



## Montgomery Village Master Plan: Briefing

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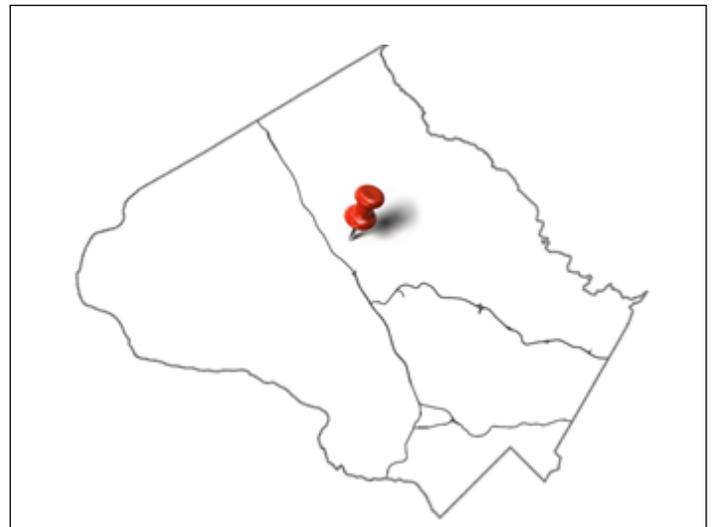
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### Description

Staff will update the Planning Board on the Montgomery Village Master Plan, including community outreach efforts, preliminary concepts, potential land use and zoning options, and next steps.

As part of the Master Plan process, staff is currently:

- engaging in community outreach activities;
- preparing rezoning recommendations for all land currently in the T-S Zone to zoning categories that are generally comparable to the existing residential land uses and densities in Montgomery Village;
- analyzing the potential for redevelopment of selected commercial center sites and determining appropriate zoning options for these locations;
- evaluating reuse, redevelopment, and rezoning of the 147-acre former golf course; and
- preparing land use and transportation assumptions for traffic modeling and school capacity assessment.



## INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the work program established by the County Council, the Planning Department initiated the Montgomery Village Master Plan in October 2014. The Planning Board approved the Scope of Work for the Master Plan on December 11, 2014. The Scope of Work outlined the Plan boundaries, background, context, purpose, outreach strategy, and schedule.

The Montgomery Village Master Plan (MVMP) addresses the 2,435 acres of land that comprise the Montgomery Village community. Montgomery Village is located in the central part of Montgomery County, east of I-270 and north of the City of Gaithersburg (see Figure 1). Montgomery Village is roughly bounded by Great Seneca Park on the west, Warfield Road on the north, Goshen Road on the east and Lost Knife Road on the south (see Figure 2). Communities surrounding Montgomery Village include Germantown to the west, the Agricultural Reserve to the north, the Montgomery Airpark and Lois Green Conservation Park to the east, and the City of Gaithersburg directly to the south.

