

Planning Commission

Annual Report 2025

Prepared May 2026
Draft

2025 MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Monique Ashton, Mayor
Kate Fulton
Barry Jackson
David Myles
Izola (Zola) Shaw
Marissa Valeri
Adam Van Grack

2025 PLANNING COMMISSION

Jaime Espinosa, Chair
Eric Fulton
Suzan Pitman
Shayan Salahuddin
Meng Sun

CITY MANAGER

Jeff Mihelich

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Ricky Barker, AICP (former)
Craig Simoneau (Acting)

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Jenny Snapp (former)

CHIEF OF ZONING/STAFF LIAISON

Jim Wasilak, AICP

PLANNING STAFF

Sheila Bashiri, Historic Preservation Planner
Christopher Davis, Senior Planner
Mercedes Delgado, Planner I
Tyree Dodson, Planning Technician
Megan Flick, AICP, Principal Planner
John Foreman, Development Services Manager
Katie Gerbes, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager
Anthony Mazza, Principal Planner
Nelson Ortiz, AICP, Principal Planner
Andrew Reitelbach, AICP, Principal Planner
Shaun Ryan, Development Review Supervisor
Holly Simmons, AICP, Deputy Zoning Manager
Myles Muehlberger, GIS Specialist
Manisha Tewari, AICP, Research Manager
Nicole Walters, Development Services Supervisor
Kimia Zolfagharian, Principal Planner

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CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Annual Report of the Planning Commission is the document by which the Commission reviews its performance during the preceding year, with focus on its comprehensive planning, zoning and development activities during that period and the major planning projects and issues considered by the Commission. The Report is submitted to the Maryland Department of Planning in compliance with the State's Land Use Article annual reporting requirements for local jurisdictions.

This year's Annual Report does not include a report on the City's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and Standards (APFS) but will be provided next year to satisfy the biennial requirement. It also does not include a 5-year Mid-Cycle Planning Implementation and Development Process Report, which will also be included next year.

The Smart Growth Goals, Measures and Indicators and Implementation of Planning Visions legislation (Senate Bill 276 and House Bill 295 [SB276/HB295]) requires jurisdictions that issue 50 or more building permits per year to report specified smart growth measures and indicators. The City of Rockville issued 114 single family residential building permits and 47 multifamily permits in 2025.

Each of the City's land use initiatives in 2025 worked towards implementing the State Visions for sustainable communities that protects the natural environment, directs growth, maintains and improves infrastructure and involves citizens in all stages of the planning and development review processes.

PLANNING IN ROCKVILLE

The City of Rockville had a population of 67,139 in 2020 (US Census Bureau, Decennial Census) with an estimated population of 67,563 as of July 1, 2025, making Rockville the fourth largest incorporated municipality in Maryland, behind the cities of Baltimore, Frederick and Gaithersburg. Rockville is about seven miles north of Washington, D.C. and is served by a transportation system that includes one interstate highway (I-270), two Metrorail stations within the City boundaries (Twinbrook and Rockville) and one just outside (Shady Grove), four state highways (Routes 355, 28, 586 and 189), a MARC and AMTRAK rail station (Rockville), in addition to local (RideOn) and regional (WMATA) bus service.

Rockville serves as the county seat for Montgomery County. The County Council and County Executive Offices are across the street from Rockville City Hall, as are the Circuit Court for Montgomery County and the District Court of Maryland.

The City of Rockville functions as an independent municipality, supplying many services for its citizens. The City controls its own planning and zoning authority, water and sewer services (serving much of the City, with WSSC serving some areas), police and public works departments, and recreation programs and facilities. The Montgomery County government provides services to Rockville residents for public schools, fire protection, local circuit court, additional police protection, transportation, health and other services.

