



# The Great Seneca Plan

CONNECTING LIFE AND SCIENCE

Preliminary Recommendations | Fall 2023

# Plan Schedule

- Fall 2023: Preliminary Recommendations
- Winter 2024: Working Draft
- Spring 2024: Planning Board Review
- Summer 2024: County Council Review



Figure 1: Great Seneca Plan Process

# Great Seneca Plan

The Great Seneca Plan covers 4,330 acres in the heart of the I-270 corridor. It borders both the Intercounty Connector (ICC) and MD 355 and is adjacent to the MARC Brunswick Line.

The Plan area is non-contiguous and dispersed among municipalities. The City of Gaithersburg occupies 10 square miles in the center of the Plan area, the City of Rockville borders the Plan area on the east, and the Town of Washington Grove borders the Plan area to the northeast.



Figure 2: Regional Context of Great Seneca Plan Area

# Great Seneca Plan Purpose

- Integrate policy guidance developed over the last decade, including Vision Zero, Racial Equity and Social Justice, Climate Action Plan, Corridor Forward, and Thrive Montgomery 2050.
- Address departures from and barriers to achieving the 2010 Plan vision.
- Consider new planned infrastructure, including the Great Seneca Transit Network.
- Identify emerging issues and trends.
- Establish a shared vision to guide future development and investment.



*Figure 3: Recently Constructed Building in Life Sciences Center*

# Applying an Equity Lens

The plan area includes a major and growing jobs center in the county, the Life Sciences Center, that provides well paying jobs for diverse levels of educational attainment. This plan examines how to provide access to the area through:

- Expanding transportation choice
- Increasing housing, improving affordability and attainability
- Supporting companies of all sizes

# Plan Milestones to Date

- [Scope of Work](#) - May 2022
- [Existing Conditions Report](#) – January 2023
- Emerging “[big ideas](#)” - April 2023
- [Community Engagement Report](#) - May 2023



Figure 4: Community Outreach and Engagement

# Plan Area

Given the Plan's dispersed character, it includes several distinct geographic areas including the Life Sciences Center, Quince Orchard, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Londonderry-Hoyles Addition, Rosemont, Oakmont, Walnut Hill, Washingtonian Light Industrial Park, Washingtonian Residential, and Hi Wood. These areas are referred to as enclaves.

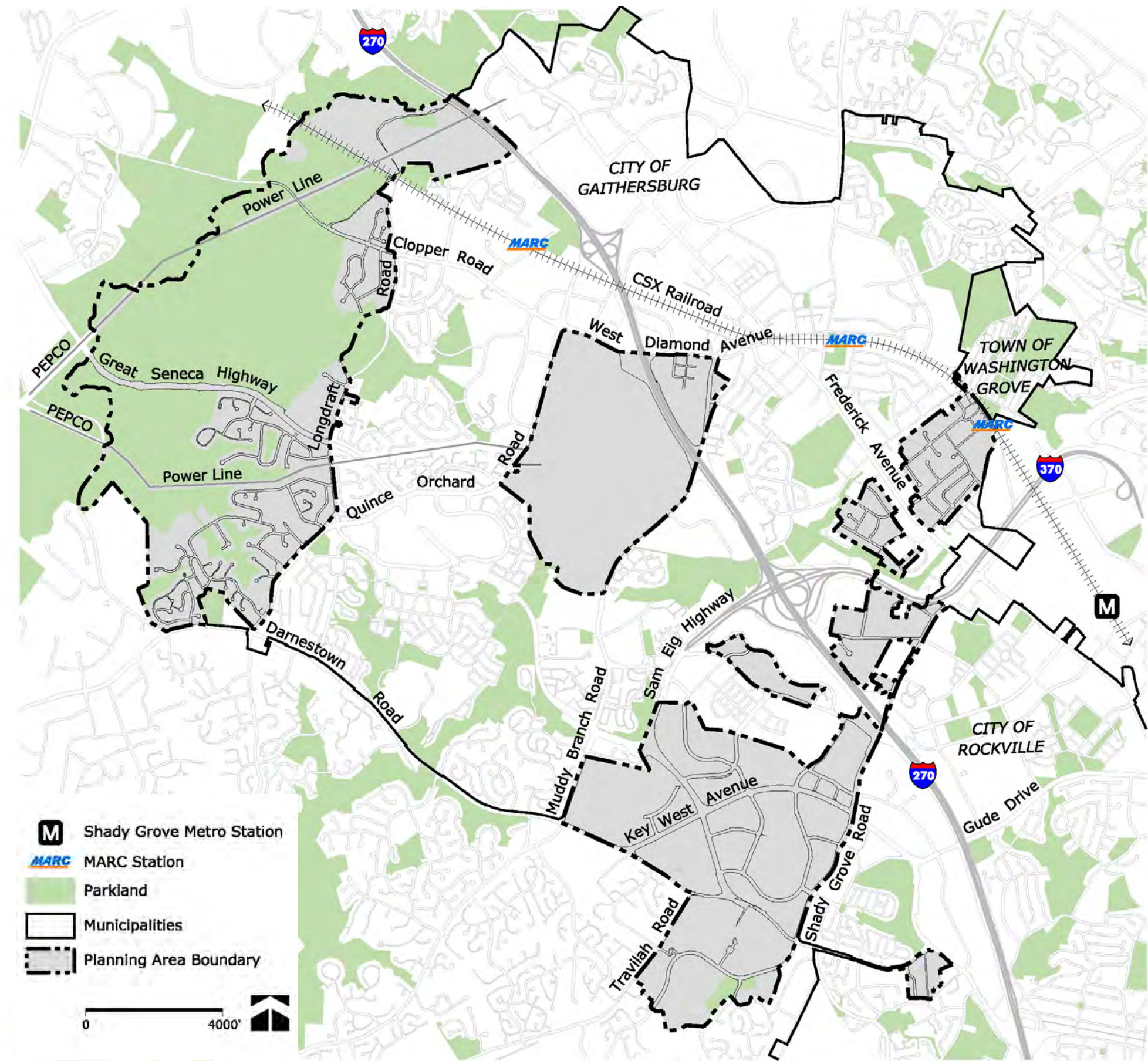


Figure 5: Great Seneca Plan Area

# Plan Area Diversity

The enclaves are diverse, with different contexts, characteristics, communities, and cultural centers. Given the distinctive nature of each enclave, the Plan considers them separately and includes preliminary recommendations that respond to the unique needs of each.



Figure 6: Existing Conditions in Plan Enclaves

# Plan Organization

This Plan separates preliminary recommendations by enclave so that residents, community members, developers and other stakeholders can reference the section associated with a specific area of interest. The Life Sciences Center is the focus of the Plan and therefore is the most detailed section.



Figure 7: Existing Mixed-Use Building in Life Sciences Center

# Preliminary Recommendations

Preliminary recommendations are the result of planner expert analysis of existing conditions and best practices, consultant expertise, and robust stakeholder engagement.

This document includes the vision and summary of preliminary recommendations for each enclave, as well as select specific recommendations.

The vision and recommendations will continue to evolve through conversations with community members, stakeholders, property owners and decision makers.



Figure 8: Elements of Preliminary Recommendation Development

# Recommendations - Table of Contents

---

Life Sciences Center (LSC) and LSC Districts p. 12

---

NIST/Londonderry and Hoyle's Addition p. 24

---

Quince Orchard p. 29

---

Rosemont, Oakmont and Walnut Hill p. 32

---

Washingtonian Light Industrial Park p. 38

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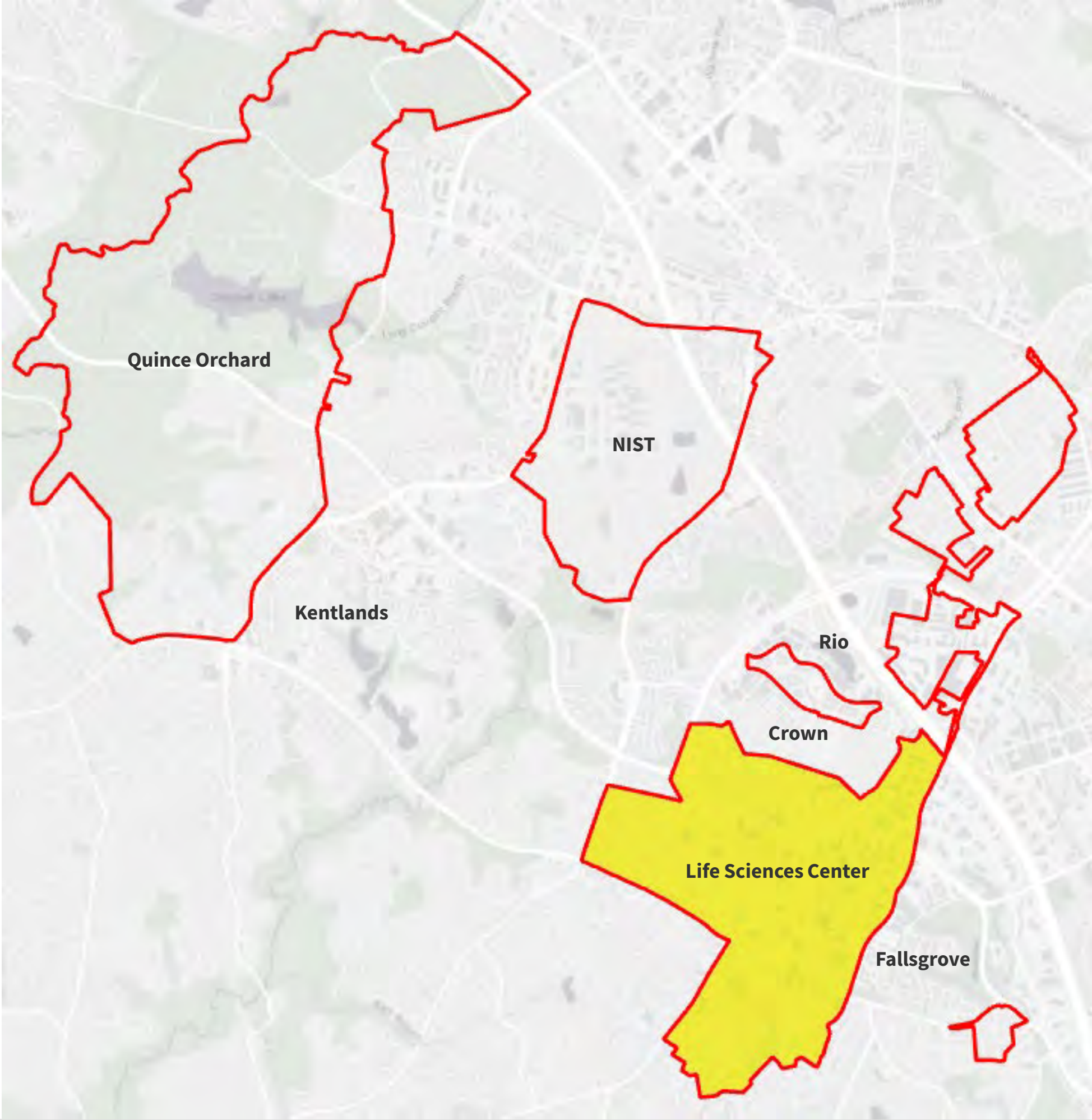
Washingtonian Residential p. 41

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Hi Wood p. 44

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# Life Sciences Center



# Life Sciences Center

The Life Sciences Center borders the City of Rockville and the City of Gaithersburg. The Life Sciences Center is bisected by the major roads of Key West Avenue, Great Seneca Highway, and Darnestown Road and bordered by Sam-Eig Highway, I-270, Shady Grove Road and Muddy Branch Road.

The Life Sciences Center serves as the county's premier location for the life sciences and biohealth industries. It includes the Adventist Healthcare Medical Center at Shady Grove, The Universities at Shady Grove, the National Cancer Institute, as well as private life sciences companies.

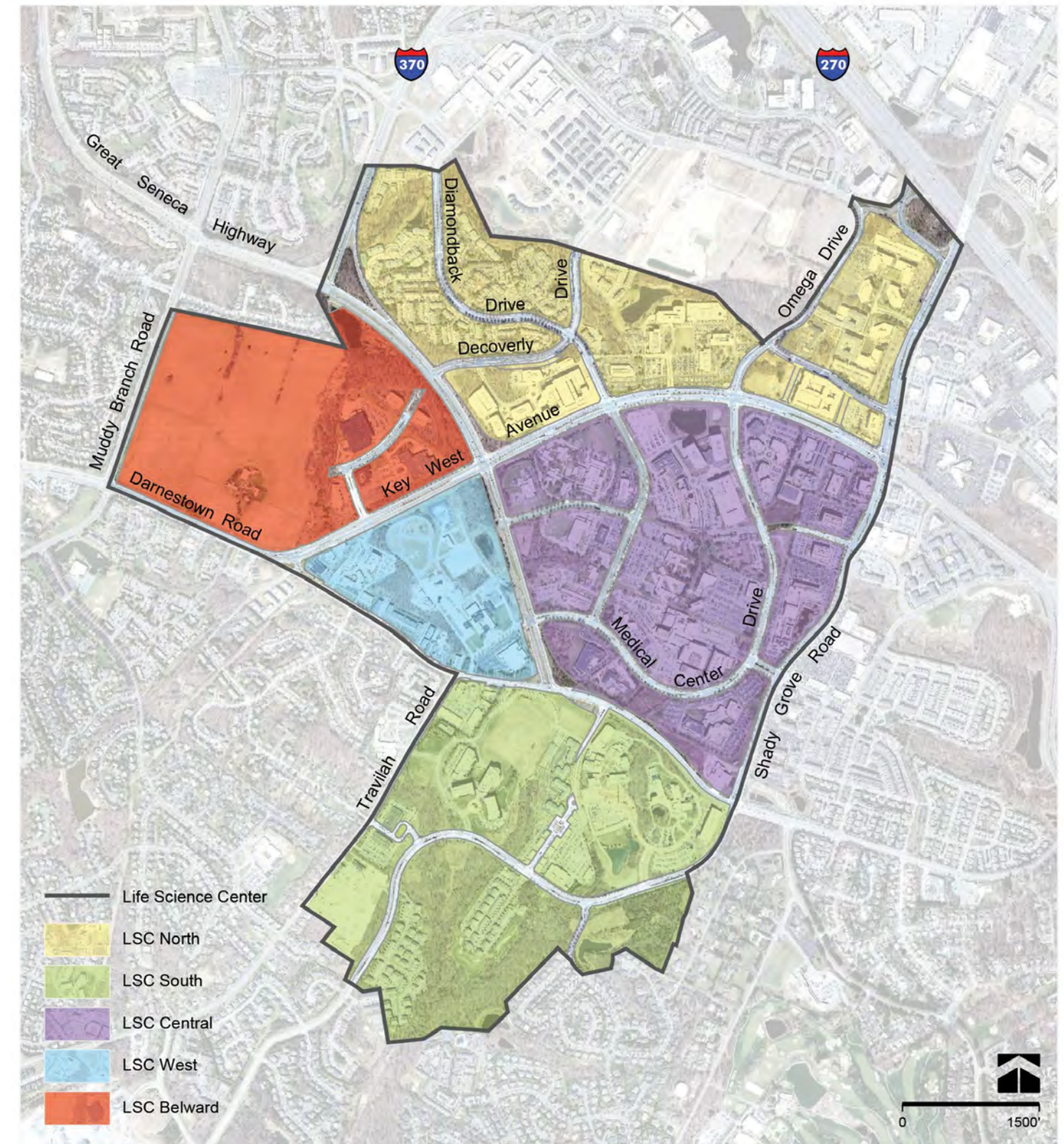
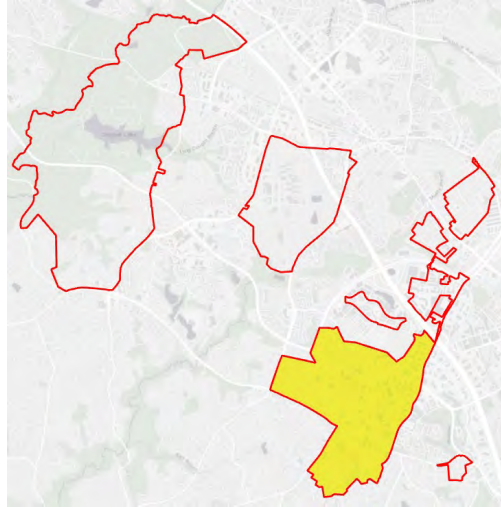


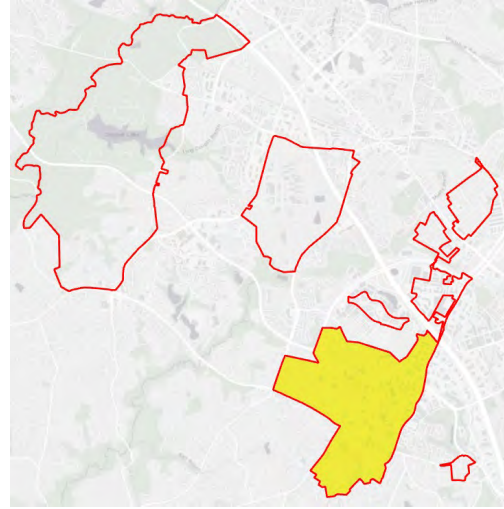
Figure 9: Life Sciences Center and LSC Districts

# Life Sciences Center - Vision



- Remain a thriving economic hub, home to diverse population and host to growing medical, educational and life sciences institutions and companies.
- Become an area that prioritizes equitable access to jobs, transportation options, housing, and public spaces.
- Become an area with strong walking, biking and transit connections.
- Provide a public realm and open spaces that support a place that is more than the sum of its parts.

# Life Sciences Center Recommendations



- Increase mixed-use infill and redevelopment supported by diverse housing options, safe, accessible, and reliable transportation infrastructure, services, and amenities to meet the needs of a variety of people within a 15-minute walk, bike, roll, or ride.
  - Integrate housing with life sciences and medical uses.
  - Right-size roadways, repurposing or reducing travel lanes.
  - Provide a network of active and passive spaces throughout the Life Sciences Center.
- Mitigate most common and damaging environmental events, flooding and extreme heat, through design.

# Life Sciences Center - Opportunity Sites

The preliminary recommendations identify several opportunity sites in the Life Sciences Center. The opportunity sites are envisioned as properties that have the potential to accommodate infill development or redevelopment near planned transit, as well as deliver public benefits including parks, publicly accessible open spaces, streets, and sustainable design.

# Life Sciences Center - Districts

The 2010 Plan divided the Life Science Center into five districts including: LSC North, LSC Central, LSC West, LSC South, and LSC Belward. The boundaries of these districts are separated by major roadways. These roadways, instead of becoming part of the public realm, have acted as barriers between the districts.

