

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT OF THE CLARKSBURG GATEWAY SECTOR PLAN

WORK SESSION #1



Description

A work session to list properties to the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* and the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, and to review additional issues related to historic preservation.

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SUMMARY

- The Historic Preservation recommendations are included in Chapter 3, Section G, Pg. 80-85, of the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*. The Planning Board received 16 comments from 13 individuals or organizations regarding these recommendations.
- The *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* recommends designating the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery as a Master Plan Historic Site and Clarksburg Heights as a Master Plan Historic District. Staff finds that both resources meet three designation criteria listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.
- The *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* recommends against designation of COMSAT Laboratories in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. While the property meets six designation criteria, there is no viable path forward for its adaptive reuse in the short or medium term while achieving other plan objectives.
- The *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* recommends that a binding agreement be recorded in partnership with the property owner of the COMSAT Laboratories building to mitigate the loss of the resource. Mitigation will include the establishment of a grant program, documentation of the building, interpretation, and place making opportunities.
- The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) held two public hearings and work sessions. On January 8, 2025, the HPC unanimously voted to recommend that the Planning Board list the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery and Clarksburg Heights in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* and that the County Council designate the properties in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. On January 22, 2025, the HPC unanimously voted to recommend that the Planning Board and County Council list COMSAT Laboratories in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

Draft

Public Hearing Draft Work Session #1

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Planning Division

Historic Preservation Division and
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Planning Board Information

MCPB

Item No. 5

10-16-2025

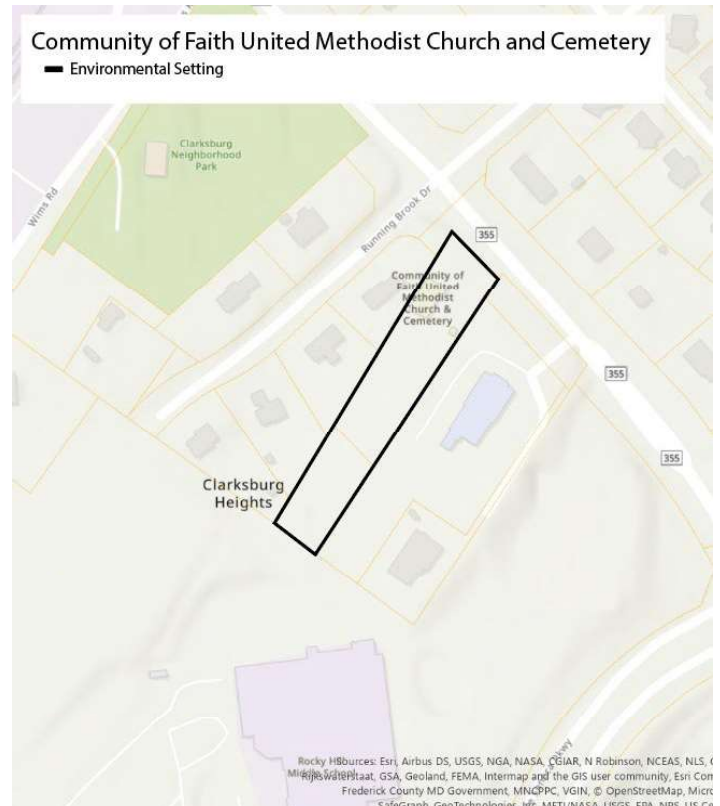
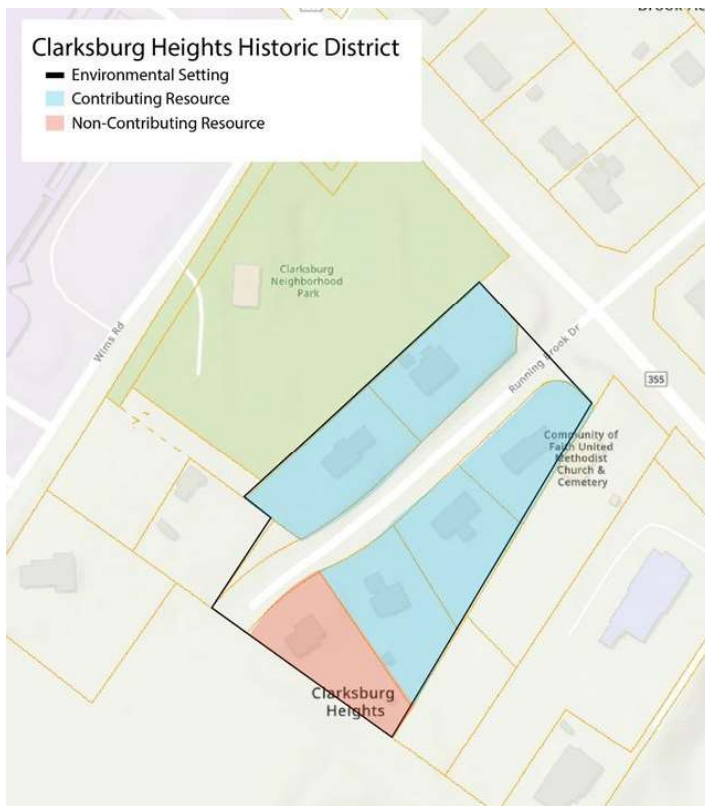


