



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item # 4
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *HK*
Sue Edwards, Team Leader, I-270 Corridor, Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Nancy Sturgeon, *NS* Planner Coordinator, I-270 Corridor Team (301-495-1308)
Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Status Report: Gaithersburg West Master Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff will provide a status report to the Planning Board on the Gaithersburg West Master Plan.

This written report provides an overview of the issues that staff has been working on and will be presenting to the Board on October 2, 2008. In addition, there are some specific issues where staff is seeking guidance from the Planning Board, including the future goals for the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center.

This staff report covers the following issues:

- Community and Property Owner Engagement
- The Origins of the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center
- The Shady Grove Life Sciences Center Today
- Planning for Science: The Shady Grove Life Sciences Center in the 21st Century
- Community Concerns
- Linking Land Uses/Connecting Communities
- Public Service Training Academy (PSTA)
- Historic Preservation Issues
- Transportation System Analysis
- Corridor Cities Transitway: Proposed Alignment and Station Locations

INTRODUCTION

The Gaithersburg West Master Plan will update the 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* and portions of the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*. The focus of the Master Plan update is on the future of the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center (LSC) and the alignment and station locations for the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). In addition to the LSC, the Gaithersburg West Master Plan includes the mostly residential areas west of Quince Orchard and Longdraft roads and the McGown property, a vacant parcel near I-270 adjacent to the City of Gaithersburg.

The Plan also includes several enclaves, areas that are within the County's jurisdiction but are completely surrounded by the City of Gaithersburg: Oakmont, Rosemont, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Londonderry/Hoyle's Addition, Washingtonian residential, and Washingtonian light industrial park (see Attachment 1). The Master Plan will contain area-wide recommendations for these locations outside the LSC where significant change is not anticipated or recommended. The Plan will establish a vision for the LSC in the 21st Century and will have detailed recommendations for this area.

Previous Presentation to the Planning Board

The last status report to the Planning Board on the Gaithersburg West Master Plan was on February 28, 2008. At that time, staff provided background on the decisions that had been made regarding the geography of the Master Plan area, the outreach strategy, the origins of the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center, and the vision of the previous Plans for the area. Staff also outlined the overall land use concepts, the alternatives that were being developed for the transportation model, and the possibility of realigning the Corridor Cities Transitway and relocating the stations within the Life Sciences Center. Since February, staff finalized the land use alternatives and completed an initial analysis of the transportation system for both the regional model and local area review. Staff coordinated an interdisciplinary group to examine the CCT alignment and station locations in the LSC. Staff has completed a demographic analysis and is working on an environmental analysis. Staff has met with LSC property owners and citizens groups. In the enclave areas outside the LSC, staff has met with citizens and individual property owners regarding site-specific as well as general issues. Staff has also been coordinating with planners from the City of Gaithersburg and colleagues in various County departments.

Community and Property Owner Engagement

Due to the large and scattered geography of Gaithersburg West, staff has undertaken a two-pronged approach to community engagement: 1) outreach to the enclave areas, and 2) outreach to those in and around the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center. In the enclave areas, staff does not anticipate significant changes to the existing zoning and established land use patterns, with the possible exception of the McGown property, located adjacent to a new mixed-use project in the City of Gaithersburg. Staff has contacted representatives of the enclave areas and has met with interested participants to discuss the Master Plan update and any issues or concerns they may have. Staff is coordinating with planners for the City of Gaithersburg on issues and areas of mutual concern.

Johns Hopkins University (JHU) owns two major properties in the LSC: the 35-acre JHU-Montgomery County Campus and the 108-acre undeveloped Belward property (see Attachment 2). As part of the Master Plan process, JHU hired a team of consultants to explore options for the future of the Life Sciences Center, an effort they call "Vision 2030." JHU has initiated several other parallel efforts, including a Senior Management Team consisting of executive and legislative staff, including Planning Director Rollin Stanley. Shady Grove Adventist Hospital has also hired a consultant to assist them in future plans for their property. Staff has had numerous discussions with the JHU team, Adventist Hospital, and other stakeholders.

Staff has met with other property owners in the LSC individually to discuss the Master Plan update and their plans and ideas for the future. Staff continues to meet with citizens associations in and around the LSC as well. These small group meetings enable staff to gather information, hear directly from residents and stakeholders, and ensure that individuals have a chance to participate in an informal setting. At this point, having had a series of smaller group meetings, staff will be scheduling several large community meetings this fall to bring all interested participants together to discuss the future of the LSC.

