

Joint Hearing - MCC & PC
Z-9444-2022
Ex 85

From: [Kevin Bond](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
Date: Thursday, February 9, 2023 3:25:37 PM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council,

As a constituent and local resident, I care deeply about our region's environment. I would like to express some desired changes to the Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan that I think would greatly benefit our community and the wellbeing of our local ecosystem.

The Seneca Creek watershed covers one-third of Montgomery County and includes about half of Gaithersburg. Lower Great Seneca and Middle Great Seneca with tributaries such as Whetstone Run, Walker's Run and Long Draught Branch constitute the northern portion of Gaithersburg with Lake Forest Mall at a mid-point of Seneca's large watershed.

What you choose to do with the Lake Forest 100+ acre plot will have a direct impact on the water quality, habitat, flood resilience, pollution levels, and even temperature in our watershed.

You have the tremendous opportunity to create a development that is sustainable, functional and beautiful, that will increase in value over time and be the vibrant sustainable community spoken of in the Gaithersburg Master Plan (8/18/2021) on redeveloping Lake Forest Mall.

Along with others in my community, my key requests to help the City to achieve these goal are:

1. Retain and incorporate the 1.7-acre forest grove at the intersection of Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road, and the 0.50-acre pond #3 on Russell Avenue in the proposed redevelopment.

The woods are a "Tree Save" area protected in the original Lake Forest Mall development and includes at least four native species of mature oak, a keystone species upon which huge numbers of other species depend. There is also a beautiful pine tree patch on the east side of the property. Retaining mature trees provides the "sense of place" referred to by the developers as being so desirable; and such natural amenities cannot be purchased at any price; and a 50 or 75 year old tree requires time to create! Wherever possible throughout the development, mature trees should be incorporated into the design. The project area has been identified as a non-attainment area for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter (Gaithersburg West Master Plan). Removing trees will increase problems of air quality, stormwater runoff, and heat island effects. Retaining trees, especially the 1.7-acre grove, will also buffer new housing units from the lights and sounds of the nearby fire station and the busy 6-lane Montgomery Village Avenue.

The recent mature tree losses in Gaithersburg (including 3 acres of woodland for Solitaire Court stream restoration, 7 acres for Blohm Park stream restoration, 40 acres for Watkins Mill interchange, 44 acres for Watkins Mill Town Center, and 100 trees at 700 Frederick Rd and Montgomery Village Ave) make retaining these trees all the more important, as all these losses will impact the health of the Seneca Creek watershed.

Retaining these trees also provides an opportunity to add attractive understory plantings, have permeable surface walking trails, and remove invasive species.

2. Dedicate at least 40% of the total residential acreage, and 25% of the commercial acreage, as open space, as per the Lake Forest Master Plan. In addition, the City should also negotiate the acquisition of park land from the developer as was done for Crown Farm Park. The current plan proposes 35% open space but this includes existing stormwater ponds and a potential HOA pool and clubhouse with little public open space or natural areas except stormwater ponds. No significant new green space is currently planned. Existing natural areas will be paved and built on, and the small pond will be removed and replaced by the transit center, so open and green space may actually decrease while 1,600 housing units bring additional population to an already densely developed area with little access to nearby public parks. Equity in the distribution of green space with its positive physical and mental health benefits is a concern.

3. Daylight, not bury, Walker's Run and landscape it as an attractive linear park. Walker's Run currently flows through a pipe under Odenthal Road and the mall parking lot before reaching the ponds. The plan calls for the pipe to be dug up, the pipe moved, and the stream redirected into the relocated pipe underground. Since asphalt will be removed and the area re-designed, this is an extraordinary opportunity to create a beautiful natural feature. The newly accessible stream would also allow more flexible stormwater management and improved water quality downstream. Paths could connect this linear park, ponds, and woodland areas. Here's a link to a stream daylighting project in DC's Rock Creek watershed, as a local example of what can be done: https://secure-web.cisco.com/10bQ_40AndM7CbXQ7dDhgXRbimUvWKKgyREan9SW_F4_yAYVij_N_axM_GhSUSdNCK0aKqmsND2JT0qku5JWjm4BsbRXGm05bDHBcZaJrjwuLwndZ6UI-0mnV59CEeHSJuwKqLAULXaWTaaITZngDfsLXJOMQTaoyz50cU2svab4Lj3JkaK61xBj3t4BuDeDQ9QAo2Uvr18TgCCbd_Pr2qCuudTkJLx8FPLLrBhlCkoYYj0pFcUtmAtgTwJ3/https%3A%2F%2Fchesapeakestormwater.net%2Faward%2Fdaylighting-of-broad-branch-and-restoration-of-its-linnea-park-tributary%2F

I am thankful for the interest shown by the Council and developers in creating a space for our entire community at Lake Forest. These recommendations to preserve wooded areas and improve stormwater management will add beauty and create places to walk/run, and be rejuvenated in nature.

Thank you so much for taking my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin Bond
211 Rolling Rd
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

From: [Tim Goodfellow](#)
To: [Planning External Mailing](#); [Rob Robinson](#); [Gregory Mann](#); bridget.cantwell@gaitersburgmd.gov
Cc: [Tim Goodfellow](#)
Subject: Lakeforest Zoning Map Amendment Z-9444-2022 & Sketch Plan comments for Planning Commission
Date: Friday, February 10, 2023 10:19:25 AM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Greetings Planning Commission members and City Planning Staff.

Below are my comments on the Lakeforest rezoning and Sketch Plan submitted for the record as the Planning Commission formulates its March 1, 2023 recommendation to the City Council. I also submitted comments on this case to the City on or about January 14, 2023.

We know that Lakeforest Mall redevelopment goals can still be achieved with a design change to Block C that retains and protects the patch of mature trees at Montgomery Village Avenue/Lost Knife Road. This existing forest grove has been the face of this portion of Montgomery Village Avenue for over 50 years. The Montgomery Village Avenue/Lost Knife Road intersection must maintain its visual streetscape appeal, stately prominence, as well as community, climate, and habitat benefits. The approval of buildings fronting or "facing outwards" to Montgomery Village Avenue in this area would destroy important and valuable natural resources in the City.

Retention and protection of the existing grove of trees in Block C is thoughtful design, sensitive development, and good community planning. Refer to the 1998 covenants that the former mall owner recorded (Liber 15702, Folio 679 in the County land records) that established this area as a tree save area. The City should use that former preservation action to guide current decisions on the rezoning, sketch plan, and future development plans. The City should require retention and incorporation of these trees into the mall's redevelopment plans as public green space and part of the site's "usable open space network." This is consistent with the Lakeforest Master Plan which states, "Residents in denser developments often do not have their own private outdoor space, and so must rely on public outdoor space to meet their quality of life needs."

