

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

CELEBRATING AND PROMOTING RURAL MONTGOMERY

Coming to Shady Grove Hospital area: 40,000 new jobs, 14.7 million square feet of construction, 5,000 new homes ... and NO secured funding for any transit...

- The Montgomery County Planning Board is now drafting its Gaithersburg West Master Plan for a high-rise, high-density "Science City" between Shady Grove Rd and Great Seneca State Park (see [planning area](#)).
- The plan triples the current workforce of the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center to a total of **60,000 people** (more than all of downtown Bethesda).
- The new construction doubles the LSC space to **14.7 million sq. feet** of development, much of which will be commercial and housing (current space is purely research and development).
- With only 5,000 new homes to accommodate the 40,000 workforce influx, demand will intensify for nearby real estate, and more housing will develop in and around the Ag Reserve.
- The aggressive increase in construction, residents, and commuters will be largely unsupportable in an area already at or above capacity in its transit, water, sewage, and school systems. They have only identified space for a single, additional elementary school, leaving the Wooton school cluster a casualty of extreme overcrowding.
- It would bring approximately **35,000 additional vehicles** to already congested commuter routes, greatly increasing current congestion and requiring expansion to six and eight-lane highways surrounding the development along with five new highway interchanges.
- The plan also includes a shift in the Corridor Cities Transit to mitigate the increased traffic, but this would offer little help as few current residents would be close enough to access the CCT stations.
- Proposed building heights of **five to twelve stories** would dwarf surrounding neighborhoods, whose commercial buildings are currently two to five stories high.
- The plan includes Johns Hopkins University's development of local treasure, Belward Farm, purchased at a gift price under deed restrictions for property use as an academic or medical campus. Using the "and related purposes" clause to undermine these restrictions, JHU has persuaded planners to permit 4.6 (of JHU's proposed 6.5) million square feet of high-rise, high density commercial and housing construction, developing all but 10% of the 107 acre farm, the only green space left in the area.

Several meetings have been held to draw community input, but updated drafts reflect little reverence for community concerns. The final plan is to be decided upon by the County Council in the fall. President Phil Andrews has already questioned the planners' number predictions.

ACTION NEEDED:

At this stage, it is important that we **contact the County Council, County Executive and Planning Board** to communicate that such large-scale development is irresponsible and unsupportable in this area. The citizens group Residents for Reasonable Development (RRD) has presented an alternative plan to help the Life Sciences Center meet goals without sacrificing local environmental and community interests. As we express our concerns, it may help to recommend the benefits of the more balanced and reasonable RRD plan as an alternative.

Please voice your concerns to the following contacts:

County Council President, Phil Andrews:

councilmember.andrews@montgomerycountymd.gov

County Executive, Ike Leggett:

ike.leggett@montgomerycountymd.gov

County Planning Board Chair, Royce Hanson:

royce.hanson@mncppc-mc.org

Thank you so much for your help!

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