

Gaithersburg West Community Meeting

December 2, 2008

Transcription of notes

Group 1

Reactions

Suggestions

Density

- Density is a good idea to support CCT; job growth, higher density since it's a corridor city.
- A lot of people want CCT to go down and then connect back to Great Seneca Highway.
- Consider relocating last branch of CCT back to the current Master Plan CCT alignment path near the stream valley buffer area around JHU Belward campus.
- Muddy Branch and Seneca Highway are dangerous; it does not make sense to have CCT along this intersection.
- Everyone will continue to drive rather than take CCT because as it is now the CCT doesn't make sense. The CCT stops should be located in established communities where people currently live. Locating it in places where no development exists will result in more traffic.
- Living near your work is too uncertain to use as an assumption. How can we be sure enough people will locate near their job to make a significant impact on traffic?
- What about people who don't want to work here? It's a nice quality of life and many people don't want to work here; they just want to live here. So why assume you will attract all these people to live/work here. (It's explained: need for density.)
- Right now the area north of Potomac has no jobs but bad traffic. More density will mean more traffic.
- Why do you make the assumption that the CCT ridership will be sufficient for traffic mitigation? (Density = better ridership is explained.)
- What density is necessary for federal funding?
- Remember, if infrastructure isn't there, nothing is built. The key is staging. What development is allowed?
- In this area we should expect more development around transit stops. Because it's a corridor city. As such it is a part of the County's plan to preserve the Agricultural Reserve by focusing development in the corridors (wedges concept).
- Staff (Transportation division), reminds the group that Park and Planning is also expanding the traffic network.
- Does staff know how many miles the average person drives?
- Has staff looked at where future residents will work or are they just guessing where people will work in the area?
- There are many people who want to live in Montgomery County who don't want to work in Montgomery County.

- Why are you focusing so much on supporting Biotech companies when the industry could fail? The biotech market could bottom out and the jobs not happen.
- Fear that density will threaten quality of life.
- The question is when do we close the gate?
- Are the CCT and the three or more interchanges really going to handle the surge in traffic? Are there plans to improve the major roads in the area?
- Growth policy and APFO are key policies to know about. They restrict the development. Nothing is built if it's not allowed by them. The current GP is so restrictive little is built.

Group 2

Reactions

Suggestions

Densities

- E.I.S./Residential impact of cars.
- Noise pollution of fire station.
- The process is co-opting concerns of existing residents.
- Surrounding neighborhoods connected.
- Boulevardize Darnestown, Key West, bottom Great Seneca Highway.
- Showing Crown Farm alignment and also Kentlands alignment CCT.
- Proximity to CCT stations for building heights.
- Danac preserve existing CCT right-of-way.
- Explore increasing density.
- Bus Rapid Transit or Rail.
- Maintain green space along Muddy Branch (Washington Woods).
- Park space on Belward.
- Have residential as an option on Travilah Trading Post site while retaining research and development uses. Accomplish under existing Research & Development zone with a zoning text amendment or with another zone to accomplish the same goal.
- Show street-grid and increased development on Belward East so that development on "Belward" itself can be moved eastward with more buffer or/and less intense development along the western boundary.
- Show more grid streets, greater intensity on LSC Central.
- Increase density adjacent to SG Road instead of Belward.
- Why not have single-family homes on PSTA property?

Group 3

Characteristics

1. Integrate the whole.

2. Focus on low impact development at Belward adjacent to "Washingtonian Woods" and "Mission Hills."
3. Likes Bikeway loops with connections to Rockville and surrounding area.
4. Reroute transit away from Great Seneca intersection.
5. Concern about level of density at Belward.
6. Lower scale adjacent to residential neighborhoods.
7. High density residential at Research Center may not be the answer. One-third of people will not use transit. This mode split is too high.
8. Stay with 38,000 jobs vs. proposed higher levels.
9. Scale height from transit centers (with lower height at plan edges).

Belward

1. High density at transit station.
2. Avoid stream valley area.
3. Wide buffers/green around farm.
4. Road grid only to the west.
5. Lower density, housing at Belward then walk or ride bike to transit.
6. Highest buildings at 4 or 7 floors, or, 6-7 floors, at Belward/with development at .5 FAR.

PSTA

1. Primary residential – 3 to 4 floors.
2. Avoid the stream areas.
3. 100 foot buffers at streams.
4. 30 units/ac. may be ok.
5. Focus housing at Darnestown/Key West Triangle.

LSC

1. Highest density and tallest buildings. Extend density north of Darnestown across Key West.
2. Start phased development at hospital.
3. Substantial redevelopment at LSC with transferred density (like at Shady Grove).
4. Higher buildings – 7-10 floors, not 12 floors.
5. Hospital needs development to complete its mission (48 acres existing).
6. Access to Falls Grove.

Open Space

1. Use "Green" safe and clean commercial products.
2. More grass/more trees.
3. LEED and sustainable development.
4. Green roofs and solar.
5. Where is the open space? Need more.
6. Connect with an open space network/Muddy Branch stream.
7. Conserve a major part of Belward farm.

Height at Belward

1. 12 floors at Belward would look like 20 floors.

2. 1.4 million square feet already committed.
3. 7 floors may work (or 4 floors).

Actions

1. Appropriate zoning.
2. A plan that reflects appropriate zoning.
3. Phase the CCT (create implementation phases).
4. Make plan come out right.
5. Identify all natural and environmental features plus protect other areas to treasure and keep with development elsewhere.
6. Put onus on developers to not build too many parking spaces.
7. No grade separated interchange.
8. Balance transit and development.

Vision

1. Do not create separate districts. Think holistically with 35-40 year plan and where to start.

The Life Science Center will:

- Accommodate/encourage further growth of biomedical businesses and institutions while preserving and protecting existing and future residents and users.
- Place the highest density and height at Life Science Center scaling/tiering down to Belward.