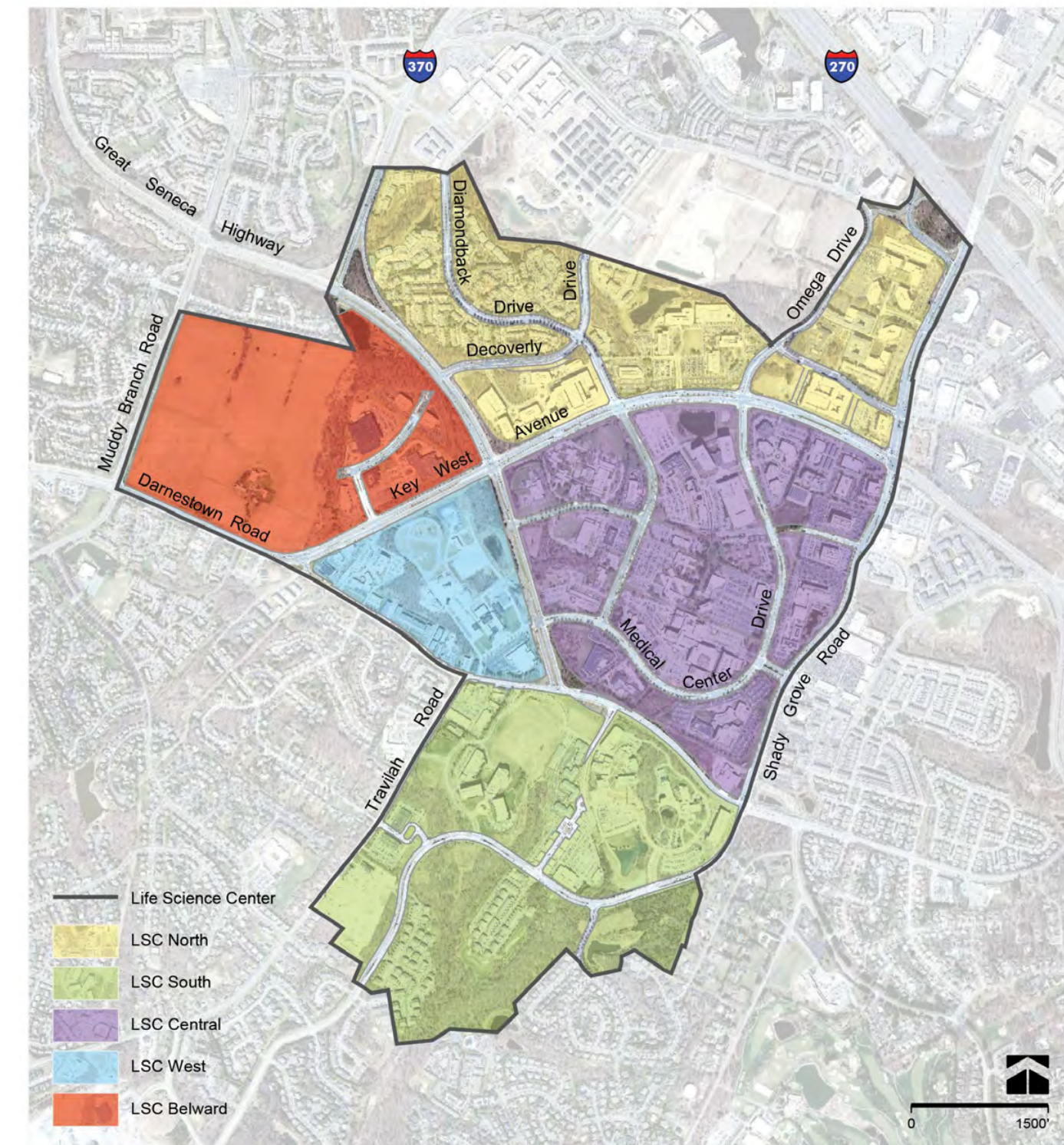


Figure 10: Life Sciences Center and LSC Districts

# LSC North Recommendations

- Reduce the number of travel lanes on Key West Avenue to create a safer and more comfortable environment for people walking, rolling, biking, riding transit, and driving.
- Opportunity sites
  - Guardian Property (15200 Shady Grove Rd)
  - The Grove (Properties bounded by Research Blvd, Omega Dr, and Shady Grove Rd)
  - Discoverly Hall (Key West Ave and Omega Dr)

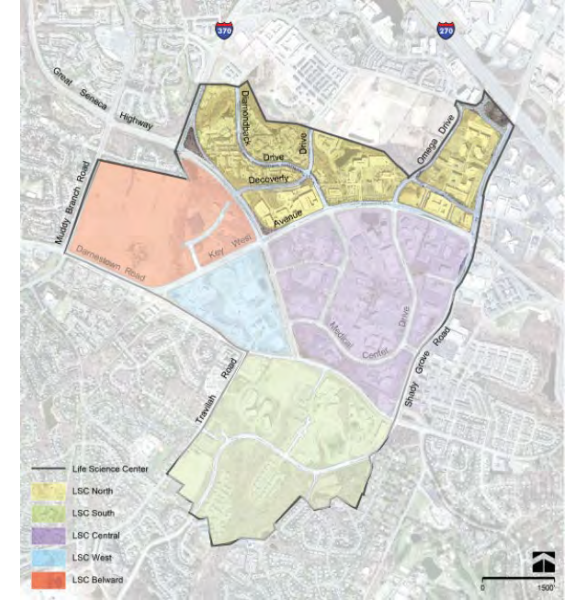


Figure 11: Aerial view of Key West Ave

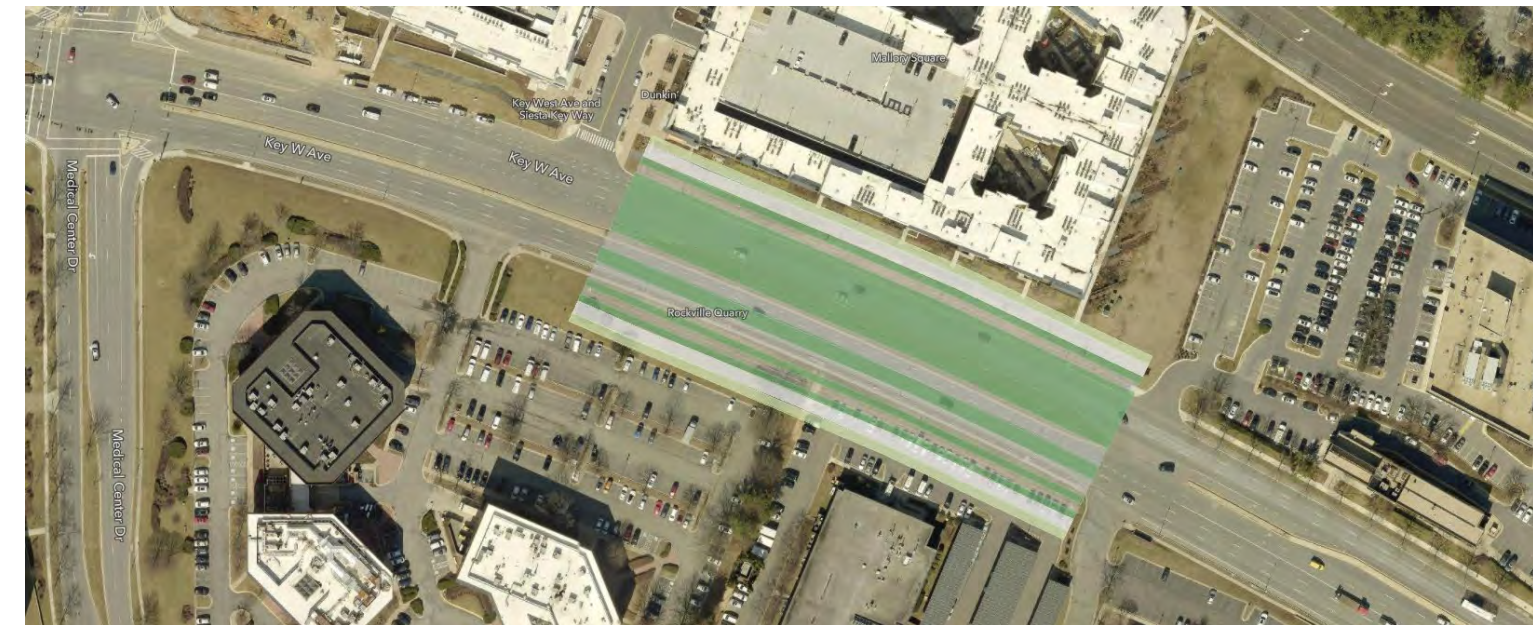


Figure 12: Precedent image of an esplanade



<https://hdc.org/buildings/eastern-parkway-scenic-landmark/>

# LSC Central Recommendations

- Establish LSC Central as a downtown area through strategic infill and redevelopment – including integration of housing among life sciences and medical uses
- Establish a fine-grain street grid to improve multimodal connectivity
- Create a 1.5-acre open space along Broschart Road
- Opportunity sites
  - Adventist Healthcare Medical Center at Shady Grove
  - Former site of Johns Hopkins University Montgomery County Campus
  - Properties (publicly and privately owned) bordered by Key West Ave, Broschart Rd, Medical Center Dr, and Great Seneca Hwy

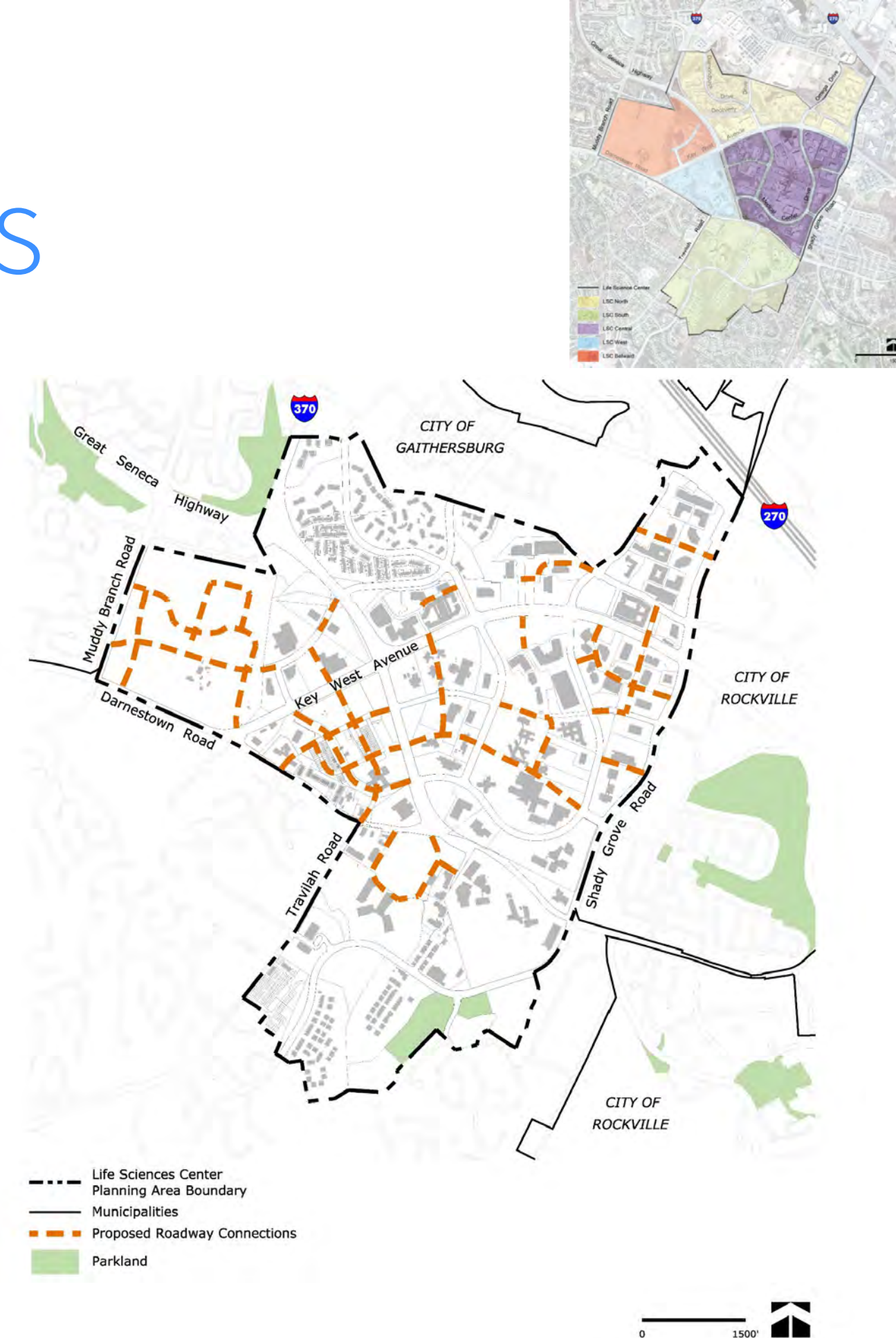


Figure 13: Proposed Streets in Life Sciences Center

# LSC South Recommendations

- Improve Traville Local Park, an undeveloped park located at Shady Grove Rd and Willow Tree Dr.
- Establish the Traville Transit Center on Traville Gateway Dr. as the terminus of the Great Seneca Transit Network. Ensure the center is meaningfully integrated with surrounding development, well marked, and easily accessible
- Opportunity Sites
  - Traville Parcel N (9010 Darnestown Road)
  - Universities at Shady Grove

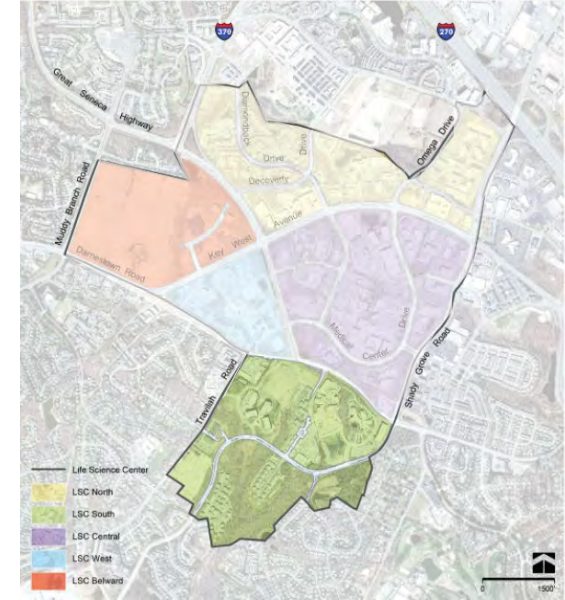


Figure 14: Parcel N Illustrative Concept Campus Plan

# LSC West Recommendations

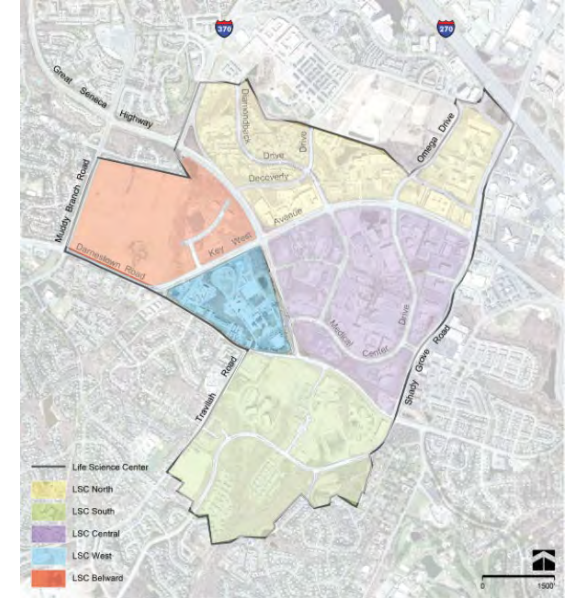
- Repurpose eastern portion Great Seneca Highway for a pilot linear open space
- Opportunity Sites
  - Cyber Security Center of Excellence



Figure 15: Linear Open Space Example



Figure 16: Recommended Pilot Open Space Location



# LSC Belward Recommendations

- Confirm Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan's Corridor Connector through the Belward Farm property.
- Opportunity Sites
  - Belward Campus
    - Confirm recommendations of the 2010 Plan, including:
    - Creation of Muddy Branch Publicly Accessible Open Space
    - Adaptive reuse of Belward farm buildings

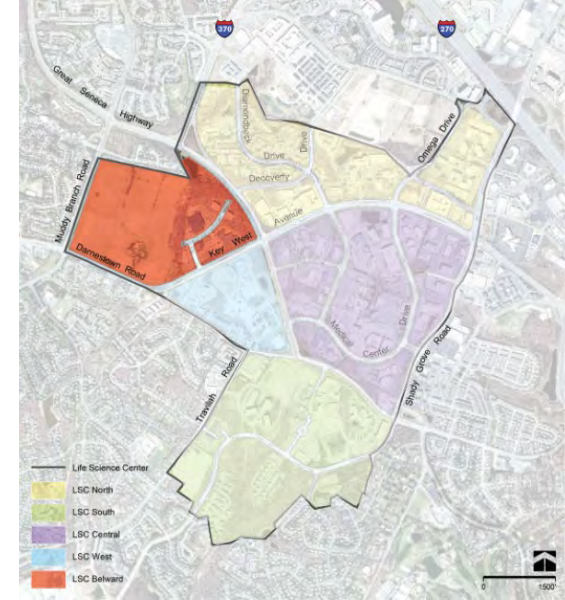
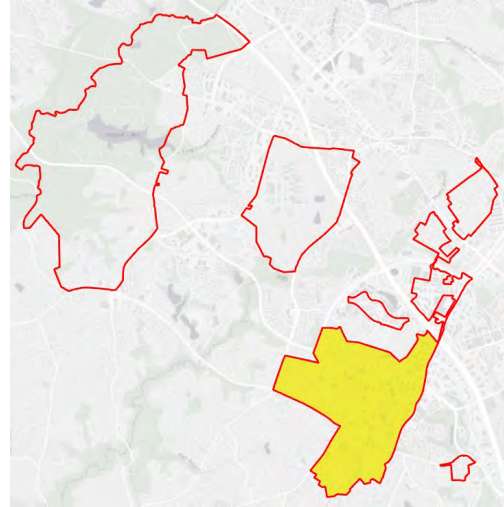


Figure 17: Belward Farm

# Life Sciences Center Implementation

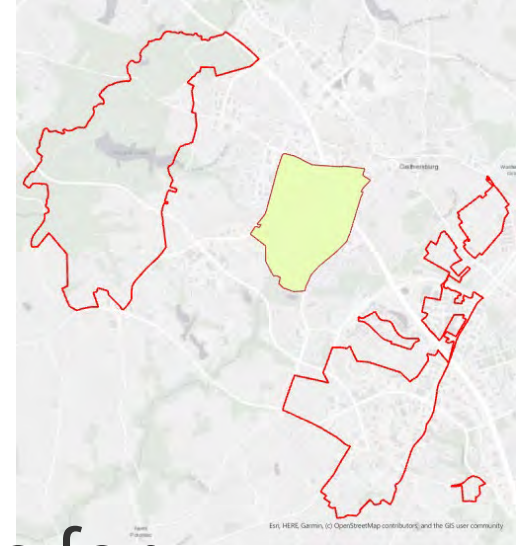


- Create an overlay zone that incentivizes housing and alters development standards to achieve urban design that promotes walkability.
- Establish an entity that brands, promotes, and programs the area.
- Establish a financing mechanism to advance planning, design, and implementation of the Plan's recommendations.
- Remove staging requirements established by the 2010 Plan.
- Provide a list of recommendations to be carried out by partner agencies, vetted by them.

# NIST, Londonderry and Hoyle's Addition

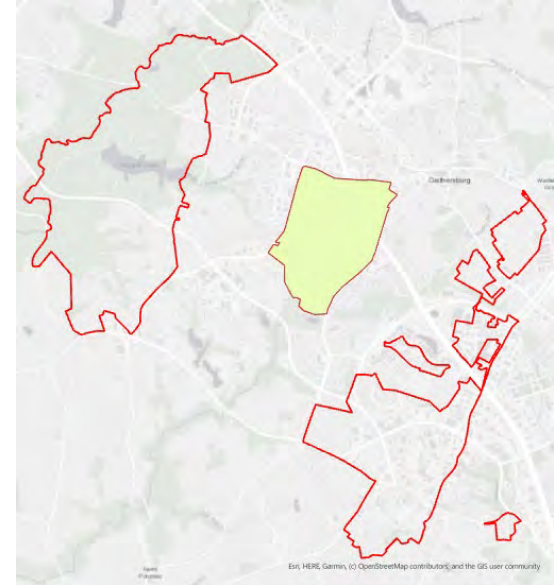


# NIST/Londonderry and Hoyle's Addition



- This enclave is surrounded by the City of Gaithersburg. It includes the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), the multi-unit residential buildings: Londonderry Towers, The Willow, Londonderry Apartments, and Montgomery Club Apartments and Townhomes. NIST and the residential parts of the enclave are separated by I-270.
- The residential buildings contain more than 1,100 residential units. Most affordable housing units are through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program (LIHTC), but there are also a mix of other affordable programs like project-based Section 8.

# NIST/Londonderry and Hoyle's Addition



The Community Equity Index (CEI) is a composite measure of equity-related indicators developed to help analyze existing conditions in neighborhoods and explore factors that may contribute to racial and social inequities in Montgomery County.

It describes each neighborhood's level of advantage or disadvantage based on its combined indicator score compared to the county's overall score of five indicators:

- Poverty Status
- Education level
- English language proficiency
- Housing tenure (Households that rent housing)
- Per capita income

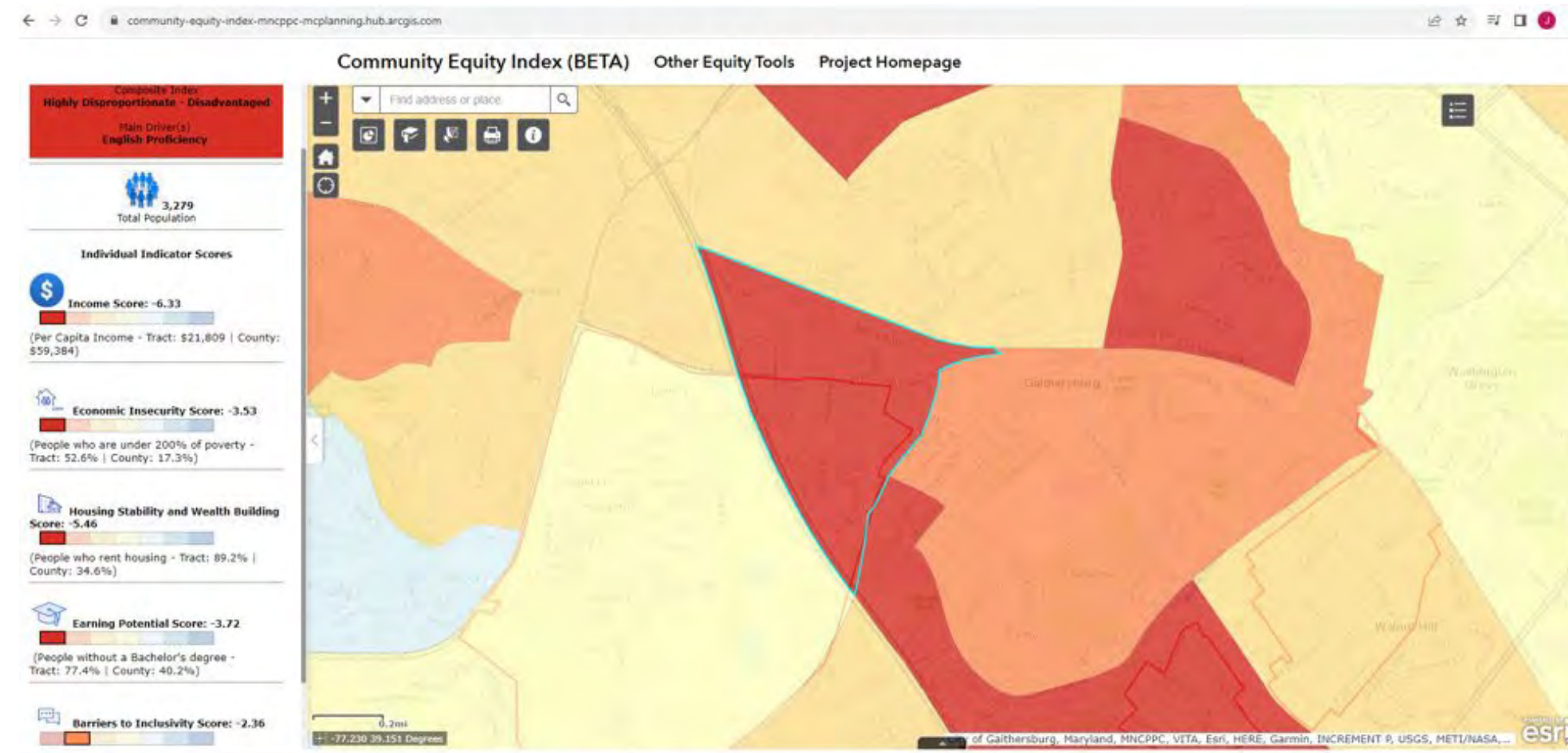
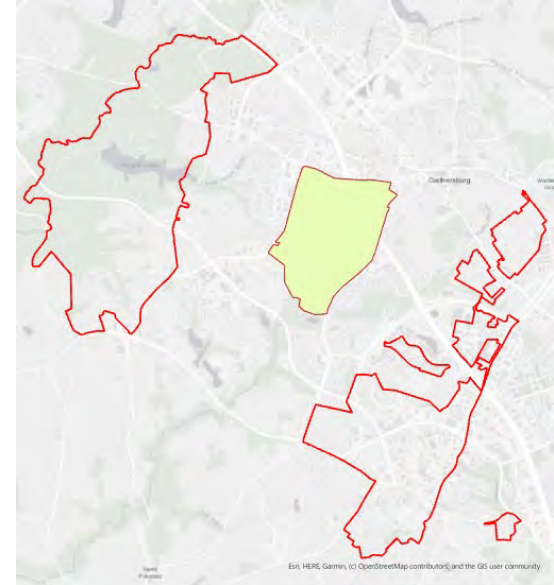


Figure 18: Snapshot of Community Equity Index for Enclave

# NIST/Londonderry and Hoyle's Addition



- According to the Community Equity Index, the residential part of the enclave is highly disproportionate/disadvantaged. Nearly half the residents are below 200 percent of the poverty line, 90 percent of people rent housing, the per capita income is just over a third of the average for the county.
- According to the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening Tool, the Londonderry area has high:
  - Air toxics associated with cancer
  - Hazard waste proximity
  - Traffic proximity

# NIST, Londonderry and Hoyle's Addition Recommendations

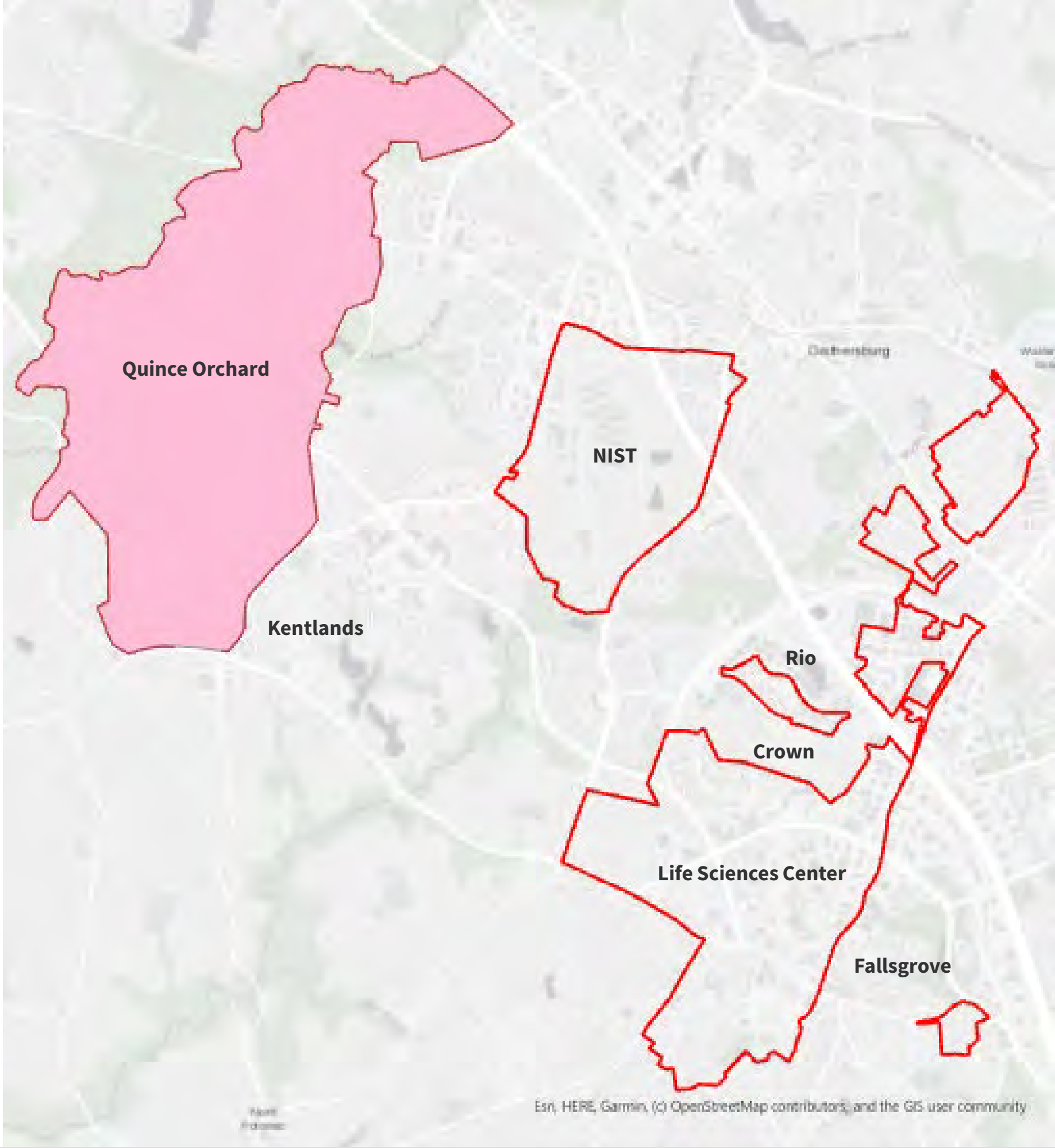
Plan recommendations for the area are forthcoming. The Plan will include recommendations to:

- Increase residential zoning capacity
- Mitigate noise and traffic pollution due to I-270
- Increase environmental features
- Improve equity related metrics



Figure 19: Londonderry Towers

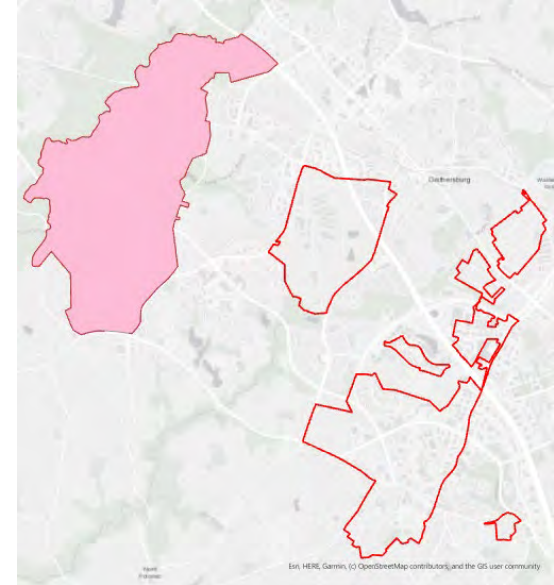
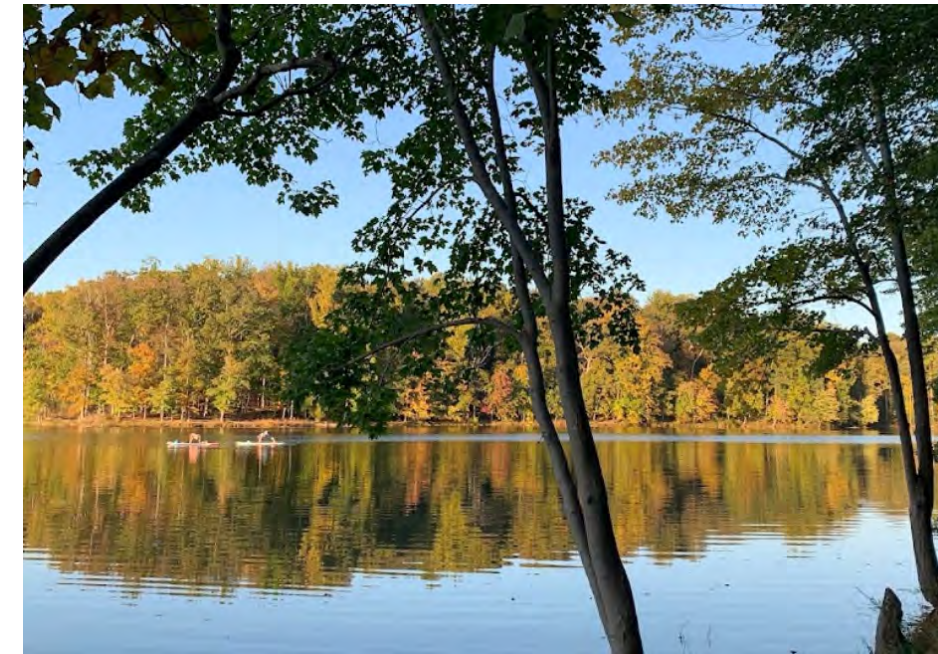
# Quince Orchard



# Quince Orchard

The Quince Orchard enclave is the westernmost portion of the Plan area and is generally defined by I-270 to the north, Great Seneca Creek to the west, Darnestown Road to the south, and the City of Gaithersburg to the east. The enclave includes the communities of Parkridge, Quince Orchard Valley, Quince Orchard Manor, Orchard Hills, and Willow Ridge, as well as Seneca Creek State Park.

The enclave is predominantly characterized by single-family detached residential units and parkland and has limited transit access. This plan recommends retaining the residential zoning, but encourages organic, incremental development to achieve diversity in housing types in Quince Orchard over the life of the Plan.



*Figures 20 and 21: Seneca Creek State Park and Quince Orchard community*

# Quince Orchard Recommendations

- Rezone McGown Property (bordered by I-270, City of Gaithersburg and Seneca Creek State Park)
- Implement Germantown to Burtonsville Breezeway recommended in 2018 Bicycle Master Plan
- Improve and update the Quince Valley Neighborhood Park
- Encourage the installation of rain gardens and bioswales

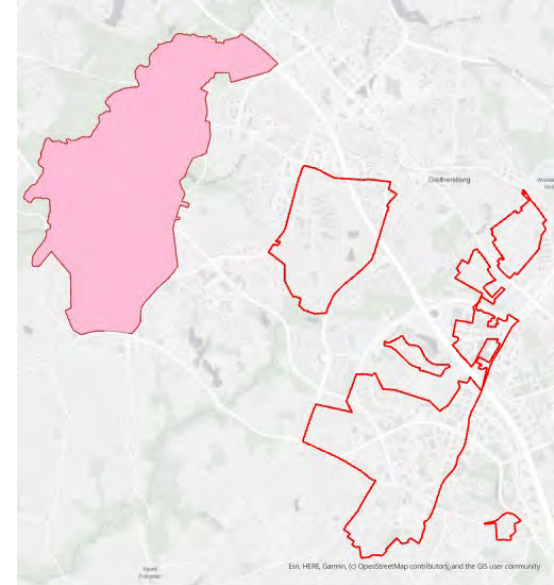
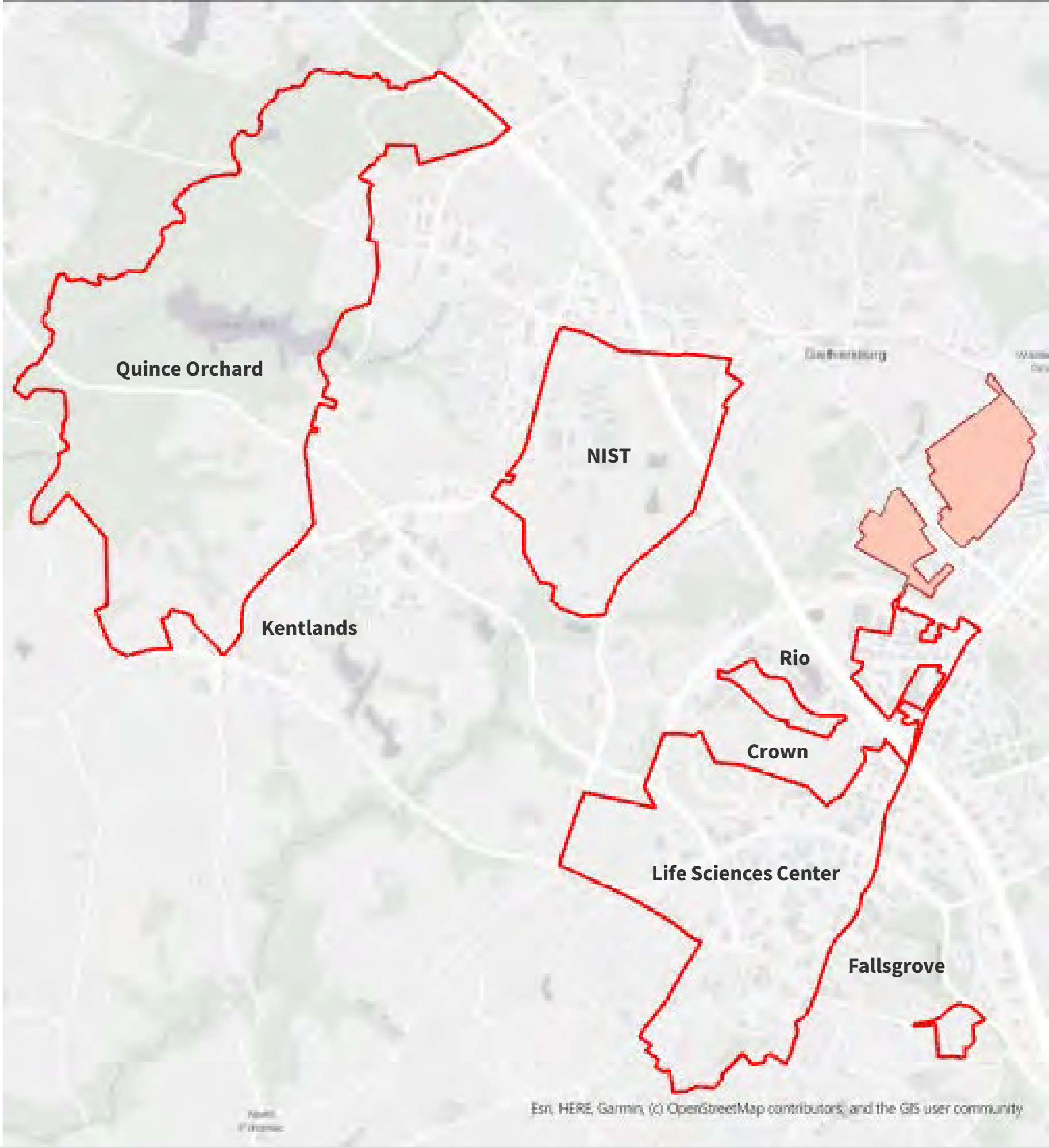


Figure 22: Park building at Quince Valley Neighborhood Park

# Rosemont, Oakmont and Walnut Hill



# Rosemont

The Rosemont enclave is completely surrounded by the City of Gaithersburg and is generally defined by Alden Avenue, Virginia Drive and Edgewood Drive. The enclave is adjacent to Rosemont Elementary School and Morris Park, both within the City of Gaithersburg. Rosemont is exclusively characterized by single-family detached residential units primarily constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. The Rosemont enclave is fully built out, but this plan encourages organic, incremental development to achieve diversity in housing types over the life of the Plan.

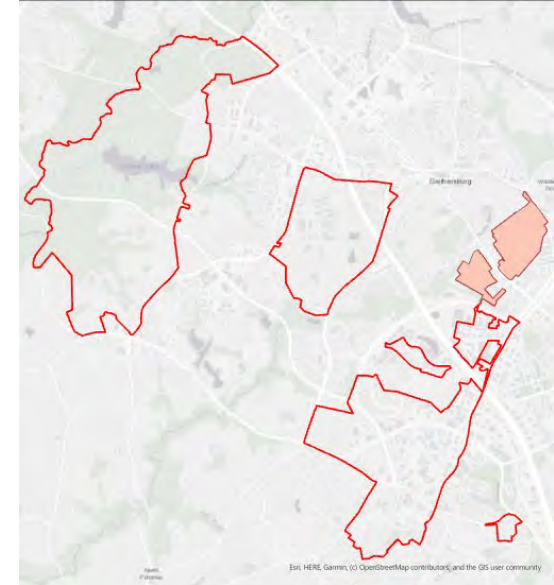


Figure 23: Rosemont Elementary School

# Rosemont Recommendations

- Retain existing R-200 zoning
- Coordinate with the City of Gaithersburg to link the City's planned Industrial Dr to Summit Hall Rd Bicycle Connection to Edgewood Ct
- Encourage the installation stormwater management infrastructure such as rain gardens on private property through existing county programs such as rainscapes
- Increase use of bioswales and rain gardens in landscaped areas and along roadways
- Annexation of the Rosemont enclave into the City of Gaithersburg is logical and consistent with the City's Maximum Expansion Limits (MEL)

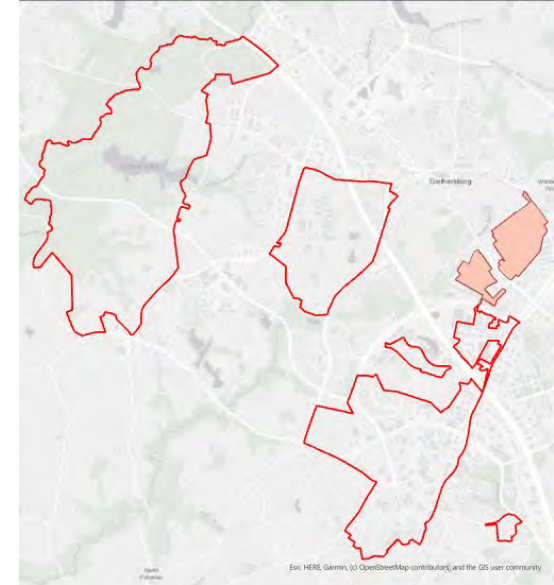


Figure 24: Rosemont Community

# Oakmont and Walnut Hill

The communities of Oakmont and Walnut Hill are located at the northeastern corner of the Plan area. The City of Gaithersburg borders the enclave to the east, west, and south, and the Town of Washington Grove borders the enclave to the north. The enclave is primarily residential with some institutional and limited commercial uses. This plan envisions that the primarily residential character will remain and encourages organic, incremental development to achieve diversity in housing types.

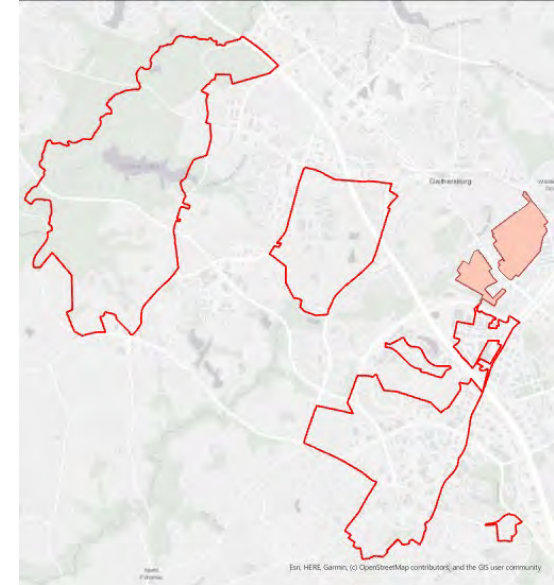


Figure 25: Hershey's Restaurant in Oakmont Community

# Oakmont and Walnut Hill

Given the proximity of Oakmont and Walnut Hill to the Washington Grove MARC Rail Station and planned Bus Rapid Transit on MD355, this enclave is included within the Corridor Focused Growth Area established by Thrive Montgomery 2050. However, the MARC Cornerstone Plan and Corridor Forward Plan have postulated that the Washington Grove MARC Rail Station may need to be decommissioned to provide capacity for potential new MARC rail stations at Shady Grove and/or White Flint.

