



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

May 25, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief  
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**SUBJECT:** Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan Draft Implementation Guidelines

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**ACTION REQUESTED**

Provide direction to staff on the Implementation Guidelines for the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this work session is to perform a detailed review of the draft Implementation Guidelines for the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan. The draft guidelines are based on preliminary recommendations reviewed by the Board on March 10 and May 5, 2011.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Staff held discussions with the Planning Board on March 10 and May 5 to obtain Board input on draft staging guidelines for the Great Seneca Science Corridor (GSSC) Master Plan. The draft Implementation Guidelines being presented today incorporate the draft staging guidelines that have been shaped by our interaction with the Board and other interested parties. To the staging guidelines we have added the framework of the Biennial Monitoring Program required by the Master Plan, and an explanation of how the normal transportation approval mechanisms should be used to implement the transportation recommendations of the Master Plan. Together, these elements should enable coordinated implementation of the GSSC Master Plan.

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Attachment: GSSC Implementation Guidelines

**Great Seneca Science Corridor  
Life Sciences Center  
Implementation Guidelines**

**Discussion Draft  
June 2, 2011**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The vision of the 2010 Approved and Adopted Great Seneca Science Corridor (GSSC) Master Plan is to create a world-class biotechnology center in Montgomery County to research and develop real-world applications for the benefit of human health worldwide. The framework for the Great Seneca Science Corridor Life Sciences Center was laid down in the 1988 Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan. The current plan builds on this framework and the land uses that have been established in support of the vision, including the Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, the considerable academic resources of the Universities at Shady Grove and the Johns Hopkins University, and numerous industry-leading private firms that are engaged in genomic and biotechnology research.

The Approved and Adopted Master Plan envisions a live-work community that will foster the creativity and collaboration necessary for developing bioscience innovations, all set within an attractive and sustainable mixed-use neighborhood. The Plan focuses on Transit-Oriented Development centered around the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), a public transit line in a dedicated right-of-way running from the Shady Grove Metro Station through Gaithersburg and Germantown and continuing up to Clarksburg, Maryland. The staging requirements of the GSSC Master Plan are intended to ensure that this critical transit infrastructure is coordinated with development of the Life Sciences Center. It is the very clear intent of the Plan to make new development in this area contingent on the funding and construction of the CCT.

The GSSC Master Plan requires establishment of an Implementation Advisory Committee comprising property owners, residents, and other stakeholders in the Plan's implementation to monitor development plans, staging, and the County Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and to provide input to the Planning Board and County Council. The Plan also requires the creation of a biennial monitoring program to track development and staging triggers at each stage of the Master Plan.

These guidelines provide direction to the Planning Board, Planning Board staff, and stakeholders regarding appropriate procedures for implementing the Master Plan.

Over the decades needed for full Master Plan implementation, some modifications may be needed to the staging and implementation guidelines. The process for considering amendments to the GSSC Implementation Guidelines is described later in this document.

## **2.0 Master Plan Implementation Structure**

### **2.1 GSSC Implementation Advisory Committee**

The Master Plan requires that the Planning Board must establish an advisory committee that consists of property owners, residents, and representatives of government and other affected parties that are stakeholders in the development or redevelopment of the Master Plan area. The committee is responsible for monitoring the Plan's recommendations, the Capital Improvements Program, and subdivision staging, and making recommendations to the Planning Board and County Council.

The committee consists of 18 individuals appointed by the Planning Board for two-year terms, with reappointments also made by the Board. The committee meets as needed to discuss issues related to the Plan's implementation, including reviewing development plans and CIP projects.

## **2.2 Staging Guidelines**

The Master Plan establishes commercial and residential maximums for four development stages. The Plan also details the prerequisite conditions that must be met prior to the opening of each stage, identifies projects and circumstances that exempt development from some staging requirements, and establishes a framework of policies and procedures for implementation of the Master Plan. The GSSC Implementation Guidelines take the staging recommendations from the Master Plan and supplement them with additional recommendations and interpretations to create a more comprehensive guide to Plan implementation. The staging guidelines constitute the first section of the Implementation Guidelines.

## **2.3 Monitoring Program**

The Master Plan also requires the creation of a biennial monitoring program to track development approvals, traffic issues, public facilities and amenities, and the CIP and Subdivision Staging Policy as they relate to staging and development in the Life Sciences Center. The monitoring program will provide an ongoing assessment of the status of GSSC Master Plan staging and implementation. The monitoring program constitutes the second section of the Implementation Guidelines.

## **3.0 Use of Guidelines**

These guidelines are intended to be used by the Planning Board and its staff in the implementation of the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan. They will interpret the Master Plan recommendations and provide additional guidance and clarification for staging and implementation of development in the Life Sciences Center of the GSSC.

## **4.0 Changes to Guidelines**

Changes to the Implementation Guidelines require Planning Board approval. The need to balance flexibility and certainty indicates that changes to the Implementation Guidelines should be guided by the following principles:

1. Whenever possible, major changes approved by the Planning Board should take effect with the opening of the next Master Plan stage. In considering whether it is appropriate to make major changes to the Implementation Guidelines that take effect before the opening of the next stage, the Planning Board may consider a variety of factors, including the nature of the proposed change, the justification for the proposed change, whether the county or stakeholders would be seriously harmed by delaying implementation of the change, and the testimony submitted by stakeholders.

2. The Planning Board may consider a proposed change to the Implementation Guidelines at any time if the Planning Board finds that events have occurred or facts have emerged that render specific provisions of the Guidelines no longer appropriate.
3. The Planning Board should reconsider the Implementation Guidelines in conjunction with the Planning Board's review of the biennial monitoring report or other periodic assessments.

## **5.0 Staging Procedures**

### **5.1 Declaring Stages Open for New Development Applications**

The Planning Board will officially announce the opening and closing of Stage 1. The Planning Board does not need to issue official declarations marking the opening and closing of subsequent stages. The monitoring program being developed is intended to track development levels and staging triggers, and provide a constant assessment of the status of each stage. We recommend that staff and applicants refer to the monitoring program to determine whether to move ahead with plan preparation and approvals and when stages open and close. The Board may re-visit this near the opening of later stages, and may opt to make an official announcement.

### **5.2 Allocation of Staging Capacity**

A "first come, first served" policy will be applied so that each plan submitted goes to the Board in the order it was received. This will be accomplished by the following process:

1. Preliminary plans that include new additional development cannot proceed to the Planning Board for approval until all of the triggers for that stage are met.
2. An application will enter the queue when the application has been accepted as final by our Development Application and Regulatory Coordination Division.
3. If staging capacity is available, a Board date will be set no later than 180 days from the time the application is accepted as final. Applications may go to the Board earlier than 180 days if the applicant requests it as long as the order of the queue is not disrupted. If the application is not ready to go to the Board within 180 days, the application will lose its place in the queue to the next available application.
4. Allocation of additional new development occurs at the time of Preliminary Plan approval by the Planning Board; or, if a Preliminary Plan is not required, the allocation will occur at the time of Site Plan or Building Permit approval.
5. The queue will be maintained only as long as the stage is open. Once a stage is complete, the queue will be cleared until the next stage opens.
6. All applications received will be reviewed by staff; however, review does not guarantee that capacity will be allocated. Applicants filing applications assume the risk that capacity will not be available by the time the review is complete. No refunds will be made for plans that do not receive capacity allocations.

7. Capacity that becomes available (due to plan and APF expirations or other circumstances) after a stage has closed will be added to the capacity for the next stage. Plans and APF will not be approved for any amount greater than the available capacity in a stage. For plans that exceed available capacity, a separate application to amend the plan and obtain APF approval for the balance of the development must be made when the next Stage opens. A plan amendment will not enter the queue until the application for the amendment has been accepted as complete.

No requests to extend the 180 days will be considered; however, exceptions will be made for unforeseen and unscheduled closings that are out of the Applicant's control.

### **5.3 Plans that Exceed Available Staging Capacity**

If a plan in the queue exceeds the staging capacity available, the applicant will be given an opportunity to obtain approval for the amount of development capacity remaining in the stage. If the applicant chooses not to seek partial approval for their development, the development review process will pass to the next plan in the queue. Applicants with plans exceeding available capacity in a given stage that obtain partial approval must apply for a plan amendment to obtain the remaining capacity when the next development stage opens.

### **5.4 Exemptions from Staging**

The following are exempt from staging:

1. Health Care Services are exempt from the requirements of Stage 1; however, new development for Health Care Services will be tracked and applied against the development totals for Stage 2.
2. Plans with development approvals predating the adoption of the Master Plan ("pipeline" projects).
3. Public institutions and projects requiring Mandatory Referral approval.
4. The Rickman Property in the LSC South.
5. Projects being converted from Commercial to Residential, provided that the change in development will not increase the number of vehicle trips.

### **6.0 Demolitions and Conversions**

The Master Plan specifies that, when converting commercial development to residential development, the portion of the new residential development that is covered by vehicle trip credits from a prior approved commercial development is not subject to staging. Any additional increment exceeding the vehicle trip credits from the prior approved commercial development is subject to staging. This applies both to existing buildings that are demolished to make way for redevelopment, and to approved but unbuilt development.



Conversely, the Master Plan is silent on conversion of residential to commercial development. Therefore, while residential development may be converted to commercial development if the zone permits, the conversion will be treated as new development for the purposes of staging, and will be subject to all staging limitations. Again, this applies both to demolitions and to approved but unbuilt development.

The administrative adjustment required to track converted properties will be included in the monitoring program so that conversions that count against staging will be appropriately accounted for. This may mean that on-the-ground total development amounts may not exactly match the levels prescribed in the Master Plan. The administrative adjustment will show the real (as-built) totals and an adjusted total that can be used to determine when commercial and residential maxima have been reached.

## **7.0 Limiting Plan and APF Validity Periods**

The only safeguards against potential hoarding are the time limits placed on plan validity and APF approvals. Because development in the GSSC is tightly controlled by staging, plan validity and APF approvals should be limited to the minimum time periods prescribed in the subdivision regulations: currently five years for a Preliminary Plan approval and seven years for Adequate Public Facilities approval<sup>1</sup>. It is up to the Planning Board to limit the approval of extensions in order to discourage hoarding. While longer validity periods will be discouraged, the Planning Board has the authority to grant longer validity periods for special circumstances, including phased projects.

## **8.0 Transportation Network Implementation**

### **8.1 LATR, PAMR, and CIP Projects**

Improvements to the transportation network will occur both as requirements of development approvals and as CIP projects. The normal development review process includes a requirement for developers to conduct traffic studies and establishes requirements for transportation network improvements through formulas contained within the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) and Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR) processes. In addition to developer-funded improvements are larger transportation network improvements that are funded through the County's CIP process. CIP level improvements should be identified during the biennial review of Master Plan implementation.

### **8.2 Mobility and Capacity Enhancement Alternatives**

The Master Plan states that mobility and capacity enhancements should be considered as alternative solutions during a transportation planning study, or the review of a land development project. These enhancements include, but are not limited to, increased transit services, implementation of a robust

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<sup>1</sup> Per County Council resolution, the typical three-year and five-year minimum validity periods for Preliminary Plans and APF approvals, respectively, has been increased to five and seven years for approvals granted until April 1, 2013.

street system that promotes walking and bicycling, managed parking supply, provision of proactive travel demand management services, and operational enhancements to at-grade intersections, streets, arterials and highways.

### **8.3 Context-sensitive Improvements**

Prior to designing any interchanges deemed necessary in the Biennial Report, a feasibility study will examine the alternative mobility enhancements described above and develop context-sensitive solutions. The Plan supports context-sensitive improvements that are designed to facilitate community connections, minimize right-of-way needs, and address visual and noise concerns through design elements such as depressing roadways and ramps below grade. Additional guidance should be obtained from the GSSC Urban Design Guidelines. The feasibility study will include participation by adjacent community representatives to help define community needs and context. All transportation improvements should be planned, designed and constructed under the lens of sustainability, balancing their effects on the natural environment, social community, and economic resources.

### **9.0 General Policies**

1. The total development maximums (commercial and residential) will be the ultimate controlling number to determine when a stage has reached capacity.
2. If a development plan expires without the lots being recorded, the development capacity represented by that plan becomes available to all eligible applicants.
3. The Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) is used to establish the policies and procedures for administration of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). The Life Sciences Center is in the R&D Village policy area, where the SSP indicates that, by suburban standards, area roads are congested and certain school clusters are overcrowded. Any new development will need to mitigate a percentage of its impact before it can move forward. The goal of the APFO is to ensure that transportation and school facilities have sufficient capacity for the Planning Board to approve specific development projects. Development that is exempt from staging is still subject to APFO requirements.

### **10.0 Coordination with Other Jurisdictions**

The context of the Life Sciences Center of the Great Seneca Science Corridor is within Montgomery County adjacent the municipal boundaries of both the City of Gaithersburg and the City of Rockville. Implementation of the GSSC Master Plan will have implications for the County and for both cities. The reverse is also true – development within the neighboring jurisdictions will affect the LSC. Coordination between all jurisdictions will be important as the GSSC Master Plan is implemented. The GSSC Implementation Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from the City of Gaithersburg and the City of Rockville as well as County government representatives, will be the vehicle for identifying areas of discussion and coordination during Plan implementation. Additional meetings with Gaithersburg and Rockville city governments will be held as needed to explore issues that affect each jurisdiction.

## **11.0 Monitoring Program**

The monitoring program will track the following items in the Life Sciences Center:

1. Existing, Pipeline (approved but unbuilt), and new development.
2. Conversions from commercial to residential properties.
3. Traffic generation and roadway and intersection performance.
4. Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS)
5. All CIP projects identified in the Master Plan. Some CIP items are staging triggers, and will be highlighted in the monitoring program. These include:
  - a. The Corridor Cities Transitway (may be CIP, developer-funded, or a combination)
  - b. The LSC Loop Trail
  - c. Relocation of the Public Safety Training Academy
  - d. Public street construction that provides connectivity across major highways and between districts, such as Medical Center Drive extended and Belward Campus Drive
6. Subdivision Staging Policy (formerly Growth Policy) items that relate to the Life Sciences Center.
7. Public facilities and amenities
8. Status of staging

In the spring of each odd-numbered year, the program will produce a Biennial Report to submit to the County Council and County Executive prior to the development of the biennial CIP. This should include an assessment of the staging plan to determine if any modifications are necessary. The biennial assessment should also determine if any master-planned transportation improvements should be programmed for completion prior to the opening of the next stage.

To facilitate communication of the status of development and other items related to Plan staging, a web application is being developed that will allow public access of the most current monitoring information. Landowners, County officials, staff, and interested citizens should consult the web site to determine when development capacity is available.

## **12.0 Great Seneca Science Corridor Staging Requirements**

Implementation of the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan is divided into the following: a pre-staging element listing actions that must be completed before plans for any new development plans can be approved and four development stages.

Staging applies to all 5 Districts in the Life Sciences Center (LSC) – North, Central, South (except Rickman property), West, and Belward. It does not apply outside the LSC.

**Before Stage 1 begins, all of the following must occur:**

- Approve and adopt the Sectional Map Amendment.
- Fund and begin operating the Greater Shady Grove Transportation Management District (TMD).
- Designate the LSC Central, West, Belward, and North Districts as a Road Code Urban Area.
- Include the entirety of the Rickman property on Travilah Road in the R&D Policy Area. Document the baseline of non-driver mode share through monitoring and traffic counts.
- Develop a monitoring program for the Master Plan within 12 months of adopting the sectional map amendment that addresses the following:
  - The Planning Board must develop a biennial monitoring program for the LSC. This program will include a periodic assessment of development approvals, traffic issues (including intersection impacts), public facilities and amenities, the status of new facilities, and the CIP and Growth Policy as they relate to the LSC. The program should conduct a regular assessment of the staging plan and determine if any modifications are necessary. The biennial monitoring report must be submitted to the Council and Executive prior to the development of the biennial CIP.
  - The Planning Board must establish an advisory committee of property owners, residents, and interested groups (including adjacent neighborhoods in Gaithersburg and Rockville), with representation from the Executive Branch, the City of Rockville, and the City of Gaithersburg that are stakeholders in the redevelopment of the Plan area – to evaluate the assumptions made regarding congestion levels, transit use, and parking. The committee’s responsibilities should include monitoring the Plan recommendations, monitoring the CIP and Growth Policy to address issues that may arise, including, but not limited to, community impacts and design, and the status and location of public facilities and open space. Dependent on the availability of outside funding, the Planning Board must initiate an ongoing health impact assessment of development in the Plan area, with the participation of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Transportation, the City of Gaithersburg, and the City of Rockville.

**Stage 1 –**

- Commercial Development Totals
  - 7.0 million square feet – existing
  - 3.7 million square feet – pipeline
  - Subtotal: 10.7 million square feet (existing + pipeline)
  - 400,000 square feet – additional
  - 11.1 million square feet – total Stage 1 Commercial development

**Health care services are exempt from the requirements of Stage 1**

Development above 11.1 million square feet cannot proceed until all the prerequisites for Stage 2 have been met, including full funding of the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Metropolitan Grove within the first six years of the County’s CIP or the State CIP.

- Residential Development Totals
  - 3,300 - total existing and approved dwelling units
  - 2,500 – additional new dwelling units
  - 5,800 total Stage 1 dwelling units

**Before Stage 2 begins, all the following must occur:**

- Fully fund construction of the CCT, including the proposed realignment through the LSC, from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Metropolitan Grove within the first six years of the County’s CIP or the State CTP.
- Fully fund relocation of the Public Service Training Academy from LSC West to a new site.
- Fund the LSC Loop trail in the County’s six-year CIP and/or through developer contributions as part of plan approvals.
- Attain an 18 percent non-auto driver mode share (NADMS).

**Stage 2**

**Commercial Development Totals**

- 11.1 million square feet Stage 1 development
- 2.3 million square feet additional Stage 2 development
- 13.4 million square feet total Stage 2 commercial development

**Residential Development Totals**

- 5,800 Stage 1 dwelling units
- 2,000 additional Stage 2 dwelling units
- 7,800 total Stage 2 dwelling units

**Before Stage 3 begins, all the following must occur:**

- CCT is under construction from Shady Grove Metro Station to Metropolitan Grove and at least 50 percent of the construction funds have been spent.
- Program for completion within six years any needed master-planned transportation improvement identified by the most recent biennial monitoring review to be needed at this point in the staging plan.
- Construct and open at least one public street (such as Medical Center Drive extended) across LSC West and Belward to provide a direct connection across major highways and between the districts, contributing to place-making and connectivity.
- Attain a 23 percent NADMS.

### **Stage 3**

#### **Commercial Development Totals**

- 13.4 million square feet Stage 1 & 2 development
- 2.3 million square feet additional Stage 3 development
- 15.7 million square feet total Stage 3 commercial development

#### **Residential Development Totals**

- 7,800 Stage 2 dwelling units
- 1,200 additional Stage 3 dwelling units
- 9,000 total Stage 3 dwelling units

#### **Before Stage 4 begins, all of the following must occur:**

- Begin operating the CCT from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Clarksburg.
- Program for completion within six years any needed master-planned transportation improvement identified by the most recent biennial monitoring.
- Attain a 28 percent NADMS.

### **Stage 4**

#### **Commercial Development Totals**

- 15.7 million square feet Stage 1, 2 & 3 development
- 1.8 million square feet additional Stage 4 development
- 17.5 million square feet total Stage 4 development at full buildout

#### **Residential Development Totals**

- 9,000 Stage 3 dwelling units
- No additional Stage 4 dwelling units
- 9,000 total Stage 4 dwelling units at full buildout

### 13.0 Definitions

Health Care Services - "Health care services" are defined as "Establishments providing health care by trained professionals. These establishments include hospitals, hospice care facilities, life care facilities, nursing homes, medical clinics, physical therapy facilities, and occupational therapy facilities."

Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS) – NADMS is the proportion of employees who commute to work by means other than driving a single-occupant vehicle. The NADMS is a non-integer number, expressed as a percentage. Non-Auto Drivers include transit users, carpool/vanpool passengers, walkers, and bikers. Non-Auto Drivers do not include employees on scheduled leave or sick leave, or out of the office. Non-Auto Drivers also do not include teleworkers and compressed-schedule employees. The NADMS figure is determined by the Commuter Services Division of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation through the work of the Greater Shady Grove Transportation Management District.

Commercial Development – For the purposes of this Implementation Plan, commercial development includes all non-residential development, including office, retail, industrial, institutional, and other non-residential development.

Residential Development – Residential development includes all development that is dedicated to long-term residential living, including single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments. It does not include hotels or nursing homes.

Mixed-use development – Mixed-use development includes both commercial and residential uses. The commercial and residential portions will be tracked separately for purposes of staging.

Transportation Management District - Transportation Management Districts are established by the County Executive to promote transit and other commuting options in Montgomery County's major business districts. According to the Montgomery County Government web site, TMDs have four goals:

- Cut traffic congestion
- Increase transportation capacity
- Reduce air and noise pollution
- Promote bicycle and pedestrian access

TMDs accomplish these goals by offering employers assistance in setting up alternative transportation programs for their employees, including establishing carpools and vanpools, providing public transit schedules and information, and offering incentives to employees who do not drive single-occupant vehicles to work. The Greater Shady Grove TMD includes the Life Sciences Center portion of the GSSC.