The Origins of the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center

The origins of the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center are found in the 1971 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*, which endorsed the County's proposal for a future Montgomery County Medical Center complex near Shady Grove Road west of I-270. The Medical Center was envisioned as a major employment area that would include medical research as well as a hospital and full complement of health services for the rapidly growing western portion of the County. In 1976, land was conveyed to the State for the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA) and the Noyes Institute. Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, one of the first major developments in the area, opened in 1979.

In the early 1980s, Montgomery County government made a strategic decision to utilize public resources to enhance its competitive position to attract the biotechnology industry. With land and location as its principle benefits, and the presence of a strong federally supported scientific community, biotechnology was a natural focus for the County's economic development program. The County's Department of Economic Development has played a major role in the success of the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center, which was created on nearly 300 acres of publicly-owned land west of I-270. The County's land use strategy included three components – a health services core in the center, educational institutions as anchors to the north and south, and surrounding land available to attract research and development companies. Health services were clustered around the existing Shady Grove Adventist Hospital. To bring academic institutions to the area, the County donated land to Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland. A number of biotechnology firms have located in the LSC, including Human Genome Sciences, BioReliance, and the J. Craig Venter Institute.

The Shady Grove Life Sciences Center Today

The term "Life Sciences Center" is being broadly applied to the area shown on Attachment 2. In the past, the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center was more narrowly defined as the large super block that includes Adventist Hospital. Going forward, the LSC moniker should be expanded to include the Johns Hopkins Belward property to the west and the Universities at Shady Grove to the south. As shown on Attachment 2, the LSC contains the following areas and primary uses. (Attachment 2 also identifies the Washingtonian residential enclave, which is located north of Fields Road and is separated from the LSC by the Crown Farm in the City of Gaithersburg. This area is not technically considered to be part of the LSC.)

- LSC North is east of Shady Grove Road, north of Key West Avenue, and west of Great Seneca Highway. This area includes office parks and office buildings at DANAC, National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD), Shady Grove Executive Center, and the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA) and the residential communities of Decoverly and Shady Grove Gables.

- LSC Central is surrounded by Shady Grove Road on the east, Darnestown Road on the south, Great Seneca Highway on the west, and Key West Avenue on the north. Uses include Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, Johns Hopkins University – Montgomery County Campus (JHU-MCC), several medical office buildings and other office buildings. Biotech businesses include the J. Craig Venter Institute, BioReliance, Otsuka, and Alexandria Real Estate’s three biotech companies. Social service agencies are also located here: the State’s Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA) and Noyes Institute, and the County’s Betty Ann Krahnke Center and the Treatment and Learning Center.
- LSC South is south of Darnestown Road and includes the Universities at Shady Grove, Human Genome Sciences, and the Traville retail and residential developments.
- LSC West is the block surrounded by Great Seneca Highway on the east, Darnestown Road on the south, and Key West Avenue on the west and includes the Public Service Training Academy (PSTA), the County’s Shady Grove Innovation Center (formerly the Maryland Technology Development Center (Business Incubator), and some retail and residential uses.
- LSC-Belward is the area surrounded by Darnestown Road on the south, Muddy Branch Road on the west, Great Seneca Highway on the north, and Key West Avenue on the east. LSC-Belward includes the 108-acre, undeveloped Belward property owned by JHU as well as the 38 acres comprising the developed portion of the site along Belward Campus Drive. A small subdivision in the City of Gaithersburg, Mission Hills, is located north of and adjacent to the Belward property.

Since the 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* was approved, many of the goals for the LSC have been realized. As originally envisioned, the LSC had a specific land use purpose and a unique employment niche, surrounded by large tracts recommended for residential and retail development. The zoning for the LSC was applied by Sectional Map Amendment in 1996, which was when the Life Sciences Center Zone and the R&D Zone were created (see Attachment 3). In part, the intent of creating and applying these zones was to ensure that land would be reserved for life sciences in order to create a concentration of these uses sufficient to accomplish the original vision for the LSC. Uses such as housing and retail were specifically excluded from the LSC and R&D zones to enable the primary land uses of medical, life science, and academia to become established and have room to grow. There was also interest in avoiding potential compatibility issues between residential and life sciences uses. Of the nearly 1,000 acres in the greater LSC, 500 acres are covered by zones that exclude or limit housing and retail uses. All of the 325 acres that comprise the majority of life sciences uses (LSC Central and LSC-Belward) are covered by the LSC and R&D zones, which have limited uses as described above. Of the areas that are covered by zones that allow housing, 75 acres (one-quarter) are currently in public use for non-residential purposes.

To provide housing near the jobs in the LSC, the 1990 Plan proposed the traditional neighborhood concept – now known as “new urbanism” – for the King Farm, the Crown Farm, and the Thomas Farm (Falls Grove). King Farm and Falls Grove were annexed into the City of Rockville and are nearly built-out as neo-traditional neighborhoods. The Crown Farm was annexed into the City of Gaithersburg and has approved development plans for a mixed-use community, which is not yet under construction. Whether in the City of Gaithersburg, the City of Rockville, or the County areas of North Potomac, the LSC is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Within the greater LSC area in the Gaithersburg West Master Plan shown on

Attachment 2, there are a total of 3,262 existing residential dwelling units: in the Washingtonian enclave there are 1,368 units, at Decoverly there are 1,144, and at Traville there are 750 units (of which 230 are senior housing).

At the heart of the I-270 Corridor, the LSC today is the County's premier location for, and has the largest concentration of, advanced technology and biotechnology companies. The two academic institutions in the LSC – the Universities at Shady Grove and the JHU-MCC campus – have increased its prominence and vastly expanded opportunities for collaboration. Shady Grove Adventist Hospital has expanded its facilities, providing the broader community with a full range of health care services. A number of biotechnology companies, mentioned above, are located here. Today, the greater LSC contains over 6 million square feet of existing development and has approximately 3.5 million square feet of approved development in the pipeline. Many sites in the LSC have maximized their current development potential under the existing zoning.

Planning for Science: the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center in the 21st Century

What should the LSC of the 21st Century be like? The JHU "Vision 2030" concept envisions the LSC of the future as a major urban center with a complete mix of uses, including high density housing and high-rise buildings. JHU is convinced that the LSC of the future must be a dynamic, world class, transit-oriented, mixed-use "science city" with high enough densities to create and support a 24/7, urbane, live/work/play environment. JHU suggests that these are the places where the best and brightest research workers of tomorrow want to be and that the LSC, therefore, must be such a place. JHU feels strongly that a mix and intensity of uses is needed to create a robust, world class public-private collaborative applied research community. In order to create such a place, JHU asserts that housing should be 30–50 percent of the land use mix at densities of at least 30 dwelling units per acre. JHU is also advocating higher densities to improve the ridership projections for the CCT.

While approaching JHU's vision with an open mind, staff must independently assess and recommend the appropriate overall density and the right mix of uses. The proposed density must be supported by the transportation network, located so as to take advantage of the CCT, and staged along with the provision of public facilities. One of the critical considerations is the extent to which the LSC should be recommended for mixed-use development.

Envisioning the future of the LSC involves questions such as:

- Should the potential for future growth in the area be distributed among housing, retail, and cultural uses?
- Or, is it important to limit uses that are not related to the original purpose of the LSC so that there are ample growth opportunities for the medical, biotech, and academic uses that comprise the LSC today?
- If a mix is introduced, what is the right balance among uses, particularly housing and commercial?
- Will housing and retail uses reduce opportunities for biotech expansion in the future?
- To attract tomorrow's workers to the LSC, is it necessary to create urban, 24/7, city-like densities with self-contained live/work/play opportunities all within the Master Plan area?
- Given the residential opportunities near the LSC and in communities along the proposed transit line, how much more housing is needed within the boundaries of the Plan?

Mixed-use development, preferably with transit availability, has been the universal planning archetype of recent years. It is thought that these are the best type of places to plan and build because such development epitomizes smart growth and sound planning principles; addresses land use/transportation balance; helps achieve a jobs/housing balance; maximizes public investments in infrastructure; is potentially more sustainable than other forms of development; and creates the types of places where many people want to live and work. The Planning Department has recommended mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD) in a number of master plans and sector plans, especially in areas with existing Metrorail stations (e.g. central business districts as well as Shady Grove, Twinbrook, and White Flint).

One of Montgomery County's fundamental planning tools is the jobs/housing balance, which is the ratio of jobs to housing units in an area. If the number of jobs is in relative balance to the number of dwelling units in an area, there will be an opportunity for people to live near where they work, which will reduce traffic congestion. A balanced ratio of jobs to dwelling units, however, does not guarantee that the housing will be occupied by those who work nearby since housing choices are based on many factors, one of which is an individual's or couple's current job location. An important piece of analysis for the future would be to determine the extent to which housing near jobs is actually occupied by people employed locally. If simply providing the units near the jobs is not achieving the overall goal, then other programs and policies may need to be explored to create incentives to live near work. Employment at the LSC will also be supported by housing opportunities located elsewhere on the same transit line. The jobs/housing balance on the corridor as a whole must be considered, not just in each center.