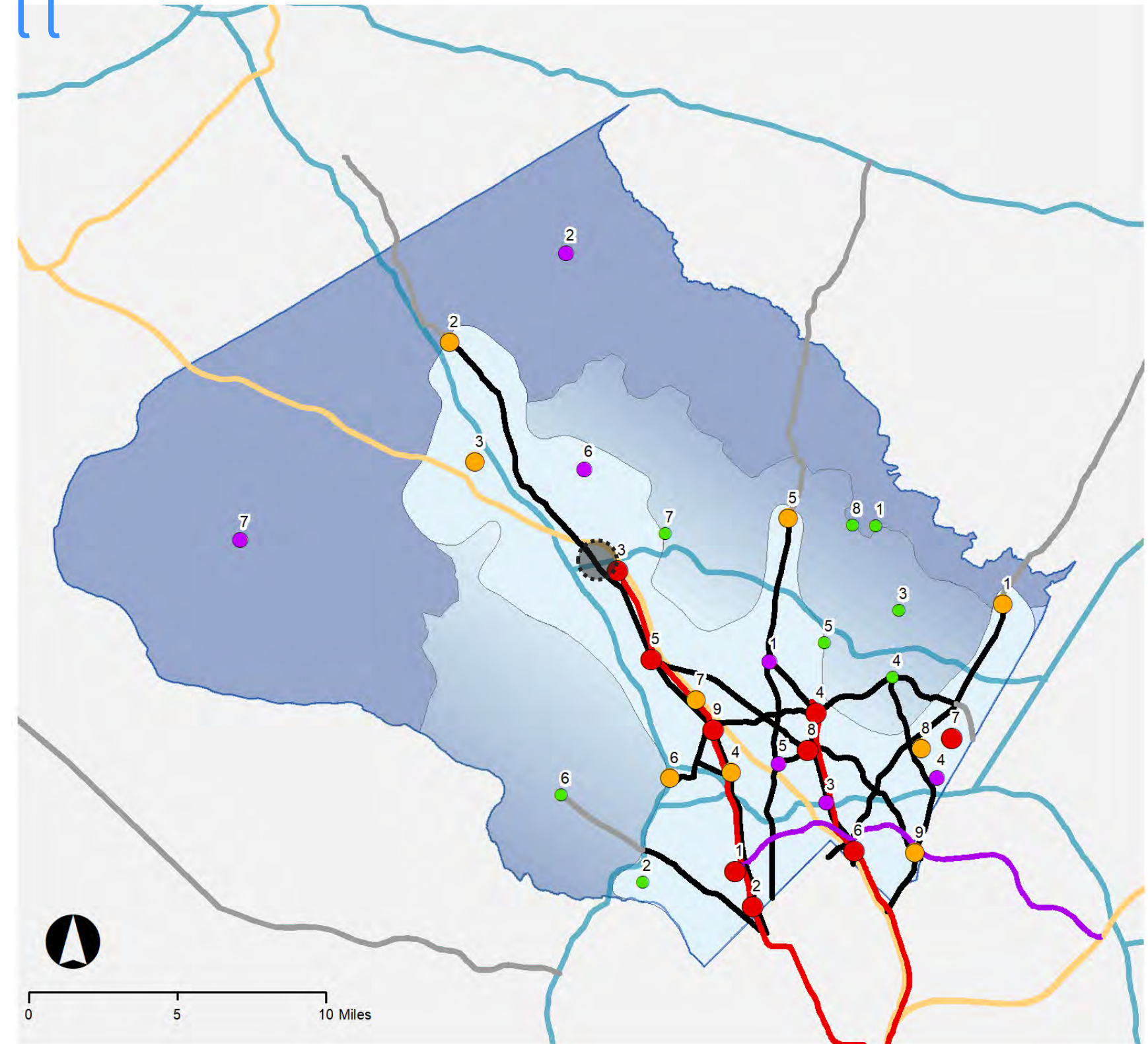


Figure 26: Thrive Montgomery 2050 Growth Map, with Oakmont and Walnut Hill Highlighted

# Oakmont and Walnut Hill

- Retain existing zoning; however, if expanded service on the MARC Rail Brunswick Line is implemented and the Washington Grove station remains operational, this Plan supports an application for a Commercial Residential Neighborhood Floating Zone for parcels within one-quarter mile of the Washington Grove station.
- Support the long-term potential of the Maryland Transit Administration MARC Rail Brunswick Line and the Corridor Forward Plan recommendation to add stations at Shady Grove and White Flint by exploring skip stop operations or decommissioning underutilized stations like Washington Grove.
- Annexation of the Oakmont and Walnut Hill enclave into the City of Gaithersburg is logical and consistent with the City's MEL.

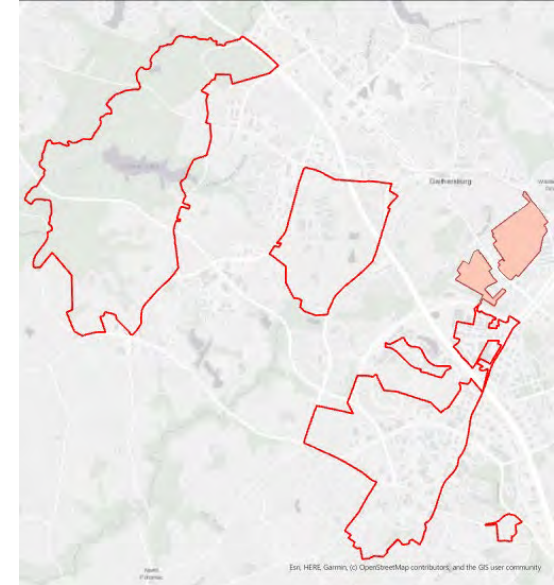


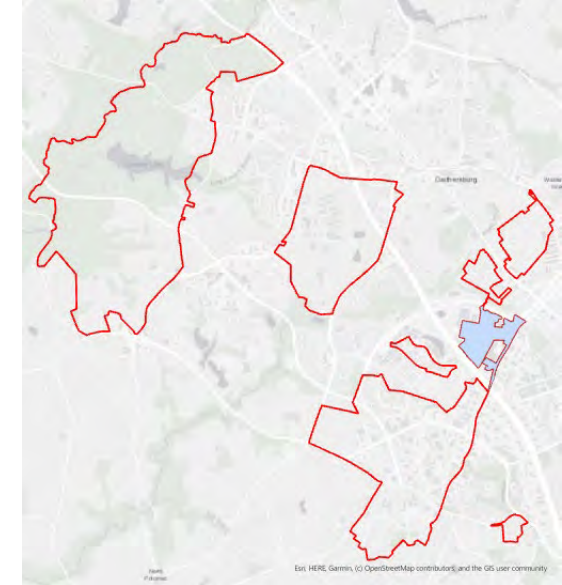
Figure 27: Washington Grove MARC Rail Station

# Washingtonian Light Industrial Park



# Washingtonian Light Industrial Park

- The Washingtonian Light Industrial Park is located southeast of the I-270 and I-370 interchange along Shady Grove Road. The 103-acre industrial park is bordered by the City of Gaithersburg on the north, west, and south, and by the City of Rockville on the east.
- Uses in the Washington Light Industrial Park enable different forms of employment including vocational and entry level jobs and spaces for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and artisans and support basic needs for residents, non-profits and public agencies as well as unique recreational opportunities.
- The Washingtonian Light Industrial Park should continue to provide space for these crucial uses and the Plan does not recommend changes to land use in the enclave.



# Washingtonian Light Industrial Park

- Confirm existing zoning
- Increase green cover and tree canopy cover by planting street trees, increasing landscape islands in surface parking lot, and increasing use of bioswales and rain gardens in landscaped areas
- Reduce the distance between controlled crossings on Shady Grove Road and Gaither Road
- Achieve a PLOC level 2 on all roadways

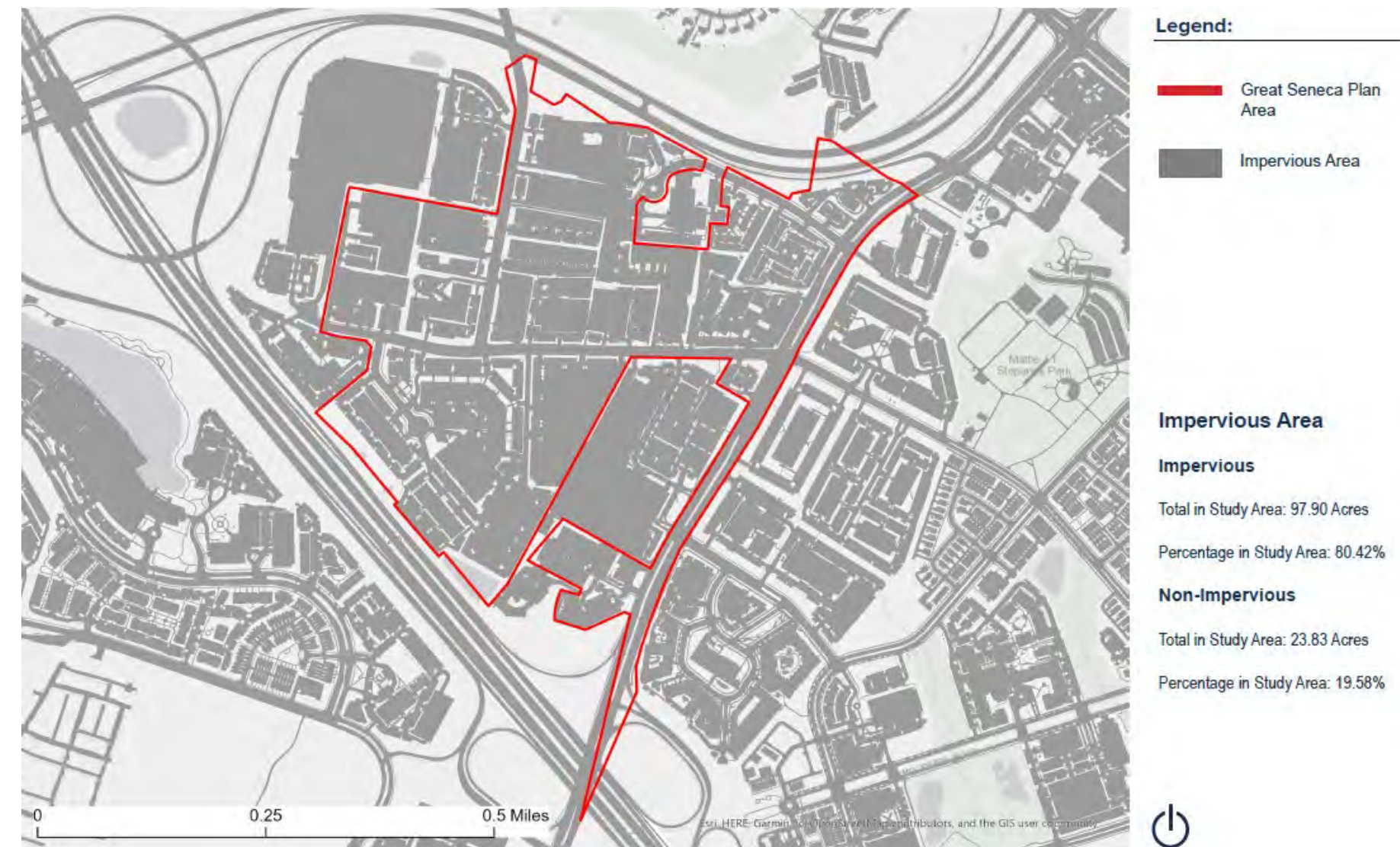
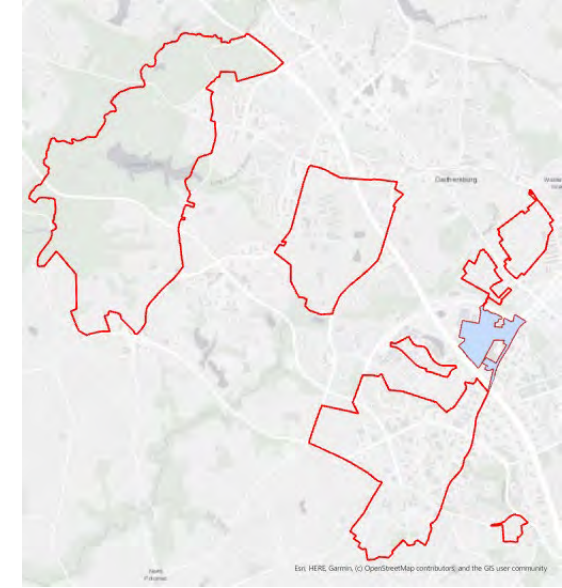


Figure 28: Impervious Area in Washingtonian Light Industrial Park

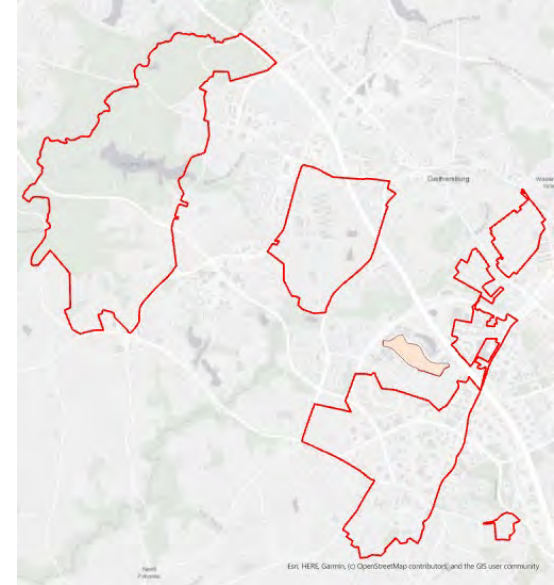
# Washingtonian Residential



# Washingtonian Residential

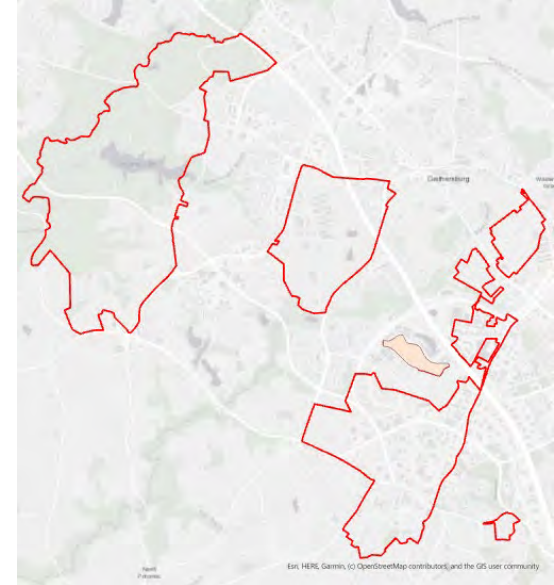
The Washingtonian Residential enclave is surrounded by the City of Gaithersburg. It is north of Downtown Crown and south of Rio Lakefront. The enclave is characterized by a mixture of residential units including the Washingtonian Tower Condominium, a high-rise multifamily building constructed in the mid-1960s, garden-style apartments constructed between the mid-1980s and the late 1990s, and single-family attached units constructed in the 1990s.

This Plan envisions that the Washingtonian Residential will remain an important residential area, whose residents enjoy the shops and entertainment available at Downtown Crown and Rio Lakefront. Redevelopment of older buildings offers opportunities to provide more housing for people and new walking, biking and rolling connections for residents and between Downtown Crown and Rio Lakefront.



# Washingtonian Residential

- Rezone the Washingtonian from R-10 to CRT-1.25, C-0.25, R-1.25, H-110
- Maintain tree canopy cover to at least 35% of site in redevelopment
- Prioritize additional Moderately Priced Dwelling Units and two- and three-bedroom units in redevelopment
- Provide support to tenants in the event of redevelopment to ensure residents receive the support and assistance necessary to mitigate impacts of temporary relocation
- Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections through enclave to connect Downtown Crown and Rio Lakefront
- Annexation of the Washingtonian enclave into the City of Gaithersburg is logical and consistent with the City's Maximum Expansion Limits

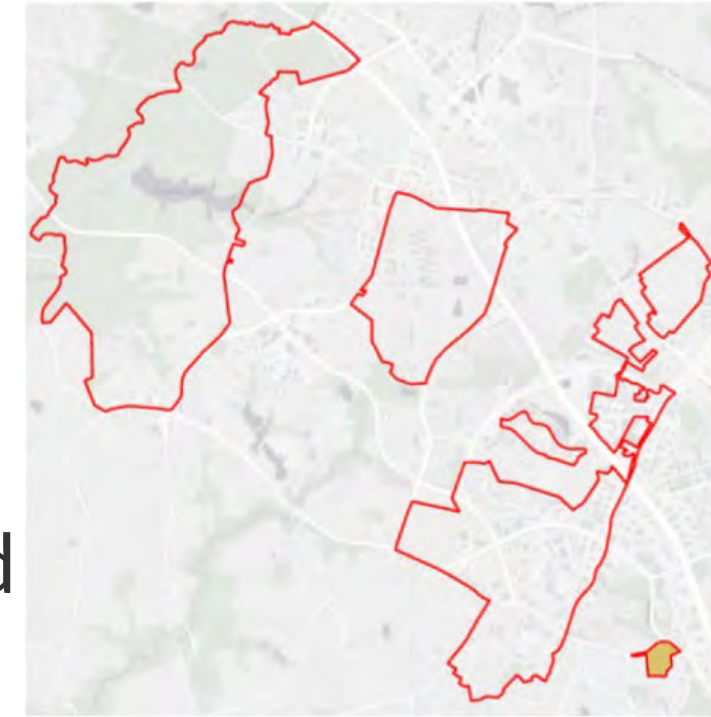


# Hi Wood



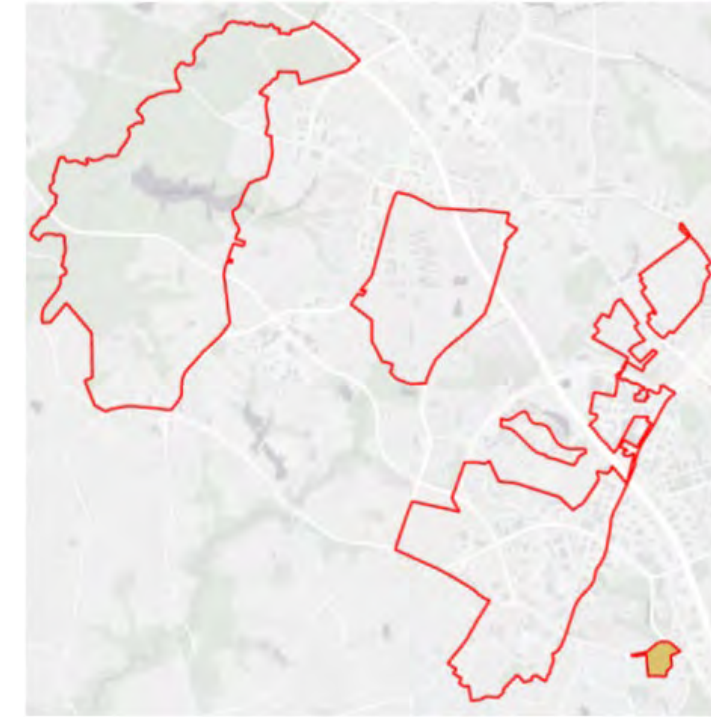
# Hi Wood

The Hi Wood enclave is the easternmost portion of the Plan area and is surrounded by the City of Rockville. The enclave includes approximately thirty single-family detached units constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, and all parcels are zoned R-200. Hi Wood is fully built-out, with little opportunity for parcel consolidation and is appropriate for annexation into the City of Rockville. This Plan recommends retaining the existing R-200 zoning, but encourages organic, incremental development to achieve diversity in housing types in Hi Wood over the life of the Plan.



# Hi Wood Recommendations

- Retain existing R-200 zoning
- Annexation of the Hi Wood enclave into the City of Rockville is logical and consistent with the City's Maximum Expansion Limits
- Construct a sidepath along the southside of Darnestown Road, consistent with the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan
- Encourage the installation stormwater management infrastructure such as rain gardens on private property through existing county programs such as rainscapes
- Increase use of bioswales and rain gardens in landscaped areas and along roadways



# Conclusion / Next Steps

- Staff presents Preliminary Recommendations to the Planning Board on December 7
- Staff develops a Working Draft of the Plan and presents to the Planning Board in January 2024

# Provide Feedback!

Contact project manager Maren Hill at 301.650.5613 or [maren.hill@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:maren.hill@montgomeryplanning.org) to submit questions or comments.

Visit the Great Seneca Plan project site for more information at [www.montgomeryplanning.org/greatsenecaplan](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/greatsenecaplan).