Similar to the forest grove in Block C, design and lay-out reconfigurations to the site can be made at this phase of the review and approval process in order to retain Pond #3 within Block F. All three ponds are specifically mentioned in the Lakeforest Master Plan as "unique assets that should be incorporated into any future redevelopment." Ponds "should be improved with appropriate landscaping enhancements and made accessible through addition of paths." Furthermore, the Lakeforest Master Plan contains

recommendations to "Retain the 3 stormwater ponds and place under a Category II Forest Conservation Easement" and "Enhance the 3 stormwater ponds and integrate them into the larger open and green space networks.

Assets are valuable and, by definition and practice, warrant nurturing and protection. The Lakeforest Master Plan clearly establishes policy priority and recommendation for incorporating the 3 ponds in any form of redevelopment. Conformance with the Master Plan is a requirement of rezoning and sketch plan approval. Section 24-160D.10(b) of the City Code requires a finding that a sketch plan is "in accord with the recommendations in the applicable master plan for the area."

During the January 17, 2023 joint public hearing, it was stated that the preservation of these unique site elements could be addressed during the future schematic development plan phase of this project. However, while this may be true, the sketch plan and rezoning set the framework for all future components--and approvals--of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment. If the sketch plan is not required to depict Pond #3 and the forest grove on Montgomery Village Avenue, there is nothing binding the developer/applicant to incorporate Pond #3 and the forest grove into future development plans.

If the City respects its Master Plan and places value and importance on the retention, protection, and incorporation of Pond #3 and the forest grove into the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment plan, then it is prudent to require:

-A revised sketch plan that depicts the retention of Pond #3 and the forest grove along Montgomery Village Avenue, and

-Addition of a rezoning condition that requires protection of Pond #3 and the forest grove, and their incorporation into all future plan submissions.

Tim Goodfellow
18520 Boysenberry Drive, #234
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20879
monocacyriver@yahoo.com

From: [Linda Gore](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
Date: Thursday, February 9, 2023 4:37:08 PM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

February 9, 2023

Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council,

As a constituent and local resident, I care deeply about our region's environment. I would like to express some desired changes to the Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan that I think would greatly benefit our community and the wellbeing of our local ecosystem.

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new housing units from the lights and sounds of the nearby fire station and the busy 6-lane Montgomery Village Avenue.

The recent mature tree losses in Gaithersburg (including 3 acres of woodland for Solitaire Court stream restoration, 7 acres for Blohm Park stream restoration, 40 acres for Watkins Mill interchange, 44 acres for Watkins Mill Town Center, and 100 trees at 700 Frederick Rd and Montgomery Village Ave) make retaining these trees all the more important, as all these losses will impact the health of the Seneca Creek watershed.

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I am thankful for the interest shown by the Council and developers in creating a space for our entire community at Lake Forest. These recommendations to preserve wooded areas and improve stormwater management will add beauty and create places to walk/run, and be rejuvenated in nature.

Thank you so much for taking my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,
Linda Gore
60 Oak Shade Rd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Shaare Torah Green Team

From: [Rick Grimes](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
Date: Saturday, February 11, 2023 8:07:34 AM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Public Comment for Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
2/11/23

Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council,

After years of looking at the eyesore that is Lake Forest Mall I agree with the Muddy Branch Alliance and Seneca Creek Watershed Partners. Please:

1. **Protect the 1.7 acres of mature trees** along with as many of the other mature trees on the site as possible;
2. **Keep the current stormwater ponds;**
3. **Create more open green space** (in the current plan green space may actually *decrease* while 1,600 housing units bring population to a densely developed area);
4. **Daylight Walker's Run**, a stream which is currently piped underground. We feel that having Walker's Run above ground provides an opportunity to create a linear park with native plant landscaping, better stormwater management, and a walking path linking the stream, ponds, and wood areas.

Keep Gaithersburg green.

Thanks for your time,

Richard Grimes
9 Pavilion Dr.
Gaithersburg

From: [David Mosher](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Comments on the LakeForest Re-development Plan
Date: Saturday, February 11, 2023 6:45:31 PM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council,

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and heat island effects. Retaining trees, especially the 1.7-acre grove, will also buffer new housing units from the lights and sounds of the nearby fire station and the busy 6-lane Montgomery Village Avenue.

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I am thankful for the interest shown by the Council and developers in creating a space for our entire community at Lake Forest. These recommendations to preserve wooded areas and improve stormwater management will add beauty and create places to walk/run, and be rejuvenated in nature.

Thank you so much for taking my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

David Mosher
15 Mirrasou Lane
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Member: Seneca Creek Watershed Partners and the Muddy Branch Alliance

From: [Julia R](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
Date: Friday, February 10, 2023 11:48:23 AM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

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Thank you so much for taking my comments into consideration. **Hopefully you've received this email from a few other interested local people! We are really counting on you to think about the long term wellness of our community, protect those trees, and expand the park. We really need the regenerative**

hopefulness of wild spaces, in addition to just the ecosystem services we all benefit from, now more than ever.

Sincerely,
Julia Rasnake
Muddy Branch Alliance (Communications Chair)

From: [Deby S](#)
To: [MCC Services](#); [Planning External Mailing](#); [Rob Robinson](#); [Bridget Cantwell](#); [Gregory Mann](#)
Cc: ecorizons@outlook.com
Subject: Lakeforest Zoning Map Amendment Z-9444-2022 COMMENTS
Date: Saturday, February 11, 2023 2:28:08 PM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Commissioners, Planning Staff, Mayor and Council:

The following are my comments presented on Jan 17 at the joint public hearing:

The project area is located in the small Walkers Run subwatershed. Walkers Run is a small stream that begins near Montgomery Rd/Oak Ave, flows for about ½ mile north until it meets the intersection of Russell and Odenthal. It is then piped under the Lakeforest parking lot for another 1600 feet into the stormwater pond on the property. Flow from the pond goes under Montgomery Village Avenue and becomes a stream again and its riparian greenway reappears. It flows under Christopher Avenue and continues along with its forest to another pond and Whetstone Run. At one time Walkers Run was probably a small forested stream for its entire length, and still is for part of it. Although we may not be able to return to those origins, an amazing opportunity presents itself nonetheless.

The plan calls for the buried pipe that contains Walkers Run to be dug up, the pipe moved, and the stream then redirected into the relocated pipe underground. Rather than going through the cost and effort to rebury the stream, why not daylight it? Walkers Run could become an attractive linear urban park. Imagine 1600 feet of waterfront dining, living, or playing along a boardwalk or path where one could enjoy native plants and birds.

Residents note that the downstream portion of Walkers Run is flashy, as evidenced by instability under Christopher Avenue. The daylighted stream could help manage stormwater flows, increase infiltration, create habitat and improve water quality downstream. The newly accessible stream would be easier to manage and maintain.