Staff is exploring realistic opportunities to increase housing in the LSC, as discussed further below (see Public Service Training Academy). Residential opportunities will be available at transit-accessible centers along the Corridor Cities Transitway as well as the substantial amount of housing throughout nearby Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Potomac. Staff views the LSC as part of a continuum of communities that are linked by the transitway. Each transit center along the CCT does not need to have the same mix of uses and densities. With the CCT, centers will be connected, enabling people to live and work anywhere within the corridor and get where they need to go by transit. Most of the CCT stations to the east and west of the LSC have existing or planned mixed-use development with a housing emphasis, as outlined in the following section.

It is important to encourage a development pattern in the LSC that enhances its role as the County's premier location for the life sciences industry. Planning for science should continue to be the central theme and core vision for the future of the LSC. In order for the LSC to achieve its potential, staff is considering retaining the LSC Zone and modifying it to reflect more contemporary standards, allow more density, and, potentially, allow more uses without diminishing the primary mission. The LSC and R&D zones are very similar and staff is analyzing whether to retain both or merge them into one zone.

At this point in the Master Plan development process, staff's overall goals and vision for the LSC include the following:

- Realignment of the CCT and relocation of the stations.
- New development and redevelopment should be concentrated at the three proposed CCT stations.

- The tallest buildings should be located at the CCT stations, with compatible and appropriate transitions to adjacent neighborhoods, especially around the Belward property.
- Create a new residential community on the PSTA.
- Consider more of a mix of uses throughout the LSC to create a more dynamic and vibrant place while ensuring that enough land is reserved for bioscience growth and expansion.

Community Concerns

There are significant community concerns regarding substantial increases in density in the LSC generally and the Belward property specifically. Many residents feel that no matter what is done to mitigate the effects of growth, traffic will worsen, which will have adverse impacts on air quality and noise pollution. Residents make the point that roads are crowded and traffic congestion is already bad at some locations in Gaithersburg West; they are concerned that congestion will become more severe, and they are skeptical whether light rail, if it is built, will make a difference.

In addition to traffic, residents are concerned about the effects of increased development on the area's eco-system, including water quality, waste disposal capacity, and even energy supply. Concerns have also been raised about the potential height of buildings, particularly on the Belward property, which is adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods. Some residents have stated concern about the potential number of dwelling units. Overall, current residents request that the County take a conservative approach to planning the future of this area and not diminish the quality of life for those who already live there. As noted earlier, staff will be continuing to meet with community groups throughout the fall.

Linking Land Uses/Connecting Communities

In the future, with the implementation of the long-planned Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), the Corridor Cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, and Clarksburg will be connected by transit. Staff views these linkages, and the possibility of connecting communities by transit, to be a key planning principle for this area. As described in full detail below, the CCT is a 14-mile transit line from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Clarksburg. The first phase of the CCT is a 7.5 miles section from the Shady Grove Metro Station to the Metropolitan Grove/MARC station. This portion of the CCT has 8 stations, half in the municipalities and half in the County's planning jurisdiction. Whether in the City of Rockville, the City of Gaithersburg, or the County's planning areas, efforts have been underway to ensure the best possible alignment and the appropriate land use planning around the proposed stations. The CCT will link land uses and connect communities by transit. Someone will be able to live at the King Farm and take the transit three stops away to a job at Adventist Hospital or BioReliance or attend classes at JHU. Someone working at MedImmune could live at the new community at the Shady Grove Metro Station and commute by transit. At CCT stations to the east and west of the LSC, over 13,000 dwelling units are planned.

Public Service Training Academy (PSTA)

The County Executive's Office is exploring options for relocating several County facilities. The County Property Use Study includes relocation of the Public Service Training Academy (PSTA) in the Life Sciences Center as well as the County Service Park at the Shady Grove Metro Station. (Relocation of the County Service Park would enable implementation of the 2006 *Shady Grove Sector Plan*, which envisions transforming the Shady Grove Metro Station from a light industrial service park to a new mixed-use residential community that makes the best use of Metro proximity by placing transit-oriented uses adjacent to the station.)

The PSTA occupies 52 acres of a 75-acre triangular parcel bordered by Key West Avenue, Great Seneca Highway, and Darnestown Road (see Attachment 2). The PSTA is a training facility for firefighters, police officers, and operators of large vehicles for the County. Adjacent to the PSTA at the corner of Great Seneca Highway and Darnestown Road is the County's Innovation Center, which provides space for biotech start-up businesses. At the corner of Key West Avenue and Darnestown Road are a small retail center and several medical office buildings. Adjacent to the PSTA on the north side of Darnestown Road are several single-family homes and special exception uses. The single-family homes have been assembled and are the subject of a current re-zoning application.

The PSTA has been at this site since 1973 when the area was mostly farmland and there were few roads or other supporting infrastructure. Since the 1980s, when the County decided to create the LSC, the uses around the PSTA have changed dramatically. Today, the PSTA occupies a prime location between the heart of the LSC to the east and the JHU/Belward property to the west. According to the County Executive's Office, all of the PSTA needs cannot be satisfied at this location and there is little-to-no expansion capability, which limits the County's ability to address the long-term needs for public safety training. From a land use perspective, staff has long believed that the PSTA is no longer properly located. While it is an important public facility, it has no relationship to the uses in the LSC nor does it help advance the goals for the future of the area.

What are the best uses for this site in the future? Staff considers the PSTA site to be an excellent location for a new, transit-served residential community. As part of the proposed CCT realignment (discussed below), the new route would come through the PSTA site and staff recommends that a station be located there. The PSTA site is one of the few locations in this area where a new neighborhood could be created, one supported by transit, retail, civic spaces, and possibly a public elementary school. A residential community on this site would provide housing near the jobs in the LSC, increasing the opportunities for people to live near their work. The PSTA site will also need to accommodate a planned fire station and possibly an elementary school to serve this area.

Staff has collaborated with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to assess future school needs based on the potential growth that is being contemplated. MCPS has determined that an elementary school may be needed in the area in the future. Schools, particularly at the elementary level, are best located in residential neighborhoods. Staff has been encouraging MCPS to consider smaller building footprints at all school levels. If a new residential neighborhood is built on this site, and if an elementary school is ultimately needed for this area, it would be logical to locate the school in this community. Staff is also considering community open space adjacent to the proposed school site.

As mentioned above, the County's Shady Grove Innovation Center (Incubator) is located adjacent to the PSTA at the corner of Great Seneca Highway and Darnestown Road (see Attachment 2), a visible location with great potential to become a signature site. The Incubator could remain at its current location or, ideally, be incorporated into other redevelopment opportunities at the PSTA or elsewhere in the LSC.

Historic Preservation Issues

Belward Farm

The Belward Farm is a historic site designated on the County's *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* (Site #20/21). The farmstead, established in the mid-1800s by Ignatius Beall Ward, includes a dairy barn, silo, large cow barn, corn crib and other outbuildings. The Queen Anne-style farmhouse was built in 1891 and is a significant example of late 19th century Victorian farmstead architecture. When the Belward Farm was designated a historic site, the setting was 138 acres. In 1996, a Preliminary Plan was approved for the 138-acre, JHU-owned Belward property. As part of the Preliminary Plan, the environmental setting for the historic property was established as 6.98 acres, with open space on either side of the existing tree-lined driveway (that leads to the house from Darnestown Road) to maintain a view of the house from the road. Since JHU does not intend to implement the approved plan for Belward, and a substantially different plan may be considered for the future development of the property, an appropriate setting for this historic resource may need to be reevaluated. This historic portion of the property must be appropriately incorporated into any future design and development of the site.

The current alignment for the Corridor Cities Transitway is along the west side of Great Seneca Highway, an environmentally sensitive area. If the alignment and station are relocated within the center of the Belward property (discussed below), the transitway may be near the historic Belward Farmstead and staff is concerned about the potential impacts. Typically, density is concentrated around transit stations and the higher buildings are placed in these locations. While density and height are yet to be determined for the Belward property, these design issues need to be sensitively addressed. Historic preservation staff are particularly concerned about this issue and believe that buildings of significant height would be inappropriate immediately adjacent to the historic resources. In their view, buildings should be graduated in height to be sensitive to the historic resource.

Humpback Bridge

This resource was added to the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites by the Planning Board in 2005. The Humpback Bridge spans the CSX railroad tracks in the vicinity of East Deer Park Drive, providing a connection between Gaithersburg and the historic Town of Washington Grove. It is adjacent to the Washington Grove MARC station and reflects the origin and development of Washington Grove, Oakmont and Gaithersburg. The Humpback Bridge is a local landmark that is a unique, established, and familiar visual feature. The form and profile of the bridge are reflective of bridge construction from 1945, the year that the current structure was erected. The bridge was rehabilitated in 1988 and 2000.