Municipal Authority

The authority to plan for the City's development and to enact and enforce laws relating to land planning and zoning is derived from the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Land use planning in Rockville is the responsibility of four official bodies: The Mayor and Council, Planning Commission, Board of Appeals, and Historic District Commission. The Mayor and Council adopts the Master Plan (Plan), enacts legislation to ensure compliance with the Plan, adopts amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map, and funds capital improvements necessary to implement the Plan. The Board of Appeals considers applications for Special Exception uses, Variances from the Zoning Ordinance requirements and Appeals from administrative decisions related to planning and zoning.

The City's Zoning Ordinance, along with the Land Use Article, states the powers and duties of the Historic District Commission (HDC). They include identifying and recommending properties deemed eligible for historic designation, reviewing and acting on applications for Certificates of Approval for work within designated historic districts, and providing courtesy review to the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council for projects within or adjacent to historic districts.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is the only one of the four official bodies with direct land use authority that is involved in all phases of the planning process. It has specific duties, such as acting as the Approving Authority for subdivisions and site plans, as well as advisory responsibilities to the Mayor and Council and Board of Appeals.

The Planning Commission is made up of seven members with staggered five-year terms. Members are nominated by the Mayor and approved by the full body of the Mayor and Council. The Commission elects a Chairperson from its membership each year. The Planning Commission typically meets twice a month, on the second and fourth Wednesdays starting at 7:00 p.m., in the Mayor and Council Chambers of Rockville City Hall. All meetings are televised and streamed live online and available online via "on-demand" the following day through the City's website. All agendas and supporting documentation are posted on the website one week before each meeting. The Commission conducts meetings in person and virtually via Webex.

Certain powers and duties of the Planning Commission are mandated by the Land Use Article. The Commission is required to prepare a plan for the physical development of the City (the Plan, also called Comprehensive Plan), which is recommended to the Mayor and Council for approval, including with modifications¹. The Commission also makes recommendations concerning public structures, improvements and land acquisition necessary for the execution of the Plan; recommends district boundaries for comprehensive zone classification of land; approves all subdivision of land; and consults with and advises public officials, agencies, civic, educational, professional and other organizations and citizens with respect to the protection or execution of the Plan.

¹ An amendment to Maryland's Land Use Article was enacted in 2015 which specifically allows the governing body to make modifications to recommended plans prior to adoption. The governing body may also approve, remand or disapprove the plan.

Certain duties of the Planning Commission stem from its function as the originator of the Plan. The Commission reviews and makes decisions on site plans for major proposed developments, except for single-family or semi-detached residential development and site plans that are acted on by the Chief of Zoning as an administrative approval, for compliance with applicable regulations. For most projects, the Commission approves a site plan, and subdivision plat if necessary, as prerequisites to the issuance of a Building Permit for construction. Applications filed pursuant to Mandatory Referral by public entities are also reviewed by the Commission for compliance with the findings required by the Land Use Article for these actions.

Applications for Project Plan applications, Map Amendments, Text Amendments, Annexations, and other City policy statements are forwarded to the Mayor and Council with the Commission's recommendations. Similarly, the Commission reviews all applications for special exception uses for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and makes appropriate recommendations to the Board of Appeals. The Commission reviews sectional map amendments to designate historic districts and makes recommendations to the Mayor and Council for consistency with the Master Plan. Finally, the Commission must file an Annual Report on its activities with the Mayor and Council and the Maryland Secretary of Planning. This report fulfills that requirement.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES IN 2025

Zoning Ordinance and Map Changes

The City adopted a new Zoning Ordinance on December 15, 2008 with an effective date of March 16, 2009. A new Development Review Procedures Manual was published in July 2009, followed by further updates in 2011, based on recommendations by a city Communications Task Force in 2010, and in 2013. The city has since adopted text and map amendments to clarify issues and to ensure the Zoning Ordinance addresses current planning and zoning issues facing the City.

In 2025, the Planning Commission did not review any applications for Zoning Map Amendments (MAPs) but reviewed the proposed changes to the Zoning Map as part of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite (ZOR) project. The changes are part of a Comprehensive Map Amendment that will cover the entire city and implement the zoning changes recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and Town Center Master Plan.

