

Notes from Q&A
Presentation of Redevelopment Plans for 7121 Wisconsin Ave.
the Farm Women's Market and
County Surface Parking Lots 10 and 24
Thursday, October 3, 7 p.m.
Town Hall

The Long Range Planning Committee hosted a presentation and discussion on Thursday, October 3, at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall. Several local elected officials attended. Representatives from EYA (<https://www.eya.com>), partners with the land owner Bernstein Management Corporation (<https://www.bmcproperties.com/>), outlined current plans for the project.

Questions and answers following the presentation included:

1. What are the metrics for the project?
 - Number + type of residential units: 250-300 rental units
 - Number of parking places: 0.7 spaces/unit; market driven
 - Commercial space added to Farm Women's Market (FWM) in a one-story pavilion: 8,000 square feet added for 12-13k total
 - Retail space in 7121 building of about 13,000 SF. Total retail space of about 26,000 sf - considered critical mass for commercial success.
2. Why is parking not proposed under both parks?
 - DOT develops demand profiles vs cost. The parking spaces currently on Lots 10 and 24 will be replaced under Lot 24. This will be less expensive than building a garage under both lots. Extra parking is available in Lot 31, under the Darcy and the Flats, which is nearby.
3. The park for lot 10 (between Leland and Walsh) is to be developed as a "Phase 2" after the work on the FWM and new garage under Lot 24 is completed. What guarantee is there that Lot 10 park gets built?
 - This decision is up to the County, which will need to find the money for construction. The Park Impact Payment (PIP) funds can help. MoCo Parks budget is limited and there are many demands on it.
4. How will Elm Street park change?
 - This is up to the County. But with an active FWM area park, it seems likely that Elm street park can remain more tranquil.
5. Who will maintain FWM park + how will the maintenance be funded?
 - Undetermined at this time. Could be maintained by MoCo Parks or privately funded to MoCo Park standards, or some other arrangement.

6. Does Bethesda need more rental units? What about affordable housing?
 - The developers believe that there is a shortage of rental properties in Montgomery County generally, and that demand will therefore be strong for these units – even considering the other current building projects in Bethesda which include rental units. Montgomery County has less available rental housing than other parts of the metropolitan area. The County requires new projects to have at least 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs), and this project will comply with that requirement.
7. Closing Lot#10 undermines local merchants.
 - Lot 10 will not be closed until after the underground parking garage under Lot 24 is completed and open. During Phase I (construction on 7121 Wisconsin, Lot 24, and FWM site) developers will work to avoid disruption.
8. What is being done for energy efficiency?
 - EYA has considerable experience with sustainable development, stormwater management, may try for some LEED level.
9. Who will manage the FWM retail space?
 - Undetermined yet. EYA-Bernstein could hire + bring inhouse or lease to a Market Hall operator or retain partner.
10. How will loading for the FWM vendors be planned?
 - Undetermined at this time. They may place loading (and rest rooms as well) in a basement under FWM or provide a surface access route.
11. What about construction noise impacting neighbors?
 - Will try to be a good neighbor. County sets construction hours but this will be a major construction project for over two years.
12. Is there a completed contract with a selling price for the FWM?
 - There is a contract to purchase but it has not settled
13. Will Willow Lane close during construction and how will construction affect access to the Town?
 - It seems unlikely that Willow would be closed. Any road closures would have to be approved by MCDOT, and closures will be kept at a minimum.
14. How will the underground parking and park space be funded?
 - Bernstein-EYA are finalizing negotiations with DOT. They will pay market price for use of the site. The Bethesda Parking Lot District will issue bonds to fill the funding gap for parking, but additional funding needed to develop the parks on Lot 24 (over the garage) and on Lot 10.

15. Will the FWM building move?

- The building's foundation needs to be replaced and the building renovated. The building will remain on the site but will be moved 13ft toward Willow.

Please note: This is not a complete list of questions or answers. Its purpose is informational only and designed to capture highlights of the discussion.