

MEMORANDUM

October 8, 2009

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Marlene L. Michaelson, Senior Legislative Analyst
Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Staff Director

SUBJECT: Gaithersburg West Master Plan

This is the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee's second worksession on the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. This worksession will address all land use issues outside the Life Sciences Center area and selected transportation issues not related to the overall balance of land use and transportation.

LAND USE ISSUES

The map on page 19 of the Plan displays the areas in the planning area highlighting the impact of annexations on geography of the County and municipal boundaries. There are several areas of County land that are partially or primarily surrounded by City of Gaithersburg land; they are referred to in the Master Plan as "areas and enclaves" and described beginning on page 45 of the Plan. The five enclaves that are completely or nearly completely surrounded by the City of Gaithersburg are all within the City's Maximum Expansion Limits (MEL) and the Plan supports annexation. Each area/property is described below.

Quince Orchard Area

The Quince Orchard area is in the western portion of the planning area and is composed primarily of Seneca Creek State Park, but also includes the residential neighborhoods of Quince Orchard, Orchard Hills, Willow Ridge, and Parkridge. The recommendations are to retain the existing residential and commercial zones and maintain the established character of these neighborhoods. Additional recommendations address the demands for active recreation in this area by acquiring land for a local public park, providing a natural surface trail connecting Quince Orchard Valley Neighborhood Park to the Seneca Greenway Corridor, and promoting planting street trees and neighborhood trees. The Master

Plan recommends **against annexation**, since it could preclude the opportunity to acquire a new local park.

Staff Recommendation: Staff supports the recommendations in the Master Plan but is somewhat concerned that the recommendation for parkland acquisition is not highlighted in a community facilities section of the Plan. Staff has discussed formatting changes with Planning Department staff that could ensure this recommendation is adequately highlighted and will incorporate those changes into the resolution.

McGown Property

Size of Property: 75-acres

Location Map: Page 52

Existing Zoning: 65 acre parcel zoned 1-3 and 10 acres zoned R-200

Summary of land use recommendations (see page 51): The McGown property is a largely undeveloped property within the City of Gaithersburg's Maximum Expansion Limits. Since the property is somewhat isolated and disconnected from any centers of growth planned in the County, annexation into the City of Gaithersburg may be appropriate. Recommendations are to coordinate planning with the City of Gaithersburg; consider the Planned Development (PD) Zone at a moderate density (10-15 units per acre); preserve the property's natural resources, particularly the high quality, mature forest on the 10-acre parcel; preserve and create connections to Seneca Creek State Park; and provide right-of-way for Watkins Mill Road extended.

Testimony: None

Staff Recommendation: Staff supports the Master Plan recommendation to allow the option of mixed-use development, particularly since the adjacent development in the City of Gaithersburg is mixed-use. However, Staff questions whether the PD zone is the right zone, since it only allows for a limited amount of mixed-use and, although it requires a significant amount of "green area", it has only a limited option for the purchases of transferable development rights (TDRs), and does not require the purchase of Building Lot Termination (BLT) rights or the provision of amenities, public benefits provided by other new mixed-use zones.¹ Staff has asked the Planning Department to consider whether this property might be more appropriate for the proposed Commercial Residential (CR) zone or one of the other mixed-use zones with greater public benefits, or alternatively, whether it would be appropriate to amend the PD zone to provide for additional public benefits.

¹ The PD zone allows for a density bonus of 10% above the maximum density in the master plan for the provision of TDRs, if the use of TDRs is recommended for the site. Staff has asked Planning Department staff whether any property owner has opted to purchase TDRs under this provision.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

Size of Property: 580-acres

Location Map: Page 54

Existing Zoning: R-200

Summary of land use recommendations: Coordinate with NIST to plan for the proposed CCT station along Quince Orchard Road; refer all plans for development at NIST, including campus master plans, to the Montgomery County Planning Board as part of the mandatory referral process; preserve mature trees and forest; and target stream buffer areas for forest planting and removal of invasive plants. Retain existing R-200 zoning.

Testimony: None

Staff Recommendation: Support the Master Plan recommendations

Londonderry and Hoyle's Addition

Location Map: Page 55

Location Map: Page 54

Existing Zoning: R-200 and R-20

Summary of land use recommendations: Annexation of these areas into the City of Gaithersburg is logical and consistent with the City's MEL. Maintain the existing zoning, target stream buffer areas for forest planting and removal of invasive plants, and use low-impact development techniques to minimize runoff to stream systems. Hoyle's Addition may be appropriate for townhouse zoning in the future.