The Commission reviewed three Zoning Text Amendments: to modify the parking requirements for certain town house units within Planned Developments, to implement the zoning recommendations of the adopted Town Center Master Plan, including implementation of floating zones; and to establish regulations for the retail sale of cannabis for personal use. The Commission recommended approval of all three.

The Commission conducted five work sessions during 2025 on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project, the topics of which reflected work sessions that were also being held by the Mayor and Council. These work sessions constituted direction from the Mayor and Council with recommendations by the Planning Commission on the direction of the Zoning Ordinance as it was being drafted.

Development Review Activities

Changes in development patterns in the City of Rockville, whether originating in the public or private sector, require the approval of one or more types of development applications. A review of all such applications acted on in 2025 provides a snapshot of future changes in the use of land within the city for that year. The approved development changes are consistent with all components of the adopted Comprehensive Master Plan, neighborhood plans, Zoning Ordinance regulations, and related City requirements.

Several subdivision plats were approved by the Rockville Planning Commission in 2025. These included record plats necessary to create lots for previously-approved development projects. Site Plan approvals by the Planning Commission in 2025 included a residential community with 48 two-over-two units on a former townhouse office property in the Town Center, a second phase of mixed-use redevelopment near the King Farm, and a multifamily redevelopment at the Twinbrook Metro station.

A list of all the Planning Commission actions in 2025, appears later in the report.

Comprehensive Plan Development and Implementation

The City of Rockville Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP), known as Rockville 2040, was adopted in August 2021. In 2025, two amendments to the Comprehensive Plan were adopted by the Mayor and Council: the Town Center Master Plan and an amendment to the Lincoln Park Conservation District Plan. When combined with the Pedestrian Master Plan adopted into the Comprehensive Plan in 2023, there are now a total of three amendments to the CMP.

Town Center Master Plan

The Planning Commission reviewed and approved a new Town Center Master Plan in 2024, replacing the previous version adopted in 2001. The Mayor and Council subsequently adopted the Rockville Town Center Master Plan on January 27, 2025. The resounding themes found throughout this document are to create a flexible regulatory environment that allows Town Center to thrive by enabling development and allowing the market to dictate the “highest and best” land uses over the next two decades. Additionally, the Plan prioritizes the development of additional residential housing units, with a particular emphasis on affordable and attainable housing units. The final theme throughout the document is to turn Town Center into a vibrant local and regional destination by creating an environment where people can live, work, and play for years to come. Most of the zoning and land use recommendations within the Town Center Master Plan will be implemented through the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite and Comprehensive Map Amendment project currently underway.

Lincoln Park Conservation District Amendments

In 2022, the City of Rockville, in partnership with Lincoln Park residents and a design consultant, began working with community members to help review standards and develop draft design guidelines for new construction and additions to single-unit detached housing properties in the neighborhood. These efforts were made primarily to address issues with existing building standards in the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Conservation District. The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed amendments to the *Lincoln Park Conservation District Plan* and the proposed design guidelines in 2024.

After extensive review, the Mayor and Council decided not to proceed with new design guidelines for the neighborhood. Instead, on January 27, 2025, the Mayor and Council adopted ordinances to amend the

Lincoln Park Conservation District Plan and overlay zone to focus on needed revisions to existing standards relative to building footprint and height requirements.

DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY ANALYSIS

The City of Rockville participates in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCog) growth forecasting process and has used the projections derived through that process in lieu of conducting a separate Development Capacity Analysis. All of the projections are based upon the current municipal boundaries and are therefore all located within a Priority Funding Area. The City participated in the MWCog Round 10.1 process in 2024. Round 10.1 projected the following for the year 2050:

MWCog Round 10.1 Projections (2024) – City of Rockville			
	2020	2050	Percent Change
Population	67,228	90,396	34%
Households	26,869	37,833	41%
Jobs	76,424	94,463	24%

DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The following tables outline the development review actions taken by the City Planning Commission during 2025.

