

## Gaithersburg West – A Total Lack of Good Sense

The Gaithersburg West Master Plan proposes 20 million square feet of commercial space and 9 million square feet of residential space on an area of about one and a half square miles. It is difficult to visualize what that might look like. The Pentagon has 6.6 million square feet of gross floor space. If 29 million square feet is divided by 6.6 million square feet, the answer is 4.4 Pentagons in a congested suburban area between Shady Grove Road and Muddy Branch Road, five miles from the nearest Metro station. Why does the County think we need four and a half Pentagons in our established suburban area? Johns Hopkins Real Estate wants to build a gigantic high-rise commercial complex for 15,000 – 20,000 people on a beautiful historic property, Belward Farm, which was sold to them for a gift price to build a minimally intrusive medical or academic campus. In order to accommodate Johns Hopkins' massive plans, the County has declared the area "urban" and is rezoning the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center and Belward Farm for a high-density, high-rise "live, work, play" complex. To accommodate the 60,000 to 80,000 people proposed by the Gaithersburg West Master Plan, the Corridor Cities Transitway will be built to carry about 12 % - 15% of the people, and for the remaining 85% who will be in their cars, there will be six- and eight-lane highways and 10- and 12-lane multilevel highway interchanges...immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

Johns Hopkins' self-serving plans would overwhelm the community and gridlock the roads.

The residents have been saying for over two years the Gaithersburg West Master Plan does not make sense and needs to be scaled back. Phil Andrews and Marc Elrich have said repeatedly that the plan does not make sense and needs to be scaled back. Now the Cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville have said the plan does not make sense. We can see the obvious errors in the transportation analysis and the fiscal analysis, but Councilmembers Knapp, Floreen and Leventhal refuse to budge. They appear ready to risk the wrath of the voters in the fall in order to approve this master plan.

Those of us who see the plan as fundamentally flawed have asked that it be sent back to the Planning Board to be scaled back and rewritten honestly and accurately. We have been asking for honesty and accuracy for over two years, but we have been met with arrogance and a blatant disregard for the concerns of the residents.

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