We should not pass up this chance to restore one of Gaithersburg's natural

headwater streams and at last reconnect it to its headwaters. Other streams are so encased in urban development that it would be cost prohibitive or impossible to daylight them. The only limit here is a parking lot and pipe. The project could be a showcase to other communities who wish to reconnect their urban living with nature.

Thank you.

Deborah Sarabia

Saybrooke, Gaithersburg

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Deborah Sarabia, M. En.

Joint Hearing - MCC & PC
Z-9444-2022
Ex 92

From: [Deby S](#)
To: [MCC Services](#); [Planning External Mailing](#); [Rob Robinson](#); [Bridget Cantwell](#); [Gregory Mann](#)
Cc: ecorizons@outlook.com
Subject: Lakeforest Zoning Map Amendment Z-9444-2022 addendum
Date: Saturday, February 11, 2023 2:42:48 PM
Attachments: Z-9444-2022 comment addendum.pdf

This email is from an **EXTERNAL** source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Commissioners, Planning Staff, Mayor and Council:

The attached help to illustrate my comments regarding stream daylighting. Included are **visuals** specific to Walkers Run, and **links** to daylighting examples and further reading. In particular, please note the recent DC-area Broad Branch project which involved approximately 1600 feet of daylighting, and received an award for outstanding stream restoration.

Thank you for your attention.

--

Deborah Sarabia, M. En.

Lakeforest Zoning Map Amendment Z-9444-2022 addendum

Broad Branch:

[Daylighting of Broad Branch and Restoration of its Linnean Park Tributary | Chesapeake Stormwater Network](#)

[Nonpoint Source Success Story: Daylighting a Tributary to Broad Branch and Installing Treatment Practices Improve Stream Health \(EPA 841-F-15-001M\)](#)

Further Reading:

<https://greencommunitiesguide.ca/guide/nbs-implementation-overviews/stream-daylighting>

[AmericanRivers daylighting-streams-report.pdf](#)

[Reclaiming Urban Waterways—Daylighting the Saw Mill River - Urban Waters Learning Network](#)

[GUEST ARTICLE: Revitalizing urban stormwater infrastructure via stream daylighting \(revitalization.org\)](#)

[Daylighting Streams | Stormwater Solutions \(stormh2o.com\)](#)



FIGURE 2. A USGS topographic map and MD stream mapping show the headwaters of Walkers Run south of Lake Forest mall.

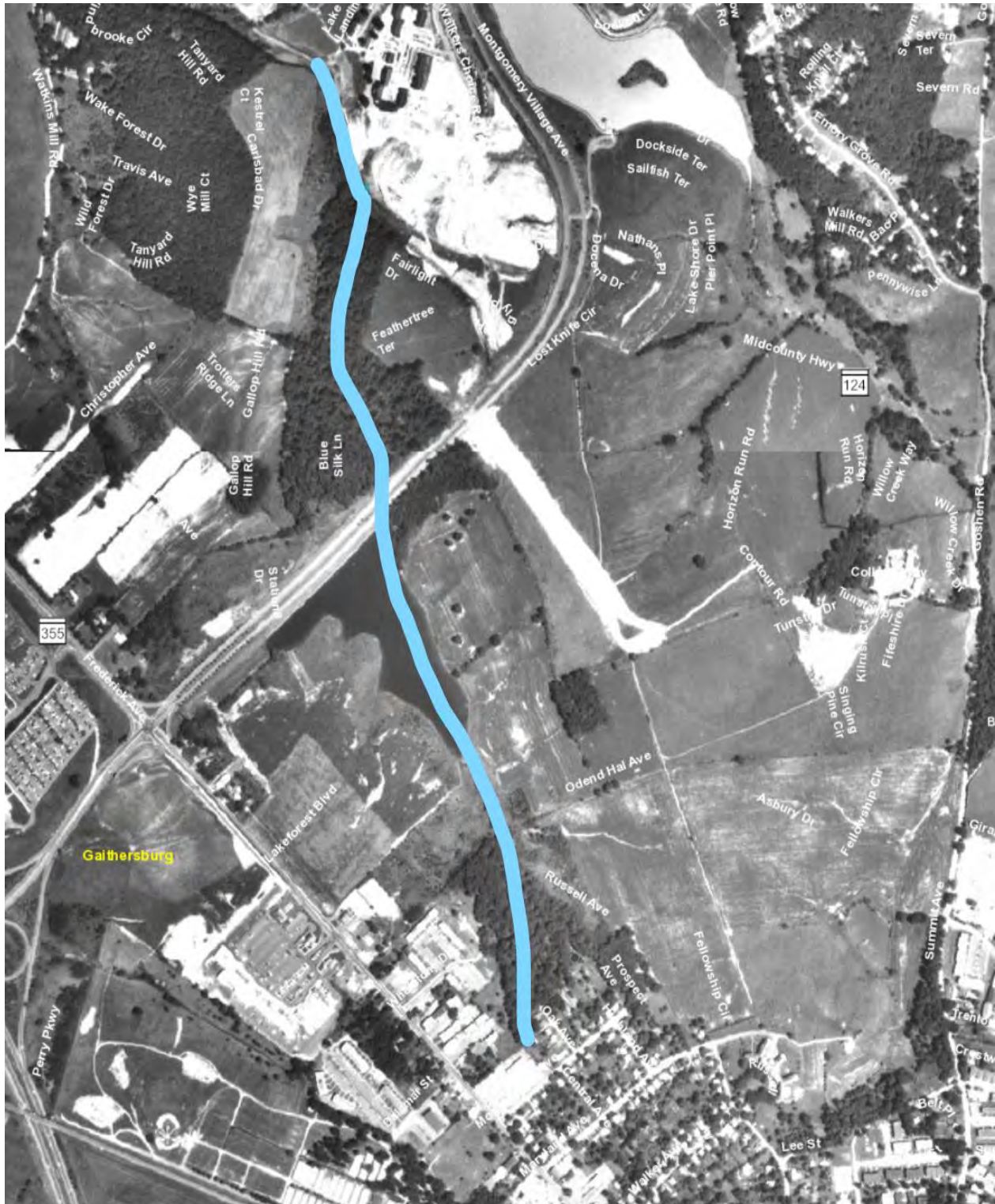


FIGURE 3. Approximate location of Walkers Run and impoundment in the Lake Forest vicinity, 1970.



FIGURE 5. Vicinity of Walkers Run as piped under the Lake Forest parking lot.



FIGURE 6. View south from Lake Forest at the intersection of Odenthal and Russell. Walkers Run is indicated by the trees in the center of the photo.



FIGURE 7. Walkers Run channel upstream from the intersection of Odenthal and Russell.

Joint Hearing - MCC & PC
Z-9444-2022
Ex 93

From: [Rachel Toker](#)
To: [Planning External Mailing](#); [CityHall External Mail](#)
Cc: [Rachel Toker](#); [Merikay Smith](#); [Deby Sarabia](#)
Subject: Lakeforest Mall Site Redevelopment - public comment
Date: Monday, February 13, 2023 9:44:15 AM
Attachments: UER Lakeforest Mall Letter.2-13-23.pdf

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Commission, Mayor, and City Council,

Thank you for accepting the attached comments into the public record with respect to the redevelopment of the Lakeforest Mall site.