Annexations

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
ANX2023-00147	Annexation petition to annex the Shady Grove Metro station and approve the annexation plan	Recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on April 23, 2025

Map Amendments

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
None		

Mandatory Referral Applications

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
STP2025-00512	Mandatory Referral Application to establish the Montgomery County Diversion Center at 1307 Seven Locks Road	Approved by the Planning Commission on September 10, 2025

Plats - Subdivision

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
PLT2025-00626	Final Record Plat Application to resubdivide Lot 6, Block A of the Victory Court subdivision to create two lots from a single lot to allow for construction of a duplex in the MXT Zone and Historic District Overlay Zone at 107 Fleet Street.	Approved by the Planning Commission on February 19, 2025
PLT2025-00631	Final Record Plat Application to resubdivide a part of Lot 23, Block A of the Wheel of Fortune subdivision located in the MXCD Zone at 11511 Fortune Terrace.	Approved by the Planning Commission on February 19, 2025
PLT2025-00627 PLT2025-00628 PLT2025-00629 PLT2025-00630	Final Record Plat Applications to create townhouse lots, open space parcels and dedicate public rights-of-way in the previously approved site plan area for development of The Tower Preserve property in the PD-TO (Planned Development – Tower Oaks) Zone at 2200 Tower Oaks Boulevard	Approved by the Planning Commission on March 12, 2025
PLT2025-00640	Final Record Plat to resubdivide part of Parcel C, Block D of Tower Oaks at 2000 Tower Oaks Boulevard	Approved by the Planning Commission on May 28, 2025
PLT2025-00637 PLT2025-00638 PLT2025-00639	Final Record Plats to create record lots, HAO parcels and dedicate public rights-of-way to implement STP2024-00493 in the PD-RS (Planned Development – Rockshire) Zone at 2401 Wootton Parkway	Approved by the Planning Commission on June 11, 2025
PLT2025-00643	Final Record Plat to resubdivide Lot 2, Block A of the City Center subdivision to allow for redevelopment in the MXNC Zone at 622 Hungerford Drive	Approved by the Planning Commission on September 24, 2025
PLT2025-00632 PLT2025-00633 PLT2025-00634 PLT2025-00635 PLT2025-00636	Final Record Plats to resubdivide lots in the Danac Technological Park to implement STP20020-00393 in the MXE Zone at 15815 and 15825 Shady Grove Road, 2 Choke Cherry Road and 2092 Gaither Road	Approved by the Planning Commission on October 8, 2025
PLT2025-00641	Final Record Plat to resubdivide two record lots into a single record lot in the R-60 Zone at 210 First Street	Approved by the Planning Commission on November 12, 2025
2026-96-PLT	Final Record Plat to create a single record lot and dedicate public right-of-way in the MXT Zone at 22 West Jefferson Street	Approved by the Planning Commission on November 12, 2025

PLT2025-00642	Final Record Plat to resubdivide Parcel A of the Halpine Baptist Church subdivision to permit redevelopment in the RF-FZ (Residential Flexible – Floating Zone) at 5906 Halpine Road	Approved by the Planning Commission on December 10, 2025
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Project Plans

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
PJT2025-00022	Project Plan application to modify the Champion Billiards implementation period of the approved Planned Development in the PD-CB (Planned Development – Champion Billiards) Zone at 900 Rockville Pike	Recommended by the Planning Commission on June 11, 2025
PJT2025-00020	Project Plan application to permit conversion of retail space to 13 residential units in the Rockville Center Planned Development at 198 East Montgomery Avenue	Recommended by the Planning Commission on July 23, 2025
PJT2025-00023	Project Plan application to permit construction of a 147-unit multifamily building in the Rockville Center Planned Development at 41 Maryland Avenue	Recommended by the Planning Commission on November 12, 2025