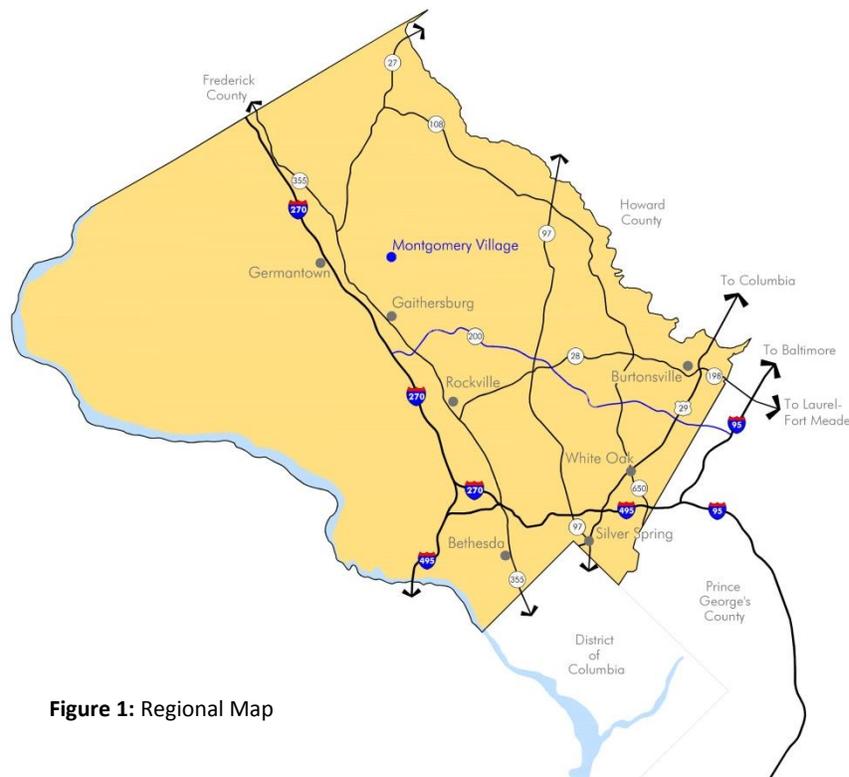


Figure 1: Regional Map

## MASTER PLAN PURPOSE

The County Council directed the Planning Department to expedite work on the MVMP with a focus on two things: 1) address potential redevelopment proposals in Montgomery Village and 2) devise new zoning recommendations to replace the Town Sector (T-S) Zone comprehensively (the prohibition against piecemeal rezoning of T-S-zoned property in Montgomery Village

expires this year). As a result of decisions made by the Planning Board and the County Council when the new Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2014, the Town Sector Zone must be replaced with new zones as part of this Master Plan process. Also at the Council’s direction, the MVMP will not address the alternatives that are being considered for Midcounty Highway (M-83) by the County Department of Transportation and the Army Corps of Engineers. Final decisions about M-83 will not be resolved within the timeframe of the MVMP.

The schedule for the MVMP was fast-tracked since there had already been an extensive visioning process by the Montgomery Village Foundation, which produced the Montgomery Village’s Vision 2030.

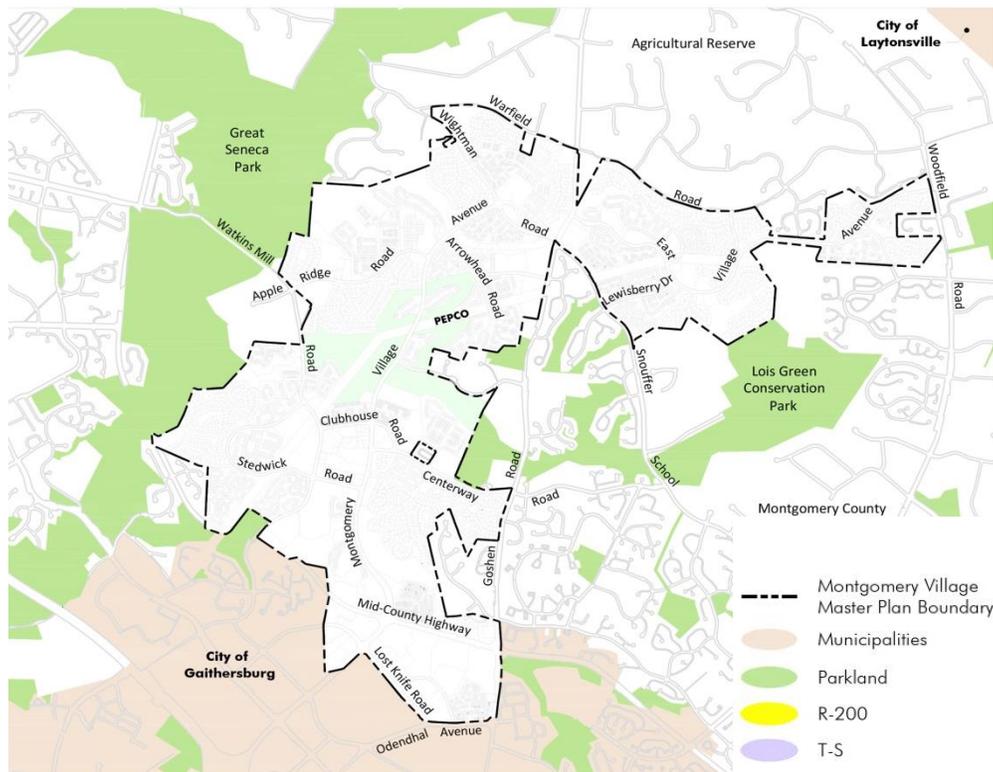


Figure 2: Montgomery Village Plan Area

## FRAMEWORK AND CONTEXT

### *Community Outreach*

As part of the overall outreach strategy, the Scope of Work recommended a variety of approaches to gather input and engage the Montgomery Village community in the Master Plan process. Staff initiated “MV Matters,” a series of outreach events to encourage all interested stakeholders to discuss the future of Montgomery Village. Village residents, property owners, and business owners were invited to share their ideas and provide feedback about the commercial centers, proposed zoning options, preservation of open spaces, and connectivity.

