

**THE GREAT SENECA PLAN: CONNECTING LIFE AND SCIENCE
WORKING DRAFT**



The Great Seneca Plan

CONNECTING LIFE AND SCIENCE

Description

Staff will present the Working Draft of the Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science, which establishes a vision and recommendations for 4,330 acres in the heart of the I-270 Corridor. The Plan focuses on strengthening the economic competitiveness of the Life Sciences Center and also provides recommendations for the Londonderry / Hoyle's Addition, Quince Orchard, Rosemont, Oakmont, Walnut Hill, Washingtonian Light Industrial Park, Washingtonian Residential, and Hi Wood areas.

Staff recommends approval of the Working Draft as the Public Hearing Draft and requests that the Planning Board set a date for the Public Hearing.



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SUMMARY

- The Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science is a comprehensive amendment to the 2010 *Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan* and covers 4,330 acres in the heart of the I-270 Corridor between the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville and the Town of Washington Grove.
- The Plan includes several distinct areas with a variety of contexts, conditions, and opportunities, including the Life Sciences Center (LSC), Quince Orchard, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Londonderry / Hoyle's Addition, Rosemont, Oakmont, Walnut Hill, Washingtonian Light Industrial Park, Washingtonian Residential, and Hi Wood. The Working Draft of the Plan provides the context, vision, and recommendations for each of these areas in separate chapters, but largely focuses on the Life Sciences Center.
- The Working Draft of the Great Seneca Plan focuses on strengthening the economic competitiveness of the Life Sciences Center through mixed-use development, public realm improvements, equitable access, and implementation strategies. The Plan envisions the Londonderry / Hoyle's Addition area as a thriving residential neighborhood with local-serving retail, public open spaces, and transit connections, and offers limited recommendations for the Quince Orchard, Rosemont, Oakmont, Walnut Hill, Washingtonian Light Industrial, Washingtonian Residential, and Hi Wood areas.

GREAT SENECA PLAN: CONNECTING LIFE AND SCIENCE

Draft

Working Draft

Date

January 26, 2024

Lead Planner

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Planning Division

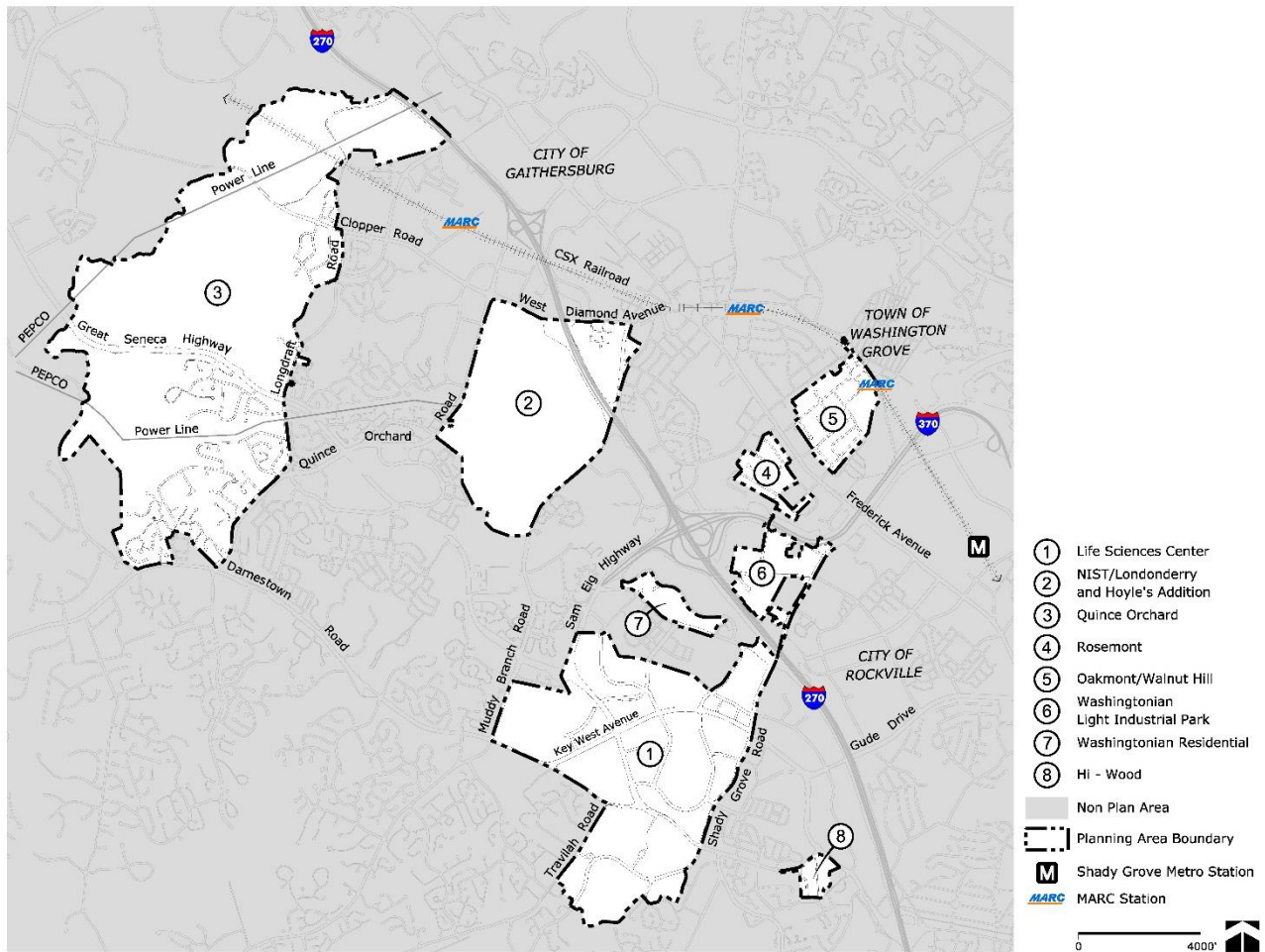
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Planning Board Information