Best regards,
Rachel Toker

Rachel Toker, LEED AP (BD&C), CBLP
President & CEO
Urban Ecosystem Restorations
phone: 202-494-8562; email: Rachel@urbanecosystemrestorations.org
www.urbanecosystemrestorations.org

Make Every Square Foot Count

Via Email

February 13, 2023

To: Gaithersburg Planning Commission, planning@gaitthersburgmd.gov
Gaithersburg Mayor's Office and City Council, cityhall@gaitthersburgmd.gov

Re: Public Comment – Go “Nature Positive” in Lakeforest Mall Redevelopment

Dear Mayor Ashman, City Council, and Planning Commission,

As the President of Urban Ecosystem Restorations (UER), a local nonprofit urban land trust committed to ecosystem restoration, I care deeply about our region's environment. UER has been working to improve local ecosystem function in Gaithersburg since 2019. We have worked with Gaithersburg homeowners and homeowners' associations to help them understand how essential it is for us to use our private lands – big and small – to heal our struggling local and regional ecosystems. In fact, Mayor Ashman generously praised our work with the Lakelands Community Association at the dedication ceremony, in October 2021, of the Butterfly Commons at Lakelands, our first demonstration of an [Eco-Functioning Space](#) in the Lakelands Community. Eco-Functioning Spaces are natural spaces intentionally designed (or preserved) and maintained to support our local ecosystems while adding beauty, stormwater management, climate resilience, and improved air quality to the lands around them.

What you choose to authorize at the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment site will have a direct impact on the water quality, habitat, flood resilience, pollution levels, and even temperature in the City's watershed. You have the tremendous opportunity to help craft a development that is **sustainable, functional, and beautiful** – one that will increase in value over time and be the cornerstone of the 'vibrant sustainable community' spoken of in the Gaithersburg Master Plan (8/18/2021) – by requiring the use of nature-based solutions and nature-positive development on site.



UER stands with Seneca Creek Watershed Partners and the Muddy Branch Alliance in calling for the City to require the following in the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment:

1. Retain and incorporate the 1.7-acre forest grove at the intersection of Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road, and the 0.50-acre pond #3 on Russell Avenue in the proposed redevelopment. These woods are essential for a sustainable site redevelopment, and they include at least four native species of mature oak, a keystone species upon which huge numbers of other species depend. There is

also a beautiful pine tree patch on the east side of the property. Retaining this as a forested area will serve core air quality, stormwater runoff, climate and heat island mitigation, and health goals and provide an opportunity to add attractive understory plantings and nature-friendly walking trails, all of which can be contemplated and referenced in planning and approval documents. Retaining tree groves will also buffer new housing units from the lights and sounds of the nearby fire station and the busy 6-lane Montgomery Village Avenue.

2. Require the development dedicate at least 40% of the total residential acreage, and 25% of the commercial acreage, as natural open space (or “Eco-Functioning Space”), in accordance with the Lakeforest Master Plan. The current redevelopment plan proposes 35% open space, but this includes existing stormwater ponds and a potential HOA pool and clubhouse with few natural areas except stormwater ponds. No significant new green space is currently planned. This traditional approach to suburban redevelopment is not in line with updated scholarship and scientific findings that call for such development to incorporate biodiversity restoration and climate resilience efforts, so that urban regions can successfully respond to climate change and widespread biodiversity loss and avoid further reductions in ecosystem services.

3. Daylight, do not rebury, Walker’s Run and landscape it as an attractive linear park. Walker’s Run currently flows through a pipe under Odenthal Road and the mall parking lot before reaching the ponds. The plan calls for the pipe to be dug up, the pipe moved, and the stream redirected into the relocated pipe underground. Since asphalt will be removed and the area redesigned, this is an extraordinary opportunity to create a beautiful natural feature. The newly accessible stream would also allow more flexible stormwater management and improved water quality downstream. Paths could connect this linear park, ponds, and woodland areas.

UER deeply appreciates the support the Mayor and the Council have expressed for sustainability and stormwater management in Gaithersburg. We urge you to call for developers to stand with you in your environmental leadership and create natural spaces at the Lakeforest redevelopment site that bolster our local ecosystems and the ecosystem services we need to thrive. Those of us working in urban sustainability know that **redevelopment and economic development must continue forward in a “nature positive” manner – restoring and protecting nature as we improve areas for ourselves.** This is an opportunity for you to lead with a shining example of how cities can create sustainable futures for their citizens.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Toker
President, Urban Ecosystem Restorations
rachel@urbanecosystemrestorations.org

From: [Suzie Ward](#)
To: [MCC Services](#); [Planning External Mailing](#); [Rob Robinson](#); [Bridget Cantwell](#); [Gregory Mann](#); [Deby Sarabia](#)
Cc: [Suzie Ward](#)
Subject: Lakeforest Mall Rezoning & Sketch Plan: Z-9444-2022
Date: Monday, February 13, 2023 11:52:08 AM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

February 13, 2023

Dear Chairman Bauer and Planning Commissioners, Planning Staff, Mayor and Council:

I am writing to you concerning the Lakeforest Mall Rezoning & Sketch Plan: Z-9444-2022. Please have my letter entered into the record.

While the Sketch Plan is generally well thought out, there are a few items that I want to be certain to have implemented as well.

First, there must be an actual playground with equipment in which children can play, exercise safely, and experience fresh air and sunshine. Additionally, there is a need for open, useable green space where people of all ages can exercise and play, e.g., soccer, baseball, Frisbee, etc. Open green space will not only benefit those using it, but the general community as well. Green space absorbs rainwater, provides area for insects, wildlife, fauna and flora benefitting the ecosystem. Green space generally cools the atmosphere instead of heating it up like asphalt does.

Gaithersburg has the designation of "Tree City". As such there is a requirement to retain, protect and preserve the remnant native oak forest at the corner of Lost Knife Road and Montgomery Village Avenue as well as another small forest area and any specimen trees. These native forest areas have ecosystems that we cannot see, but which contribute to the health of the vegetation and animal life that live there. Once destroyed it cannot be readily replaced. Additional trees and shrubs are in the Plan and are a *must* for the health and wellbeing of all who will be living, working and/or visiting this new Community. Retaining and afforesting trees in the community are especially important in light of the recent **Technical Study of Changes in Maryland's Forest Cover and Tree Canopy**. " Forests represent one of Maryland's most important natural resources, and are critical to its economy, sustainability, health, and identity. Forest conservation and tree planting are central strategies to achieve the goals laid out in the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and are reinforced in many parts of the Maryland legal code."^[1] This study found that "Central Maryland, representing the rapidly urbanizing Washington, D.C. suburbs, was the only region that experienced a loss of tree canopy cover from outside and within forest. The distribution of tree Canopy loss is highly skewed – two counties, Montgomery and Prince George's, accounted for more than

50% of the state's total tree canopy loss...development is an important driver of change in the state.”^[2]

“Urban tree canopy is essential for air quality, stormwater mitigation, mental wellbeing, urban heat reduction, and environmental justice...Tree canopy cover has been recognized as essential infrastructure to keep the Bay and surrounding watershed clean.”^[3]

Speaking of stormwater, one thing that will assist stormwater management would be to “daylight” Walker’s Run that is flowing below the parking lot of Lakeforest Mall.

Daylighting Walker’s Run will provide numerous benefits. Daylighting results in “increased hydraulic capacity for flood control, slowing water velocity to reduce downstream erosion, removal of water from combined sewer systems resulting in fewer sewer overflows, community and ecological revitalization, as well as water quality improvements...Community benefits include enhancing recreational space, reconnecting residents to nature, increasing property value, benefiting nearby businesses by creating a space that *attracts* people, and creating an urban greenway.”^[4]

Additionally, “daylighting aids nutrient and pollution removal, providing the community with a cleaner water supply, and groundwater recharge.”^[5] I direct you to the article on Daylighting by AmericanRivers.org. Appendix 2 of the paper provides potential funding sources for stream daylighting.

Walker’s Run flows into the storm water retention ponds. These ponds are actually Lake Walker; therefore, all three ponds should be retained along with native trees, shrubs, and vegetation surrounding them. In fact, the *Environment – Element of the Master Plan*, indicates wetlands on the edges of the ponds.^[6] These should not be disturbed, but must be protected.

Continuing the green theme, there should be a Community Garden included in the design of this neighborhood. Apartment and condominium dwellers have no place to grow food. In this age of increased food prices and inflation, these residents need a place to produce their own food, if they choose. Spending time outdoors, in the fresh air, close to the earth, has so many more benefits than solely growing one’s own food. A community garden contributes to useable, productive green space in this project. Gardening together helps build vital relationships with neighbors too.

If we want to create a “sense of place”, there should be a Community Center where residents can gather for meetings, classes, games, recreation or just having a place to be other than their own living rooms. Kids and teens should feel like they have a place where they will be welcomed, accepted and nurtured. Along with that, a venue where concerts, conferences, programs, etc. can be held should be included in the Lakeforest

Plan.

One excellent element that was included in the *Lakeforest Mall Master Plan* is a “Makerspace”. A Makerspace is a place where individuals can create and/or build any number of types of things. It is a “place where people can gather to collaborate, invent, create, explore, mentor, build, share, learn, and discover by using a variety of tools and materials.”^[7] This is such an excellent idea that it must not be overlooked or discarded. A Makerspace will draw people from across the City and County. To my knowledge there is no such space in the City. If it is desired that Lakeforest be a destination, then this is definitely one major way to *encourage* and *enable* that goal.

Housing is an obvious goal of the City in this redevelopment. That said, there must be attention paid to providing sufficient truly affordable and Gap housing to meet the needs of the residents who live on this side of the City. “The Lakeforest area has more persons, families, and households living below poverty as compared to the City as a whole, and there are more households earning less than \$50,000 per year and fewer households earning \$200,000 or more per year. In the interest of equity, the Plan should encourage the income diversity of the area by including housing that encourages a variety of price points for both new and current residents.”^[8] “The population surrounding Lakeforest is diverse, in terms of race, age, and incomes, and the Plan should seek to respond to and retain this diversity.”^[9]

Not only is the area around Lakeforest low income, it has low access to food as well.^[10] This is an environmental justice issue that cannot be overlooked or “swept under the rug.” There must be a full-service grocery store in this development.

Lakeforest Mall area and much of Gaithersburg, in general, has been noted to be an Urban Heat Island.^[11] Decreasing impervious surface, increasing open green space, increasing tree canopy coverage, daylighting Walker’s Run, adding green or cool roofs will all contribute to decreasing the “heat island” effect of the Lakeforest area.

A goal for the Lakeforest redevelopment must be increased green power generation and using renewable energy sources to lessen the ecological impacts associated with energy consumption.^[12] This is an ideal location for installation of solar panels as indicated on the map in the *Environment and Sustainability Master Plan*.^[13] Equally advantageous will be the installation of EV charging stations and the infrastructure to accommodate additional units as the need arises.

I am including the link for the “Daylighting Streams” article from americanrivers.org.

Deby Serabia uploaded the entire article for you in Exhibit #51. This includes Appendix 2 that enumerates Resources for seeking funding and grants to assist in paying for daylighting streams.

https://www.americanrivers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/AmericanRivers_daylighting-streams-report.pdf

Lakeforest Mall Redevelopment has much potential to improve the environment, and the lives of those who will live and work there. It is exciting to reimagine this space in Gaithersburg and watch as it evolves and metamorphoses into a new and vibrant community. Let us make it the best that it can be!

Sincerely,
Suzie Ward
437 Gaither Street
301-367-6120 - cell

[1] *Technical Study on Changes in Forest Cover and Tree Canopy in Maryland*, (TSCFCTCM), November 16, 2022, p. 9

[2] TSCFCTCM, p.11

[3] TSCFCTCM, p10

[4] *Daylighting Streams: Breathing Life into Urban Steams and Communities*, AmericanRivers.org/Daylighting Report, p. 9

[5] *Daylighting Streams*, p. 3

[6] City of Gaithersburg – *Environment – A Master Plan Element*, p. 9

[7] *City of Gaithersburg-Lakeforest Mall Master Plan*, adopted by Mayor and City Council, August 16, 2021, p. 23

[8] Lakeforest Mall Master Plan, p. 41, 2014-2018 5-Year Community Survey (ACS)

[9] Lakeforest Mall Master Plan, p.44

[10] *City of Gaithersburg-Environment and Sustainability- A Master Plan Element (ES)*, pp. 71-72

[11] ES, pp. 54-55

[12] ES, p. 60

[13] ES, p. 62

From: cathysmailliw@gmail.com
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
Date: Friday, February 10, 2023 11:51:43 AM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council,

As a constituent and local resident, I care deeply about our region's environment. I would like to express some desired changes to the Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan that I think would greatly benefit our community and the wellbeing of our local ecosystem.

The Seneca Creek watershed covers one-third of Montgomery County and includes about half of Gaithersburg. Lower Great Seneca and Middle Great Seneca with tributaries such as Whetstone Run, Walker's Run and Long Draught Branch constitute the northern portion of Gaithersburg with Lake Forest Mall at a mid-point of Seneca's large watershed.

What you choose to do with the Lake Forest 100+ acre plot will have a direct impact on the water quality, habitat, flood resilience, pollution levels, and even temperature in our watershed.

