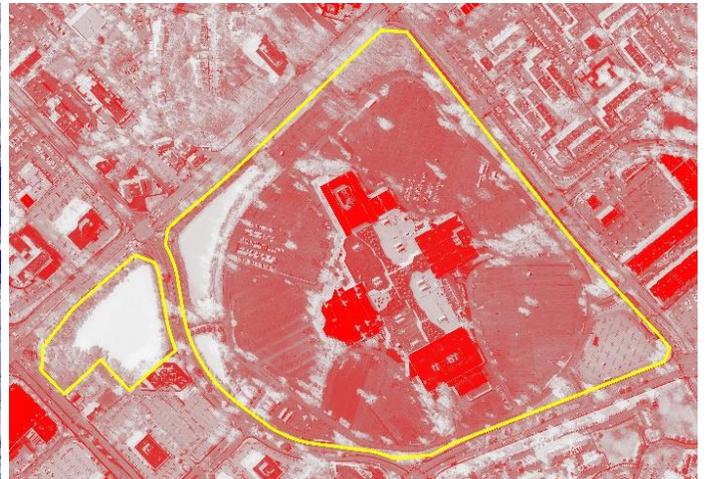
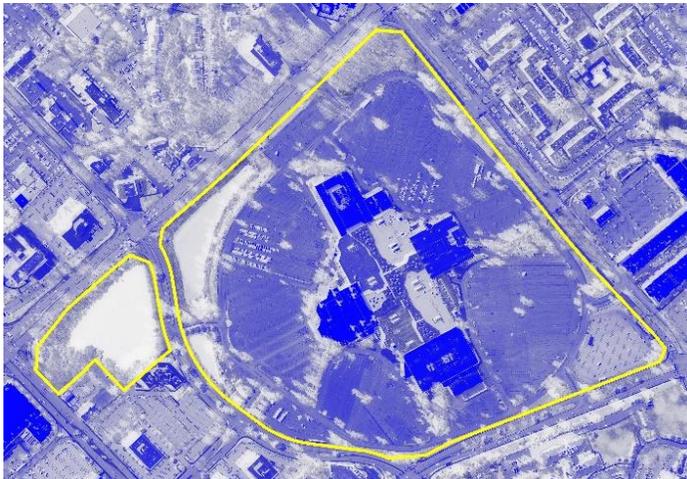
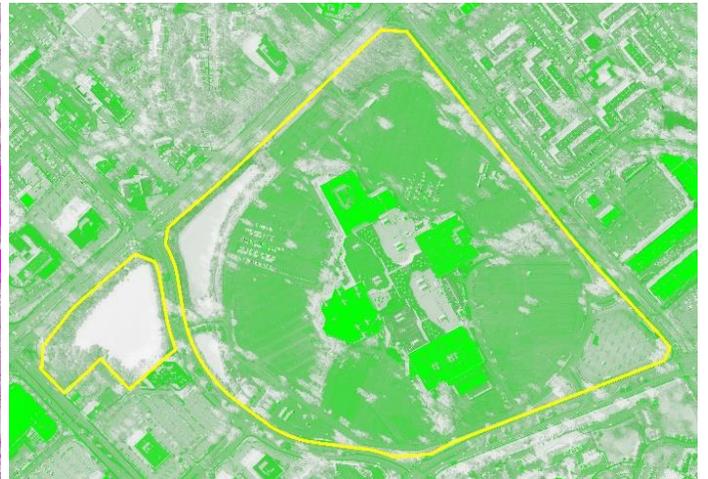




CITY OF  
GAITHERSBURG

Master Plan

# Lakeforest Mall



# Lakeforest Mall Master Plan

## An Amendment to the City of Gaithersburg Land Use Element

*Published August 19, 2021*

### MP-1-21 (Master Plan)

Planning Commission Approval: July 21, 2021, Resolution PCR-1-21

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### MP-2-21 (Special Conditions)

Planning Commission Approval: July 21, 2021, Resolution PCR-2-21

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# 1. Legal Authority

The City of Gaithersburg is empowered, under the Land Use Article (Land Use) of the Annotated Code of Maryland to exercise autonomous planning and zoning powers. Land Use establishes the requirements of a municipal comprehensive master plan and its required elements as codified in Land Use Division I, §3-101 and §3-102(a)(1). In short, the City of Gaithersburg is required to do master plans. The following Lakeforest Mall Master Plan (Plan) was developed in accordance with the requirements established in the Land Use Article that make clear the intent of any master plan is to reflect the interests of the City and not any particular owner, developer, stakeholder, or party:

§ 3-201. Plan preparation.

(a) In general. --

(1) A planning commission shall prepare a plan by carefully and comprehensively surveying and studying:

- (i) the present conditions and projections of future growth of the local jurisdiction; and
- (ii) the relation of the local jurisdiction to neighboring jurisdictions.

(2) A planning commission shall make the plan with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing the coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the local jurisdiction and its environs.

(3) The plan shall serve as a guide to public and private actions and decisions to ensure the development of public and private property in appropriate relationships.

(b) Scope and purposes of plan. --

(1) In accordance with present and future needs, a plan shall promote:

- (i) good civic design and arrangement;
- (ii) a healthy and convenient distribution of population;
- (iii) the health, safety, and general welfare of the local jurisdiction; and
- (iv) efficiency and economy in the development process.

Further, Land Use establishes in § 3-201(c) that the Plan will "...implement the 12 planning visions established in Land Use §1-201." The 12 planning visions address various facets, goals, and actions that master plans are to include in creating equitable and sustainable developments. The 12 planning visions as defined are:

Quality of Life and Sustainability:

A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment.

Public Participation:

Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals.

**Growth Areas:**

Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers.

**Community Design:**

Compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources.

**Infrastructure:**

Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;

**Transportation:**

A well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers;

**Housing:**

A range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;

**Economic Development:**

Economic development and natural resource-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged;

**Environmental Protection:**

Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources;

**Conservation:**

Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;

**Stewardship:**

Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and

**Implementation:**

Strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state, and interstate levels to achieve these Visions.

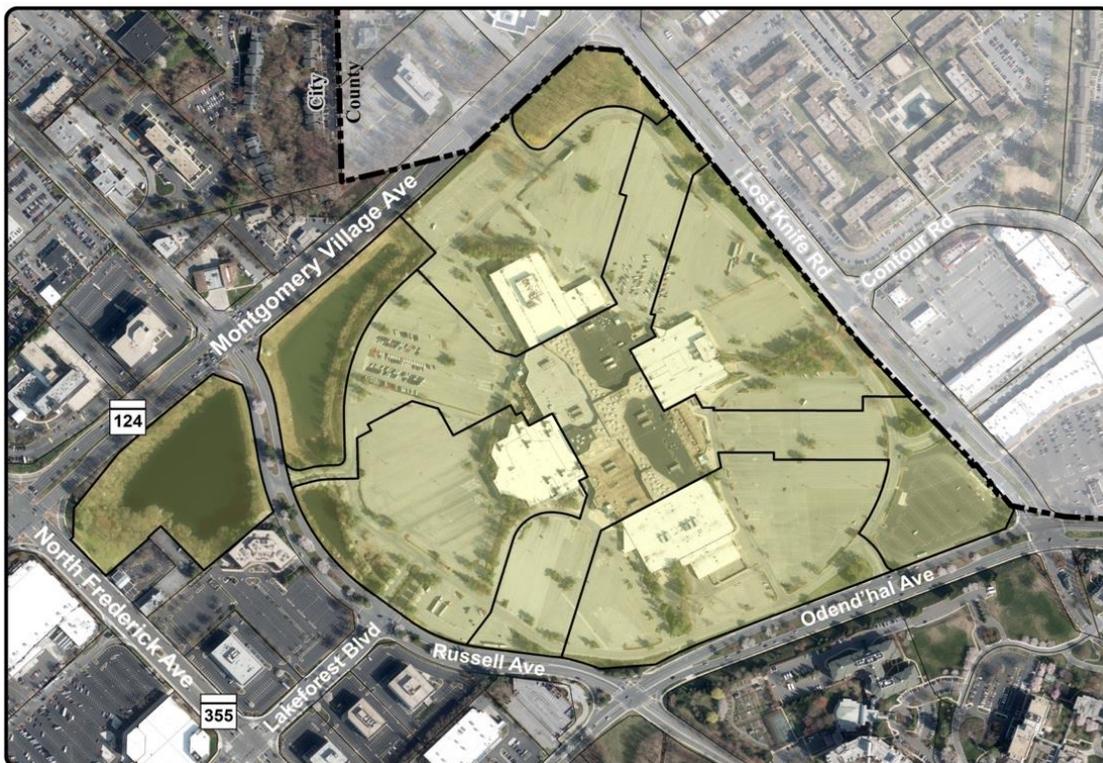
Lastly, as the City has adopted various Elements of the Master Plan such as *Environment & Sustainability*, *Community Facilities*, and *Parks, Recreation and Culture* among others, the Plan's recommendations are understood to be in addition to the goals, themes, and recommendations of these other Elements although they are not explicitly stated within the document. Any future redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall is to reflect the entire Master Plan.

## 2. Introduction

*"You can't really know where you are going until you know where you have been."  
- Maya Angelou*

### Background

The Lakeforest Mall Property (Property) is comprised of eight (8) parcels on 102± acres and represents a significant redevelopment opportunity for the City of Gaithersburg and the surrounding area.



*Map 1. Lakeforest Mall Property*

The current zoning designation assigned to the property, General Commercial (C-2), is meant to include commercial uses serving the regional and local area, together with normal supplemental uses and other uses compatible with a cohesive and attractive shopping and office area. Residential uses are precluded in the current zoning. The Property was last reviewed as part of the City's 2009 Master Plan update and was identified in the 2009 Land Use Element as Map Designation 35, which recommended redevelopment of the Property with a Commercial-Office-Residential land use designation and a zoning change from C-2 to MXD. That Map Designation was drafted during the height of the great recession beginning in 2008 and, due to market uncertainties, only provided the broadest of design and use recommendations.

The Mayor & City Council, during their August 15, 2020 meeting, directed staff to move forward with a master plan amendment for Lakeforest Mall. The scope of this master plan amendment was limited to the eight parcels comprising the Mall. The reasoning for the scope of this effort is that the Lakeforest Mall was a separate Map Designation (Map Designation 35) in the 2009 Land Use Element and continues to be viewed as a singular holistic redevelopment. The City acknowledges that other proximate properties should be reexamined through the Master Plan, but in response and subsequent to an adopted Lakeforest Mall redevelopment plan. Given the closing of various anchors, the nationwide decline of

***“...the Plan will express, through narratives and recommendations, elements to be included, or – perhaps more importantly – to be excluded, in any future redevelopment.”***

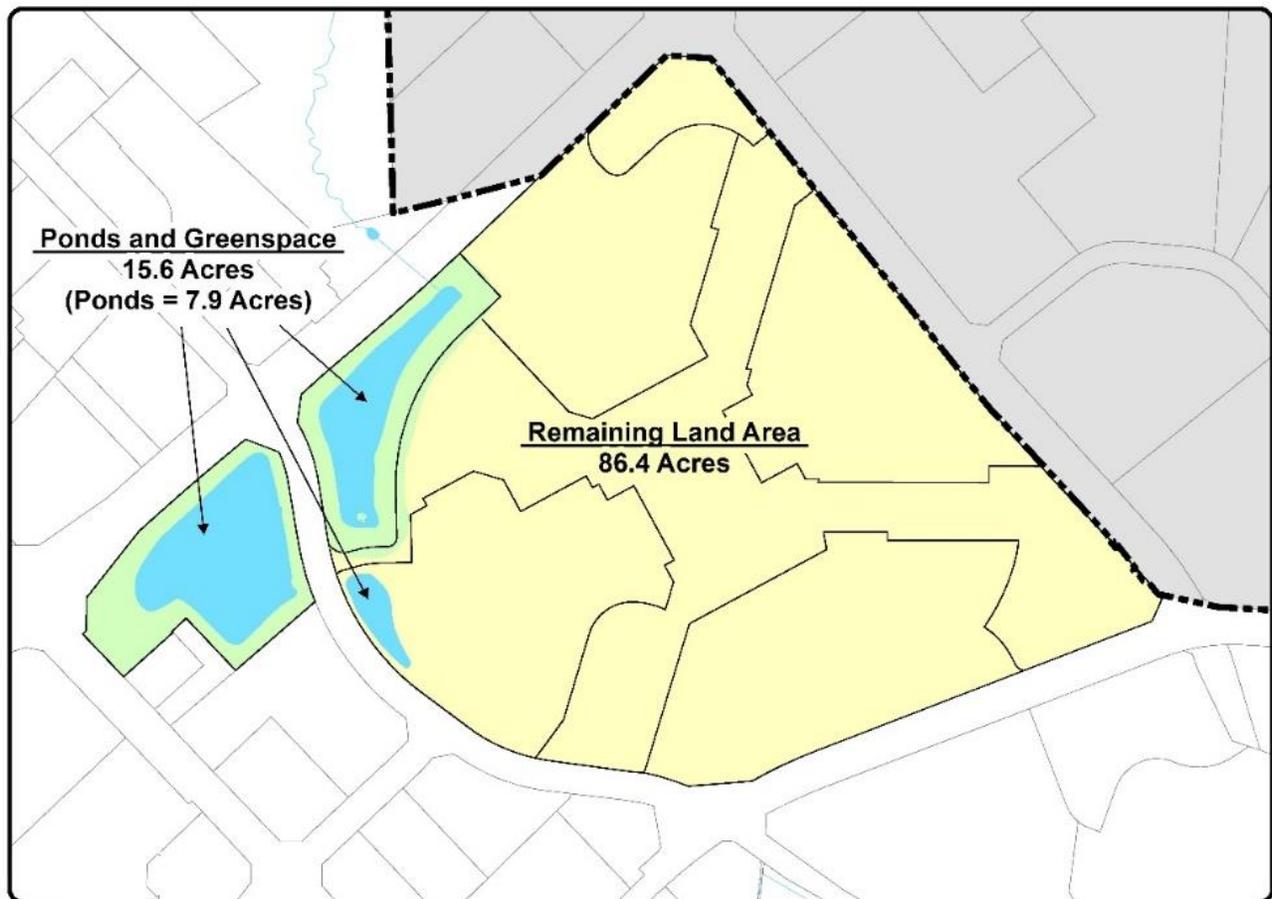
enclosed malls, and the retail sector impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic; near-term redevelopment of the Mall is acknowledged to be plausible while the current Master Plan recommendations for the surrounding properties remain valid in the near term.

Using sound planning principles, previous studies or City policies that have proven to be valid, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, and extensive public and stakeholder input, staff has developed the Lakeforest Mall Master Plan (Plan). Staff has drafted this Plan during a global pandemic, which has impacted how people live, work, play, and shop; possibly creating lasting fundamental changes to how development will address these life aspects. Given this current climate of uncertainty, the Plan is not intended to be a detailed block-level design plan. To this point, the Plan will express, through narratives and recommendations, elements to be included, or – perhaps more importantly – to be excluded, in any future redevelopment. In short, the Plan will define the “what” and the “why,” but not the “where,” to be included in a future redevelopment. To this point (not being a detailed block level design plan with every use defined), and given the climate of uncertainty under which this Plan was developed, no market studies were performed as part of this effort as the validity of any findings would be questionable. Broader studies, focused on general demographic and broad economic trends and projections, can be used to inform the Plan, but studies focused on facets such as construction costs and potential rental income are too specific for the intent of this Plan.

The Plan, as discussed in the Legal Framework section, will reflect the State's 12 Planning Visions and adopted City plans and policies, including other master plan elements. Through its recommendations, the Plan will create the framework that will guide any future redevelopment of the Lakeforest Mall. Any future redevelopment will reflect the Plan's narratives and recommendations, unless a recommendation is a “special condition,” in which case strict adherence to the recommendation is required. The intent of the Lakeforest Mall Master Plan is to provide flexibility in responding to changing times, increase the value of and incentivize redevelopment of the Mall, and meet the goals and visions of the City.

## Existing Context

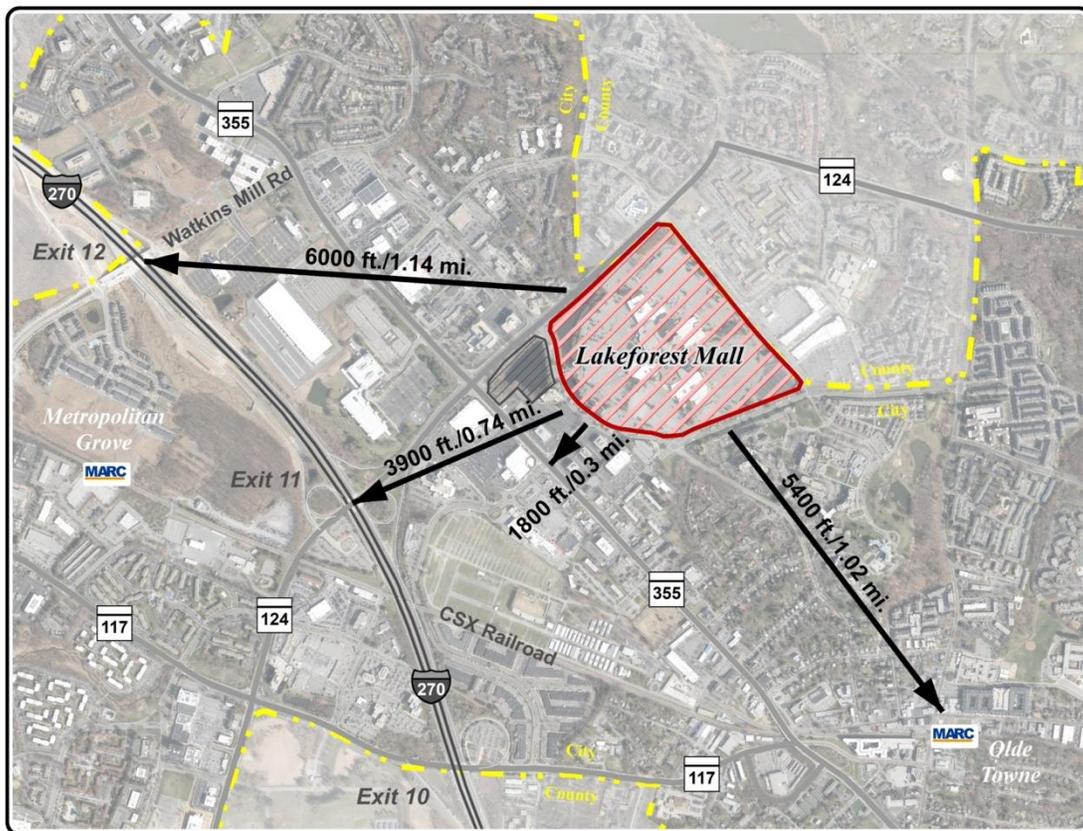
Lakeforest Mall, as discussed, is approximately 102 acres divided amongst eight parcels. Within the 102 acres are three stormwater management (SWM) ponds that serve not only the Mall parcels, but also act as a regional facility. The largest pond is located on a noncontiguous parcel sited at the south-eastern corner of the intersection of MD 355 (Frederick Avenue) and MD 124 (Montgomery Village Avenue). All told, the three ponds and associated “green areas” encompass 15.6 acres, with the ponds themselves being 7.9 acres of surface water. This leaves 86.4 acres of gross land or “core area” targeted for redevelopment. Internally, the core area is connected by a drive aisle “ring road” linking the various surface parking lots, but lacks bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



*Map 2. Lakeforest Mall Core Area (yellow) and Stormwater Management Ponds*

The center of the core area is, as the crow flies:

- 1,800 feet (.3 mile) from MD 355, Frederick Avenue along Lakeforest Boulevard
- 3,900 feet (.74 mile) from the MD 124 and I-270 interchange
- 6,000 feet (1.14 miles) from the Watkins Mill interchange
- 5,400 feet (1.02 miles) from the MARC station in Olde Towne



**Map 3. Lakeforest Mall Context**

The core area is situated within a network of intersecting major arterial / connector roads owned and maintained by various agencies:

- Lost Knife Road (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)
- Odend'hal Avenue (City of Gaithersburg)
- Russell Avenue (City of Gaithersburg)
- MD 124, Montgomery Village Avenue (State Highway Administration)

Each of these roads creates a “corridor” with its own existing land use context. These corridors establish a more refined base understanding from which to analyze possible redevelopment relationships.

## Lost Knife Road



**Map 4. Lost Knife Road Corridor**

The Lost Knife Road corridor is split between residential and commercial uses, with the Ride On Bus's Lakeforest Transit Center located at one corner, closest to the intersection with Odend'hal Avenue. The road itself has two wide travel lanes in each direction, separated by a large landscaped median, to accommodate the traffic volumes associated with the adjacent commercial and apartment uses. The speed limit is 30 MPH. Between Montgomery Village Avenue (MD 124) and Odend'hal Avenues, there is a full intersection at the Cider Mill Apartments, a T Intersection with Contour Road (which does not connect to the Mall), a T intersection with Montgomery Village Plaza, a full intersection near the Transit Center that connects to the service lanes for the two shopping centers, and a T intersection with the Off Price Center. Crosswalks are not provided at all legs of these intersections. Sidewalks with a narrow planting strip are included on both sides of the road, but there are no separate bicycle facilities. The intersection with Montgomery Village Avenue includes four uncontrolled right-turn lanes for vehicular turns, which increases the number of conflict points with pedestrians.

Near the intersection with Montgomery Village Avenue, along the east side of the road, is a one-story child day care facility, followed by the three-story Cider Mill Apartments owned by the Housing Opportunity Commission, both of which have large surface parking lots. South of Contour Road on the east side of the road are the Montgomery Village Plaza and Off-Price Center shopping centers<sup>1</sup>, both of which consist of large one-story connected buildings in a strip layout, several one-story "pad site" buildings, and large surface parking lots. Most of the west side of Lost Knife Road consists of the existing two-story Lakeforest Mall and associated large surface parking lots, with a few areas of landscaping and trees. The Ride On Bus's Lakeforest Transit Center, also on the west side of Lost Knife, is made up of several one-story open bus shelters, bus parking bays on the road itself, and an adjacent commuter surface parking lot with dedicated lanes for taxis and paratransit.

<sup>1</sup> These properties have been rezoned by Montgomery County to accommodate a denser mix of uses, including residential, but no development applications have been enacted at the time of this Plan's development.

## Odend'hal Avenue

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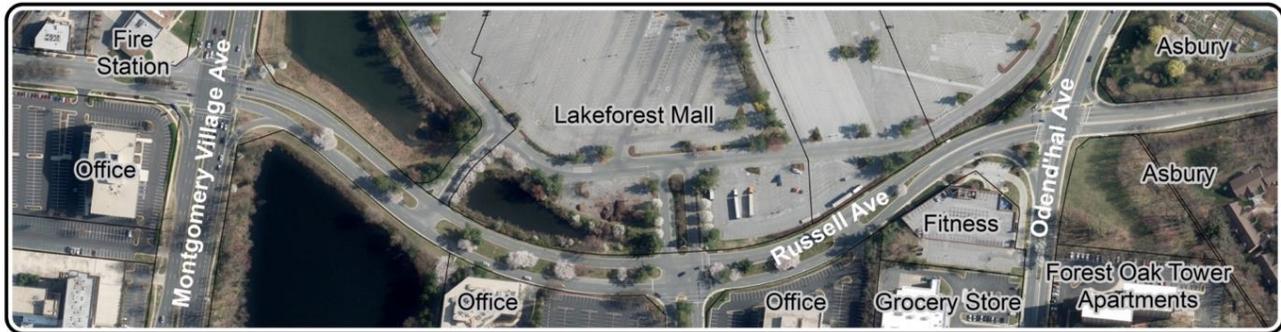


*Map 5. Odend'hal Avenue Corridor*

The Odend'hal Avenue corridor is split evenly between residential and commercial uses, with residential to the south and commercial to the north. The road itself has two wide travel lanes in each direction, separated by a large landscaped median, to accommodate the traffic volumes generated from the commercial and residential uses between MD 355 and Goshen Road. The speed limit is 35 MPH. There is one T intersection between Lost Knife Road and Russell Avenue that provides access to the Mall, but no crosswalks are provided. Sidewalks with a narrow planting strip are included on both sides of the road, but there are no separate bicycle facilities. The intersection with Russell Avenue includes three uncontrolled right turn lanes, which increases the number of conflict points with pedestrians.

Asbury Methodist Village, which includes a variety of residential units and services for seniors in buildings that range from two to eleven stories, occupies the entire south side of Odend'hal Avenue. Asbury is laid out in a landscape-dominant campus-like setting, with buildings set in large connected green areas and only small surface parking lots. The north side of Odend'hal consists of the two-story Lakeforest Mall and its associated large surface parking lots, a few small landscaped areas, and the commuter surface parking lot for the Lakeforest Transit Center.

## Russell Avenue



**Map 6. Russell Avenue Corridor**

The Russell Avenue corridor has exclusively commercial uses on both sides. The road itself has two wide travel lanes in each direction, separated by a large landscaped median, to accommodate the traffic volumes associated with the adjacent commercial uses, but there are no pedestrian facilities on the Mall side of Russell. Russell Avenue has a speed limit of 40 MPH, the highest of the four corridors. Between Odend'hal and Montgomery Village Avenues, there is a full intersection with Lakeforest Boulevard and a T intersection north of Lakeforest that provides access to the Mall. Crosswalks are not provided at the T intersection and not all crosswalk legs are provided at the Lakeforest Boulevard intersection. A sidewalk with no planting strip is included only on the south/west side of the road, with a gap near the intersection with Odend'hal Avenue and a gap near the intersection of Montgomery Village Avenue, and there are no separate bicycle facilities. The intersection with Odend'hal Avenue includes three uncontrolled right turn lanes for vehicular turns and the intersection with Montgomery Village Avenue includes four uncontrolled right turn lanes, which increases the number of conflict points with pedestrians.

Along the west side of Russell Avenue is a one story fitness center near the intersection of Odend'hal, followed by four to six story office buildings on either side of Lakeforest Boulevard that sit within large surface parking lots. Near the intersection with Montgomery Village Avenue is a large pond on the west side of the road. The two-story Lakeforest Mall and its associated large surface parking lots occupy the entire east side of Russell, along with a few small landscaped areas and two stormwater management ponds surrounded by landscaping.

## Montgomery Village Avenue (MD 124)



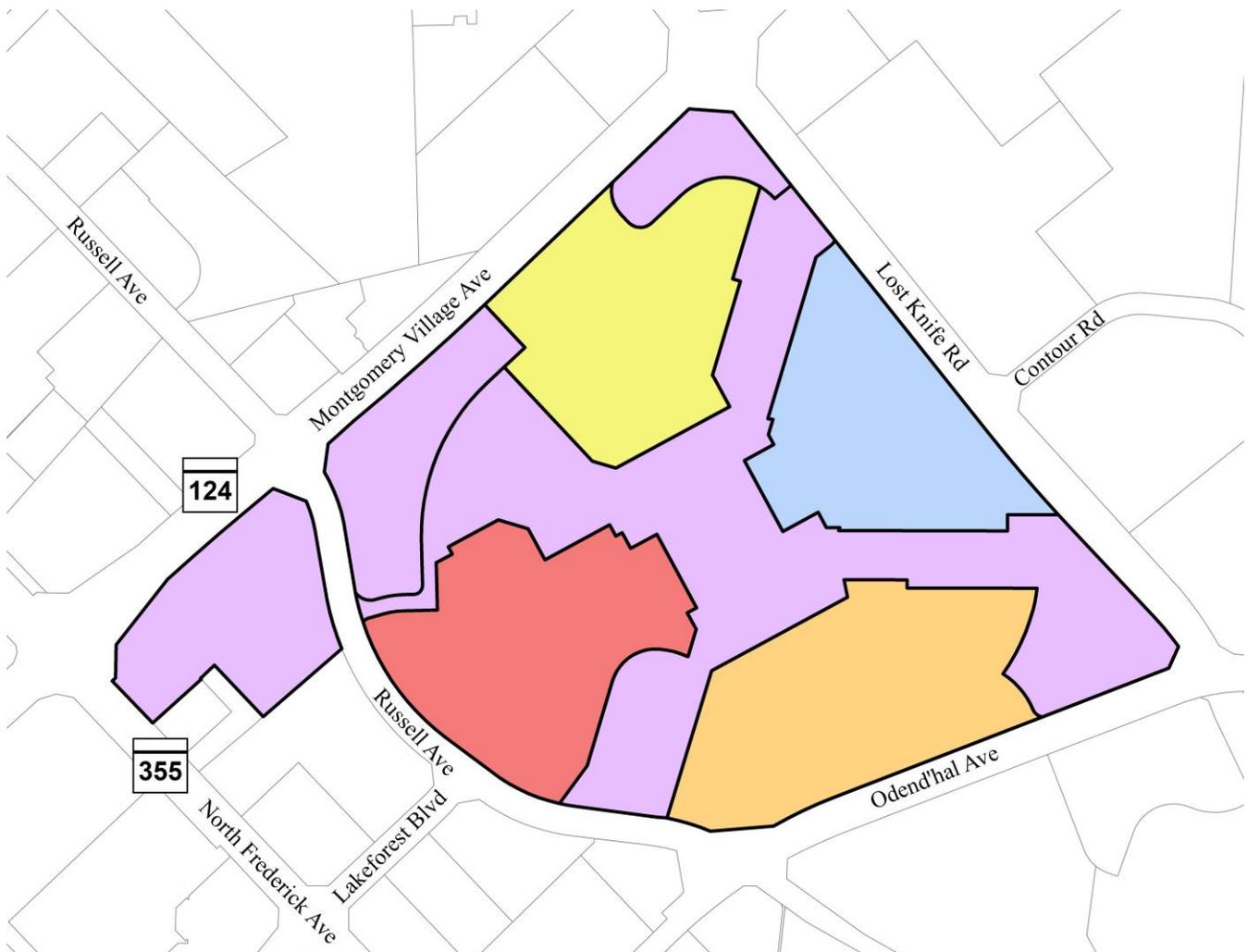
*Map 7. Montgomery Village Avenue Corridor*

The Montgomery Village Avenue corridor has a mix of commercial and public uses. The road itself has three or four wide travel lanes in each direction, separated by a narrow landscaped median, to accommodate the large through traffic volumes associated with its use as a major state highway arterial. MD 124 has a posted speed limit of 35 MPH. There is a full intersection that provides access to the Mall and an office building across the street, between Russell Avenue and Lost Knife Road. Crosswalks are not provided for the single intersection between Russell and Lost Knife. A sidewalk with a narrow planting strip is provided on the north/west side of the road, with a gap at the fire station, and a sidewalk with a medium-to-large planting strip is provided on the south/east side of the road. There are no separate bicycle facilities. The intersections with Russell Avenue and Lost Knife Road include four uncontrolled right turn lanes, which increases the number of conflict points with pedestrians.

On the north/west side of Montgomery Village Avenue, near the intersection with Russell Avenue, sits the two story Gaithersburg-Washington Grove Fire Station 8, followed by a small one story retail center and gas station, a small stream with surrounding forest (hydrologically connected to the nearest pond), a seven story office building with a large surface parking lot, and lastly, the two story Gaithersburg Regional library and its associated large surface parking lot. The two-story Lakeforest Mall and its associated large surface parking lots occupy the entire south side of Montgomery Village Avenue, along with a large area of trees defined as a tree save area. The two largest SWM ponds are sited within the Montgomery Village corridor.

## Current Ownership Context

The Plan notes similar to many master plan areas, the Lakeforest Mall has multiple owners. While multiple owners can present challenges to coordination, it does not mean that the Plan cannot be implemented. As with shopping malls and centers across the country, a Reciprocal Easement Agreement (REA) between the owners of the various parcels is in place and limits development activity of each owner. New development cannot occur without full consent of the other owners. The City is not a party to the REA and cannot modify it. The property owners, however, have the ability to renegotiate the terms or extinguish the REA at any time. However with the Plan, the City can affect changes to allowable land uses and the densities of those uses. A broader, more flexible range of uses, at higher densities, increases the future value of redevelopment and promotes mutually beneficial coordination under the REA. The map below shows the current parcel boundaries, and identifies individual property owners by a unique color.



**Map 8: Lakeforest Mall Parcels and Ownership**

## 3. Terms and Definitions

*For the purposes of this Master Plan Amendment, the following definitions apply to the subject land area only, and supersede, where applicable, comparable terms and definitions in other ordinances or sources. Graphics and images are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be the Plan's required physical forms.*

**Accessory use** – a use on the same lot with, and of a nature customarily incidental and subordinate to, the principal use of the main building or lot.

**Affordable housing** – housing with a price that is regulated under the requirements and definitions established in Article XVI of Chapter 24, Zoning, of the City Code.

**Bungalow court** – multiple small detached dwellings no greater than 1,200 square feet in size each, located in close proximity to each other in a condominium regime and arranged around a central green or open area. Bungalow courts have shared amenity spaces and no private yards or garages.



**Figure 1. Bungalow Court Example<sup>2</sup>**



**Figure 2. Bungalow Court Typical Site Layout<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> <http://historicfresno.org/lrhr/281.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2017/11/29/missing-middle-close-bungalow-courts>

**Civic use** – a publicly or privately owned and operated destination generally open to the public that positively contributes to the greater community and serves as an attractor or draw to the area. Such uses typically include uses that facilitate governmental operations such as courthouses, police stations, and departmental offices; or uses that provide recreational, educational, social, or cultural activities, support, and programming.

**Commercial uses** – a term that broadly encompasses office, retail, research & development, laboratory, amusement, restaurant, integrated light manufacturing, and similar uses.

**Condominium regime** - vests ownership of a "unit" in an owner, and then places ownership of the common elements in a unit owners association. While the dwelling itself is privately owned, the units themselves and yards are not located on individually owned lots.

**Detached housing** – residential units that are completely separated from all other units (do not share any walls with other housing units) and are located on an individual fee simple lot. Individual buildings within a bungalow court are not detached housing for purposes of this plan.

**Duplex** – a stand-alone residential building that consists of two units, arranged either side-by-side or up-and-down (one unit on the ground and basement floors and the other unit on the upper floors). Each unit of a side-by-side duplex may be located on an individual lot, but both units of an up-and-down duplex must be located on the same lot. Duplexes may also be part of a condominium regime. The maximum size of an individual duplex unit is 1,500 square feet above grade.

**Experiential use** – a use that offers an interactive, participatory, or immersive experience. Experiential uses transform products and services into total consumption experiences for the consumer, appealing to emotional and creative needs in addition to utilitarian necessities<sup>4</sup>. Examples include restaurants, maker spaces, entertainment and themed retailing. A use whose function is solely a point of sale for a product is not experiential. Traditional retail uses may incorporate experiential elements, while still not being considered experiential uses, such as<sup>5</sup>:

- Home improvement stores that offer “do-it-yourself” classes.
- Appliance stores that offer cooking classes or simply allow shoppers to try out a cooktop, dishwasher or washing machine before they purchase it.
- Sporting goods stores that incorporate climbing walls, golf and tennis simulators, etc. that enable shoppers to “test drive” equipment.
- Outdoor outfitters that offer lectures, classes and even travel adventures to deepen customer relationships.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0969698900000345>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.naiop.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Magazine/2016/Summer-2016>

**Gap Housing** - Residential units that are intended to bridge the architectural and price point gap between higher-priced single family (detached and townhouse) units and rental-focused multifamily units. Typologies include but are not limited to stacked townhouses, quadplexes, and triplexes, as well as duplexes and bungalow courts under a certain size. Typically, Gap Housing has the following characteristics:

- Generally 2-4 units per building
- Individual unit sizes between a typical multifamily unit and a typical townhouse
- Overall massing similar to and compatible with townhouses and detached homes, with various typologies included within the same block to enhance the streetscape and walkability
- Parking that is either shared or dedicated to each unit.

**General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO)** – a retail sector that includes establishments such as clothing stores, furniture stores, bookstores, jewelry stores, pet stores, sporting goods stores, home goods stores, craft stores, antique shops, electronics stores, etc.

**Housing affordability** – housing with a market-driven price point that allows households of various incomes to rent or purchase it by spending no more than 30% of their annual income.

**Incubator space** – an affordably-priced space that can be used by a startup or small business for proof of (business model) concept, prototyping, or nascent production, on a temporary or permanent basis.

**Integrated light manufacturing** – the manufacturing, compounding, assembly, and/or processing of articles in a building, unit or floor thereof where the operations, emission, and by-products, such as external excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation and/or other adverse effects or nuisances are neither created nor present outside the enclosed building, unit or floor thereof. Integrated light manufacturing uses must be low impact. Integrated light manufacturing should be located within a business park/campus, commercial center or transit oriented development with additional residential, retail, office, or research and development uses, but should be compatible with and may be included in predominantly residential developments, should the zoning allow. Uses defined as integrated light manufacturing include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Chocolatier/specialty gourmet.
- (2) Craft brewery/small batch distillery.
- (3) Pottery/artisanal.
- (4) Electronics.
- (5) Precision instruments.
- (6) Additive manufacturing (3D printing).
- (7) Medical supplies and devices.
- (8) Molecular engineering/nanotechnology.
- (9) Mechanical equipment and micro-manufacturing.
- (10) Cyber security technologies.

**Makerspace** – 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. Examples of components found in makerspaces include woodworking shops, robotics labs, quilting and sewing rooms, machining spaces, electronics tables, digital fabrication carts, and computer labs. Makerspaces are typically subsets of retail, civic, or integrated light manufacturing uses with an experiential component.



*Figure 3. Makerspace<sup>6</sup>*

**Micro-mobility** – a transportation mode consisting of small, lightweight vehicles used by single persons. Micro-mobility devices may include, but are not limited to, electric bikes and scooters and bike-share facilities.



*Figure 4. Micro-mobility: Electric bikes and scooters<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> <https://fessendensummercamps.org/specialty-camps/summer-makerspace-camp>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theverge.com/2019/11/19/20972322/ojo-gotcha-acquisition-electric-scooter-bike-shared-micromobility>



*Figure 5. Micro-mobility: Bike-share<sup>8</sup>*

**Middle-income households** – households that earn between 80% and 120% of the Washington DC Metropolitan Statistical Area median income.

**Mixed-use** – a holistic development where residential, commercial, civic uses, and amenities are integrated through an interconnected transportation network that creates synergy and vibrancy amongst the uses.

