



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Pamela Dunn, Sr. Legislative Analyst
Purpose: Action – vote expected
Keywords: Planning, GSSC, Master Plan

AGENDA ITEM 4
December 10, 2019
Action

SUBJECT

Amendment to Montgomery County Planning Department's work program: Addition of Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Gwen Wright, Director, Planning Department
Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director, Planning Department
Carrie Sanders, Chief Area 2, Planning Department

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Council action to amend the work program for the Montgomery County Planning Department

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

The Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan, approved in 2010, set limits on how much development is allowed according to four stages. The minor master plan amendment would evaluate the staging elements of the Plan. Currently, Stage 2 has not been met, preventing approval of additional development in the master plan area until certain transportation thresholds can be achieved.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- On October 21, 2019, Hans Riemer, Chair of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee, sent a letter to his Council colleagues requesting that a Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment be added to the Planning Board work program (attached on ©1).
- During discussion of this proposal at the Planning Department's Semi-Annual Report, the Council requested that Planning Director Gwen Wright consider the amendment and provide the Council with her thoughts on the timing, scope, and coordination of such an amendment with other work program items.
- Ms. Wright's response is attached on ©3. In short, the Planning Department supports adding the work program item, suggesting a 12-month schedule to begin in May¹ 2020 with plan review before the County Council in the Spring of 2021. It is important to note that the schedule for the

¹ Perhaps June 2020 is more realistic as this estimated start date was proposed 6 weeks ago.

I-270 Corridor Transit Plan will need to be accelerated to support analyses needed for the minor master plan amendment.

- The Planning Department suggests starting consultant assistance work for the I-270 Corridor Transit Plan this winter. Accelerating this work will require a supplemental appropriation of funds (\$300,000) that had been planned for the Department's FY21 budget request.

This report contains:

Letter from Councilmember Hans Riemer	©1-2
Letter from Planning Director Gwen Wright	©3-4
Letter of support from the Maryland Technology Council Presentation	©5

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

HANS RIEMER
COUNCILMEMBER (AT LARGE)

CHAIR
PLANNING, HOUSING, AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE,
ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

To: Councilmembers
From: Hans Riemer
Re: Supporting growth in the core of our biohealth cluster
Date: October 21, 2019

At our recent retreat, we touched on the need to re-examine the Great Seneca Science Corridor staging plan and reinvigorate the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), which the State has unfortunately abandoned.

On Tuesday, the Council will review the work program for the Planning Board. **As an action item on our vision to promote economic development in the County, I propose that we add a master plan amendment to revise Stage 2 of the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan to the Planning Board's workplan.** The goal of this revision will be to simultaneously push forward on the CCT as well as remove an effective moratorium on new development in the heart of our County's biohealth sector.

The way to get the CCT back on track is to propose a realistic funding plan. In recent years there has been a lot of discussion, driven by private property owners, about a potential tax district to fund a portion of the CCT. Blending a tax district with federal and state funding could give us a realistic request to the state capital budget program.

The master plan, approved in 2010, set limits on how much development would be allowed according to four stages. The first stage of development allowed for an additional 400,000 square feet of commercial and an additional 2,500 housing units over what was existing and already approved when the plan was adopted in 2010. Our understanding is that the commercial development allowed in Stage 1 has all been claimed by property owners who have filed plans. (However, it is unclear how much of that is actually moving forward.)

The master plan amendment would reconsider solely Stage 2 of the plan. There are four requirements for Stage 2 to proceed that, when met, will release another 2.3 million square feet of commercial development and 2,000 housing units. Those requirements are:

1. Relocating the Public Safety Training Academy;
2. Attaining a non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) of 18%;
3. Fully funding the construction of the Life Sciences Center (LSC) Loop Trail within the six-year capital improvements program; and
4. Fully funding construction of Phase I of the CCT (Shady Grove to Metropolitan Grove) within the six-year County or State capital improvements program.

The good news is that the first two staging requirements have been met, and the third can be met—effective July 2020—if the FY21-26 CIP keeps the LSC Loop Trail on its current schedule.

The proposed master plan amendment would split Stage 2 in two parts: Stages 2a and 2b. Stage 2a would require meeting the first three staging requirements, while Stage 2b would also require full construction funding of Phase I of the CCT. As noted above, the requirements of Stage 2a should be met by next summer, allowing some portion of the 2.3 million square feet of commercial development and 2,000 housing units to be available for development approvals. The size of the Stage 2a portion would be decided as part of the master plan amendment.