MCPB
Item No. 7
02-01-2024



THE GREAT SENECA PLAN: CONNECTING LIFE AND SCIENCE

WORKING DRAFT SUMMARY

[The Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science](#) is an update to the [2010 Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan](#) (2010 Plan) and follows the [2021 Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment](#) (2021 Amendment).

PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of the Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science is to:

- Address barriers that have stymied progress toward achieving the 2010 Plan vision.
- Integrate policy guidance from countywide policies, plans, and initiatives.
- Develop recommendations that respond to the social, environmental, technological, demographic, and economic shifts that have occurred locally and globally since 2010.
- Establish a shared vision to guide future development and investment, as well as to advance racial equity and social justice.
- Attract, retain, and grow the life sciences and healthcare industries by enhancing the Life Sciences Center as a complete community.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plan's recommendations are organized in the themes of the built, social, natural, and economic environments and provide guidance for land use; zoning; urban design; transportation; parks, trails, and public open space; economy; environment; and implementation. Key recommendations include:

- Establish a Life Sciences Center Overlay Zone for the entire Life Sciences Center area that supports mixed-use life sciences development, incentivizes production of affordable and market-rate housing, and establishes financing mechanisms to achieve infrastructure and public realm improvements.
- Encourage compact, mixed-use development near transit that integrates and connects life sciences uses with residential uses, retail, and neighborhood services and amenities.
- Create a recognizable and finer grain street grid network to promote walkability and connectivity.
- Right-size roadways and intersections to create a safer and more comfortable environment for people who are walking, rolling, bicycling, riding transit, and driving.

- Implement a complete network of comfortable walkways and bikeways, connected by safe, protected crossings.
- Advance dedicated transit lanes, including the Great Seneca Transit Network and the Corridor Connectors.
- Repurpose two travel lanes on Key West Avenue to establish a tree-lined promenade for people who are walking, biking, and rolling.
- Repurpose a portion of the Great Seneca Highway right-of-way as a greenway and space for development. This open space could provide more than 4.5 acres of new development and publicly accessible open space for active recreation, social gathering, and contemplative experiences.
- Increase on-site clean energy generation, incorporate strategies to increase building energy efficiency, and incorporate environmentally sustainable development strategies into all developments.
- Increase green cover and tree canopy coverage, minimize impervious surfaces, and increase bioswales and rain gardens.
- Enhance infrastructure and amenities to attract life sciences companies, residents, and workers, including housing, multi-modal transportation, public open space, recreation, and walkability.
- Facilitate new development and adaptive reuse of existing buildings to meet industry demand based on quantity, type, and size of life science real estate. Encourage development of small- and medium-scale lab space not provided by private market.
- Establish a place management organization in the Life Sciences Center to implement master plan recommendations and perform other supporting functions.
- Identify funding mechanisms to implement Plan recommendations, including parks, open space, and transportation infrastructure improvements.
- Remove staging requirements from the 2010 Plan.
- Rezone properties in the Londonderry / Hoyle's Addition area to achieve a mixture of uses, including additional residential and local-serving retail uses.

PROCESS TO DATE

The Working Draft was developed through an iterative process between Planning staff, community members, property owners, and institutional and agency partners, among others. Recommendations do not come from a single place but represent the balance between best practices and professional expertise, data analysis and modeling, and the lived experience and desires of the community. The Great Seneca Plan process followed the 2021 Amendment, which adjusted the staging requirements established by the 2010 Plan and recommended a comprehensive amendment to align the vision, recommendations, and overall staging requirements for the area with the county's current reality and its adopted plans, policies, and priorities.

Key milestones in the planning process include the following:

- April 2022: Virtual Community Kick-Off Meeting
- May 2022: Scope of Work approved by the Planning Board
- September 2022: Virtual Community Visioning Meeting
- October 2022: In-Person Community Visioning Meeting
- January 2023: Planning Board Briefing – Existing Conditions Analysis
- April 2023: Planning Board Briefing – Emerging Big Ideas
- May 2023: Planning Board Briefing – Community Engagement Overview
- October 2023: In-Person and Virtual Community Meetings
- December 2023: Planning Board Briefing – Preliminary Recommendations

In addition to the above referenced meetings, it is important to note that the engagement strategy for the Great Seneca Plan focused on meeting people where they are: in terms of information, physically, and in the community. Throughout the planning process, staff sought input from residents, workers, property owners, students, state and county agencies, and community organizations through in-person and virtual meetings, live and on-demand activities, door-to-door canvassing, and pop-up events in the community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff will present the Working Draft of the Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science to the Planning Board on February 1, 2024. Staff recommends approval of the Working Draft as the Public Hearing Draft and requests that the Planning Board schedule the public hearing for March 14, 2024. The Plan Appendices will be available on the Plan website (www.montgomeryplanning.org/greatsenecaplan) prior to the public hearing.

ATTACHMENTS

Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science Working Draft

Great Seneca Plan: Transportation Appendix