You have the tremendous opportunity to create a development that is sustainable, functional and beautiful, that will increase in value over time and be the 'vibrant sustainable community' spoken of in the Gaithersburg Master Plan (8/18/2021) on redeveloping Lake Forest Mall.

Along with others in my community, my key requests to help the City to achieve these goal are:

1. Retain and incorporate the 1.7-acre forest grove at the intersection of Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road, and the 0.50-acre pond #3 on Russell Avenue in the proposed redevelopment.

The woods are a "Tree Save" area protected in the original Lake Forest Mall development and includes at least four native species of mature oak, a keystone species upon which huge numbers of other species depend. There is also a beautiful pine tree patch on the east side of the property. Retaining mature trees provides the "sense of place" referred to by the developers as being so desirable – and such natural amenities cannot be purchased at any price – a 50 or 75 year old tree requires time to create! Wherever possible throughout the development, mature trees should be incorporated into the design. The project area has been identified as a non-attainment area for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter (Gaithersburg West Master Plan). Removing trees will increase problems of air quality, stormwater runoff, and heat island effects. Retaining trees, especially the 1.7-acre grove, will also buffer new housing

units from the lights and sounds of the nearby fire station and the busy 6-lane Montgomery Village Avenue.

The recent mature tree losses in Gaithersburg (including 3 acres of woodland for Solitaire Court stream restoration, 7 acres for Blohm Park stream restoration, 40 acres for Watkins Mill interchange, 44 acres for Watkins Mill Town Center, and 100 trees at 700 Frederick Rd and Montgomery Village Ave) make retaining these trees all the more important, as all these losses will impact the health of the Seneca Creek watershed.

Retaining these trees also provides an opportunity to add attractive understory plantings, have permeable surface walking trails, and remove invasive species.

2. Dedicate at least 40% of the total residential acreage, and 25% of the commercial acreage, as open space, as per the Lake Forest Master Plan. In addition, the City should also negotiate the acquisition of park land from the developer as was done for Crown Farm Park. The current plan proposes 35% open space but this includes existing stormwater ponds and a potential HOA pool and clubhouse with little public open space or natural areas except stormwater ponds. *No significant new green space is currently planned.* Existing natural areas will be paved and built on, and the small pond will be removed and replaced by the transit center, so open and **green space may actually decrease while 1,600 housing units bring additional population to an already densely developed area** with little access to nearby public parks. Equity in the distribution of green space with its positive physical and mental health benefits is a concern.

3. Daylight, not rebury, Walker's Run and landscape it as an attractive linear park. Walker's Run currently flows through a pipe under Odenthal Road and the mall parking lot before reaching the ponds. The plan calls for the pipe to be dug up, the pipe moved, and the stream redirected into the relocated pipe underground. Since asphalt will be removed and the area redesigned, this is an extraordinary opportunity to create a beautiful natural feature. The newly accessible stream would also allow more flexible stormwater management and improved water quality downstream. Paths could connect this linear park, ponds, and woodland areas. Here's a link to a stream daylighting project in DC's Rock Creek watershed, as a local example of what can be done: <https://chesapeakestormwater.net/awards/daylighting-of-broad-branch-and-restoration-of-its-linnean-park-tributary/>

I am thankful for the interest shown by the Council and developers in creating a space for our entire community at Lake Forest. These recommendations to preserve wooded areas and improve stormwater management will add beauty and create places to walk/run, and be rejuvenated in nature.

Thank you so much for taking my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Williams

14704 Mentmore Place, Gaithersburg, MD

From: [Mark Laura Wilson](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:02:27 PM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

February 7, 2023

Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council,

As a constituent and local resident, I care deeply about our region's environment. I would like to express some desired changes to the Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan that I think would greatly benefit our community and the wellbeing of our local ecosystem. During the 24 years I have lived in this area, there has been positive growth, but also a terrible loss of green space and damage to the natural environment which decreases the desirability of living here.

The Seneca Creek watershed covers one-third of Montgomery County and includes about half of Gaithersburg. Lower Great Seneca and Middle Great Seneca with tributaries such as Whetstone Run, Walker's Run and Long Draught Branch constitute the northern portion of Gaithersburg with Lake Forest Mall at a mid-point of Seneca's large watershed.

What you choose to do with the Lake Forest 100+ acre plot will have a direct impact on the water quality, habitat, flood resilience, pollution levels, and even temperature in our watershed.

You have the tremendous opportunity to create a development that is sustainable, functional and beautiful, that will increase in value over time and be the 'vibrant sustainable community' spoken of in the Gaithersburg Master Plan (8/18/2021) on redeveloping Lake Forest Mall.

Along with others in my community, my key requests to help the City to achieve these goal are:

1. Retain and incorporate the 1.7-acre forest grove at the intersection of Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road, and the 0.50-acre pond #3 on Russell Avenue in the proposed redevelopment.

The woods are a "Tree Save" area protected in the original Lake Forest Mall development and includes at least four native species of mature oak, a keystone species upon which huge numbers of other species depend. There is also a beautiful pine tree patch on the east side of the property. Retaining mature trees provides the "sense of place" referred to by the developers as being so desirable – and such natural amenities cannot be purchased at any price – **a 50 or 75 year old tree**

requires time to create! Wherever possible throughout the development, **mature trees should be incorporated into the design.** The project area has been identified as a non-attainment area for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter (Gaithersburg West Master Plan). **Removing trees will increase problems of air quality, stormwater runoff, and heat island effects. Retaining trees,** especially the 1.7-acre grove, will also **buffer new housing units** from the lights and sounds of the nearby fire station and the busy 6-lane Montgomery Village Avenue.

The recent mature tree losses in Gaithersburg (including 3 acres of woodland for Solitaire Court stream restoration, 7 acres for Blohm Park stream restoration, 40 acres for Watkins Mill interchange, 44 acres for Watkins Mill Town Center, and 100 trees at 700 Frederick Rd and Montgomery Village Ave) make retaining these trees all the more important, as all these losses will impact the health of the Seneca Creek watershed. Loss of trees also means loss of bird habitat and increased carbon footprint. These need to be replaced.

Retaining these trees also provides an opportunity to add attractive understory plantings, have permeable surface walking trails, and remove invasive species.

2. Dedicate at least 40% of the total residential acreage, and 25% of the commercial acreage, as open space, as per the Lake Forest Master Plan. In addition, the City should also negotiate the acquisition of park land from the developer as was done for Crown Farm Park. The current plan proposes 35% open space but this includes existing stormwater ponds and a potential HOA pool and clubhouse with little public open space or natural areas except stormwater ponds. *No significant new green space is currently planned.* Existing natural areas will be paved and built on, and the small pond will be removed and replaced by the transit center, so open and **green space may actually decrease while 1,600 housing units bring additional population to an already densely developed area** with little access to nearby public parks. Equity in the distribution of green space with its positive physical and mental health benefits is a concern. **Green space is vital to mental and physical health! Please, more not less is needed.**

3. Daylight, not rebury, Walker's Run and landscape it as an attractive linear park. Walker's Run currently flows through a pipe under Odenthal Road and the mall parking lot before reaching the ponds. The plan calls for the pipe to be dug up, the pipe moved, and the stream redirected into the relocated pipe underground. Since asphalt will be removed and the area redesigned, this is an extraordinary opportunity to create a beautiful natural feature. The newly accessible stream would also allow more flexible stormwater management and improved water quality downstream. Paths could connect this linear park, ponds, and woodland areas. Here's a link to a stream daylighting project in DC's Rock Creek watershed, as a local example of what can be done: <https://chesapeakestormwater.net/awards/daylighting-of-broad-branch-and-restoration-of-its-linnean-park-tributary/>

I am thankful for the interest shown by the Council and developers in creating a space for our entire community at Lake Forest. These recommendations to retain and add green spaces, preserve wooded areas, and improve stormwater management will

add beauty, create recreation areas, increase the value and enjoyment of the land and most importantly, improve the overall environment which will enhance lives.

Thank you so much for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,
Laura Wilson
10540 Smithy Court,
N.Potomac/Gaithersburg MD 20878

information courtesy of:
Seneca Creek Watershed Partners, Muddy Branch Alliance, Watt's Branch, etc.

From: [n.y](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Public comment for Lake Forest development plan
Date: Friday, February 10, 2023 12:21:51 AM

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Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council

As a constituent and local resident, I care deeply about our region's environment. I would like to express some desired changes to the Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan that I think would greatly benefit our community and the wellbeing of our local ecosystem.

The Seneca Creek watershed covers one-third of Montgomery County and includes about half of Gaithersburg. Lower Great Seneca and Middle Great Seneca with tributaries such as Whetstone Run, Walker's Run and Long Draught Branch constitute the northern portion of Gaithersburg with Lake Forest Mall at a mid-point of Seneca's large watershed.

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Forest Mall.

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The woods are a “Tree Save” area protected in the original Lake Forest Mall development and includes at least four native species of mature oak, a keystone species upon which huge numbers of other species depend. There is also a beautiful pine tree patch on the east side of the property. Retaining mature trees provides the “sense of place” referred to by the developers as being so desirable – and such natural amenities cannot be purchased at any price – a 50 or 75 year old tree requires time to create! Wherever possible throughout the development, mature trees should be incorporated into the design. The project area has been identified as a non-attainment area for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter (Gaithersburg West Master Plan). Removing trees will increase problems of air quality, stormwater runoff, and heat island effects. Retaining trees, especially the 1.7-acre grove, will also buffer new housing units from the lights and sounds of the nearby fire station and the busy 6-lane Montgomery Village Avenue.

The recent mature tree losses in Gaithersburg

(including 3 acres of woodland for Solitaire Court stream restoration, 7 acres for Blohm Park stream restoration, 40 acres for Watkins Mill interchange, 44 acres for Watkins Mill Town Center, and 100 trees at 700 Frederick Rd and Montgomery Village Ave) make retaining these trees all the more important, as all these losses will impact the health of the Seneca Creek watershed.

Retaining these trees also provides an opportunity to add attractive understory plantings, have permeable surface walking trails, and remove invasive species.

2. Dedicate at least 40% of the total residential acreage, and 25% of the commercial acreage, as open space, as per the Lake Forest Master Plan. In addition, the City should also negotiate the acquisition of park land from the developer as was done for Crown Farm Park. The current plan proposes 35% open space but this includes existing stormwater ponds and a potential HOA pool and clubhouse with little public open space or natural areas except stormwater ponds. *No significant new green space is currently planned.* Existing natural areas will be paved and built on, and the small pond will be removed and replaced by the transit center, so open and **green space may actually decrease while 1,600 housing units bring additional population to an already densely developed area** with little access to nearby public parks. Equity in the distribution of green space with its positive physical and mental health benefits is a concern.

3. Daylight, not rebury, Walker's Run and landscape it as an attractive linear park.

Walker's Run currently flows through a pipe under Odenthal Road and the mall parking lot before reaching the ponds. The plan calls for the pipe to be dug up, the pipe moved, and the stream redirected into the relocated pipe underground. Since asphalt will be removed and the area redesigned, this is an extraordinary opportunity to create a beautiful natural feature. The newly accessible stream would also allow more flexible stormwater management and improved water quality downstream. Paths could connect this linear park, ponds, and woodland areas. Here's a link to a stream daylighting project in DC's Rock Creek watershed, as a local example of what can be done: <https://chesapeakestormwater.net/awards/daylighting-of-broad-branch-and-restoration-of-its-linear-park-tributary/>

I am thankful for the interest shown by the Council and developers in creating a space for our entire community at Lake Forest. These recommendations to preserve wooded areas and improve stormwater management will add beauty and create places to walk/run, and be rejuvenated in nature.

Thank you so much for taking my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,
Natalya Yun
212 Kent Oaks Way,
Gaithersburg, MD

From: [Maureen Baltay](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Public comment on Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 4:45:59 PM

This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council:

I am a retired Federal Executive and second career professional Landscape Designer. I support the proposed zoning change and strongly support the proposals outlined in the testimony and letter from the Seneca Creek Watershed. The proposal to daylight Walker's Run rather than dig it up and rebury it in a different location is particularly exciting. Doing so would support several of the City's goals and has the potential to create the strong sense of place desired.

The developer's current Sketch Plan is deceptive in the amount of green space which would actually be available for structured or unstructured recreation, especially Block A. Furthermore, it looks as if much of the current asphalt paving will be replaced by asphalt roofing. Please consider giving preference to commercial buildings which have green roofs to mitigate the heat island effect.

With respect to Walker's Run, streams have been daylighted in many cities in the U.S. and abroad over the last 20 years, and for good reason. The benefits include reduction in air temperatures, mitigation of stormwater runoff, attraction to both businesses and residents, and reduction in crime. Daylighting Walker's Run would also be less expensive for our city than for others since the developer would have a clean slate and would not have to work around existing buildings. Rather, building sites could be designed to flank the stream.