Approximately 135 people attended the October 1, 2014 MVMP kick-off meeting. Provided with stickers that said: “I want [fill in the blank] in my Village,” attendees identified issues that were important to them. The message staff has received from the community is that they would like to:

- Preserve the character of the Village,
- Maintain the recreation and open spaces,
- Encourage reinvestment in the commercial centers, and
- Enhance connectivity.

Staff also engaged local high school students and posed the question, “What is your ideal Village and what can it become?” One of the most direct and specific issues that has been brought to staff’s attention was during conversations with several students who attend Watkins Mills High School, where the “MV Matters” meetings are held. Since bus service for public high school students is not provided for those who live within a mile and a half of the high school, some students walk at least 45 minutes to and from school daily. Students requested that more direct connections and pedestrian trails be provided.

Another outreach tool that the MVMP staff team utilized is an on-line, interactive map for residents to catalog what is loved, liked, or needs to change in the Village. Anyone with an interest in the Village was able to upload comments and pictures about specific sites for staff’s consideration. To date, staff has received over 70 responses, many of which are focused on the desire for an upgraded, updated Village Center, as well as walkable and connected spaces, trail connections, protection of view sheds, green spaces, and overall concerns related to traffic congestion.

Subsequent to the October 2014 kick-off meeting, staff held five community meetings to provide information and receive feedback, with attendance ranging from 30 to 140 attendees. The format of the meetings has included a staff presentation, followed by break-out groups and discussion tables that provide opportunities for community members to dialogue and interact with staff. Topics covered included proposed residential zoning, the commercial centers, the former golf course, open space preservation, and a proposed overlay zone. Staff has also attended Montgomery Village Foundation (MVF) Board of Directors’ meetings and MVF community-wide family events.

In November, staff surveyed over 70 business establishments to learn more about their situation and provide them with an opportunity for input. The survey asked business owners what is most important to them; how they characterize their business’s past and future performance; and whether they have considered moving their business from their Montgomery Village location. Of those who responded, 58% were optimistic about their business’s future outlook, but many have seriously considered relocating.

To engage Hispanic residents, who account for more than 27 percent of the population in Montgomery Village, staff developed Spanish-language planning materials, on-line videos, and a bus signage campaign. Planning Board Commissioner Natali Fani-Gonzalez played an instrumental role in engaging members of the Latino community and encouraging them to participate in the MVMP. Over 10,000 postcards (in both Spanish and English) were mailed to Village residents and businesses to provide notification of the MV Matters meetings, as well as information about on-line opportunities to provide input. Staff was interviewed by English and Spanish language television stations about the MVMP. And, bilingual notices about the MVMP have been placed at Ride-On bus shelters and on buses, the Shady Grove Metro Station, and at the meeting locations of the various Chamber of Commerce groups (Hispanic, Asian, and Greater Germantown/Gaithersburg). (See Figure 3.)



Figure 3: Shady Grove Metro Station

In an effort to engage all members of the community -- employees, students, families, and those who are unable to attend evening meetings -- staff produced several “graffiti boards” and placed them at local schools and the Gaithersburg Library. (See Figure 4.)