Figure 1: Proposed environmental settings shown in black for the Clarksburg Heights District (left) and the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery Site (right).

CLARKSBURG GATEWAY SECTOR PLAN

WORK SESSION #1: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* area covers approximately 969 acres in northern Montgomery County, Maryland, near the crossroads of Interstate 270 (I-270) and Clarksburg Road. The Sector Plan establishes a new vision for a more complete, connected, and sustainable Clarksburg community with recommendations to shape future development and transportation networks, provide additional recreational opportunities for area residents, advance the county's housing and economic goals, and preserve and protect the natural environment.

The *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* contains the text and supporting maps and figures for a comprehensive amendment to a portion of the Approved and Adopted 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan & Hyattstown Special Study Area* (the 1994 Plan) and a portion of the 2014 *Ten Mile Creek Area Limited Amendment* (the 2014 Plan). It also amends *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, as amended; the 2025 *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*, as amended; the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*, as amended; the 2022 *Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan*; the 2023 *Pedestrian Master Plan*; and the 1979 *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, as amended.

The Planning Board held two Public Hearings for the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* on September 25, 2025, the first in the Montgomery County Planning Board auditorium at 2425 Reddie Drive in Wheaton and the second at the Upcounty Regional Services Center at 12900 Middlebrook Lane in Germantown. The public record remained open for written testimony through October 3, 2025. The Planning Board advertised the Public Hearings in the *Washington Times* on August 25, 2025, and a supplemental public hearing advertisement was published in the *Washington Times* on August 29, 2025.

This worksession will focus on the recommendations related to historic preservation. The *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* recommends the designation of the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery Site and the Clarksburg Heights District to the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* and the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Plan does not recommend the designation of COMSAT Laboratories to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. When considering amendments to the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* and *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, the Planning Board shall utilize the designation criteria in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code. Montgomery Planning's staff reports, site and district designation forms or memorandums, and the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) forms were including in the Public Hearing Draft as Appendices G-J, and are included in this report as Attachments 2 and 4-5.

DESIGNATION PROCESS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and Planning Board have important and defined roles in the historic designation process. The HPC's responsibilities include the research and evaluation of historic resources, and recommendations to the Planning Board for the listing of certain sites and districts to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. These recommendations are, by law, advisory in nature. The HPC's recommendation must be based on the designation criteria outlined in §24A-3(b), Historic Resources Preservation, Montgomery County Code.