Testimony: None

Staff Recommendation: Support the Master Plan recommendations

Rosemont, Oakmont, and Walnut Hill

Location Map: 58

Existing Zoning: R-200, C-1, C-2 and C-T

Summary of land use recommendations: These primarily residential communities have little development potential and the stable residential areas should be preserved. Remove the proposed C-T zoning option on the R-200 properties in the vicinity of Oakmont Avenue since the Plan recommends removing the transit easement along Oakmont Avenue. Improve stormwater management, reduce impervious surface, increase street tree planting and incorporate other low impact development and green building techniques if the Walnut Hill Shopping Center redevelops, preserve and create connections following Muddy Branch parallel to Central Avenue.

Testimony: None

Staff Recommendation: Support the Master Plan recommendations.

Washington Light Industrial Park

Size of property: 103-acres

Location Map: 61

Existing Zoning: Light industrial area primarily zoned I-1 with a few C-3 parcels.

Summary of land use recommendations: Consider future mixed-use redevelopment of the Shady Grove Center (which is zoned I-1 but grandfathered with 108,000 square feet of retail space on a six-acre site); retain the I-1 Zone and C-3 Zone for all other properties in the Washington Light Industrial

Park; reduce imperviousness; improve stormwater management; and implement other green building techniques if there is redevelopment.

Testimony: William Kominers supports the Staff's recommendation on page 60 of the proposed Master Plan that the Shady Grove Center should be considered for a new medium-density commercial mixed-use. The Property is most suitable for long-term development of mixed non-residential uses (office/retail). He recommends that a density of approximately 1.5 FAR be included in the Master Plan for this property.

Staff Recommendation: Staff supports the Master Plan recommendation for this property but notes that if a new mixed-use zone is identified for this property, it should be considered for other similar properties in this area (i.e., the other I-1 properties with grandfathered retail uses) and may also be appropriate for the two small areas zoned C-3. Staff does not support including a Master Plan recommendation related to floor area ration (FAR) until a zone is identified.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Bikeways. The Master Plan's recommended bikeways are on pp. 74-79. The Council received comments from the Department of Transportation (©1), Jack Cochrane for Montgomery Bicycle Advocates (©2-4), and Alan Migdall, a nearby resident and bicyclist (©5-7). Many of the comments are technical in nature, identifying corrections or inconsistencies that will be addressed when the adopted plan is published.

Council staff met with Planning staff and DOT staff to review the more substantive comments, particularly those that recommend a new or different type of bikeway than proposed in the Final Draft Plan. Generally we concur with Messrs. Cochrane and Migdall that the major highways and several business district streets that will have four or more travel lanes would be designated as dual bikeways, featuring both a shared use path and either bike lanes or a shared signed roadway.

Council staff's recommended revisions, with which Planning staff and DOT staff concur, are:

- Key West Avenue, west end of Darnestown Road to Gude Drive: reclassify from a shared use path to a dual bikeway with both a shared use path and bike lanes.
- Darnestown Road, Great Seneca Highway to Glen Mill Road: reclassify from a shared use path to a dual bikeway with both a shared use path and bike lanes.
- Quince Orchard Road, Darnestown Road to Clopper Road: reclassify from a shared use path to a dual bikeway with both a shared use path and bike lanes.
- LSC Loop (LB-1): reclassify from a shared use path to a dual bikeway with both a shared use path and a shared signed roadway.
- Diamondback Drive/Broschart Road: reclassify from a shared use path to a dual bikeway with both a shared use path and a shared signed roadway.
- Blackwell Road, Great Seneca Highway to Shady Grove Road: reclassify from a shared use path to a dual bikeway with both a shared use path and a shared signed roadway.
- Blackwell Road, west of Great Seneca Highway: extend shared use path designation west to Darnestown Road.

Messrs. Cochrane and Migdall recommend on-road bikeways on certain business district streets with two travel lanes. However, traffic volumes on these streets will be low and slow enough so that bikers should be able to safely ride with traffic without widening the roadway further. The other substantive

revisions suggested by Messrs. Cochrane and Migdall are within the Cities of Rockville or Gaithersburg, or outside the Gaithersburg West Master Plan boundary, so they are not appropriate for this master plan.

Game Preserve Road. Game Preserve Road is a two-lane secondary residential street that runs along the southeast edge of Seneca Creek State Park between Frederick Avenue (MD 355) and Clopper Road (MD 117), passing beneath I-270 and the CSX Metropolitan Branch. The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) recommends that it be reclassified as a rustic road, noting that it meets all the statutory requirements for such a designation. The RRAC's transmittal and background material are on ©8-18.

Since this recommendation was transmitted in mid-September, there is no reference to it in the Final Draft, nor is there a recommendation from the County Executive. Nevertheless, a master plan update is the appropriate venue for making this decision.