Site Plans

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
STP2024-00490	Level 2 Site Plan to permit the construction of 48 two-over-two residential units in the MXCD Zone at 622 Hungerford Drive	Approved by the Planning Commission on February 29, 2025
STP2022-00436	Level 2 Site Plan to permit construction of 437 multifamily units and 5,075 commercial space in the PD-TC (Planned Development – Twinbrook Commons) and MXTD Zones at 1800 and 1818 Chapman Avenue	Approved by the Planning Commission on February 26, 2025
STP2025-00503	Level 2 Site Plan to permit conversion of retail space to 13 residential units in the Rockville Center Planned Development at 198 East Montgomery Avenue	Approved by the Planning Commission on October 8, 2025
STP2024-00492	Level 2 Site Plan to permit construction of a 360-unit multifamily building and 145,000 square-foot lab and office building in the MXE Zone at 15815 and 15825 Shady Grove Road, 2 Choke Cherry Road and 2092 Gaither Road	Approved by the Planning Commission on November 12, 2025
STP2024-00482	Level 2 Site Plan to permit construction of three new research and development buildings containing 645,000 square feet in the MXE Zone at 2097, 2099 and 2101 Gaither Road	Approved by the Planning Commission on December 10, 2025

Special Exceptions

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
None		

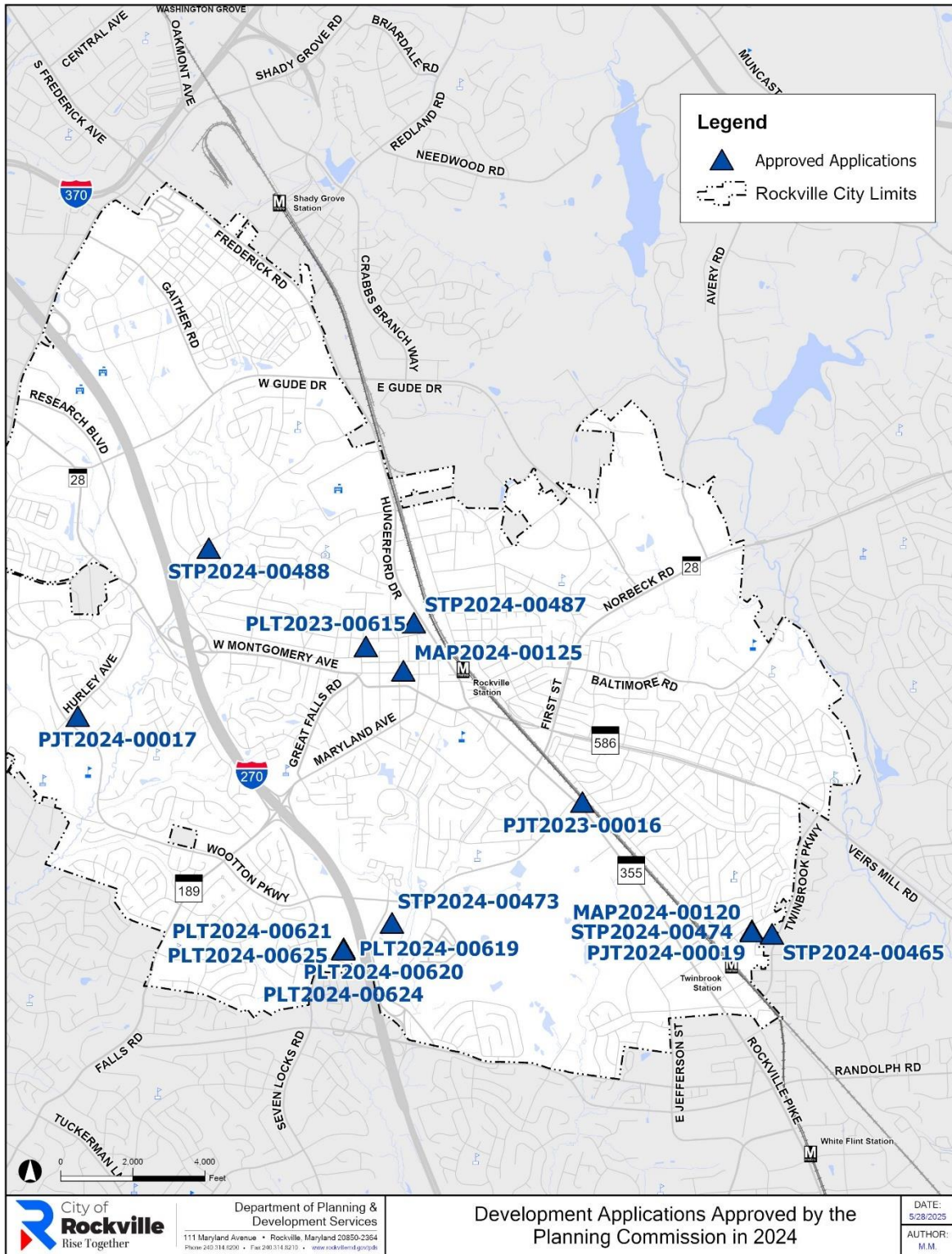
Waivers

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
WAV2025-00013	Waiver Application to permit a reduction of 44 parking spaces in the MXE Zone at 1251 West Montgomery Avenue	Approved by the Planning Commission on April 9, 2025

Zoning Text Amendments

Application #	Applicant, Request and Location	Action/Date
TXT2025-00268	Zoning Text Amendment by the Mayor and Council to modify the parking requirement for certain residential dwellings	Recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on February 19, 2025
TXT2025-00269	Zoning Text Amendment by the Rockville Mayor and Council to implement the zoning recommendations of the Town Center Master Plan, including implementation of floating zones.	Recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on March 12, 2025
TXT2025-00270	Zoning Text Amendment by the Rockville Mayor and Council to regulate establishments that include the retail sale of cannabis for personal use	Recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on May 28, 2025