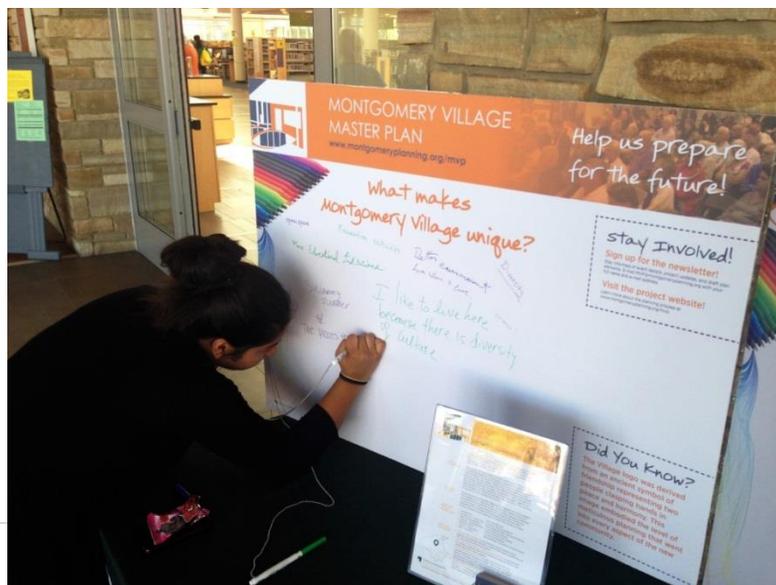


Figure 4: Gaithersburg Library (Montgomery Village, MD)

Staff continues to coordinate with public sector stakeholders, including the Department of Fire and Rescue Service, Department of Transportation, and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Interagency collaboration is focused on community facility needs throughout the Village. The Department of Fire and Rescue Service has identified that a new fire station may be needed in the vicinity of Montgomery Village, particularly the northern area. Staff conveyed this information to the community at the February 9, 2015 meeting and Fire and Rescue staff have attended MVMP meetings.

Following is a summary of the Village's constraints, challenges, strengths, and opportunities as identified by residents, MVF staff, property owners, and business owners during the MVMP outreach efforts.

#### Constraints and Challenges

- Limited retail options and destination services and uses;
- Lack of reinvestment in existing commercial centers; economic challenges with redeveloping older centers, especially when there are multiple property owners;
- Uncertainty regarding redevelopment of Lake Forest Mall in the City of Gaithersburg, located at the southern border of the Village;
- Nearby, newer retail shopping opportunities outside the Village (at Kentlands, Crown Farm, RIO/Washingtonian Center) creates competition for retailers in older centers in the Village;
- Rezoning all 2,435 acres of Montgomery Village;
- Aging housing stock, foreclosures, evidence of lack of upkeep and maintenance;
- High vacancy rates in certain retail and office buildings;
- Determining appropriate reuse of the former golf course;
- Lack of transit – nearest Metro Station is Shady Grove, six miles from the Village; and
- Uncertainty regarding the future of M-83.

#### Strengths and Opportunities

- Convenient location with access to major transportation routes;
- Established residential neighborhoods that are relatively affordable;
- Diverse housing types;
- Strong civic and community involvement; and
- Expansive open space and recreational opportunities.

#### *Study Area Demographics*

##### Demographic Snapshot of Montgomery Village:

- Population is 34,646 person in 12,662 households;
- Average age of the population is 37.7 years;
- 67% of area households are owner-occupied; 25% of households are renter-occupied;
- 51% of Village residents are 35 years and younger;
- 17% of the households' members have one or more person 65 or older;
- 25% of the households live alone; 49% are married (with or without children);

- Median household income was \$82,230 in 2012;
- 22% of residents are non-Hispanic African-American, 37% is non-Hispanic white, 26% is Hispanic, 3% are non-Hispanic Asian;
- 27% of adult ages 25 and up have earned at least a Bachelor's degree;
- 81% of employed residents commute to work by car.

### *Previous Master Plans*

Montgomery Village was included within the boundaries of two previous master plans -- the 1971 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan* and the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*. The boundaries for these master plans were nearly identical and covered about 25 square miles of land surrounding the City of Gaithersburg and the Town of Washington Grove, with the City of Rockville bordering the Plan to the southeast. The 1971 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan* relied on the corridor city concept to establish a development pattern for Gaithersburg, including a central core, residential areas, a lower density residential fringe, and a transportation system.

With the exception of a reference to open space and potential school sites and a fold-out land use map, the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan* contained no narrative or background about Montgomery Village. The 1985 Plan limited its focus to three areas – Shady Grove West (i.e., the Life Sciences Center and environs), the Airpark, and Smokey Glen – that were considered to have meaningful opportunities to influence physical growth and future development through the master plan process. For all other areas, the 1985 Plan stated that the recommendations of the 1971 Gaithersburg Master Plan would be continued.