Council staff concurs with the RRAC. Changing the classification from a secondary residential street to a rustic road will not change the land use/transportation balance in Gaithersburg West, since neither type of street is counted on to carry through traffic. The obvious through-traffic alternative is Watkins Mill Road Extended; all but the I-270 bridge is either open to traffic or under construction, and the bridge is the #1 State road construction priority of the Council and Executive.

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- recommend Design Standard #2004.10 with reduced width buffer for Shady Grove Road due to dual bikeway proposed
 - add Design Standard #s for Riffle Ford Road and Oakmont Avenue
 - clarify what "(needs SUP)" means
 - recommend Design Standard #2004.01 for Decoverly Drive east of MD 119, Medical Center Drive, and Diamondback Drive due to bicycle facilities on these roads
- p. 73
- revise the Limits for the third listing of B-1 to state – Darnestown Road to Great Seneca Highway
 - specify the Limits of all roads listed from B-2 through B-15; "proposed new road" is inadequate
 - add a listing for I-1 Gaither Road
 - change the column heading to state "Design Speed" and add the appropriate footnote as agreed upon for the Germantown Sector Plan
- p. 74
- change the column heading to state "Design Speed" and add the appropriate footnote as agreed upon for the Germantown Sector Plan
 - delete the third bullet under "Recommendations"; this is an operational issue
- p. 77 & 78
- the LSC needs to have more on-road designated master planned bikeways, for example along SP-59, LB-1 and LB-4 plus a dual bikeway along Oakmont Avenue

September 22, 2009

To the Montgomery County Council,

We are pleased that Gaithersburg West Sector Plan highlights the importance of walking and bicycling and seeks to provide a safe and convenient system of interconnected bikeways. The plan is exemplary with respect to shared use paths, calling for them to be built alongside many roads and along the Corridor Cities Transitway.

However, the plan calls for far too few on-road bikeways. Relegating bicyclists to shared use paths is not appropriate for a sector designed to be truly walkable and bikeable. Bicycles are vehicles and experienced bicyclists operate most effectively and safely in the roadway, assuming roads are designed with cyclists in mind. Shared use paths are important and desirable, but they expose bicyclists to turning cars at every side street or driveway crossing. It appears that the compact LSC will have many such crossings. Shared use paths also create an inherent conflict between bicyclists and pedestrians, especially in busier areas, and if this plan ever achieves its goals, pedestrians will be using the paths in large numbers.

Bicyclists must have access to the major roads because it's those roads that provide connectivity between clusters of lesser streets, small centers, sub-areas, etc. That means supporting bicycling in the roadway on the arterials, major business district streets, and selected major highways in the sector. The plan notes that it "facilitates bicycle travel in mixed traffic along local streets". But biking any distance through the LSC requires access to the major streets. (The plan highlights its "pedestrian-oriented street grid" as a plus for bicyclists. Surely not enough minor streets span the LSC to call it a grid, not to mention the fact there's nary a straight arterial).

We recommend the following roads to be on-road bikeways in addition to any bikeways (on-road and/or paths) already proposed in the sector plan. Where a shared use path is also planned, the dual bikeway designation should be used.

- **Major Highways**

- MD 28 (Darnestown Road where MD 28; Key West Avenue) – Dual Bikeway. Much of Key West Ave. has already been consciously striped by SHA to include bikeable shoulders, presumably with more to come.
- Darnestown Road (where not MD 28) – Dual Bikeway. This is already fairly bikeable for adept riders, but consistent striping and/or bike lanes would be a big improvement. Both this part of Darnestown Road and MD 28/Key West are the essential through-routes for bicyclists traveling from western Gaithersburg to points south and vice versa.
- MD 124 / Quince Orchard Road (MD 28 to MD 117) – Dual bikeway. The state's policy is to provide bike space (shoulders) on roads wherever possible, and it is possible for much of this segment of MD 124.

- **Arterials**

- Omega Drive/Medical Center Drive – Bike lanes (if doable) or shared roadway. May have enough room already.
- Fields Road – Dual Bikeway. Important route from Sam Eig Highway and Gaithersburg to Rio and the Shady Grove corporate area. This is especially important because Gaithersburg may follow suit for its section of this road (if it ever takes ownership). Much of it is very wide.
- Diamondback Rd./Broschart Drive – Dual Bikeway. May have enough room already.
- Decoverly Drive – Dual Bikeway.
- Oakmont Avenue – Bike lanes or shared roadway. This is a critical need. Oakmont is the only road connection for bicyclists traveling from Old Towne Gaithersburg, Girard Street, or Washington Grove to Shady Grove Road, with the exception of certain daunting highways.
- **Business District Streets / Industrial Streets**
 Although the Road Code lacks a business district street cross-section showing bike lanes, bike lanes (or wide outside lanes) should be considered routinely on business district streets with volumes/speeds inconsistent with comfortably riding single-file with cars. In this sector, we'll limit our request to the following "major" business district streets.
 - Blackwell Drive – This appears to be a 4 lane business street that cuts across the LSC, as an arterial would, and therefore merits bike lanes.
 - B-2 (extension of Research Blvd.) – Bike Lanes or shared roadway. This is likely needed as an alternative to Key West Ave. Key West should retain its dual bikeway designation, but if interchanges are added, B-2 should be provided as a more comfortable option.
 - Industrial Drive (bridge) – It is critical to designate this bridge over I-370 as a bikeway of some type, to support a future connection from the bridge to the residential area along West Deer Park Road. A cut-through path along Comprint Court and I-370 would be ideal to connect Shady Grove Road to the bridge. Gaither Road is an alternate option.

On arterials and major highways, bike lanes are preferred. On existing roads where bike lanes cannot fit, shared roadway is appropriate. Wide outside lanes are typically preferred over bike lanes on slow yet busy urban streets to reduce "right hooks" and other issues. But we recognize that other objectives may favor bike lanes on these streets.

On minor local streets, as the plan states, no special bike accommodation is required.

Other items

- The addition of so many new grade-separated interchanges will create serious problems for bicyclists trying to get across all the new ramps, whether riding in the road or on a path. Some of the most difficult crossings in the entire county are high speed ramp crossings, as evidenced by the recent tragic fatality of a bicyclist along Great Seneca Highway or by the dangerous ramp

from southbound Clopper Road to southbound I-270. The number of interchanges in the plan should be reduced.

- The plan states that all the business district streets are to have 30 mph target speeds. Surely that isn't right.

Corrections

- The cross-section of Omega Drive/Medical Center Drive is identified in the plan as 2004.10 (which has bike lanes), but the LSC bikeway map says its a shared-use path bikeway, and the road is not listed at all in the table of bikeways (p. 77).
- Check for discrepancies between the bikeway maps and the bikeway table. For example, in the larger bikeway map, DB-24 (Muddy Branch Road) is shown as a green line (shared use path only) but is a dual bikeway in the LSC bikeway map and in the bikeway table.

Thank you.

Jack Cochrane
Chair, Montgomery Bicycle Advocates
7121 Thomas Branch Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817

Sept. 15, 2009

Re: Gaithersburg West Master Plan

Dear Council President Andrews and the entire Council,

This Master Plan is an opportunity to make a real difference by implementing a design that truly encourages non-automotive transportation modes. To make that happen, the design should consider the needs of cyclists and pedestrians first, and then and only then work automotive access in around those bike and pedestrian requirements. That is the way other countries do it and their results speak for themselves.

Below are my specific comments on the Gaithersburg West Maser Plan.

Sincerely

Alan Migdall
11736 Owens Glen Way
Gaithersburg , MD 20878

Items that are either incorrectly listed in the draft, inconsistent, omitted, or just in error are:

1. DB-16 MD 28 between QO Rd & Muddy Branch Rd is listed as on-road bike lanes but it is existing dual facility.
2. DB-24 Muddy Branch Rd is shown on the map as shared use path existing but the Master Plan calls for dual (including bike lanes). The table gets it right.
3. Key West Ave is shown as a shared use path existing, but it is currently striped for bike lanes as it should be in addition to the sidepath.
4. An important path along Montgomery Ave is not shown. On road bike lanes are needed to complete the missing link.
5. A bike path connection should be made from the Great Seneca Highway path and the Seneca park road overpass (just south of the Clopper Dam). This would provide significant bike connectivity at low cost.
6. Shady Grove Rd. south of MD28 should have its inner lanes reduced to create more curb lane width. MD SHA is considering and implementing this in a number of places.
7. Watkins Mill interchange not shown and not shown including bike lanes as MD SHA plans to implement.
8. Quince Orchard Rd from Md 28 to Md 117 should include bike lanes. This section of

road is not even listed in the table.

9. All roads within the LSC-Loop should accommodate and encourage on-road bike traffic. By encourage, I mean that connectivity for cars should be restricted by use of facilities like “bike boulevards.” These would be through linkages for cyclists and pedestrians, but not for cars. By making it more convenient to get between destinations by foot or bike will make a real difference in the number that use those modes.

10. Page 1 next to the last bullet should specifically mention bikes. Instead of--

♣ “ Create a grid pattern of new streets that improve local circulation, promote alternatives to car use for local trips, and enhance access to the future transit stations.”