After receiving the recommendation from the HPC, the Planning Board holds a public hearing and worksession to make its own determination, using the same designation criteria, and balancing the importance of the historic property with other public interests. The Planning Board forwards their recommendation to the County Executive and County Council for their consideration. The County Council ultimately decides if a property is listed to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

HISTORIC RESOURCES IN ROCKY HILL

BACKGROUND

Montgomery Planning and the Historic Preservation Division are committed to uncovering and amplifying the stories of underrepresented groups who are integral to the county's rich history. Rocky Hill, a historic African American community located to the south of the Village of Clarksburg, originated in the late nineteenth century. The Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery and Clarksburg Heights are critical resources to understanding the community's development.

The Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery site and Clarksburg Heights district are located within the boundary of the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*. The Community of Faith's cemetery is listed under its former name, "John Wesley United Methodist Church Cemetery" (HP-099), in Montgomery County's Burial Sites Inventory. In addition, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) determined the Clarksburg Heights district eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2019.

On January 8, 2025, the HPC held a public hearing and worksession on the historic designation of these resources. The HPC: 1) found that the site and district satisfied the designation criteria as listed in §24A-3 of the County Code; 2) recommended that the Planning Board list the resources in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*; and 3) recommended that the County Council designate the site and district in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA – COMMUNITY OF FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH & CEMETERY

The Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery site meets three designation criteria (1.A, 1.D, and 2.E) as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code. Please see Attachment 4 for the Master Plan Historic Site Designation form.

1.A Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.

The Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery represents an early twentieth century, gothic revival church attended by the residents of Rocky Hill—the earliest African American community in Clarksburg—and the surrounding region. The church reflects the development pattern associated with the formation of the Rocky Hill community and the lives of African Americans during an era of segregation in Montgomery County. Churches and schools provided parishioners the opportunity for education, social engagement, and leadership opportunities. Influential members of the Rocky Hill and Clarksburg community including the Davis, Foreman, Mason, Snowden, and Wims families are all buried at the church cemetery.

1.D Historic and cultural significance. The historic resource exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historical heritage of the county and its communities.

The Community of Faith United Methodist Church serves as a visible reminder of segregated life and the resilience, achievements, and contributions of African Americans residents in the early twentieth century. After the original wood-frame church burned in 1924, the congregation pressed forward with the construction of an imposing Gothic Revival-styled brick church. The church trustees hired Charles W. Spurgeon Graves and Charles Green, highly skilled African American builders from Washington, D.C., to construct the building for \$7,500 in 1925. These actions by the congregants—who worshiped more than 30 miles away from the nation’s capital in a rural section of the county—reflect the prosperity of the church and its function as a religious, educational, and social center for the African American community. As noted in *Black Historical Resources in Upper Western Montgomery County, Maryland* (1979), Community of Faith United Methodist Church was one of the largest and most architecturally notable African American churches.

2.E Architecture and Design: The historic resource represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular characteristic or landscape.

The Community of Faith United Methodist Church and Cemetery is the last public site associated with the Rocky Hill community in Clarksburg. The church and cemetery serve as a tangible link to the African American community’s past, providing a sense of continuity, orientation, and place as a

former center of religious, social, and educational activities. The imposing front-gable brick church with an integrated tower has stood in its original location along Frederick Road for nearly a century.

The Rocky Hill community, however, lost its other community landmark along with other significant resources. In the 1960s, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning demolished the Rocky Hill Elementary School, a two-room segregated Black elementary school. Additionally, many homes of early Rocky Hill and Clarksburg community members identified in previous architectural surveys, such as the Lloyd and Sarah Gibbs House, Arthur and Ella Mae Gibson House, William and Mary Hackey House, Clifton and Rachel Snowden House, Benjamin F. and Elizabeth Wims House, and John Henry and Emma M. Wims House, have been demolished. Most of these individuals were buried in the church cemetery, and there are no limited sites that reflect their contributions to the development of Rocky Hill or Clarksburg in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Therefore, the church remains as an essential feature of the built environment and its preservation would retain the legacy of the community.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA – CLARKSBURG HEIGHTS

The Clarksburg Heights district meets three designation criteria (1.A, 1.C, and 1.D) as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code. Please see Attachment 5 for the Master Plan Historic Site Designation form.

1.A Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.

