

Focus Group Meeting: Transportation September 23, 2020

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This focus group centered on various State and County transportation facets to be considered. Representatives from the State Highway Administration and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation participated. The session lasted for an hour and a half. The following are highlighted points from the discussion:

- Transit center should be closer to MD 355, especially with the BRT coming
- Transit ridership is down across the board, but there is still a need for the transit center to remain in place
- Mixed use development has been the most successful in the County, and is probably the right strategy for Lakeforest redevelopment
- Development should consider the existing surrounding properties and not be insular in focus – this translates to better connectivity
- Transit center should be incorporated into the development rather than standalone/separated
- Lakeforest redevelopment may lead to displacement of surrounding residents, if it leads to higher property values in the surrounding area
- Reduce environmental and traffic impacts from the redevelopment on the surrounding areas
- Mixed income residential is supported as a goal - go beyond the affordable housing requirements if you can
- Phased redevelopment will likely happen, and may take longer than initially anticipated (compare to White Flint mall redevelopment)
- Shore-term development opportunities could happen without losing sight of or impairing long-term vision
- Transit center relocation placement and timing will be flexible, to coordinate with mall redevelopment and BRT project
- Redevelopment should include an internal grid of streets with a hierarchy in the network and greater porosity for modes
- BRT project on MD 355 will probably happen within 10 years
- County-wide transit study will begin next year (2021)
- One additional access point from MD 124 may be possible, but further analysis would need to be done, once a more final development design is available
- More access points to the property are desirable, for both cars and bikes/pedestrians
- Transit center location should facilitate quick access by the buses

- Most important thing for the transit center is easy access, but County is not wedded to any particular site
- A connection from Lakeforest Boulevard to Contour Road is natural and desirable
- There are no plans for MD 124 improvements, but the redevelopment could provide some bike/pedestrian improvements
- Off-road bike/pedestrian paths are a better option than on-street lanes on MD 124
- Lost Knife – the county master plan calls for remaking this road as a boulevard with a street edge formed by closer buildings, which implies more bike/pedestrian facilities; also calls for bike lanes on Lost Knife and off-street shared use path
- Due to volumes, there can't be a road diet for MD 124
- Transit center should include a micromobility hub (shared bikes, scooters, etc.)
- MCDOT suggested the City look at a bike lane connection along Russell Ave from Lakeforest Blvd to Olde Towne
- General agreement that MD 124 and Odend'hal Ave are busy roads that should not be the main entrance into the redevelopment – Lakeforest Blvd would be a better place for the main entrance
- Differentiate the access points to enhance the primary users – bigger/grander for cars and transit and smaller/safer for bikes/pedestrians
- Park and Ride should be included, to serve the regional transit center
- Park and ride could be explored through a P3 between County and developer creating shared structured parking
- There might be other options to locate park and rides elsewhere in order to relieve pressure on Lakeforest
- An experiential community with outdoor spaces will probably be successful
- Potential to create “15 minute communities” with all uses needed to serve that community
- Is the City willing to subsidize desirable uses that the market will not provide?
- Greenspace and amenities at Lakeforest that can be used by the surrounding communities-cannot think of Lakeforest as an island
- More outdoor and park space should be included in the development