Try this-

♣ “ Create a grid pattern of new streets that improve local circulation for trips made without a car, promote alternatives to car use for local trips by making it more convenient to get between destinations by foot or bike than by car, (this includes encouraging ample covered secure bike parking and discouraging car parking) and enhance access to the future transit stations.”

11. Page 5 – State whether this plan is consistent with the 2001 State goal to double trips by bicycle.

12. Page 11 – Mention that the old plan also discourage biking too.

13. Page 13 – 2nd line- Include “bikeable” too

14. Page 13 last paragraph – mention bikeable radius too

15. Page 16 at the bottom instead of

“The LSC is five districts that will be connected through a refined street network, transit, and trails.”

Try

“The LSC is five districts that will be connected through a refined street network that encourages on-road biking, transit, and trails for pedestrians and path-cyclists.”

16. Page 18 in the middle- Instead of –

“The LSC Loop, described below, will unify the pedestrian and bicycle circulation system with sidewalks, bikeways, trails, and paths”

try

“The LSC Loop, described below, will unify the pedestrian circulation system with sidewalks and trails and the bicycle circulation system with on-road and off-road bikeways, trails, and paths”

17. Page 23 Question- Is

“Create an identifiable LSC Loop along Medical Center Drive that connects pedestrians to other”

about a separate facility that than would be used by cyclists?

18. Page 35 In list “An enhanced and expanded transportation network will:” add bullet “Will reduce car trips by encouraging bicycle and foot trips”
19. Page 36 – LSC circulation recommendations next to the last bullet should include on-road bike lanes and delete the phrase “on-road paths”
20. Page 36 last line – break out bike and pedestrian mode share goals
Same for page 38 5th bullet
21. Page 69 it says “This Plan encourages walking and biking as an alternative to automobiles”. To do this there must be real efforts to restrict automotive circulation.
22. A connection from the end of Conservation lane to Great Seneca Hwy path needs to be included. The city of Gaithersburg is working on this.
23. A path between NIST fence and I270 needs inclusion as has been proposed by a city of Gaithersburg bike planning consultant.



RUSTIC ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 16, 2009

The Honorable Phil Andrews, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Gaithersburg West Master Plan
Game Preserve Road Classification

Dear Mr. Andrews:

The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) oversees the preservation of nearly one hundred rustic roads in Montgomery County. Our responsibilities include reviewing the classification of rustic roads and ensuring the protection of their significant features. We recommend that Game Preserve Road be designated as a rustic road in the Gaithersburg West Master Plan.

Game Preserve Road came to the committee's attention several years ago when residents along Game Preserve Road requested that it be considered for rustic classification. The residents subsequently withdrew the request, as they wished to explore other possible traffic calming devices. (about half the community was in favor of speed bumps, and one resident suggested closing the road at the CSX tunnel.) Ultimately, the community did not vote for traffic calming.

Our Committee reviewed Game Preserve Road (as part of the Gaithersburg West Master Plan) from North Frederick Avenue (MD 355) to Clopper Road. We find that Game Preserve Road has a rustic character that is unique in the Gaithersburg West Master Plan area. We consider it to be a very strong candidate for designation, as shown in the Criteria Check table below.

Criteria Evaluation for Rustic Roads	Meets Criteria
Narrow, intended for local use	Yes
Traffic volume consistent with rustic road	Yes
At least one of the following:	
- Outstanding natural features; or	Yes
- Outstanding vistas, farm and rural; or	
- Historic value	Yes
Accident history does not suggest unsafe conditions	Yes

We recommend that Game Preserve Road be designated as a rustic road. Significant features of the road include:

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- The road alignment as it follows the contours of the land and crosses creeks
- The railroad underpass
- The mature woodlands and overhead canopy along most of the road

Further information about Game Preserve Road, including our analysis, is attached for your review. Our proposed master plan description will be forwarded to council staff following our September meeting.

We look forward to adding Game Preserve Road to the Rustic Roads program. If we may be of further assistance, please contact us via our staff representative, Sarah Navid, DPS, at 240-777-6304. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kevin Foster, Chair, Rustic Roads Advisory Committee

James D. Arnoult
Robert N. Goldberg
Fred Lechluder

Marc T. Miller
Eric Spates
Robin Ziek

Attachments:

- A. Photos
- B. Criteria check

Cc: Sarah Navid, DPS, RRAC staff coordinator
Nancy Sturgeon, M-NCPPC

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Game Preserve Road

Photos

The following photos of Game Preserve Road illustrate the character of the road, the significant features and the adjacent properties. They were taken June 13, 2008 and September 15, 2009.