2025 Planning Commission Actions Map



Note: This map includes actions with a spatial location only, excluding zoning ordinance and general map amendments, for example

PLANNING COMMISSION WORK PROGRAM FOR 2026

The Planning Commission's work plan for 2026 will initially consist of public hearings and work sessions for the ZOR and related Comprehensive Map Amendment. This will result in recommendations to the Mayor and Council on both documents in the first quarter of the year.

During the remainder of the year, the Commission will continue considering development review applications, including site plans and record plats, and providing recommendations on certain applications as required by the new Zoning Ordinance once adopted.

The Commission continues to encourage public participation in all planning efforts as well as for agenda items at their meetings. The Commission provides for in-person as well as virtual participation at meetings and accepts written testimony by email at any time.

APPENDIX A – 2025 MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Jaime Espinosa

Address: 5717 Ridgway Avenue
Term: Appointed 2023, expires 2027
Personal: Debarment Specialist, Food and Drug Administration
Education: B.A., Political Science, University of Nevada – Las Vegas; J. D., University of St. Thomas;
Master of Public Administration, University of Baltimore

Eric Fulton

Address: 402 Beall Avenue
Term: Appointed 2022, expires 2027
Personal: National Program Manager, Customer Outreach and Communication, United States
General Services Administration
Education: B.A., Communications, University of Maryland

Suzan Pitman

Address: 822 Grandin Avenue
Term: Reappointed 2024, expires 2029
Personal: Operations Director, American College of Dentists
Education: B.A., Psychology and American History, Incarnate Word College

Shayan Salahuddin

Address: 103 Bullard Circle
Term: Appointed 2023, expires 2028
Personal: Mortgage Operations and Capital Markets Consultant
Education: B.S., Finance, California State University – Long Beach

Meng Sun

Address: 604 East Lynfield Drive
Term: Appointed 2024, expires 2031
Personal: Planner, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)
Education: B. Architecture, Tsinghua University, M.S. Urbanism, Delft University of Technology,
PhD. Urban Planning and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago