

Unaddressed Issues with the Plan for the Life sciences Center

This plan overreaches – it contains too much development based on unrealistic claims about public facilities, the presumption that it's OK to impose much more crowding on us, faulty fiscal analysis, NO environmental analysis or greenhouse gas analysis. You can't proceed without coming to grips with these issues.

To give a sample of the big issues, raised many times, yet unaddressed by the PHED Committee, I borrow from the cities, several County Council members, three of the Executive's Citizen Advisory Boards, Housing Opportunities Commission, Md Department Of Transportation, environmental, smart growth, and transit-advocacy groups; countywide, regional and local civic associations and lists of residents.

1. Why should the Life Sciences Center be the largest urban employment center in the County?
2. Justify leapfrogging the LSC to a congestion standard of 1600, the edge of complete failure, way above the congestion standards of surrounding communities, like Gaithersburg and Rockville which have much better transit service. Both cities have asked you to estimate how much development is feasible using their congestion standards of 1400-1450.
3. What development is justified if the CCT fails, or is delayed, or does not wind through the LSC? Is justified without the interchanges within and opposed by the City of Gaithersburg?
4. Do more traffic modeling, to test the impact of the proposed development on roads outside the LSC. To include the whole system of roads leading into the LSC, enumerated in cities' resolutions, including I 270 and its interchanges, as enumerated by the MDOT.
5. Give up the unrealistic assumptions about carpool and transit commuting. 20% plus will not carpool, when currently it's 4-5%. Noted by MDOT among others, the assumption of 30% non-driver mode share must be justified, not just asserted.
6. Come to grips with the implications of the extreme imbalance between jobs and housing for the new workforce: population growth in Rockville and Gaithersburg with its fiscal implications, increase in automobile commuting, reduced affordability of housing, and deeper socioeconomic divide within the county and the region.
7. Adopt a staging plan that does not allow a lot more development before any new facilities are in service.
8. Comply with your own new law and calculate seriously the greenhouse gas impacts of this development.

Principally, we ask you for a plan as Sidney Katz described rather wistfully last night – a plan for a Science City but one that respects our interests, one for which we can afford to provide good facilities without beggaring the rest of the county and even the state, one that's world class and a good neighbor, that invites us in rather than walling us out with big roads. And give us the respect of your time needed to produce (borrowed from Phil Andrews) a plan done with us rather than done to us.