The bridge is maintained by Montgomery County Department of Transportation, which is currently evaluating the structural condition of the bridge. Future restoration or rehabilitation work on the bridge must preserve the form, scale, and location of this resource. A timber bridge has been in place at this location since the 1880s. The traditional rustic use of wood is important,

but materials should be considered in the future with some leniency. If deemed unsuitable for further rehabilitation for car traffic, it could be preserved for exclusive use by bicyclists and pedestrians. Heritage tourism goals include a railroad theme which could connect well with this resource. The Gaithersburg West Master Plan will need to address the transportation issues of carrying traffic across the railroad tracks.

Transportation System Analysis

The transportation recommendations for Gaithersburg West are intended to accommodate potential future development with a complete network of transportation options consistent with Montgomery County policies for an adequate system. In preparation for the Gaithersburg West Master Plan update, staff has analyzed three land use scenarios to determine the potential impact of proposed future development on the transportation network. The scenarios include 1) a low development scenario represented by the data reported in the 2007-2009 Growth Policy Analysis, 2) a medium scenario developed by staff, and 3) a high density scenario reflecting JHU's Vision 2030 concept. The low, medium, and high land use alternatives are a standard approach to such analysis. For the Gaithersburg West high scenario, staff decided to use the JHU concept because it met the definition of high density. The transportation analysis assumes that major, planned projects will be implemented, particularly the Intercounty Connector (ICC) and the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). The medium and high land use alternatives assume the implementation of the proposed CCT alignment through the LSC that is intended to bring the transit closer to the proposed development being contemplated by this Plan.

The results of the preliminary Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR) analysis indicate that the two policy areas within the Gaithersburg West Master Plan, R&D Village and the City of Gaithersburg, fall within an adequate range for the low and medium land use scenarios. The PAMR results with regard to the high land use scenario show that the R&D Village policy area falls just within the inadequate area on the PAMR chart. From a Master Plan perspective, this finding indicates that the land use and transportation capacity in the R&D Village policy area is marginally "out of balance" under this scenario. The City of Gaithersburg policy area falls within the adequate area of the PAMR chart under any scenarios evaluated. The PAMR charts pertaining to the scenarios described above are shown on Attachments 4-6. The corresponding PAMR-related data tabulation summaries for these scenarios are provided in Attachments 7-9.

Staff is working on an analysis that would evaluate the scenarios if a mode split assumption of 32.5 percent non-auto drivers was applied to work trips traveling to and from the LSC area. A mode share of this type could only be achieved with the CCT, as well as aggressive transportation demand management strategies designed to reduce single-occupant auto travel in the LSC area. Achieving this mode share would, of course, be easier if a significant number of those employed in the LSC lived nearby. The PAMR analysis reflecting this assumption is underway.

Also considered are the upstream/downstream traffic implications of the potential development being evaluated for this Plan. In this regard, the mobility implications for policy areas in the immediate vicinity of Gaithersburg West must be considered, particularly Germantown East, Derwood/Shady Grove, Montgomery Village/Airpark, City of Rockville, and North Potomac. With the exception of the City of Rockville, all of these policy areas remain in the adequate category for all of the scenarios evaluated. The City of Rockville policy area is found to be adequate in the low scenario and falls into the marginally inadequate area on the PAMR chart for both the medium and high scenarios.

Additional travel demand analysis is provided with the local area model, which uses cordon lines to evaluate intersection information and levels of performance. The cordon line analysis draws a line at the boundary of the LSC portion of the Master Plan area to track trips entering and leaving that sub-area. This information, in combination with trip information pertaining to internal sub-area travel, supports the intersection analysis that determines the Critical Lane Volume (CLV) level of congestion at intersections located within the LSC sub-area. This work is currently underway. The results of this analysis will be used to evaluate more detailed land use options within the area. Based on the preliminary analysis performed thus far, three intersections may warrant future grade-separation: 1) Great Seneca Highway at Muddy Branch Road (in the City of Gaithersburg); 2) Key West Avenue at Diamondback Drive; and 3) Key West Avenue at Shady Grove Road. The cost of such improvements would be significant and will be estimated as part of the fiscal impact analysis for this Plan.

Corridor Cities Transitway: Proposed Alignment and Station Locations

The centerpiece of the future transportation network for the Gaithersburg West Master Plan is the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). The concept for a transitway in the I-270 Corridor can be found in the County's 1964 General Plan as well as the Gaithersburg Vicinity and Germantown Master Plans from the early 1970s. The transitway has been recommended in all subsequent I-270 Corridor Master Plans, including the 1994 Clarksburg Plan as well as the Frederick County Master Plan. The purpose of the transitway is to alleviate congestion on I-270, extend transit service west and north of the Shady Grove Metro Station (the terminus of the Red Line), and provide a transit option among the Corridor Cities.

The CCT will be a 14-mile transit line with at least 13 stations running from the Shady Grove Metro Station to the Comsat site in Clarksburg (see Attachment 10). The alignment is planned as an exclusive, dedicated facility that may be either light rail transit (LRT) or bus rapid transit (BRT) with limited interaction with vehicular traffic at local street crossings. A bike path is planned along most of its length except in areas where width is constrained and the bike path will have to take an alternate route in certain locations. The first phase of the CCT is from the Shady Grove Metro Station to the Metropolitan Grove/MARC station. Of the stations planned in the first phase, half are in County planning areas and half are in the municipalities (see Attachment 11). The second phase of the transitway would extend the line from Metropolitan Grove north to Germantown and Clarksburg (see Attachment 10).

Status of MTA Study

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is analyzing the CCT as part of the I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study and is nearing the completion of a major update to the 2002 Draft Environmental Impact Study, which is referred to as the Alternative Analysis/Environmental Assessment (AA/EA)¹. Staff is cognizant of the importance of coordinating the Master Plan schedule with the MTA schedule. The concurrent analysis is also important to the timely consideration of a Locally Preferred Alternative for the CCT and the eventual submittal of a New Starts application and request to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to begin preliminary engineering.

¹ More information on the overall study objectives and process can be found on the project web site at: <http://www.i270multimodalstudy.com/>

The AA/EA report, scheduled to be completed this fall, will include a detailed assessment of the existing CCT Master Plan alignment between the Shady Grove Metro Station and the Comsat site south of Clarksburg. The Planning Department and the County Department of Transportation (DOT) have officially requested that MTA include the proposed LSC realignment and station locations as part of its ongoing work on the AA/EA (see Attachments 12 and 13). In order to accomplish this, MTA requested that the County specify the alignment to be examined and provide initial, preliminary land use forecasts (jobs and housing), which the Planning Department staff provided to MTA in early August. It is anticipated that the MTA will be able to complete an analysis of the proposed alignment modification described below (along with the proposed changes in the City of Gaithersburg) at the same time that the AA/EA is made available.

Proposed CCT Realignment to Serve the LSC

Over the past several months, the Planning Department has coordinated the work of a multi-disciplinary group including MTA, the County DOT, the JHU team, Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, as well as the occasional participation of other LSC stakeholders. This group examined the potential realignment of the CCT through the LSC. This proposed realignment was discussed with the Planning Board during the February status report and again during the July 24 briefing to the Board regarding coordination with MTA.

The purpose of the proposed realignment through the LSC is to coordinate transportation and land use planning and ensure that the CCT is properly located to serve those areas where redevelopment and new development are anticipated. The study team conducted a preliminary examination of two alternative alignment options and station locations with respect to ridership, costs, and travel time. The current alignment of the CCT through the LSC includes two stations that could be relocated: 1) the “DANAC” station on the south side of Discoverly Drive and 2) the “Discoverly” station along the west side of Great Seneca Highway at the edge of the Belward property (see Attachment 11 and blue line on Attachment 14). Future growth in the vicinity of the DANAC station is somewhat limited as there is an existing residential community to the north and the DANAC/Stiles property to the south is approximately two-thirds built out. The Discoverly station is located along a highway (on Great Seneca Highway near Sam Eig Highway) and appears to have been predicated on a suburban “park and ride” model rather than a transit-oriented approach of placing the station in the center of development. The current Discoverly station location and alignment along Great Seneca Highway is within an environmentally sensitive wetland and stream buffer area, which could be avoided if the alignment is relocated as proposed.

There is a tremendous opportunity at this point in time to make sure that the CCT is properly planned and the station locations are centrally located where future development will be. There are ongoing efforts by both County and municipal planners, working with MTA, to ensure the best possible alignment. For example, a proposed realignment of the CCT on the Crown Farm (shown on Attachment 14), now located in the City of Gaithersburg, places the route along Fields Road before turning south, rather than a diagonal route through the property. This realignment would allow for a grid of streets on the Crown Farm and reflects development plans approved by the City of Gaithersburg, which were closely coordinated with MTA. The City of Gaithersburg is also working with MTA on a possible shift of the CCT alignment to the southwest side of Great Seneca Highway to provide access to the Kentlands Market Square redevelopment before the alignment turns north on Quince Orchard Road.

