


**MCPB**

Item No. 4

Date: 7/1/2021

## Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment Work Session Number 2: Draft Mark-Up

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**Completed: 6/25/2021**

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### Summary

In the second work session for the Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment, staff will present proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft Plan, discussed with the Planning Board during the first work session, which are based on the public testimony received and guidance from the Planning Board.

At the conclusion of the work session, staff will request that the Planning Board approve the Planning Board Draft of the Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment for transmittal to the County Council and the County Executive.

Planning Board members can bring their copies of the Public Hearing Draft that were previously distributed to them or access the Public Hearing Draft at the following link:  
[https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Public-Hearing-Draft\\_Final.pdf](https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Public-Hearing-Draft_Final.pdf).

### Recommendations

#### Public Hearing Draft Recommendations and Summary of Testimony

On June 17, 2021 the Planning Board held the first work session for the Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment. Staff shared the public testimony received to date and recommended revisions to the Public Hearing Draft based on the public testimony.

The Public Hearing Draft includes two recommendations:

*Recommendation 1: Create an interim stage, between Stage 1 and Stage 2, that shifts 400,000 square feet of non-residential development from Stage 2 to this interim stage. Release the 400,000 square feet of non-residential development capacity immediately through this interim stage.*

*Recommendation 2: Initiate a comprehensive amendment to the 2010 Plan to address the departures and barriers from the 2010 Plan vision identified through this Amendment, as well as the staging requirements. The comprehensive amendment provides an opportunity to integrate policy guidance from countywide plans and initiatives including Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, and Vision Zero, as well as to employ a robust outreach and engagement strategy to create a plan that advances racial equity and social justice.*

As discussed during the first work session, the public testimony received on the Public Hearing Draft related to three main ideas:

- New development approvals should not go to areas that have significant pipeline development – approved but unbuilt projects.
- Projects should have to “use or lose” approvals.
- The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) is an impediment to development and should be eliminated as a staging requirement.

These ideas as well as staff’s recommendations for revisions to the Public Hearing Draft are discussed in further detail below.

#### Recommended Revisions to Public Hearing Draft

Staff recognizes that there is still significant approved but unbuilt capacity. Two property owners hold over 90 percent of the approved but unbuilt capacity. While some large unbuilt projects have made steady progress towards final build out, others have not moved forward as anticipated. Staff recommends that the Planning Board consider limits on the geography of any new non-residential development capacity allocated through the interim stage to address these concerns. New capacity could be allocated in the LSC North, Central and South districts and prohibited in the LSC West and Belward districts.

Staff recognizes that the CCT, and all the staging requirements from the 2010 *Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan*, merit examination. However, the 2010 staging requirements were established as part of compact with the community. The CCT is a center piece of both the 2010 Plan vision and its staging requirements. The removal of the CCT as a staging requirement deserves a comprehensive examination in concert with zoning, land use and infrastructure recommendations. Staff does not recommend removing the CCT from staging in this Plan Amendment, but rather examining all of the staging requirements in a subsequent comprehensive amendment to the 2010 Plan. The comprehensive amendment will have the benefit of evaluating the CCT as a staging requirement using the analysis developed through a concurrent planning effort, *Corridor Forward: I-270 Transit Plan*, which is evaluating transit options to serve communities along the I-270 corridor, including the CCT. Staff recommends adding language to the Plan Amendment that clarifies the intention to examine changes to or elimination of staging requirements during the forthcoming comprehensive amendment to the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan.

Staff recommends the following additions, shown in red, to the text of the recommendations in the Public Hearing Draft:

- *Recommendation 1: Create an interim stage, between Stage 1 and Stage 2, that shifts 400,000 square feet of non-residential development from Stage 2 to this interim stage. Release the 400,000 square feet of non-residential development capacity immediately through this interim stage. The 400,000 square feet of non-residential development capacity is limited to the LSC North, LSC Central, and LSC South districts. New development capacity allocations through this interim stage are prohibited in the LSC West and LSC Belward Districts.*
- *Recommendation 2: Initiate a comprehensive amendment to the 2010 Plan to address the departures and barriers from the 2010 Plan vision identified through this Amendment, as well as changes to or the potential elimination of staging requirements. The comprehensive amendment provides an opportunity to integrate policy guidance from countywide plans and initiatives including Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, and Vision Zero, as well as to employ a robust outreach and engagement strategy to create a plan that advances racial equity and social justice.*

## **Conclusion**

Staff recommends the Planning Board approve all recommended changes to the Public Hearing Draft Plan and transmit the Planning Board Draft to the County Executive and County Council.

