

**City of Rockville Report  
Rockville Economic Development, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
February 23, 2024**

**January 22, 2024 Mayor and Council Meeting**

**Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Presentation on MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) provided a presentation on MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to the Mayor and Council. MCDOT also provided an update on the Veirs Mill Road Flash BRT project, which also serves Rockville along MD 355, and the Great Seneca Transit Network project. The MD 355 Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project will implement a roughly 24-mile BRT corridor connecting Bethesda to Clarksburg, primarily along MD 355. The MD 355 Flash BRT currently includes 11 miles of dedicated bus lanes and 30 new Flash-branded stations, of which six stations are in Rockville.

Next steps for MCDOT include officially submitting the project to Federal Transit Administration, completing the National Environmental Policy Act documentation and review, procuring a progressive design-build team and advancing the project through final design, as well as continued stakeholder discussions. MCDOT is proposing construction to start in late 2025 and completion in 2028.

**Presentation of the Vision Zero Annual Report, and Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan Progress Updates**

The Mayor and Council received a Public Works Department presentation on the Vision Zero annual report. Vision Zero is a multidisciplinary traffic safety program with the overarching goal to wholly eliminate deaths and serious injuries that result from traffic crashes. This program is designed for all roadway users: motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. The Vision Zero Annual Report updated the Mayor and Council on Vision Zero action items conducted during 2023. The thirty action items are categorized into four groups: 1) Engineering, 2) Enforcement, 3) Education, and 4) Policy. Vision Zero work is ongoing, and the next progress report will be provided in July of 2024. City staff also updated the Mayor and Council on their continued work to implement the Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plans.

**February 12, 2024 Mayor and Council Meeting:**

The Mayor and Council received a briefing on Floating Zone Map Amendment and a Project Plan For 5916 Halpine Road, a request to rezone the property from the R-60 (Single Unit Detached Dwelling Zone) to RF-Z Residential Floating Zone and permit construction of 36 two-over-two stacked condominium rental units (Pulte Home Company). The Mayor and Council asked questions and provided comments. The next step is for the Planning Commission to review the application and forward a recommendation to the Mayor and Council.

## **Consideration of 2024 State Legislation**

The Mayor and Council discussed Governor Moore's housing package designed to address Maryland's housing shortage. They voted to support the two bills and authorized Councilmember Shaw to provide in person testimony at the February 20, 2024 House hearing in Annapolis.

**SB 481/HB693 – Renters Rights and Stabilization Act of 2024** – this legislation provides enhanced renter protections including the establishment of an Office of Tenant Rights to serve as an advocate for renters; provides education on tenant rights under the law and how to execute them; provides enforcement for landlords that are out of compliance with local, state and federal housing laws, and other enhancements.

**SB 483 – Housing and Community Development Financing Act of 2024** – this legislation establishes the Maryland Community Investment Corporation which is a new Community Development Entity that would be certified by the United State Treasury to channel Federal investment into low-income communities in Maryland.

The Mayor and Council asked staff to return for the February 26 meeting with additional information on the impacts of the following legislation:

**SB 484 – Land Use – Affordable Housing – Zoning Density and Permitting (Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024)**. The following is an overview:

- Provides density bonuses to encourage new construction of affordable housing units in targeted areas including former state-owned complexes (none in Rockville), rail transit areas within a mile of a station (includes Rockville), and land owned by nonprofits.
- Expands single-family residential zones to include manufactured homes if it will be attached to a foundation.
- Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances cannot be used to deny a permit for affordable housing projects financed by Low Income Housing Tax credits or other affordable housing financing programs managed by the State's Department Housing and Community Development. This provision would be sunset in fifteen years.
- Limits public engagement in the development process by limiting public hearings to one before each of the following: the local governing body, the Planning Commission, a historic commission, and the Board of Appeals

## **Upcoming Mayor and Council Meeting:**

### **February 26, 2024:**

- Community Engagement and Outreach.
- Consideration of 2024 State legislation.