The CCT realignment that staff examined would bring the transitway into the core of the LSC (as shown by the red line on Attachment 14) rather than the current route, which has the transitway along the edge of the LSC (as shown by the blue line on Attachment 14). The proposed realignment would lengthen the route by approximately one mile. Rather than turning west on Discoverly Drive, the transitway would continue south along Diamondback Drive, cross Key West Avenue, continue on Broschart Road, turn west in the vicinity of Medical Center Drive, cross Great Seneca Highway, continue through the current site of the Public Service Training Academy, cross Key West Avenue, continue through the JHU/Belward property, and then move north on Muddy Branch Road to Great Seneca Highway. The three proposed stations in the LSC would centrally locate the stops within large blocks where new development and redevelopment is expected, increasing the number of potential CCT users that are within a five minute walk of the stations:

- 1) LSC Central: at the northern corner of Shady Grove Adventist Hospital along Broschart Road;
- 2) LSC West: on the current site of the Public Service Training Academy, which is recommended for relocation; and
- 3) LSC-Belward: on the JHU/Belward property.

Staff's initial analysis indicates that new development and redevelopment at these three proposed stations would be sufficient to increase CCT cost-effectiveness despite the additional length and added station. As mentioned above, MTA is performing a sensitivity analysis on this proposal to determine whether they could support it as a potential Locally Preferred Alternative in the environmental documentation due to be released this fall. The current timing of MTA's work is coordinated with the proposed schedule for the Gaithersburg West Master Plan.

While there is significant consensus that the proposed realignment and alternate station locations represent a sound approach to planning for the future of the area, staff would like to acknowledge that the DANAC/Stiles representatives are not pleased about the potential relocation of the station from their property. Not only have they dedicated the right-of-way for the CCT alignment, they stated that they have leased space in their buildings to major tenants based on the future, planned transit station. The Discoverly Homeowners Association, representing the residential community on the north side of Discoverly Drive, appears to support relocation of the DANAC station based on a meeting staff had with the HOA.

Previous Consideration of CCT Alignment

It is worth noting that the CCT alignment through the LSC was thoroughly studied as part the *Gaithersburg Vicinity-Shady Grove Master Plan Amendment*, approved in November 1996. One of the purposes of the amendment was to designate one alignment for the CCT between the Shady Grove station and the Metropolitan Grove/MARC station. Two CCT alignments had been considered: a "Metrorail" alignment located along the CSX railroad tracks and the "Light Rail" alignment that we are familiar with today. In a report titled "Corridor Cities Transitway Re-Alignment Study: Shady Grove Study Area Omega Drive to Great Seneca Highway," ten different alignments were studied between the Crown Farm station and the Great Seneca Highway station. Most notably, several alternatives to the DANAC and Discoverly station were considered. The Planning Board recommended an alternative (4A) that brought the alignment south on Diamondback Drive, across Key West to Broschart Road and then turned west on Blackwell Road before going north on Great Seneca Highway. Relocating the Great Seneca Highway (Discoverly) station into the Belward property was not considered at the time. The

alternative recommended by the Planning Board in 1996 is similar to the shift in alignment into the LSC that staff is currently supporting. The County Council did not agree with the Board's recommendation to move the CCT alignment to the south and it remained where it was, which is the current alignment today.

Next Steps

As mentioned, staff will be continuing its work with the community this fall, both with individual civic associations as well as larger community meetings. This input will be extremely helpful as staff begins to develop preliminary land use recommendations, focusing on the appropriate overall density and the right mix of uses in the LSC. Staff is also developing an open space system for the LSC with a variety of recreational options as well as civic spaces at each of the CCT stations. As mentioned, staff is also beginning to review the zoning options and then will develop staging recommendations. Staff expects to provide the Planning Board with preliminary Master Plan recommendations in December 2008.

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Attachments:

1. Gaithersburg West: Areas and Enclaves
2. Life Sciences Center: Districts
3. Life Sciences Center Existing Zoning
4. Year 2030 PAMR Chart: GWMP Low Scenario
5. Year 2030 PAMR Chart: GWMP Medium Scenario
6. Year 2030 PAMR Chart: GWMP High Scenario
7. Year 2030 PAMR Summary Results Table: GWMP Low Scenario
8. Year 2030 PAMR Summary Results Table: GWMP Medium Scenario
9. Year 2030 PAMR Summary Results Table: GWMP High Scenario
10. MTA Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) Study Area Map
11. Corridor Cities Transitway Alignment and Stations (Phase 1)
12. M-NCPPC Letter to MTA
13. DOT Letter to MTA
14. Proposed LSC Corridor Cities Transitway Alignments and Stations
15. Demographic Analysis