## **Attachments:**

1. Updated summary of public testimony.
2. Highlighted changes to the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

Attachment 1: Updated Summary of Amendment Testimony

	<b>Issues/Property</b>	<b>Public Hearing Draft Plan Page #</b>	<b>Testimony or Comments</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>	<b>Planning Board Decision</b>
1.	Johns Hopkins Belward Campus		<p>Request to cap the allowable zoning capacity on the Johns Hopkins Belward Campus site at 1.4 million square feet.</p> <p><i>Donna Barron</i></p>	<p>This Amendment does not recommend any changes to the established zoning. The Amendment recommends initiating a Phase 2 amendment that will comprehensively review the area and develop recommendations, potentially including changes to zoning.</p>	
2.	Recommendations 1 and 2		<p>Supportive of the Public Hearing Draft recommendations.</p> <p><i>Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation</i></p> <p><i>Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce</i></p>	<p>Noted.</p>	

	<b>Issues/Property</b>	<b>Public Hearing Draft Plan Page #</b>	<b>Testimony or Comments</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>	<b>Planning Board Decision</b>
3.	Corridor Cities Transitway		<p>Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) is an impediment to development and development should not be tied to the CCT. The CCT should be eliminated as a staging requirement.</p> <p><i>Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce</i></p>	<p>Staging was put in place as a compact with the community as part of the 2010 <i>Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan</i>. Staff believe that big changes to the staging plan be accompanied by a comprehensive review of the area and a robust community engagement process. In Phase 2, staff proposes to examine and evaluate all of the staging requirements.</p>	

	<b>Issues/Property</b>	<b>Public Hearing Draft Plan Page #</b>	<b>Testimony or Comments</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>	<b>Planning Board Decision</b>
4.	Time line of Phase 2 Amendment		<p>Concern that the comprehensive review will be “put in the back of the line”, resulting in a delay for the initiation of Phase 2.</p> <p><i>Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce</i></p>	Phase 2 of the Amendment has been approved by the County Council in the Montgomery Planning workplan. Phase 2 will initiate in February 2022.	
5.	Staging requirements		<p>The staging requirements are not impediments to growth but a necessity for rational growth. If the amendment releases more growth it should not be lumped into an overcrowded spot.</p> <p><i>Arthur Schlesinger</i></p>	Noted.	
6.	Open space		<p>2010 Master Plan recommended public meeting space, green areas and other park-like improvements, but this has not been implemented.</p> <p><i>Arthur Schlesinger</i></p>	This Amendment does not recommend any changes to the 2010 Master Plan amenity and infrastructure recommendations. The Amendment recommends initiating a Phase 2 amendment that will	

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				comprehensively review the area and develop recommendations, including open space, trails and parks.	

## ATTACHMENT 2

In summary, two key recommendations result from this amendment:

### Recommendation 1

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Create an interim stage, between Stage 1 and Stage 2, that shifts 400,000 square feet of non-residential development from Stage 2 to this interim stage. Release 400,000 square feet of non-residential development capacity immediately through this interim stage. **The 400,000 square feet of non-residential development capacity is limited to the LSC North, LSC Central, and LSC South districts. New development capacity allocations through this interim stage are prohibited in the LSC West and LSC Belward Districts.**

### Recommendation 2

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Initiate a comprehensive amendment to the 2010 Plan to address the departures and barriers from the 2010 Plan vision identified through this Amendment, as well as **changes to or the potential elimination of** the staging requirements. The comprehensive amendment provides an opportunity to integrate policy guidance from countywide plans and initiatives including Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, and Vision Zero, as well as to employ a robust outreach and engagement strategy to create a plan that advances racial equity and social justice.



# Recommendations

The purpose of this Amendment is to support economic health and opportunity in the Life Sciences Center by enabling growth. The scope of the Amendment is narrow in order to provide rapid, targeted analysis and recommendations that move toward realizing the 2010 Plan vision despite lack of funding for the CCT. The following recommendations of the Amendment seek to provide relief to the life sciences industry development pressure at this crucial time for the county and the industry and support a more comprehensive evaluation of the plan area in the near term.

## Recommendation 1

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Create an interim stage, between Stage 1 and Stage 2, that shifts 400,000 square feet of non-residential development from Stage 2 to this interim stage. Release 400,000 square feet of non-residential development capacity immediately through this interim stage. **The 400,000 square feet of non-residential development capacity is limited to the LSC North, LSC Central, and LSC South districts. New development capacity allocations through this interim stage are prohibited in the LSC West and LSC Belward Districts.**

## Recommendation 2

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Initiate a comprehensive amendment to the 2010 Plan to address the departures and barriers from the 2010 Plan vision identified through this Amendment, as well as **changes to or the potential elimination of** the staging requirements. The comprehensive amendment provides an opportunity to integrate policy guidance from countywide plans and initiatives including Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, and Vision Zero, as well as to employ a robust outreach and engagement strategy to create a plan that advances racial equity and social justice.