Clarksburg Heights is a unique example of a mid-twentieth century subdivision in Clarksburg, planned, built, and owned by African Americans. In Montgomery County, African Americans faced widespread and pervasive discrimination by land developers, property owners, and the government who used or supported de jure or de facto segregation to limit housing opportunities. Between 1890 and 1960, the Black population in Montgomery County stagnated and occasionally declined, while the white population experienced exponential growth. In particular, African American educators struggled to acquire housing in the county. The NAACP estimated that ninety percent of African American teachers commuted to Montgomery County from Washington, D.C. because of discriminatory housing practices. In 1963, F. Wilson Wims, an African American builder, and Sarah L. Wims, sought to address the housing crisis with the construction of Clarksburg Heights, a small subdivision of modern, middle-class housing in the Rocky Hill community of Clarksburg. African American purchasers included at least three Montgomery County Public School teachers including Mary E. Johnson, Katie R. Harper, and Edith J. Gregg. Clarksburg Heights represents the efforts of the African American community to expand housing options prior to the passage of Montgomery County's Fair Housing Ordinance (1967) and Fair Housing Law (1968) and the Federal government's Fair Housing Provisions of the United States Civil Right Act (1968).

1.C Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society.

Clarksburg Heights is significant for its strong association with F. Wilson and Sarah L. Wims, leaders of the Clarksburg community, who subdivided, planned, and built this middle-class subdivision. The Wims supported African Americans who wanted to move to the suburbs, but faced intense discrimination. Montgomery County has recognized Wilson Wims for his dedication to the advancement of the African American community, his actions to create an inclusive community through youth athletics, and his participation in civic organizations. In 2006, the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights inducted Wims into the Human Rights Hall of Fame. The following year, Clarksburg High School named their new baseball field “Wims Field” in his honor. In 2014, Montgomery County Public Schools named the new elementary school in Clarksburg “Wilson Wims Elementary” at the behest of the greater community. The significance of Clarksburg Heights is enhanced by its association with its first and long-standing owners who influenced local affairs. This report highlights the contributions of Mary E. Johnson, Katie R. Harper, and Edith J. Gregg, three African American women who taught at both segregated and integrated Montgomery County public schools, and James R. Gregg who challenged discriminatory practices at country clubs and worked to improve conditions for African American residents. There are no historic sites or districts listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation that reflects the contributions of these individuals to Clarksburg or Montgomery County.

1.D Historic and cultural significance. The historic resource exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historical heritage of the county and its communities.

Clarksburg Heights serves as a poignant reminder of segregated life and the resilience, achievements, and contributions of African Americans residents in mid-twentieth century Montgomery County. F. Wilson and Sarah L. Wims had the knowledge, skills, and determination to counter rampant discriminatory housing practices and provide much-needed middle-class housing for African Americans. Clarksburg Heights represents the productive life of the African American community in Clarksburg. The Wims, Johnson, Harper, and Gregg families all tirelessly worked to improve conditions for African Americans who lived in Montgomery County.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

The Planning Board received public testimony from six individuals or organizations in support of the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*’s recommendation to designate the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. No testimony was received in opposition. Additionally, the Planning Board received public testimony from two individuals or organizations in support of the recommendation to designate the Clarksburg Heights District in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. No testimony was received in opposition.

Please see Attachment 6 for the Public Testimony Matrix.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Board:

1. Find that the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery site and Clarksburg Heights district satisfy the designation criteria listed in §24A-3 of the County Code;
2. List the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery site and Clarksburg Heights district with their associated environmental setting as recommended by the HPC in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*; and,
3. Recommend that the County Council designates the site and district in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

COMSAT LABORATORIES

BACKGROUND

COMSAT Laboratories, built in 1969, is an early work of world-renowned master architect Cesar Pelli that epitomized “high-technology” architectural design which became prevalent along the I-270 corridor. The research and development advances at COMSAT revolutionized communication technology.

In 1994, the County Council adopted the *Clarksburg Master Plan* (1994) that envisioned the property as a major employment and transit center. At that time, the 24-year-old building remained actively occupied by COMSAT with no threat of demolition. The building’s age paired with its active use and a lack of evaluation of its significance led to no consideration of the site for historic designation as part of that plan.

EVALUATION OF COMSAT LABORATORIES FOR DESIGNATION IN THE MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In the early 2000s, COMSAT Laboratories was considered for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* absent an area-wide sector plan due to discussions of redevelopment and demolition of the building. On November 1, 2004, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) received a nomination to list COMSAT Laboratories by Professors Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies of the University of Maryland. Between February and April 2005, the HPC held public hearings and worksessions on the proposed amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. On April 13, 2005, the HPC found that COMSAT Laboratories met six designation criteria as outlined in §24A-3(b), Historic Resources Preservation, Montgomery County Code. This included the following criteria for historical and cultural significance and architectural and design significance:

- 1.A Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.**

- 1.D Historic and cultural significance. The historic resource exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historical heritage of the county and its communities.**
- 2.A Architectural and design significance. The historic resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.**
- 2.B Architectural and design significance. The historic resource represents the work of a master.**
- 2.C Architectural and design significance. The historic resource possesses high artistic value.**
- 2.E Architectural and design significance. The historic resource represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.**

The HPC recommended an environmental setting (historic site boundary) of 33.47 acres. The proposed setting intended to preserve important viewsheds of the COMSAT Laboratories from I-270 and retain views of the surrounding open greenspace from the building. The commission recommended that the entire building be designated, but that non-historic additions be identified as non-contributing elements to facilitate demolition and/or alterations. In addition, the HPC noted that the relationship of the building to I-270 as the primary historic feature and classified the non-public portions of the building that faced away from the interstate as secondary with the potential for a higher-degree of alteration and redevelopment. All other smaller and detached buildings and structures on the property were not included in the environmental setting.

The Planning Board held a public hearing and worksession on the proposed designation of COMSAT Laboratories in May and July 2005, respectively. On July 7, 2005, the Board voted against the proposed designation and found that listing the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* had the potential to impair the implementation of the *Clarksburg Master Plan* (1994). Specifically, the Board stated preservation would inhibit the intensification of development for the site. The Board shared two other secondary concerns: 1) the consideration of the proposed designation outside the context of a comprehensive master plan created unpredictable scenarios for property owners; and 2) the designation of resources less than 50 years old was unusual albeit not prohibited by code. As noted in the *Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: COMSAT Laboratories, 22300 Comsat Drive, Clarksburg, MD*:

..., the Planning Board finds that, while the COMSAT Laboratories Building does have architectural significance, this is not a sufficient or compelling reason to support historic designation. The Board finds that this is especially true when balanced with the importance of the property in achieving goals of the Clarksburg Master Plan to provide signature sites along I-270 for major employment centers.

After the Planning Board voted to deny designation of the property, the Board did not send an amendment recommending against listing the property in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation to the County Council. The Board held an additional public worksession on February 16, 2006, to address this issue and voted to forward the amendment to the County Council. On March 7, 2006, the Board transmitted the *Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: COMSAT Laboratories, 22300 Comsat Drive, Clarksburg, MD* to the County Executive and County Council. The County Council never held or scheduled public hearings or worksessions to address the proposed amendment leaving the question of its preservation unclear. COMSAT Laboratories has been largely vacant since 2007.

On June 22, 2023, the Planning Board approved the scope for the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*. The scope included the evaluation of COMSAT Laboratories for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. On January 22, 2025, the HPC unanimously voted to recommend that the Planning Board and County Council list COMSAT Laboratories in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The Historic Preservation Division reaffirms the findings of the Historic Preservation Commission in 2005 and 2025 that COMSAT Laboratories satisfies six designation criteria (1.A, 1.D, 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, and 2.E) as outlined in §24A-3(b), Historic Resources Preservation, Montgomery County Code, and noted on Page 8 of this staff report.

