

What Others Are Saying About Plans for the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center

Excerpts from Testimony in Support of the Proposed Gaithersburg West Master Plan

March 26, 2009

“With the 270 Master Plans before you, we have an opportunity to move Montgomery County a giant step forward. We are at a crossroads. We can choose to embrace the bold visionary plans that enable us to move forward and to become a vibrant global center for creative jobs, technology, research, smart growth, and mass transit. Or we can choose the rear view mirror approach that leads to stagnation and decline with memories of what might have been.”

– Gene Counihan, Resident, Montgomery Village, and co-chair, Vision 2030

“County Executive Leggett supports the vision that the Planning Board staff has set out in the draft Gaithersburg West Master Plan. This vision incorporates policies that are critical to our future as a county....”

– Diane Schwartz Jones, Office of Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett

“We have been preparing students for a world class challenge in science research all of the 36 years I have taught in MCPS. Why not give them a chance to see a place where it can happen?”

– Gregg Gochnour, Resident, Rockville, and MCPS Science Resource Teacher, Rockville High School

“I support the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. ... I’ve stayed in Montgomery County because it’s my home and I believe it’s a great place to raise a family. I’d like my children to have the same opportunity, but with Montgomery County losing to Virginia on a pretty constant basis....I don’t see that happening.”

– Todd Grinspoon, Resident, Woods of Muddy Branch

“I support the Gaithersburg West Master Plan ...I believe the reasonable concerns of all parts of the surrounding community have been heard and addressed.”

– Eric Ross, Resident, The Willows

“I am here to speak in support of the proposed Gaithersburg West Master Plan. ... There is too much good at stake. Good for Shady Grove Hospital and its many existing and planned future services; good for our children, after being educated by top schools to be able to stay in the area; good for science, bringing cutting edge medicine to our doorstep; good for our tax base, and Good for all of our County’s families and businesses, to be thriving in the best county in the nation.”

– Rex Reed, Resident, Amberlea Farm on Dufief Mill Road

“I am here tonight in support of the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. ... Physical proximity is very important to the growth of an entrepreneurial industry. I’ve spent a lot of time in Silicon Valley, the national leader in life science. One of the reasons it works is that everyone eats breakfast at the same place! Many of us have spent years trying to build that same sense of community in our life science industry and this plan accomplishes that.”

– Bruce Robertson, Resident, Willows of Potomac, and Managing Director, HIG Ventures

“Vision 2030 asks us to look at mission; at what we want our City’s reputation to rest on. Is this where the cure for Alzheimer’s should be discovered, the elimination of TB assured and the early diagnosis of lung cancer confirmed? It gives us the opportunity to envision our role in fulfilling a universal, humanitarian mission. ... This is one of the times when a master plan needs to support a vision, and not one of the times when a vision needs to be limited by a master plan.”

– Sally Sternbach, Executive Director, Rockville Economic Development, Inc.

“I am here tonight in support of the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. This project represents a unique opportunity to fulfill the vision of the I-270 corridor as a world class center for health, science, and education. The Shady Grove Life Sciences Center will be the kind of place where the world’s top scientists from government, the bioscience industry, healthcare, and education can come together to improve the health of the world.”

– Dr. Richard Zakour, Executive Director, MdBio Division, Tech Council of Maryland

“There’s no question that numerous international companies are still looking to open up locations in the U.S. The question is: Do we want their knowledge and their expertise here? Or do we want to hand them over to Massachusetts or California or North Carolina? If we want to become the premiere location for biotechnology — if we want to become the ‘go to’ location for these international companies who are flush with cash and looking for opportunities in the States — we need to create the vibrant, walkable, transit-oriented community proposed in the Gaithersburg West Master Plan.”

– Roger Kang, Chief Operating Officer, TissueGene

“The Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber strongly supports the overall vision expressed in the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. ... There aren’t many places in the Country, or the world for that matter, that have everything it takes to build a visionary science and education center like the one proposed in this Master Plan. But we do.”

– Marilyn Balcombe, Executive Director, Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce

“I am in favor of the development of the Gaithersburg West Plan ...despite the growth and wealth of talented resources, we remain just another life sciences hub and not THE life sciences hub in the nation. One reason for this is the lack of a unique center that connects our entrepreneurs, scientists and business talent and cultivates the free flow of knowledge and ideas.”

– Vik Subbu, lives and works in Montgomery County, and Johns Hopkins University alumnus

“I am here tonight in support of the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. ...for many, the local biotech community is not strong enough and has not yet reached the critical mass to absorb the layoffs by many small businesses due to the terrible financial crisis we are all facing. ...the Gaithersburg West Master Plan will help develop and grow the immense knowledge, scientific, and business potential contained in this region to offer unique professional opportunities as well as high quality of life.”

– Paolo Baroldi, Resident, Potomac Glenn, and Chief Medical Officer, Supernus Pharmaceuticals

“I am here tonight to speak in favor of the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. ... Why wouldn’t residents welcome the creation of good jobs that promise a bright future for professionals working in three of the strongest sectors during this economic downturn? Why not provide homes and shops nearby that younger adults can afford in a vibrant environment where we’ll want to live? Why not create a community that will attract international companies to our County?”

– Montserrat Capdevila, Resident, Rockville, Graduate Student, and President, Hopkins Biotech Network

“I am here tonight in support of the Gaithersburg West Master Plan. ... In a business sector where intellectual property and technical ability are its most important assets, the quality of life for its human capital is paramount. The Gaithersburg West Master Plan addresses this critical need now and for our future generations.”

– David Marcille, Director of Support Services–Operations, BioReliance Corp.

“We believe that the Gaithersburg West Master Plan represents smart growth planning at its best. It will allow for adequate levels of job creation, housing and retail space in order to provide the kind of vibrant, walkable, mixed-use activity centers that makes Montgomery County and attractive place to live and work and a pioneer in sustainable community planning and design.... If we are serious about funding and building the Corridor Cities Transitway, we need to be committed to approving [the Gaithersburg West Master Plan] with enough density and walkable, transit-oriented design elements to boost ridership and raise the cost-effectiveness figures.”

– Gigi Godwin, President and CEO, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce