

**From:** [Bill Burke](#)  
**To:** [CityHall External Mail](#)  
**Subject:** Lakeforest Redevelopment Plan  
**Date:** Friday, February 17, 2023 12:54:38 PM

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Dear Mayor Ashman and City Council

I'd like to echo the comments made by others with respect to proposed density of this redevelopment project and the related issue of how much open space is retained or created as the project moves forward. I understand that this is a general plan right now, without full details on where open spaces will be, but I urge you to be firm on the need for practically useful open public areas as the project moves along.

Much comes down to how you count the space. You have parcels A and B which are both largely covered by ponds (which certainly can be part of effective open space) but which are on the outside of this project. While they might count for a decent % of open space, they might not be well integrated into the work and living space. Still, they should be retained, including small edge forests on them.

I would also say the idea to daylight Walker's Run sounds interesting. Again, absent a detailed plan, its hard to know what that would actually look like, but the concept of "linear park" could provide an interesting natural anchor for the project.

Thank you.

Bill Burke

216 Winter Walk Drive

Gaithersburg

To Planning Commission, Mayor Ashman, and City Council:

I am writing to reiterate the statements I made on Zoom during January 17, 2023 joint meeting. As I have been reviewing the minutes for the recent city meetings on a number of topics in the city, I have realized that the oral statements are not exactly documented with much detail which is quite a disservice to the people that take time out of their evenings to speak at a city meeting. Therefore, I really want to follow up with a letter to ensure that these statements are fully documented.

1. "Tree save area": I encourage all of you as well as the developers to keep the tree save area on the corner of Odendhal and Montgomery Village Avenue. This is the only dense area of mature trees around the perimeter of the entire complex. It would create a natural sound buffer on a very busy street corner. Please don't praise Gaithersburg as a "tree city" with a logo of a tree and do the opposite by cutting down mature trees that were designated to be saved with the original construction of the mall complex.
2. Contiguous pedestrian perimeter sidewalk: I applaud the developers for want to create a pedestrian friendly complex within the development area. But I want to also encourage pedestrian safety around the entire perimeter of the complex. Currently, the sidewalk just ends abruptly at the corner of Montgomery Village Ave and Russell Ave (below).



The sidewalk also ends at Odendhal and Russell. This requires a pedestrian to cross over Russell twice if they are walking around the perimeter. This is specifically dangerous at the areas where drivers are making right turns that have minimal visibility to see a pedestrian enter the cross walk.



Given the many pedestrian fatalities recently in the area, I really want to encourage everyone to make a continuous sidewalk around the entire perimeter of the redevelopment complex to support the pedestrian friendly concept of the development but also encourage nearby residents to walk over rather than drive their cars.

3. Daylighting Walker's Run: I encourage the city and the developer to consider "daylighting" Walker's Run rather than keep it buried under asphalt and new buildings. You have the opportunity to take advantage of a natural resource already present in the city and do something new and unique. As stated during the meeting on 1/17, "The applicant responded that Block A can be cleaned up, establishing a useable area to walk and enjoy the pond and more greenspace. There is a great opportunity with Block B to create a boardwalk near the water and an overlook, rooftops for restaurants and gathering spaces." (Page 4- minutes). This would be a great opportunity to utilize a natural resource that is already present underground and create a scenic area that hopefully looks less "man-made" and commercial like the Rio pond. One of the features of walking through downtown Frederick is walking along Carroll Creek (see below) which is something that could be done here along Russell Ave.



4. Youth activity areas: I want to echo many of the comments during the meeting about a place for youth/teens to be able to do activities and spend time where they feel safe. Walking around Pike & Rose, Bethesda Row, or even Rio, you will see a lot of teens gathering and hanging out. However, there isn't necessarily much for them to do besides shop. I think it would be great to have an activity center, skate park, band shell, or sports area that would be open to the public, not just residents of the development area.

Thank you for your time.

Amelia Barrett

**From:** [Donna Zanner](#)  
**To:** [Chris Berger](#); [Jud Ashman](#); [Planning External Mailing](#)  
**Subject:** Lakeforest zoning sketch plan  
**Date:** Friday, February 17, 2023 4:11:13 PM

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Good afternoon, Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, Mr. Berger.

If this could please be added to the record, please.

This is written in reference to the Lakeforest Mall Sketch Plan. I do appreciate the care in thought in retaining green space, the potential for new jobs, and planning for a community that draws people to the area, the entertainment areas look exciting!

Some things have been brought to my attention that deserve support, that I mention in an effort to ensure that they are not lost in any revisions to the plan, others are simply excellent ideas to enhance such a community.

In your plan, the idea of Makerspace, is a wonderful idea, in the innovation of having a chance for people to create, and bringing people together. Bravo!

Regarding the green spaces - to have space for a community garden. In these times of potential decrease in availability of food, and rising costs, would be invaluable. Retaining any present habitats- no matter how small, is very important. The ecosystem takes years to regenerate, and we must try to retain what we can. Having playgrounds with areas for baseball or soccer would certainly draw families to the area. The concept of 'Daylight Streams' was new to me, but such an environmentally sound suggestion.

I support having a community gathering hall for concerts, meetings, etc.

Having a grocery store in this community is necessary. There is no store on the east side of 270 that is easy to get to, without crossing Montgomery Village Ave.

I feel that it is important to not move the transportation hub. There are many residents of Asbury that regularly go to the existing hub, and to make them walk all the way down to where they are proposing will make it very difficult. It will also force all those coming from the east and north (from the Village) to cut through the new community. I feel that Odend Hal Rd has gotten to be one of the most dangerous roads to walk, as people drive unbelievably fast. I can no longer walk my dog along the road. I cannot imagine all those folks from Asbury walking along there.

I also feel it is imperative that the community is informed every step of the way regarding the demolishing of the Mall, because of the asbestos and other pollutants that will be dispersed.

Thank you for your consideration.  
D.Susan Zanner

108 Russell Ave,  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

From: [johudson@starpower.net](mailto:johudson@starpower.net)  
To: [CityHall External Mail](#)  
Subject: Public Comment for Lake Forest Redevelopment Plan  
Date: Friday, February 17, 2023 4:44:40 PM

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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 for 52 years, 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 well being 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 these comments developed by the three watershed organizations in Gaithersburg into consideration. I couldn't agree more with the comments or said it any better.

Sincerely,  
Toni Hudson  
214 Tulip Dr.  
Gaithersburg MD 20877