



Scott Fosler, *Mayor*
Mary Flynn, *Vice Mayor*
Fred Cecere, *Secretary*
Barney Rush, *Treasurer*
John Bickerman, *Community Liaison*

April 24, 2017

Honorable Roger Berliner
President, Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Berliner,

As the County Council heads into final consideration of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, I would like to underscore the importance our Town and all the other signers of the Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents (CBAR) letter give to staging. We strongly support the recommendations of the Planning, Housing & Economic Development (PHED) Committee and the Council staff on this critical amendment to the Plan.

We are familiar with the Planning Board's position, but believe the Council staff has persuasively addressed the points the Planning Board has raised, and has emphasized just how important the staging element is to both the workability and the public credibility of this Plan. The kind of staging the PHED committee, Council staff, municipalities, and civic organizations all support is a familiar and well-practiced tool in County master and sector plans.

What's more, the staging element here is crafted in such a way that it would become a strong positive incentive for the entire community of stakeholders – businesses, residents, developers and government officials – to engage in joint problem-solving to achieve the goals of the Plan. The alternative our residents fear is that problems left without clear metrics for measurement, without milestones to focus decision-making, and without responsibilities for who should act, will leave no solutions. And absent solutions, the collective Bethesda community will suffer, and the attractiveness of this area for further development will diminish.

This is an opportunity for the Council to complete what has been, to date, a very promising planning exercise, and to demonstrate its commitment to a compact with its citizens in planning a future for the Bethesda area and the County that we can all believe in and support.

Sincerely,

Scott Fosler
Mayor

cc: Montgomery County Council
Montgomery County Planning Board
Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents (CBAR)