



February 6, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief *JK*
Vision Division

Sue Edwards, Team Leader, North Central Transit Corridor
Vision Division

FROM: Nancy Sturgeon, *NS* Planner Coordinator (301-495-1308)
North Central Transit Corridor
Vision Division

SUBJECT: Draft Gaithersburg West Master Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Draft Gaithersburg West Master Plan as the Public Hearing Draft Plan and schedule a Public Hearing for March 26, 2009.

Background

The Gaithersburg West Master Plan is an update to the 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* and portions of the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*.

The 2009 Draft Plan focuses on the future of the Life Sciences Center (LSC) and builds on the objectives of the 1990 Plan. The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) is an essential element of this Plan and its proposed alignment and station locations are the basis for the land use and zoning recommendations. A strong public-private commitment to the Plan's transit proposals is critical.

On October 2, 2008, staff provided a status report of the Master Plan to the Planning Board, including the overall Plan concepts and objectives, the vision for the LSC, the proposed realignment and LSC station locations for the CCT, and the transportation analysis.

After meetings with area civic associations, staff held four large public meetings in October – December 2008 to discuss the future of the LSC with the broader community including residents, LSC property owners, businesses, and academia. These meetings included presentations by staff as well as break-out groups for more direct engagement with participants.

Through both the small civic group meetings and the larger community meetings, staff gained valuable information, particularly from residents, regarding concerns about the extent of development being contemplated for the LSC. The Draft Plan attempts to balance the interests of all parties.

The vision for the LSC addresses the County's long-term goals for this strategic area, allowing for growth of the biotech and medical sectors, providing for new housing near jobs, and creating mixed-use centers near transit. The tools to implement the vision help to ensure that development is tied to the provision of infrastructure so that land use and transportation are balanced and growth does not adversely impact the surrounding neighborhoods.

Next Steps

Staff will hold another community meeting prior to the Planning Board public hearing. Worksessions between the Board and staff will begin subsequent to the hearing.

NS:ha: g:\sturgeon\PB Memo 2-6-09

Attachment