Game Preserve Road is bordered on the west (right in photo) by Seneca Creek State Park. Views from the road include its stream and its extensive hardwood forest.



The road crosses tributaries of Seneca Creek in several places.



Game Preserve Road is narrow and winding, following the contours of the land.



The road passes through a one-lane underpass where the CSX tracks cross. The City of Gaithersburg is adjacent on the east (left) side of the road in this section.

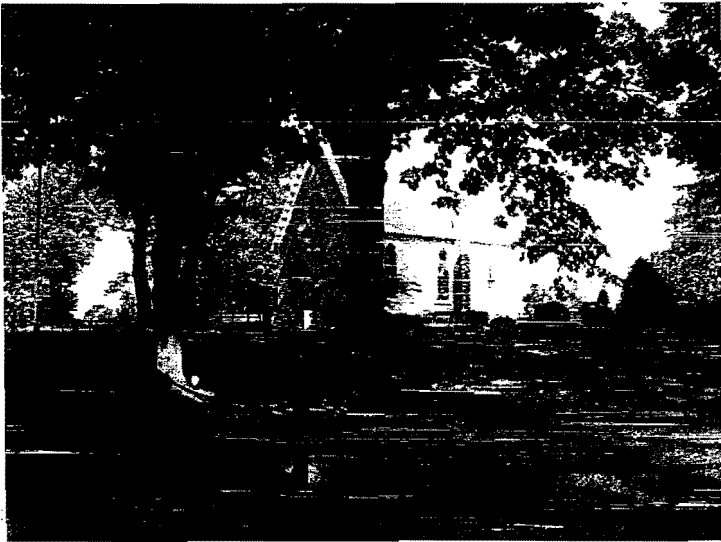
The underpass is unique in the county, an ashlar block narrow arched tunnel. It was built about 1906, when the B&O Railroad double-tracked the rail between Germantown and Gaithersburg.



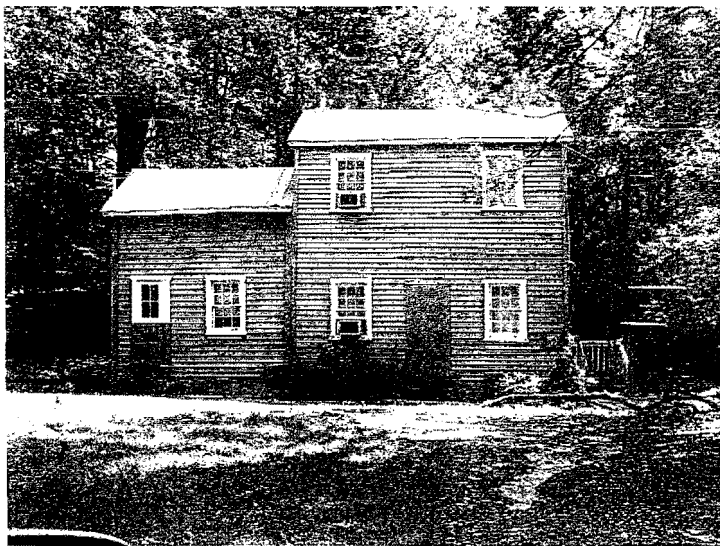
The B&O underpass was formerly a Locational Atlas site, and was recommended for historic designation in 1984 by the Historic Preservation Commission. It was ultimately not designated primarily due to safety concerns.



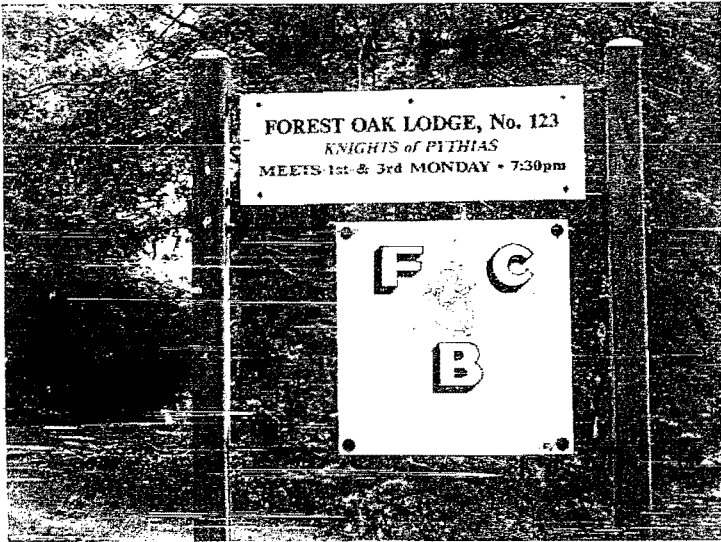
These three photos show the winding alignment of the road as it follows the contours of the land. Where the road is close to Great Seneca Creek, the road is elevated, providing long views of the creek and parkland.



These three photos show St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church (20/28), cemetery, and grounds. This was the first Catholic Church in the Gaithersburg area, established and built in 1838. The original building burned in 1883; the cornerstone of the current church, shown here, was laid on July 4, 1883.



There are about 24 houses on this section of Game Preserve Road. Newer houses are set back from the road (top two photos) while older houses (bottom photo), sit considerably closer. (This house is thought to date to the second quarter of the nineteenth century.)

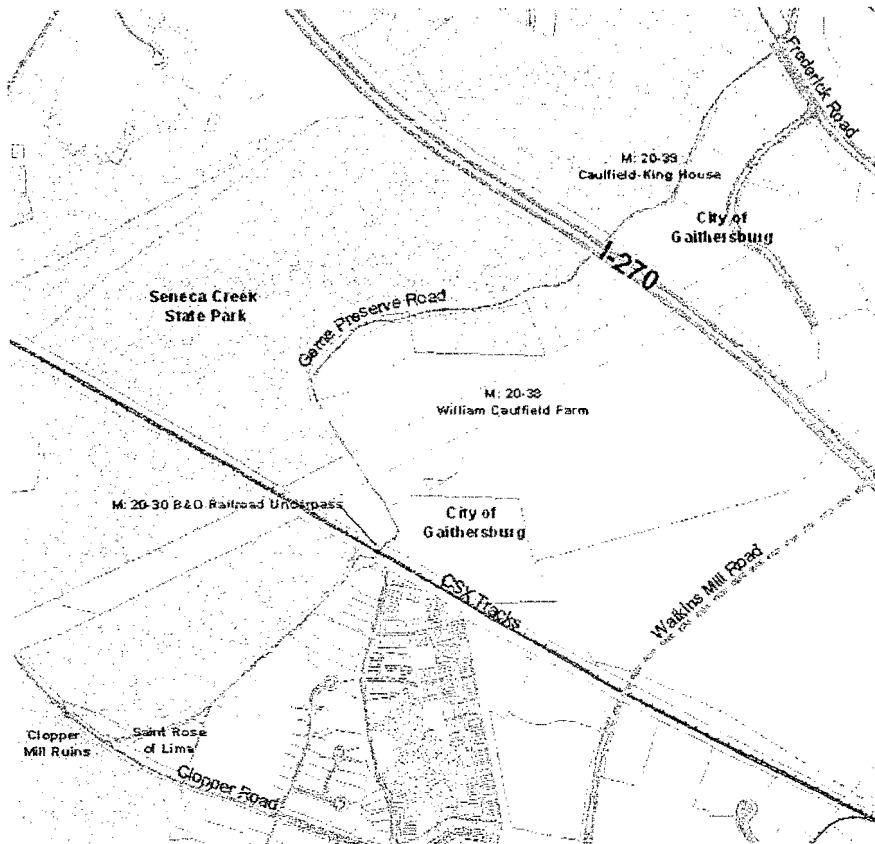


The Forest Oak Lodge on the north (top) and St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church on the south bookend a predominantly residential neighborhood which faces into Seneca Creek State Park. The CSX tracks (bottom) and PEPCO lines cross the road approximately in the middle.

Game Preserve Road

Rustic Road Criteria Evaluation

Game Preserve Road has a rustic character that is unique in the Gaithersburg West Master Plan area. The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee recommends that the section of Game Preserve Road from North Frederick Avenue (MD 355) to Clopper Road (MD 117) be designated as a rustic road.



The criteria for rustic and exceptional rustic classifications are shown in the table below; a detailed discussion each requirement follows.

Rustic Road Criteria Evaluation

The RRAC analyzed Game Preserve Road to determine whether it meets the criteria for rustic or exceptional rustic designation:

Criteria for Rustic Roads	Meets Criteria
Narrow, intended for local use	Yes
Traffic volume consistent with rustic road	Yes
At least one of the following:	
- Outstanding natural features; or	Yes
- Outstanding vistas, farm and rural; or	
- Historic value	Yes
Accident history does not suggest unsafe conditions	Yes

- 1. Is located in an area where natural, agricultural, or historic features are predominant, and where master planned land use goals and zoning are compatible with a rural/rustic character.*

Yes. Game Preserve Road is located in a natural area, bounded on the west for almost its entire length and on both sides for a short distance by Seneca Creek State Park (see map, above). There are no agricultural uses, but there are several historic features, described below. Currently, there are about 24 homes on the road, plus a church and a lodge. The land use goals and zoning in both Montgomery County and the City of Gaithersburg are compatible with retaining the current rustic character.