Concurrently we should task the Department of Transportation, working with the Department of Finance, the Maryland Department of Transportation, and businesses and potential developments along the CCT alignment between Shady Grove and Metropolitan Grove, to develop an implementation and financing plan for the CCT within the next 12-18 months. The financing plan could anticipate Federal, State, and local contributions.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 29, 2019

TO: Hans Reimer, Councilmember (At Large)

FROM: Gwen Wright, Director
Montgomery Planning Department
Maryland National-Capital Park and Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment addition to the Planning Board work program

This memorandum is in response to your request to add a minor amendment for the *2010 Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan (GSSC)* to the Planning Board work program. This request was outlined in a memorandum to the Montgomery County Council on October 21, 2019.

As we have discussed, we agree that the staging for the GSSC plan needs to be reconsidered given a variety of transportation infrastructure issues that have arisen: not only the lack of funding for the Corridor Cities Transitway, but also new infrastructure that has been proposed subsequent to the approval of the plan - such as the planning for the MD355 BRT and the I-270 Managed Lanes study. All of these types of infrastructure will be analyzed in the I-270 Corridor Transit Plan.

Thus, if the GSSC minor amendment is added to Montgomery Planning's current work program, it is essential that the I-270 Corridor Transit Plan is accelerated to begin in December 2019. This is because any minor amendment to the GSSC plan related to staging would focus on the larger I-270 corridor transportation network, and more specifically the transportation improvements designed to support the land uses approved in the plan.

We understand that you are looking at a very narrow amendment to the GSSC plan and hope that this amendment can be done as efficiently as possible. We are looking at a 12 month schedule for the minor master plan amendment that would begin in May 2020, with plan review before the County Council in the Spring of 2021.

In order to accelerate the I-270 Corridor Transit Plan to start in December, we will need consultant support in FY20. Our plan had been to request this consultant support in our FY21 budget request, but in the current scenario, we would request a supplemental appropriation of \$300,000 this Fall. The I-270 Transit Corridor Plan is a significant plan effort, requiring travel forecasting to study existing and long-term travel demand throughout the I-270 corridor—from Frederick through Bethesda to Tysons—including major activity centers along the corridor that are not served by Metrorail. It will also entail

identifying transit solutions to address the modeled travel demand and will include analysis of the following key transportation considerations:

- Transit service along the I-270 corridor, including express bus, bus rapid transit, light rail and monorail
- Transit service from Bethesda to Tysons, including an extension of the Purple Line and bus rapid transit
- Corridor Cities Transitway options
- MARC third rail, increased frequency, and station locations
- Extension of the Red Line
- Potential Park and Ride locations

In conclusion, we support adding a work program item to do a GSSC minor master plan amendment that is focused on the staging elements of the plan. However, we do not have a pre-ordained recommendation about what changes to staging may be appropriate and will only be able to provide a recommendation after public engagement, data collection, research and analysis. Any potential changes to any stages of the plan must be carefully considered and balanced with transportation improvements to support growth in the plan area – as studied through the I-270 Corridor Transit Plan.



November 15, 2019

Dear Montgomery County Council Members,

The life sciences industries in Montgomery County, and throughout Maryland, continue to grow and thrive. However, this growth has been disaggregated across the county and state, lacking a truly identifiable and densely concentrated hub of life sciences companies. The availability of high-quality life science developments, with current amenities and well-designed space facilitating chance meetings and collaboration, would advance the establishment of a successful life sciences hub in Montgomery County.

As you re-examine the Great Seneca Science Corridor staging plan, the Maryland Technology Council, and our members, urge you to consider amending the plan to open up new opportunities for the life sciences industry to have an effective hub in Montgomery County. With your help, we can continue to build one of the most desirable life science industry sectors in the country.

Thirty-six years ago, our organization was founded in Montgomery County. Today the Maryland Technology Council is the industry association in Maryland representing technology and life science companies throughout the state. Together, we advance and promote the success of innovators and organizations saving, securing, and improving lives around the world. Our 440 corporate members in Maryland represent over 25,000 state employees.

Thank you for your attention and interest.

Sincerely,

Martin Rosendale
CEO
Maryland Technology Council