

Hi Everyone,

Last night was the monthly meeting of the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) Advisory Committee and it was astounding. For the umpteenth time, they wanted to talk about the bio-swales and the storm drains with trees planted on top of them but they STILL cannot tell us how Great Seneca Highway and Muddy Branch Road will be designed.

For those unfamiliar with this area, Washingtonian Woods is on one side of Muddy Branch Road and Mission Hill is on the other at the corner of Great Seneca. They are two of Gaithersburg's most affluent neighborhoods. So, the question becomes who, the county or the state, will make the decision whether to wreck Washingtonian Woods or Mission Hill or both? Nobody seems willing to make that decision and take the heat from the residents.

The state insists that they don't have to plan for all of this because wider roads are not required in order to build the CCT. They don't have to plan, they just have to build. They have decided that the CCT will go down the middle of Muddy Branch Road. The county insists that the CCT will go down the Belward Farm side of Muddy Branch and cross the entire road at the corner of Great Seneca. To add additional chaos to this debacle, traffic lights will be added to both Midsummer intersections which will make four traffic lights within a half mile.

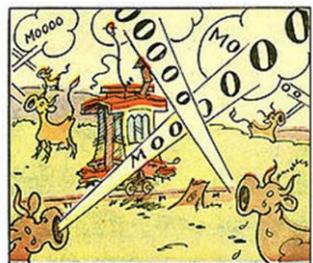
According to the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan, there will be 11 lanes on Muddy Branch Road at Great Seneca...six through lanes of traffic, two left turn lanes, two lanes for the CCT, and one continuous right turn lane that will go down the side of Great Seneca and fly over the three-level, sixteen-lane interchange that is planned for the end of Sam Eig (Rt. 370). To complicate matters even further, according to the Master Plan, Great Seneca Highway will be a 300 foot right-of-way with 12 lanes, which I presume are 12 through lanes. Add to that the two left turn lanes and two CCT lanes for a grand total of sixteen lanes at the Muddy Branch intersection.

And why will all of this manic road building be necessary? In 1989, the county brought in Johns Hopkins to convince Elizabeth Banks that the university would build an academic campus on Belward Farm. She, based on their promises, sold Belward Farm for 1/10 of its value to Hopkins. The university and the county waited for her to die and then rezoned it for 4.6 million sq ft of commercial office space for 15,000 people, which, by the way, fits the classic definition of FRAUD IN THE INDUCEMENT, which everyone seems capable of ignoring.

According to the master plan, the CCT must be built in order for Hopkins to get their full development capacity. David McDonough from Hopkins said the roads would be built "incrementally" as they build on Belward. The county and the state don't have a plan for where the roads are supposed to be built so perhaps they will allow Hopkins to make those decisions like they did with the master plan that caused this mess in the first place.

For SEVEN years we have been asking the same questions and there are STILL no answers. The whole thing is a monumental boondoggle and nobody, the state or the county, knows how it is supposed to work.

The good news, so far, is that it seems no one is interested in building on Belward Farm. Maybe companies have looked at it, admired it and decided it is a good idea to leave it the way it is...a beautiful, serene historic farm which happens to be four miles from the nearest Metro station even if the Toonerville Trolley will run through it.



Hope you all had a wonderful summer.

Best regards,

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