

THE GAITHERSBURG WEST MASTER PLAN:
The Evolution of a Totally Bogus Master Plan

1. In 1989 Johns Hopkins bought Belward Farm from Elizabeth Banks for \$5 million instead of its \$40 million to \$52 million value because Ms. Banks wanted to be able to specify what would be built on Belward Farm...a minimally intrusive educational or medical campus that would carry on the legacy of the farm that had been in her family for over 100 years.
2. In 1996, Johns Hopkins entered into an agreement with Ms. Banks and her family that resulted in the approval of 1.8 million square feet of space which was to be used to build a Jeffersonian-style medical or academic campus on Belward Farm. 1.2 million square feet remain unbuilt.
3. When Ms. Banks passed away in 2005, Johns Hopkins changed the game plan completely. Hopkins Real Estate convinced the County that, even though the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center had been declared “built out” in 1995, a “Science City” should be built in the areas surrounding the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center and on Belward Farm.
4. In December 2008, Johns Hopkins Real Estate announced they would build a commercial complex with 4.6 to 6.5 million square feet of space for 13,000 to 17,000 people in 12- to 15-story buildings on Belward Farm, in spite of the deed restrictions and their promises to Ms. Banks and her family.
5. The area needed transit so it could be called a “transit oriented development” and therefore “urban”.
6. The 45 year-old plans for the Corridor Cities Transit (CCT) were used to provide transit so our suburban area, filled with residential subdivisions with curly streets that end in cul-de-sacs, could be labeled “urban” and the zoning could be changed to allow much higher density.
7. The County proposed 40,000 – 55,000 additional workers and residents for the “Science City” which they said will be necessary to increase ridership in order to secure funding for the CCT. However, the Maryland Transit Authority said the density currently exists to apply for federal funding.
8. The CCT will only carry 12% - 15% of the additional people so at least 85% or more than 45,000 cars will be added to the already highly congested roads in this newly dubbed “transit-oriented development”.
9. To accommodate 45,000 additional cars, the roads must be widened to 6 and 8 lanes, and six 10- and 12-lane multilevel highway interchanges will be built in and around the “Science City”. Some of the highway interchanges will be built immediately adjacent to established residential neighborhoods.
10. Homes will be destroyed, neighborhoods will be reconfigured, the roads will be jammed and connectivity between our communities will be lost. The residents will not benefit from the development and there are no real amenities proposed for the area.

The outrageous density proposed by the Gaithersburg West Master Plan must be reduced, particularly on Belward Farm, to force Johns Hopkins to honor their commitments and to preserve the established suburban residential communities. Scale it back!

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