaton should redeveloped as a model of sustainable urban living.  A modern, hip green “brand” for Wheaton would be unique in Montgomery County and would help overcome some of the negative perceptions of Wheaton while building on the positives (diverse, eclectic, local small businesses, access to the green treasures of Brookside Gardens, Wheaton Regional Park and Sligo Creek Park).  The buildings on the site should be multiple use – very multiple.  This could include:

* Community meeting space
* Performance space/black box theater/gallery
* Live/work spaces for artists (this would be unique in MoCo and could help build the arts and entertainment brand for Wheaton)
* Restaurants on the green
* The buildings and town square should be “visibly green” – incorporating innovative, beyond-compliance green features as well as education about them.  Features that improve the environment could include:
  + Impervious surface area along streets and sidewalks should be reduced by utilizing pervious pavement, 50/50 pavers, mulch, gravel, and bio-retention areas
  + All of the plant material should be native and non-invasive
  + Roofs and walls should reduce the air temperature in summer by incorporating green roofs and providing living wall systems with vines along the south and west sides of buildings.
  + Space for bike parking and bike share
* The Pubic Square and urban design of the streets, sidewalks, and other public spaces should incorporate art and design made by local artists and students, wherever possible.

The proposed housing on the site does not seem to offer any unique features that won’t be found in the many other residential properties being developed along the same lines (rental apartments of up to two bedrooms).  Something much more unique is needed on this prime location.

I would like to see Wheaton Redevelopment proceed rapidly.  However, there has been very little time for the community to weigh in on this specific proposal.  There should be at least one more meeting before a decision is made at which the County and developers could respond to comments already made.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment

I am a resident of Wheaton and I am on the Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Board. I am writing this email to express my personal thoughts and opinions regarding the recently revealed proposal for Wheaton Redevelopment by Stonebridge/Bozzuto. I was in attendance at the meeting last week and unfortunately I left-under whelmed and disappointed with the proposal. Simply put - it was anti-climatic. I was excited to see the Council and the County Executive's office working side by side to ensure revitalization and redevelopment in Wheaton and I have been pleased with the financial commitment that has been established for this effort. I was hopeful that the selection of the developer by the combined team from the Council and County Executive's office would be on-point with the desires expressed by the Wheaton community. It was not. While I understand that the proposal was not a final depiction of the project, it provided insight regarding the thought process for proposed redevelopment. I am concerned that the 'Town Square' does not look inviting/welcoming or innovative. The majority of the pictures reflecting the Town Square appeared to be slabs of concrete that represented the entrance to the Park and Planning Building and the entrance to the metro. There was nothing about the Town Square that would entice me to want to bring my family to spend time in that area. Most Town Squares are surrounded by entertainment, retail and restaurants (i.e. Silver Spring, Rockville, Gaithersburg) - the Town Square in the proposal is not. Without multiple sources of activity and opportunities for engagement (that could be provided with retail/restaurants), I envision that the Town Square would be empty and rarely utilized by the community. While there appears to be alot of emphasis on maintaining Wheaton's current businesses, I think that view is extremely short sighted for many reasons:

(1) There is no guarantee that the current businesses will still be in business in another 5 years (and there is no consensus that the current businesses are vital to Wheaton's residents);

(2) There is a benefit to offering a variety of local and chain retail/restaurants to appeal to all crowds;

(3) There is a potential for Montgomery County to have significant income through leasing retail space;

(4) The more businesses in the area, the more options you provide to the residents of Wheaton;

(5) With more retail/restaurants (including chains) the Town Square will feel more vibrant and exciting.

Moreover, the Park and Planning building looks extremely generic and is far from a state-of-the-art/landmark building as it was intended to be.

I am hopeful that my comments will encourage you to reconsider your selection of this developer and ensure that any future proposal reflects the desires of the Wheaton community. Thanks!

This plan does not go far enough! You leave the shithole businesses that make Wheaton a complete dump and simply eliminate a parking lot. If you're not going to redevelop the whole area there, why bother. There are vacant buildings and buildings that should be condemned. Building a one block monolith and leaving the rest of the garbage isn't redevelopment.

Please Green Wheaton by smart and sustainable design.

POSITIVES  
1)    Location of town square closer to subway tunnel exit avoids having to pass through/under buildings and across Reedie Drive.

2)    Using steep slope of Reedie Drive hill to create natural sloped seating area for town square.  Understanding that this is Metro property, it is still a very good idea.  Creating a hint of the presence of a town square on Georgia Ave. is also good.

3)    Design of NCPC building is appealing.  Modern, fresh appearance.  Use of glass curtain wall (limited to just the 'head' of the new buildings) sets the building off from all others in Wheaton.  Breakdown of massing, such as the projection of the NCPC hearing room element helps to integrate building into the smaller scale surroundings.  Gensler -- quality architect.

4)    Design of landscape is appealing.  Screening elements well placed in order to unify the town square, by creating a more consistent edge to the town square and in trying to bridge across Reedie.   Oculus -- quality landscape design firm.

NEGATIVES  
5)  Reliance on programming to activate town square.  This can be achieved but MUST be addressed.

6)    More retail around town square would be better.  The privately owned west edge of the town square is ripe for retail use (but outside of our control).

7)    Single-sided retail along Triangle Lane less desirable than double-sided retail.

QUESTIONS  
8)    Would it be possible to raise the hearing room of NCPC to the second level, thereby allowing retail uses on the north side of the town square and the west side of Triangle Lane?   NCPC hearing room could then spill out onto a terrace overlooking the town square on the second level.