- 2. Is a narrow road intended for predominantly local use.*

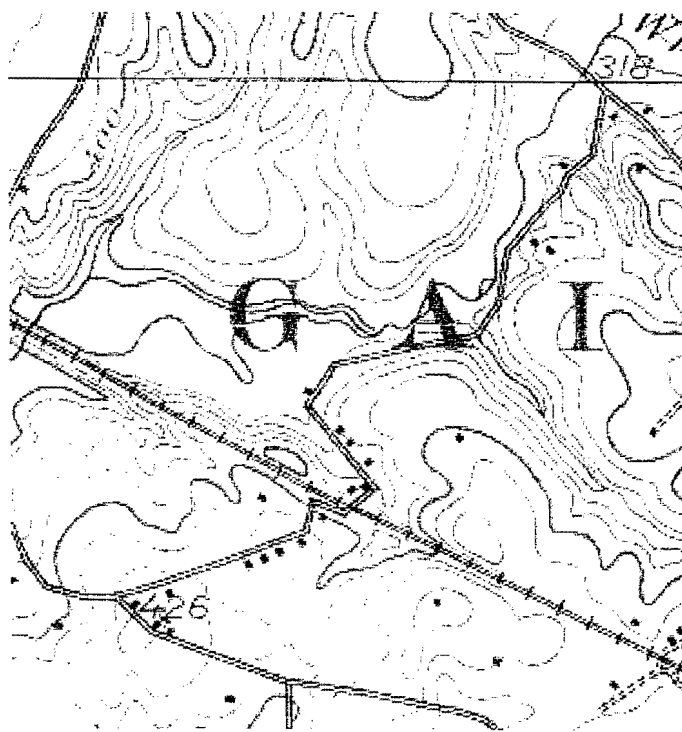
Yes. Game Preserve Road varies in width from about 11 feet (in the B&O Underpass) to 22 feet wide. It is intended for predominantly local use. The cut-through traffic that exists today is likely to diminish with the completion of Watkins Mill Road.

- 3. Is a low-volume road with traffic volumes that do not detract significantly from the rustic character of the road.*

Yes. Traffic counts show that 1,700-1,800 vehicles use Game Preserve Road daily. When the program was initiated, a guideline of 3,000 vehicles-per-day was used, though several roads in the program exceed this guideline.

- 4. A) Has outstanding natural features along its borders, such as native vegetation, stands of trees, stream valleys;
B) Provides outstanding vistas of farm fields or rural landscape or buildings; or
C) Provides access to historic resources, follows historic alignments, or highlights historic landscapes.*

Yes. Game Preserve Road satisfies both 4A and 4C. With Seneca Creek State Park adjacent to the road, native vegetation, stands of trees and stream valleys are present along the length of the road, satisfying 4A. Historic Preservation staff has found maps showing the current alignment in 1908 (right), but the road is likely to predate the map. One house is thought to date to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church was originally built in 1838, and the B&O Underpass was built in 1906. Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church is on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.



1908 alignment of Game Preserve Road

5. *The history of vehicle and pedestrian accidents on the road in its current configuration does not suggest unsafe conditions.*

Yes. Eleven relevant accidents occurred on Game Preserve Road between 2004 and 2008, as shown in the chart below.

Year	Crashes	Excluded from Crash Count
2004	3	Four additional crashes were drug or alcohol related
2005	1	
2006	4	One additional crash was drug related
2007	1	One additional crash was alcohol related
2008	2	One additional crash occurred at the MD 355 intersection
Total	11	

When the rustic roads program was established in the 1990s, roads with a history of eight or more accidents in five years were reviewed with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation traffic engineers. The committee has been advised that all appropriate spot improvements to Game Preserve Road have been made; accidents don't follow a pattern, so they don't indicate that the current roadway configuration is unsafe. A rustic designation does not restrict needed safety improvements.

Game Preserve Road is not in the Agricultural Reserve, and in many ways, is more like the rustic roads in the Potomac area, where traffic volumes and accidents rates are generally higher. In approving the rustic roads included in the Potomac Subregion Master Plan, the County Council wrote, "This Plan recommends a minor change in the legislation to redefine the traffic volume and accident history as guidelines, allowing the other rustic road criteria to be weighted more heavily for unique local situations where flat numerical standards may not be appropriate" (Resolution 14-1170, p. 19). Approved rustic roads in Potomac exceed the traffic volume and accident rate of Game Preserve Road.

The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee finds that Game Preserve Road meets the rustic road criteria, and therefore should be designated as a rustic road in the Gaithersburg West Master Plan.