As documented in the *Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: COMSAT Laboratories, 22300 Comsat Drive, Clarksburg, MD* from 2005, the HPC provided the following justification for its decision:

- COMSAT Laboratories represents the trend toward high-technology innovation in industry in Montgomery County, the nation, and international spheres.
- COMSAT Laboratories represents the advance of the commercial artificial satellite industry throughout the world. This advance was spearheaded, from a research and design perspective, in Montgomery County by the work undertaken at COMSAT Laboratories.
- COMSAT Laboratories has political origins tied to the actions of both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. In addition, it helped define the economic heritage of the County for four decades.
- COMSAT Laboratories represents the International Style in its design esthetic and is an early example of the “high-tech” architecture that came to define the corporate “campus”.
- COMSAT Laboratories is an early design by world-acclaimed architect, Cesar Pelli. He created the design as Director of Design for Daniel, Mann, Johnson, and Mendenhall (DMJM).

- COMSAT Laboratories epitomized the “machine in the garden” ideal of a futuristic building set within a naturalized setting.
- COMSAT Laboratories is one of the most easily identifiable buildings along the I-270 corridor in Montgomery County. It is a building that represents Montgomery County as an undisputed leader in high technology industry nationwide.

For more information, please see Attachment 2 for the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form for COMSAT Laboratories.

COMSAT Laboratories continues to be recognized as the setting for significant contributions to advancements in the fields of science, engineering, and technology at the national level, as well as its role in the development of the Interstate 270 corridor in Montgomery County. The building remains a self-identified and significant early work of now deceased master architect Cesar Pelli who died in 2019. Pelli stated in 2004 that “[COMSAT Laboratories] is a unique project and one of my most important designs while I was Director of Design at Daniel, Mann, Johnson, and Mendenhall (DMJM).” While the death of Pelli has no bearing on the evaluation of significance per the designation criteria, the understanding of his architectural works continues to be augmented after his death.

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), the State Historic Preservation Office for Maryland, independently determined that COMSAT Laboratories is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Attachment 3). This official Federal list of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Although the criteria for inclusion in the National Register designation criteria differ from those used in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, the MHT’s expert evaluation provides a meaning benchmark for assessing architectural and historical significance of the resource. MHT found COMSAT Laboratories eligible for listing at the national level of significance in the areas of Science, Engineering, and Communication. Additionally, MHT found that the property qualifies at the state level of significance as the work of a master architect due to its association with Cesar Pelli and its use of design features that would later characterize “high-technology” architecture. Historic preservation staff concur with the MHT findings regarding the unique significance of the COMSAT Laboratories.

PLANNING STAFF ANALYSIS OF THE COMSAT LABORATORIES PROPERTY

Following the Planning Board’s approval of the Plan’s scope of work in 2023, Montgomery Planning engaged consultants to evaluate the potential for adaptive reuse of the building and redevelopment of the surrounding property. The iterative assessment started with an architectural and urban design study, followed by a financial feasibility analysis.

For the initial phase, Montgomery Planning contracted Fu Wilmers—an architectural and urban design firm that specializes in plans for adaptive reuse of midcentury and large-scale historic campus architecture—to develop several frameworks for creating a new community with the adaptive reuse of

COMSAT as a focal point. After development of a framework plan with several different options representing a range in intensity of potential uses, Montgomery Planning sought out the services of a real estate feasibility consultant (HR&A Advisors) to analyze the feasibility of the adaptive reuse schemes. All schemes looked at preservation of the COMSAT Laboratories main building along with a portion of the campus grounds including a preserved ‘viewshed’ from I-270. Please see Attachment 1 for the HR&A COMSAT Financial Feasibility Study.

Montgomery Planning concluded that, under current market conditions, there is no viable path forward in the short or medium term for the historic preservation and adaptive reuse of the building while also achieving other plan objectives. HR&A estimated that the adaptive reuse of the building would cost approximately \$94.9 million and requires a subsidy of at least \$28 million. Moreover, Historic Preservation Division staff determined that potential design options that improved financial feasibility relied on alterations to the building that jeopardized the use of historic preservation tax credits estimated at \$14.4 million. On November 21, 2024, Montgomery Planning and HR&A briefed the Planning Board on these findings.¹ Additionally, Montgomery Planning contacted other county agencies to assess the feasibility of a public partnership for the building’s adaptive reuse; however, these agencies declined to explore such options, citing cost-related concerns.

For these reasons, Montgomery Planning and the Historic Preservation Division recommend against listing COMSAT Laboratories as a Master Plan Historic Site. Postponing potential development in the hope that market conditions will improve for its adaptive reuse could hinder or indefinitely postpone improvements to Clarksburg.

MITIGATION FOR THE DEMOLITION OF COMSAT LABORATORIES

COMSAT Laboratories is a signature piece of architecture in the State of Maryland as affirmed by the Maryland Historical Trust. Historic Preservation staff and the HPC continue to find that it is uniquely significant for its contribution to the architectural and historical/cultural heritage of the County. Therefore, Montgomery Planning recommends a comprehensive mitigation package to address the partial or full demolition of COMSAT Laboratories. In coordination with the property owner, appropriate mitigation measures have been identified. Prior to the adoption of the Sector Plan, the property owner and M-NCPPC will execute a binding agreement to formally record the agreed-upon mitigation obligations.

Mitigation will focus on advancing education and awareness of COMSAT Laboratories, promoting the public interest, and supporting the preservation of other resources eligible for or listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. This includes the establishment of a historic preservation grant program that will focus on façade and other building improvement grants for historic properties in Clarksburg and midcentury resources countywide, Historic American Building Survey (HABS)-level

¹ The presentation to the Planning Board is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/live/LnCXTGQC5ho?t=875s>.

documentation of the building, interpretation, and opportunities for public art and placemaking at the COMSAT property.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

The Planning Board received public testimony from three individuals or organizations in support of the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan's* recommendation not to designate COMSAT Laboratories in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Seven individuals or organizations submitted testimony in opposition to the plan's recommendation. The opposing testimony primarily advised the Planning Board to designate COMSAT Laboratories and require its adaptive reuse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Board:

1. Find that COMSAT Laboratories meets six designation criteria as listed in §24A-3 of the County Code;
2. Recommend against listing COMSAT Laboratories in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*; and,
3. Support the proposed mitigation measures for the partial or full demolition of COMSAT Laboratories.

OTHER HISTORIC PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan's* includes additional recommendations related to historic preservation. These include the continued preservation and protection of resources listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and Burial Sites Inventory. The plan also recommends that the Dowden's Ordinary Site and Marker Locational Atlas Site be evaluated for potential listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* in conjunction with future park improvements. In addition, it encourages collaboration with local partners to explore opportunities to interpret existing and proposed historic resources that recognize the diversity, heritage, and history of the Clarksburg community. The public submitted no testimony on these recommendations.

CONCLUSION

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Board take the following actions for the resources associated with Rocky Hill:

1. Find that the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery site and Clarksburg Heights district satisfy the designation criteria listed in §24A-3 of the County Code;
2. List the Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery site and Clarksburg Heights district with their associated environmental setting as recommended by the HPC in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*; and,
3. Recommend that the County Council designates the site and district in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

Staff recommends that the Planning Board take the following actions for the resources associated with COMSAT Laboratories:

1. Find that COMSAT Laboratories meets six designation criteria as listed in §24A-3 of the County Code;
2. Recommend against listing COMSAT Laboratories in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*; and,
3. Support the proposed mitigation measures for the partial or full demolition of COMSAT Laboratories.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: COMSAT Adaptive Reuse Feasibility Report

Attachment 2: COMSAT Laboratories Staff Report to the Historic Preservation Commission

Attachment 3: Letter from the Maryland Historical Trust — COMSAT Building National Register Eligibility

Attachment 4: Community of Faith United Methodist Church & Cemetery Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form

Attachment 5: Clarksburg Heights Master Plan Historic District Designation Form

Attachment 6: Public Testimony on Historic Preservation Issues Received by the Planning Board