

### Comments relative to the proposed Lakeforest development

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Thank you, members of Lakeforest Development, Mayor and City Council Members, Planning Department Staff and Planning Commission Members, for your efforts to create a transformative urban center. My comments and suggestions which follow are simply a request to go a notch higher, to create an awesome core where businesses and people want to be. These are in reference to the descriptions and sketch maps included in Exhibit 3.

1. Thank you for recognizing the huge amenity potential in the lakes. I use “lakes” instead of “ponds”, since I believe that the former implies a larger idea. They are much more than Stormwater ponds. Lakes, no matter how large or small, create a sense of identity and attraction, as in Kentlands, where I live, and at Rio. Three suggestions:
  - a. I hope that the third small lake in Block F, which is suggested for removal, will remain as an amenity and that greenway corridors will connect to the large areas of development away from the lakes.
  - b. Please consider eliminating the section of Street Two which connects to Russell Avenue and which separates Block B from E and F, and the portion of Street Five, which separates Blocks E and F. A neat greenway/restaurant/housing element could connect the 3 lakes and complement the proposed redevelopment of Russell Avenue. This could also be a wonderful amenity for the proposed Transit Center in Block F. Eliminating or re-thinking Street Five could give more flexibility if the lake is retained and multiple types of uses developed. The net result of this idea would be to merge Blocks B, E and F, so that there is more flexibility. Naturally, small internal street access means would have to be provided, which I assume could be addressed in the next phases of review.
  - c. Block A – thank you for your creative ideas here. I would hope that the City could be a partner in this development, and soon, so that it sends a signal that awesome things are coming.
2. I also hope that the developers and the City will retain the remnant forest bordering Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road, to create an awesome greenway for the City as well as a great “welcome” to Street One. In recently looking at the forest, certainly there are trees and shrubs which need to be removed, but there appear to be some large healthy trees also. The forest could be a positive amenity for residential and other uses.
3. In general, the proposal for Lakeforest seems similar to what is seen in the Crown area. As Crown has expanded beyond its urban and neat core, the grid of streets dominates in the creation of a very expensive and rather boring-looking community. I would hope that you would look at Kentlands, with its many curves and interesting angles and niches and parklets, building on your proposal that “some areas are envisioned to be secret corners hidden away.” I also hope that the Pike and Rose area will be reviewed as a model of higher density and height which could say that this development is Gaithersburg’s awesome downtown heart.
4. Block B – while it appears that the development here will incorporate the lake as an amenity, I hope that this area, of all areas of the project, could be reconsidered. Imagine

this as Rio but that instead of hotels and restaurants bordering the lake, there are mid-rise (up to 12 stories or more?) condominiums and apartments as well as your proposed commercial uses. Imagine that this blends into Blocks E and F, if Street Two is omitted. It seems like this could be the real urban “center” of Lakeforest, which can connect in multiple ways to the all of the development below Street Three.

5. Blocks B through O – could these be seen as the dynamic L-shaped border framing more conventional commercial and employment uses of Blocks C and D? The recreation area of Block J is the dynamic center. I would also hope that the 3 streets separating Blocks K through N could be reconsidered. Could all of the proposed uses be combined and then a creative non-linear street pattern be developed? I urge and hope for flexibility there.
6. Blocks J and I – could Street Six be omitted (for now), so that there could be a more organic relationship between housing and the public spaces? Could higher density housing over small shops/cafes in Block I open to the large public space?
7. The climate and social justice crises are calling for totally re-thinking the how and what we do. I applaud the goals for affordability and the “missing middle”, but encourage including less 2 over 2 housing, as there seem to be plenty in Gaithersburg, and this housing type discriminates in favor of those who can climb stairs and pay the now prevalent high prices. I hope that construction techniques, innovations in financing, reducing requirements for parking, etc., can create a real affordable and innovative community that is truly a “15-minute city”, which you describe in many areas of Exhibit 3, where most of life’s needs are available in a walking, biking and transit environment. In vibrant urban centers, cars can be a detriment. Please put people as the first priority, not cars.
8. In summary, thank you for a transformative proposal. I hope to see the evolution to a truly stunning and awesome proposed downtown for Gaithersburg.

Thank you.

Robert L. Rogers

**From:** [raymond.podlasek](#)  
**To:** [Planning External Mailing](#)  
**Subject:** Lakeforest Redevelopment Zoning and Sketch Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, January 12, 2023 3:31:12 PM

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Mayor ,Council members and Planning Commission ,

I have been a resident of Gaithersburg since before Lakeforest Mall was built . At that time , it was a catalyst for job opportunities and economic growth in and around our community .

Today it is a ghost town property inadequately maintained and a center for crime .

The intent to redevelop this property into a mixed use development is essential . The proposed sketch plan offers the opportunity to include a variety of uses other than retail and residential needed to create new jobs and continue economic growth in our community .

The submittal suggests a variety of residential uses with significant green space amenities neighboring on the nearby Asbury Village . Through a series of traversing interior roads ,connected to the broad roadway system surrounding Lakeforest an interconnected travel system is shown . The introduction of a new enhanced transit station in the hub of the project should increase transportation opportunities significantly .

I believe this plan will create a greater sense of place than currently exists at "The Crown " or in Germantown .

I encourage your prompt review and approval of the submitted application and it's associated plans .

Raymond Podlasek  
9111 Warfield Rd  
Gaithersburg , Maryland ,20882



January 11, 2023

Mayor, City Council, and Members of the Planning Commission  
City of Gaithersburg City Hall  
301 South Summit Avenue  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Sent via email to: [planning@gaithersburgmd.gov](mailto:planning@gaithersburgmd.gov)

RE: Zoning and Sketch Plan for the Lakeforest Mall Redevelopment

Mayor Ashman, City of Gaithersburg Council, and members of the Planning Commission.

At my request, the owner and developer of the Lakeforest Mall has met with Asbury Methodist Village residents and myself, along with residents of the surrounding community in the Rosborough Theatre. City of Gaithersburg and Montgomery Village Foundation senior staff were also in attendance. In Mr. Kevin Rogers's most recent presentation, he shared plans and updates on their Rezoning and Sketch application. During these presentations, they answered a myriad of questions from many of our residents.

We support the Rezoning Application of the property to Mixed-used (MXD) as requested by the developer and would like to see the development expedited by the City.

However, we think the sketch for redevelopment is inadequate and should be modified to

- Include more Green Space for recreation, public assembly, and walking and biking. The existing ponds, inaccessible by residents, should not be included to meet the requirements of Green Space.
- Designate a space for youth and family recreation, organization, and education in workforce development, home buying and rental assistance, gang prevention, and security in connection with County and City resources from the State and Federal governments.
- The current Transit Center should not be moved from its present position in anticipation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Frederick Road, or there should be a plan to assist residents of Cider Mill, Asbury Methodist Village, Montgomery Village, and other neighborhood residents, including new residents on the site to have quick access to the Center and the BRT, possibly through shuttles.
- Safe access to the new development by pedestrians from existing population areas should be a priority.
- We would like to participate in the access of gap ownership housing for persons who are of moderate and lower income for associates of Asbury Methodist Village.

We, along with the residents of Asbury, have been eagerly awaiting the moment when the redevelopment of the mall is imminent. Needless to say, we are all excited and encourage the swift approval of their application and plans.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michele R. Potter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michele" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Potter".

Michele R. Potter, Executive Director  
Asbury Methodist Village