A landscaped stream coursing through the new Lakeforest development could be a major unifying and enlivening feature for the site. The stream edges could be left narrow in some sections with expanded parkscapes in other areas. I urge you to press the developer to be more creative in the next step of the site development process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Maureen Baltay
211 Russell Avenue
Gaithersburg

Sent from my iPad

From: edna13miller@gmail.com
To: [Rob Robinson](#); [edna miller](#)
Subject: Fwd: Lakeforest Redevelopment Comment
Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 9:40:45 PM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **edna miller** <edna13miller@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Feb 14, 2023, 6:28 PM
Subject: Lakeforest Redevelopment Comment
To: <rob.robinson@gaithersburgmaryland.gov>
Cc: Bee Ditzler <bee.ditzler@gmail.com>, Michael N. Conroy <mconroy@mvf.org>, Tim Goodfellow <monocacyriver@yahoo.com>, Ann Smith <smith@itecksolutions.com>, edna miller <edna13miller@gmail.com>

Hi Rob,

My comments are about creating Walkability and Centralized Connectivity, when planning to redevelop residential and commercial areas. The benefit of redeveloping Lakeforest Mall should be for it to become a sustainable and resilient neighborhood within the 100 acres.

Centralized public places and spaces are critical for Walkability, in my opinion. It may seem like a wish list, but these possibilities are what makes a neighborhood desirable, attractive and feel like home.

Look at the Kentlands, there the quality residential housing features multi-use development. Ground floors were reserved for small businesses with residential above, designed to surround a large natural setting courtyard, with smart streets and off street parking, as the focal point of this community. Public access to public parks mostly within walking distance.

Their Community Center features a swimming pool, meeting rooms, a party room, again centrally located with some handicapped parking. A workout room and a WiFi room would be a desirable addition at Lakeforest. Another add on would be to have a place reserved for Daycare, a Teen Center, and a Recreation Center for Seniors. No need to drive to local events, activities and the store.

Small business thrive when people are encouraged to walk to Restaurants, Shops, and Services. They do not need to drive once they are home.

It was the Pick up and delivery service businesses that survived the Covid Epidemic. People were home more then, not going to the office, so Walkability paid off. People were getting their exercises by walking for improved health, with local destinations to buy what they needed.

Now, many types of office work is from home, by being online. Locally featured stores within

residential communities are doing well. That is called a big change in work strategies.

Empty commercial buildings are attracting investors who want to convert these buildings into residential uses.

Lakeforest Mall redevelopment has the potential to create centrally located public spaces and places, such as natural pervious surfaces, RainScapes, and Walkability to restaurants, shops & services, by featuring Safe Street design, Safe Crosswalks, low speed limits, and a Community Center that includes Senior activities, Daycare and Teen Programs.

Transportation concepts are changing from auto-centric crawl and sprawl living to Walkability design.

Connectivity features modern electric Transit Systems connecting people to people, to big events, and to employment. The effect of a centrally located Transit Hub within Lakeforest would improve local air quality and help reduce global warming. It would provide healthier outcomes and make Lakeforest feel like home.

Lakeforest has the possibility of making centralized places with natural public spaces for healthier living, with a better quality of life benefit.

Respectfully,

From: [Maryanne Sacco](#)
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan
Date: Thursday, February 16, 2023 7:51:12 AM

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2/16/23

Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council,

As a constituent and local resident, I care deeply about our region's environment. I would like to express some desired changes to the Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan that I think would greatly benefit our community and the wellbeing of our local ecosystem.

The Seneca Creek watershed covers one-third of Montgomery County and includes about half of Gaithersburg. Lower Great Seneca and Middle Great Seneca with tributaries such as Whetstone Run, Walker's Run and Long Draught Branch constitute the northern portion of Gaithersburg with Lake Forest Mall at a mid-point of Seneca's large watershed.

What you choose to do with the Lake Forest 100+ acre plot will have a direct impact on the water quality, habitat, flood resilience, pollution levels, and even temperature in our watershed.

You have the tremendous opportunity to create a development that is sustainable, functional and beautiful, that will increase in value over time and be the 'vibrant sustainable community' spoken of in the Gaithersburg Master Plan (8/18/2021) on redeveloping Lake Forest Mall.

Along with others in my community, my key requests to help the City to achieve these goal are:

1. Retain and incorporate the 1.7-acre forest grove at the intersection of Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road, and the 0.50-acre pond #3 on Russell Avenue in the proposed redevelopment.

The woods are a "Tree Save" area protected in the original Lake Forest Mall development and includes at least four native species of mature oak, a keystone species upon which huge numbers of other species depend. There is also a beautiful pine tree patch on the east side of the property. Retaining mature trees provides the "sense of place" referred to by the developers as being so desirable – and such natural amenities cannot be purchased at any price – a 50 or 75 year old tree requires time to create! Wherever possible throughout the development, mature trees should be incorporated into the design. The project area has been identified as a non-

attainment area for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter (Gaithersburg West Master Plan). Removing trees will increase problems of air quality, stormwater runoff, and heat island effects. Retaining trees, especially the 1.7-acre grove, will also buffer new housing units from the lights and sounds of the nearby fire station and the busy 6-lane Montgomery Village Avenue.

The recent mature tree losses in Gaithersburg (including 3 acres of woodland for Solitaire Court stream restoration, 7 acres for Blohm Park stream restoration, 40 acres for Watkins Mill interchange, 44 acres for Watkins Mill Town Center, and 100 trees at 700 Frederick Rd and Montgomery Village Ave) make retaining these trees all the more important, as all these losses will impact the health of the Seneca Creek watershed.

Retaining these trees also provides an opportunity to add attractive understory plantings, have permeable surface walking trails, and remove invasive species.

2. Dedicate at least 40% of the total residential acreage, and 25% of the commercial acreage, as open space, as per the Lake Forest Master Plan. In addition, the City should also negotiate the acquisition of park land from the developer as was done for Crown Farm Park. The current plan proposes 35% open space but this includes existing stormwater ponds and a potential HOA pool and clubhouse with little public open space or natural areas except stormwater ponds. *No significant new green space is currently planned.* Existing natural areas will be paved and built on, and the small pond will be removed and replaced by the transit center, so open and **green space may actually decrease while 1,600 housing units bring additional population to an already densely developed area** with little access to nearby public parks. Equity in the distribution of green space with its positive physical and mental health benefits is a concern.

3. Daylight, not rebury, Walker's Run and landscape it as an attractive linear park. Walker's Run currently flows through a pipe under Odenthal Road and the mall parking lot before reaching the ponds. The plan calls for the pipe to be dug up, the pipe moved, and the stream redirected into the relocated pipe underground. Since asphalt will be removed and the area redesigned, this is an extraordinary opportunity to create a beautiful natural feature. The newly accessible stream would also allow more flexible stormwater management and improved water quality downstream. Paths could connect this linear park, ponds, and woodland areas. Here's a link to a stream daylighting project in DC's Rock Creek watershed, as a local example of what can be done: <https://chesapeakestormwater.net/awards/daylighting-of-broad-branch-and-restoration-of-its-linnean-park-tributary/>

I am thankful for the interest shown by the Council and developers in creating a space for our entire community at Lake Forest. These recommendations to preserve wooded areas and improve stormwater management will add beauty and create places to walk/run, and be rejuvenated in nature.

Thank you so much for taking my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Maryanne Sacco
111 Kestrel Ct.
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

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Maryanne