

Planning Commission

Annual Report 2024

Prepared May 2025

2024 MAYOR AND COUNCIL

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2024 PLANNING COMMISSION

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CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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 also includes a report on the City's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and Standards (APFS) but not a 5-year Mid-Cycle Planning Implementation and Development Process Report. The requirement for a biennial APFO report was introduced in 2011, yet the Commission provides this information each year, covering significant actions and restrictions that occurred with respect to the APFO and APFS during each reporting 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 324 single family residential building permits and 95 multifamily permits in 2024.

Each of the City's land use initiatives in 2024 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 process.

PLANNING IN ROCKVILLE

The City of Rockville had a population of 67,139 in 2020 (US Census Bureau, Decennial Census), 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 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 "ondemand" 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 (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

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.

with and advises public officials, agencies, civic, educational, professional and other organizations and citizens with respect to the protection or execution of 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 all proposed development, except for single-family or semi-detached residential development, for compliance with applicable regulations. For most other 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.

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 2024

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 2024, the Planning Commission reviewed two applications for Zoning Map Amendments (MAPs), one of which was a historic district map amendment and the other was for an application of a floating zone to fulfill a Comprehensive Plan recommendation. The Commission reviewed three Zoning Text Amendments: to regulate tobacco and smoke shops; to provide for a method to amendment conservation districts; and to amend the existing Lincoln Park Conservation District.

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 2024 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 2024. These included record plats necessary to create lots for previously-approved development projects. Site Plan approvals

by the Planning Commission in 2024 included a residential community with 36 two-over-two units on a former church property near the Twinbrook Metro station, a conversion of a former office building to multifamily units also near the Twinbrook Metro station, and a 291-unit multifamily redevelopment of office buildings in the Town Center.

A list of all the Planning Commission actions in 2024, including those mentioned above, appears on pages 9-11, with a map on page 12 locating each property that was the subject of an action.

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 Design Guidelines. 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.

Pedestrian Master Plan

The Pedestrian Master Plan, adopted into the Comprehensive Plan on Oct. 30, 2023, amends, clarifies, and in many cases provides more details regarding the facility and policy planning within the city's Comprehensive Plan, Rockville 2040, and helps implement the city's Transportation Vision. The Transportation Vision states, "Rockville's transportation system will provide residents, businesses, employees, and visitors with multiple options for moving about the city through a variety of modes and paths while ensuring access for persons of all abilities and mobilities...Rockville will continue to transition to a more walkable community and contribute to regional efforts to create safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable mobility." The plan provides an overview of the pedestrian network and identifies policy and infrastructure improvements to address unique issues faced by people walking and rolling.

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 ACTIVITY IN 2024

Several major residential developments continued construction in 2024, including major developments near King Farm and Potomac Woods. In addition, a mixed use building with 460 multifamily units and a grocery store at the Twinbrook Metro station completed construction, allowing residential occupancy in 2024.

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%	

ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ORDINANCE (APFO)

The Mayor and Council have adopted an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and Adequate Public Facilities Standards (APFS) to establish minimum standards for public facilities and services such as transportation (roads, transit, pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities), schools, water, and sewer service. New developments are required to perform studies to evaluate their impact on these public facilities and mitigate unacceptable impacts prior to approval. The City's APFO can be found in Article 20 of the Rockville Zoning Ordinance.

Comprehensive Transportation Review

The transportation test of the City's APFO is the Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR). The CTR evaluates the overall transportation system from a multimodal perspective. Transportation goals from the Master Plan form the basis for the methodology, standards and impact thresholds outlined in the CTR

requirements. Each development application that generates more than 30 vehicle trips is required to include a Transportation Report that analyzes all components, including vehicle trip generation and distribution, intersection capacity analysis, and on-site transportation analysis and proposed mitigation of impacts on roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transit systems. Transportation staff have initiated a process to update the standards of the CTR, which may be modified on the same timeline as the updated Zoning Ordinance for the City.

School Capacity Standards

The City's school adequacy test, the point at which a school attendance area goes into moratorium for new residential development, is a combination of exceeding the program capacity by 120% and exceeding a specified seat count. The seat deficit is 110 seats at the elementary level and 180 seats at the middle school level.

Student generation rates were updated by Montgomery County semi-annually. The generation rates are more accurate since the location and housing type of virtually every MCPS student could be identified.

No school that serves students living in the City is in moratorium. Capacity at the high school level in the Walter Johnson HS cluster is over capacity, with the projected capacity over 120%; however, the project to reopen the former Charles W. Woodward HS within the City's test period relieves that capacity deficit.

Similarly, the Richard Montgomery HS cluster continues to exceed capacity limits at the high school level. With the capacity from the new high school to be built at the Crown development in Gaithersburg available in 2027, the capacity deficit is relieved.

Water and Sewer Standards

Water and sewer service is delivered to Rockville by two providers: the City of Rockville and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). This portion of the report provides information for properties that receive water and sewer service from the City of Rockville.

Rockville withdraws water from the Potomac River, treats the water and delivers it to the Rockville city limits for customer consumption. There are three sewersheds in Rockville: Watts Branch, Cabin John and Rock Creek. Rockville collects wastewater from customers using Rockville's sewer pipes and discharges the wastewater into WSSC sewer pipes, which in turn discharge into District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water) sewer pipes for treatment at DC Water's Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility (Blue Plains).

Calendar Year 2024 Restrictions

No restrictions were identified for projects approved during calendar year 2024:

Capacity to treat and supply water from the Rockville Water Treatment Plant: None
 Capacity of the water transmission system to provide adequate fire flow: None
 Capacity to treat wastewater at Blue Plains: None
 Capacity of the sanitary sewer collection system to transmit wastewater flow: None

Cumulative Restrictions

The following is a cumulative list of restrictions, which have not yet been mitigated, identified since Rockville adopted an APFO and began tracking water and sewer deficiencies. These restrictions may place limits on development if they are not mitigated through capacity upgrades.

The Water and Wastewater deficiencies are shown in the map exhibit found on the following page. The exhibit also identifies when the deficiencies are expected to be mitigated based on the adopted fiscal year 2024 Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

Water System

There are currently no identified water system deficiencies; however, fire flow capacity is evaluated for each proposed development so future development may require the mitigation of a water system deficiency that has not been identified.

Wastewater System

There are six (6) deficient areas that have flow restrictions. These restrictions are a result of inadequate capacity of the existing sewer pipes to convey peak wastewater flow.

There are two primary means to resolve the sewer capacity restrictions in Rockville: (1) capacity upgrades through Rockville's Capital Improvement Program and (2) capacity upgrades by developers through permits issued by DPW. Capacity upgrades typically are accomplished by increasing the diameter of the sewer pipe, however alternate methods are considered when feasible. Rockville's FY2024 Capital Improvement Program, adopted by the Mayor and Council in May of 2023, includes construction funding to resolve two (2) deficient areas: Atlantic Avenue and Glenora. The Atlantic Avenue deficiency is scheduled to be resolved in FY2028 and the Glenora deficiency is scheduled to be resolved in FY2029. The Lorraine Drive sewer deficiency area is programmed to be mitigated by a capital improvement project in FY2030.

Cumulative development approvals through 2024 require mitigating the Congressional, Halpine and Twinbrook Metro deficiency areas in the Rock Creek sewer shed. The mitigation of Congressional and Halpine deficiency areas was completed by the developer with the implementation of Phase 1 of the Twinbrook Quarter development. The mitigation of the Twinbrook Metro deficiency area is subject to the terms of a Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement (DRRA) and a pending implementation agreement between the City and the Twinbrook Quarter developer. The DRRA specifies that the mitigation of the Twinbrook Metro deficiency area will be implemented at the cost of the developer within ten (10) years of Twinbrook Quarter's Project Plan approval, or at ten (10) years, the developer must either fund the mitigation of the deficiency or forfeit the remaining reserved capacity of the Project Plan.

Water and Wastewater System Restrictions

<u>Note</u>: System restrictions are included for the Rockville Water and Sewer Service area only, and does not include areas served by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC).

Wastewater Restriction Map Number	Area Name	Date of Planned Mitigation	How Mitigated
2	Atlantic Avenue	FY2028	Rockville CIP
3	Lorraine Drive	FY2030	Rockville CIP
4	Glenora	FY2029	Rockville CIP
5	Congressional	FY2024	Developer
6	Halpine	FY2024	Developer
7	Twinbrook Metro	FY2030	Developer or Rockville CIP

Water Restriction Map Number	Location	Date of Planned Mitigation	How Mitigated
None			

DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS BY PLANNING COMMISSION

The following tables outline the development review actions taken by the City Planning Commission during 2024. A map of these actions is included below showing the location of each application, where applicable.

Map Amendments

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
MAP2024-00120	Floating Zone Map Amendment Application to change the zone of 5906 Halpine Road from R-60 to MXNC (Mixed Use Neighborhood Center)	Recommended for approval on June 26, 2024
MAP2024-00125	Historic District Map Amendment Application to change the zoning of 4 Courthouse Square from MXTD (Mixed Use Transit District) to MXTD and HD (Historic District)	Recommended for approval on March 13, 2024

Plats - Subdivision

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
PLT2024-00619 PLT2024-00620 PLT2024-00621	Final Record Plat Applications to create lots in the previously approved site plan area for redevelopment of property in the MXCD Zone at 11511 Fortune Terrace.	Approved by the Planning Commission on February 7, 2024
PLT2023-00615	Final Record Plat Application to consolidate three record lots into a single record lot at 115 North Van Buren Street in the R-60 Zone.	Approved by the Planning Commission on March 13, 2024