## **PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Montgomery Village is currently within the T-S Zone, which was created to assist in the development of the “new town” in 1965. The T-S Zone was applied by a local map amendment, along with a Development Plan that provided general land use guidance. The T-S Zone was different from conventional zoning in that it provided more flexibility and did not specify standards such as height, bulk, density, and uses within the Ordinance. These development standards were established during the regulatory process through site plans.

Montgomery County adopted a new Zoning Ordinance that became effective on October 30, 2014. As discussed in the MVMP Scope of Work, the T-S Zone is among those zones (in Article 59-8) from the previous Ordinance that are being phased out and replaced as Master Plans are updated. Staff is currently evaluating and preparing preliminary zoning recommendations for all of MVMP.

### *Residential Rezoning*

Staff's approach to the proposed rezoning of existing residential neighborhoods, which constitutes the majority of land in Montgomery Village, has been to recommend zones that reflect, as closely as possible, the land uses and densities that are currently developed. For example, the large portions of the Village that are now exclusively residential are being

recommended for residential zones (single-family, townhouse, or multi-family) that reflect the existing housing types and densities (see Attachment 1). Preliminary zoning options for existing residential areas were presented and discussed with the community on January 12, 2015.

### *Commercial Rezoning*

Where redevelopment is anticipated or desired – e.g., Village Center, Professional Center, Gateway site, and the mostly commercial areas along Lost Knife Road at the southernmost edge of the Village -- staff is considering CR zones that allow a mix of uses that could encourage revitalization (see Attachment 2, Figures A2-2 and A2-3).

At smaller commercial centers where redevelopment is not anticipated (e.g., Goshen Crossing), staff is considering the Neighborhood Retail Zone (see Attachment 2, Figure A2-1). One site, a public storage facility, is recommended for the Industrial Light (IL) Zone. Staff discussed the commercial centers with the community on February 9, 2015.

### *Former Montgomery Village Golf Course*

With regard to the 147-acre former golf course site, staff recommends residential reuse with significant open space preservation. At a community meeting on February 25, 2015, staff told attendees that, from a professional planning perspective, redevelopment of the former golf course into a new residential community with substantial open space is an appropriate use that is compatible and in character with the surrounding neighborhoods. Potential zoning options for the golf course were also discussed at the February 25 meeting. Staff is evaluating the Townhouse Low Density (TLD) Zone for the majority of the former golf course. A small portion of the site may be best suited for the Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) Zone, with no density for commercial use. Staff is considering whether the draft Master Plan should contain language encouraging the use of optional method development standards in order to maintain and facilitate compatibility between existing and new developments. And, staff is analyzing whether the overall development of the former golf course site should be limited to a maximum number of dwelling units that is less than the 9.07 per acre density allowed in the TLD Zone.

Open spaces are an integral part of Montgomery Village's character and preserving and enhancing these spaces will be important goals of the MVMP. Staff has discovered a potential opportunity to connect two existing areas of M-NCPPC parkland in the vicinity of Montgomery Village. Great Seneca Stream Valley Park forms the western boundary of Montgomery Village. Cabin Branch Park and the Lois Y. Green Conservation Park are located east of Montgomery Village. There is a possibility of connecting these two linear natural resources via an east-west link to achieve a continuous system of parkland, trails and open space. The area in question that could provide this vital east-west connection between the stream valley parks is the former golf course, currently owned by Monument Realty, and open space that is owned by Stedwick Homes Corporation. The former golf course is encumbered with a number of built stormwater features, streams in various stages of degradation, as well as a significant amount of non-native invasive vegetation.

Parks Department staff is interested in pursuing this potential connection and will be initiating discussions with the two separate property owners. Before accepting responsibility for any land through the park dedication process, Parks staff would negotiate a Park Facilities Agreement that would outline a plan and schedule and commitment to funding to correct all of the current problems on the property. The necessary corrections include stormwater facility maintenance, repair, or removal, stream bank stabilization/restoration, and management of non-native invasive plants. If an agreement could be reached, environmental benefits include enhanced water quality protection and improved wildlife habitat. Providing this missing link in the regional park system would expand recreational opportunities for park users as well as Montgomery Village residents.

### *Overlay Zone*

Staff is drafting a new Overlay Zone for Montgomery Village that would be coterminous with the areas formerly covered by the T-S Zone. Among other purposes, the proposed Overlay Zone will address anomalies in development standards that result from rezoning from the T-S Zone to new zoning categories. The proposed Overlay Zone was discussed with the community on March 25, 2015. The proposed purposes of the Montgomery Village Overlay Zone are to:

- Preserve the unique setting and character of the Village.
- Protect existing open space and conservation areas.
- Ensure compatibility between existing development and new development.

The Overlay Zone will also:

- Address anomalies on some properties that will occur as a result of rezoning from the T-S Zone to the new zoning categories. Some properties that were built to development standards devised during site plan (under the T-S Zone) do not exactly match development standards in the proposed new zoning categories. Such properties will be “grandfathered” since the existing, as-built development standards do not conform to current development standards in the proposed new zones.
- Allow existing uses that were permitted by right when constructed under the T-S Zone to be grandfathered under the newly proposed zones; if expansion of the use or redevelopment occurs and the particular use is considered a limited or conditional use under the new zone, then the property owner must follow the review requirements for limited or conditional uses as allowed.
- Preserve the existing quasi-public open space and recreation areas owned and maintained by MVF and other Montgomery Village Home Owner Associations.
- Address compatibility between existing and anticipated redevelopment of vacant parcels.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff has prepared a traffic modeling scenario to analyze the potential impacts of new development on the transportation network. Staff will consider potential infrastructure improvements to support the limited redevelopment in the Plan area. School capacity issues are also being assessed in collaboration with MCPS. Results of the traffic modeling are

anticipated by late May or early June and staff will hold a community meeting when the results are available.

**SCHEDULE**

The current schedule for the MVMP is:

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Staff Draft to the Planning Board               | July 2015              |
| Planning Board Public Hearing                   | September 2015         |
| Planning Board Worksessions                     | September/October 2015 |
| Transmit to County Executive and County Council | November 2015          |

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1- Draft Proposed Zoning Options for Residential Properties in Montgomery Village
- Attachment 2- Draft Proposed Zoning Options for Commercial Properties in Montgomery Village

RMK/ns/ha



**Draft Preliminary Zoning Options for Montgomery Village Master Plan**

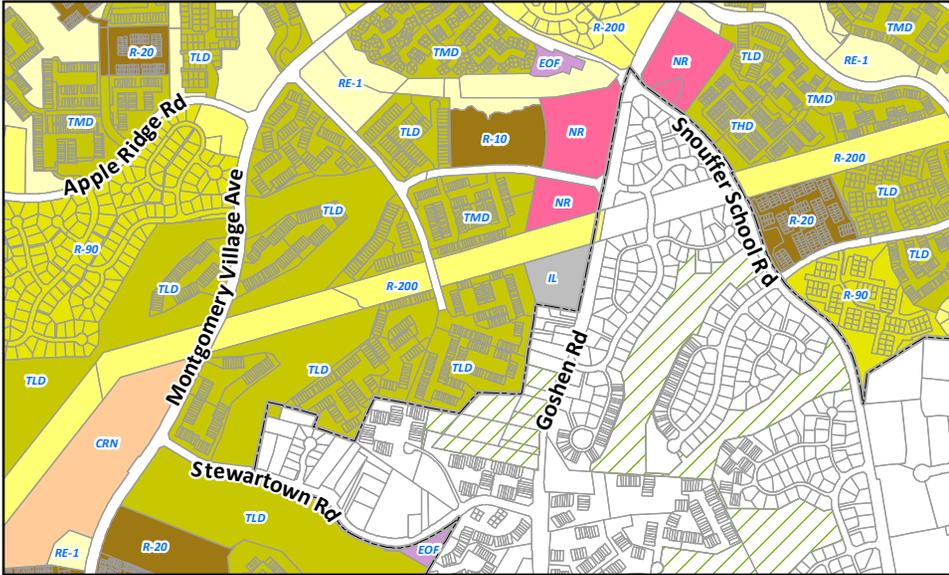


Figure A2-1: Goshen Road Zone Options

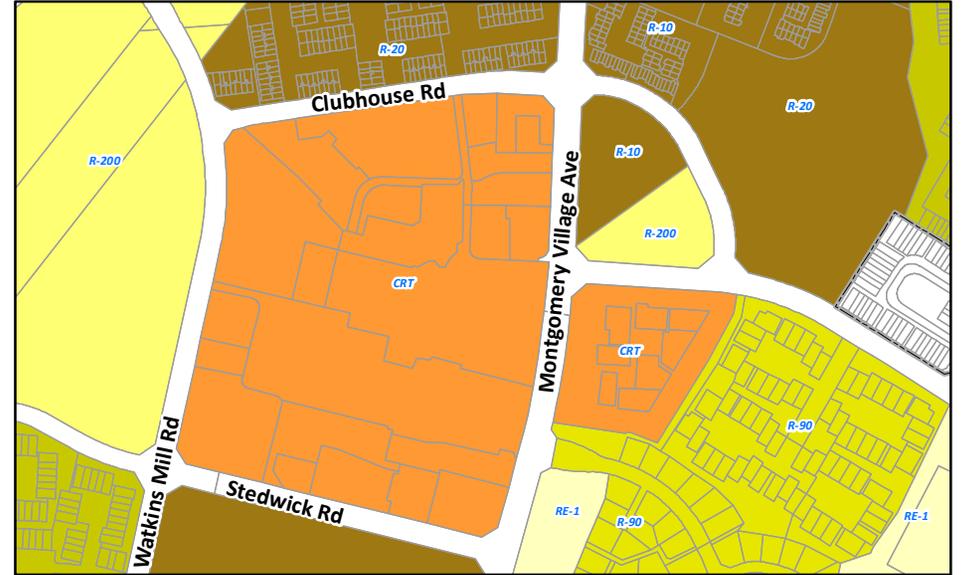


Figure A2-2: Village & Professional Center Zone Option

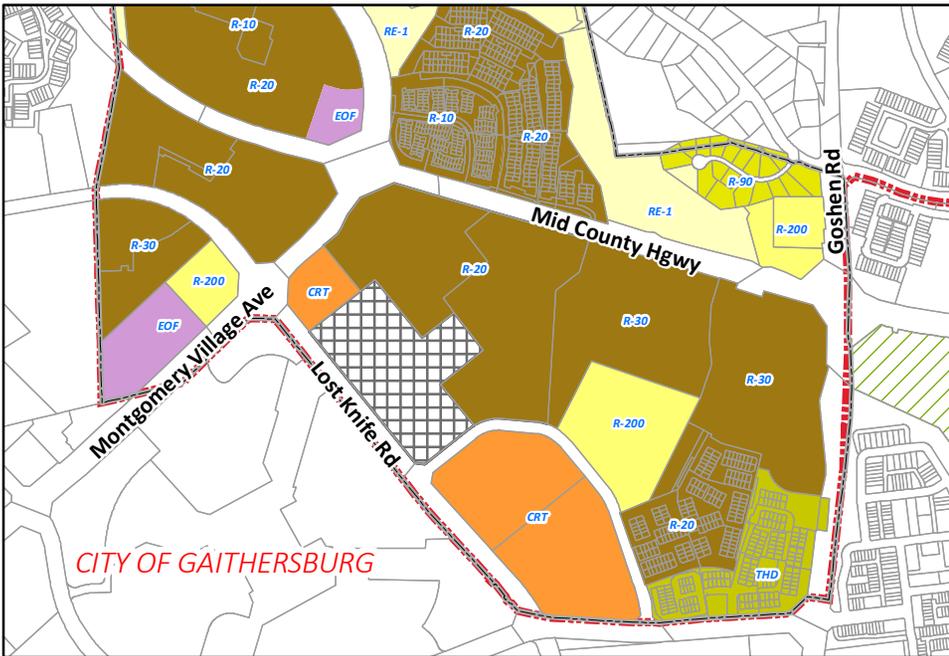


Figure A2-3: Lost Knife Road Zone Options

**LEGEND**

- Master Plan Boundary
- Property Boundary
- Existing Park
- Municipality

**Draft Zone Options**

- R-200** Rezoning Option
- RE-1
- R-200
- R-60; R-90
- TLD; TMD; THD
- R-30; R-20; R-10
- Neighborhood Retail
- Commercial/Residential - Neighborhood
- Commercial/Residential - Town
- Employment Office
- Light Industrial
- Zoning to be Determined