PLT2025-00624	Final Record Plat Applications to create townhouse lots in	Approved by the
PLT2025-00625	the previously approved site plan area for redevelopment	Planning Commission
	of property in the MXCD Zone at 11511 Fortune Terrace	on November 13, 2024

Project Plans

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
PJT2023-00016	Project Plan application to modify the Champion Billiards Planned Development to reduce the permitted amount of retail space at 900 Rockville Pike	Recommended by the Planning Commission on January 24, 2024
PJT2024-00017	Project Plan application to modify the Rockshire Planned Development and allow redevelopment of the Village Center with 60 dwelling units and 5,500 square feet of retail	Recommended by the Planning Commission On February 28, 2024

Site Plans

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
STP2024-00465	Level 2 Site Plan to permit the conversion of an existing office building to multifamily use in the MXE Zone at 12501 Ardennes Avenue	Approved by the Planning Commission on April 24, 2024
STP2024-00473	Level 2 Site Plan to permit construction of 82 townhouses at 2200 Tower Oaks Boulevard in the PD-TO (Planned Development – Tower Oaks) Zone	Approved by the Planning Commission on July 24, 2024
STP2023-00474	Level 2 Site Plan to approve 36 two-over-two units in the MXNC Zone at 5906 Halpine Road	Approved by the Planning Commission on October 9, 2024
STP2024-00488	Level 2 Site Plan to allow for reconstruction of a private school in the R-60 Zone at 850 Nelson Street	Approved by the Planning Commission on October 9, 2024
STP2024-00487	Level 2 Site Plan to allow construction of 291 multifamily units to replace two existing office buildings at 414-416 Hungerford Drive	Approved by the Planning Commission on December 11, 2024

Special Exceptions

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
None		

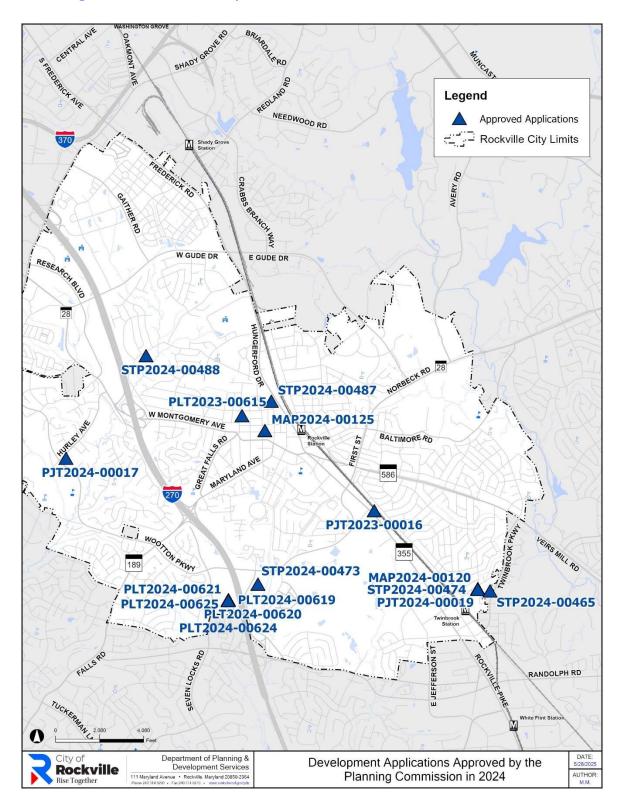
Waivers

Application #	Request and Location	Action/Date
None		

Zoning Text Amendments

Application #	Applicant, Request and Location	Action/Date
TXT2024-00265	Zoning Text Amendment by the Mayor and Council to regulate tobacco and smoke shop establishments	Recommended for denial by the Planning Commission on May 22, 2024
TXT2023-00266	Zoning Text Amendment by the Rockville Mayor and Council to provide a mechanism to allow for amendments to conservation districts	Recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on March 13, 2024
TXT2023-00267	Zoning Text Amendment by the Rockville Mayor and Council to modify the requirements of the Lincoln Park Conservation District	Recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on September 25, 2024

2024 Planning Commission Actions Map



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

PLANNING COMMISSION WORK PROGRAM FOR 2025

The Planning Commission's work plan for 2025 will consist primarily of considering development review applications, including site plans and record plats, and providing recommendations on zoning text and map amendments, project plans and special exceptions.

The Mayor and Council have approved funding for a consultant to assist in a comprehensive rewrite of the City's Zoning Ordinance that is intended to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission will have a major role in that effort and expects to hold work sessions on the project as it proceeds forward.

The Commission continues to take public participation in all planning efforts very seriously. This has been reflected in the public participation in recent master planning initiatives.

Staff for the Commission also monitors Montgomery County plans adjacent to Rockville and reports the status of such items to the Commission, which maintains an active interest in such projects. In addition, staff monitors other County projects that will impact Rockville, such as the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) planned for the Rockville Pike (MD 355) and Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) corridors as well as projects at Montgomery College.

APPENDIX A - 2024 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 2026

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