**Mixed-use building** – a single building that includes multiple complementary uses in a vertical multi-story arrangement, including but not limited to residential, civic, and commercial uses. Parking is not considered a “use” in considering mixed-use, nor are customary accessory uses to a primary use.

**Mode of transportation** – a method of travelling from one point to another. Examples include driving a car, carpooling, walking, bicycling, hailing a taxi or ride share service, using a scooter, and riding a bus or subway.

**Multifamily housing** – residential units that are grouped together within a larger building that typically includes five or more units total, which may be intended to be sold (owner-occupied) or rented. Multifamily buildings with fewer than five floors are referred to as “garden style” (or “low rise”), buildings that have five to ten floors are referred to as “midrise,” and buildings with more than ten floors are referred to as “high rise.” By placing more units in each building, the overall cost of each unit generally is lower than for single family or Gap Housing, particularly for garden style multifamily buildings.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/capital-bikeshare/2164/>

**Neighborhood Goods & Services** – a retail sector that includes grocery stores, drugstores, florists, bakeries, specialty food stores, delicatessens, dry cleaners, laundromats, hair and nail salons, etc.

**Neighborhood park** – a useable open space, usually between 0.5 and 10 acres, that includes both active and passive recreation and serves those within walking distance.

**Pocket park** – a small useable open space of up to 0.5 acre, which typically serves immediate residents and is often inserted into more developed areas. Pocket parks may include furniture, play equipment, and artwork.

**Quadplex (fourplex)** – four individual dwelling units grouped together into one building, often arranged as two units per floor in a two-story building or as a connected group of dwellings around a central courtyard or driveway, preferably in a condominium regime; also known as a fourplex.



*Figure 6. Quadplex Examples<sup>9</sup>*

**Research and Development (R&D)** – the process by which businesses or government agencies create new and improve existing products. Research and Development activities may include manufacturing, testing, and prototyping in support of product development. Research and Development should be located within a business park/campus, commercial center, or transit oriented development and should be close to additional residential, retail, office, or integrated light manufacturing uses.

**Ring road** – a private circulation drive aisle with no pedestrian facilities established with the original development of a shopping mall, designed to facilitate the movement of automobile traffic around the outer perimeter of the shopping mall's parking fields.

<sup>9</sup> Left: <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/fourplex>

Right: <https://www.probuilder.com/house-review-multifamily-designs>

**Single family housing** – residential units that are either completely separated from all other units (detached) or only share vertical walls from ground to roof (townhouses). Single family housing is intended to be owner-occupied and, consequently, is sited as one unit on a single fee simple lot. Examples of single-family housing include detached houses, townhouses, and rowhouses.

**Stacked townhouse (2 over 2) condos** – a three- or more-story townhouse-appearing building that shares at least one vertical wall with another building, and contains two individual condominium units, one of which occupies the bottom one or two floors and the other of which occupies the top floors. When arranged as one unit on the bottom two floors and another unit on the top two floors, they are also known as 2-over-2 condos. Other variations include split 3-level condos, 2-over-1 condos, 3-over-1 condos, and 3-over-2 condos.



*Figure 7. Stacked Townhouse Examples<sup>10</sup>*

**Townhouse** – a single-family dwelling unit in a group of three or more attached units in a stick configuration that share only vertical walls. Townhouses that only share side walls are also known as rowhouses.

**Triplex** – three individual dwelling units grouped together into one building that may share vertical and horizontal walls and floors, often arranged as one unit per floor in a three-story building. Three unit townhouse sticks are not considered triplexes.

<sup>10</sup> Left: City of Gaithersburg, Crown 2-over-2 stacked condos on Diamondback Drive

Right: <http://blog.lamidesign.com/2016/10/stacked-townhomes-typical-configuration.html>



*Figure 8. Triplex Example<sup>11</sup>*

**Uncontrolled right turn lane** – a right-turning lane that is separated from the rest of the signalized intersection by painted lines or raised barriers, which allows turning movement with a yield-to or merge-into traffic without a full stop.



*Figure 9. Uncontrolled Right Turn Lane (Russell Avenue at MD 124)<sup>12</sup>*

**Warehousing and distribution** – a building or portion of a building that is solely or primarily used for storage, protection, and distribution of data, packages, goods, products, or raw materials. Examples of warehousing and distributions uses include, but are not limited to, climate-controlled warehouses, fulfillment centers, package distribution centers, truck terminals, foodbank holding facilities, and data centers. These uses do not include self-service storage facilities.

<sup>11</sup> <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/triplex>

<sup>12</sup> City of Gaithersburg GIS Data (Aerial Orthophoto, Spring 2017)

## City Road Code Typologies<sup>13</sup>

### Commercial Service Road

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Service Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct access for commercial parcels</li> <li>• Low pedestrian/bike activity</li> <li>• Connect commercial parking lots</li> <li>• Slow speeds (20 mph)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-way</li> <li>• Sidewalk / Buffer Zone on one side</li> </ul>

### Alley

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Alley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple land uses</li> <li>• Single grade or surface shared by all modes</li> <li>• High density with short streets</li> <li>• Extremely low speeds (15 mph or less)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-way</li> <li>• Accommodates 2 travel lanes</li> </ul>

### Neighborhood Residential

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Neighborhood Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide direct access to single-family and multi-family residences</li> <li>• Focus on pedestrian safety and well-defined walking paths</li> <li>• Bicyclists typically share the roadway or in conventional bike lanes</li> <li>• Slow speeds (20 mph)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 travel lanes</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Street trees</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• On-street parking</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> The typologies are taken from the from the City's adopted "Street Design Standards and Traffic Calming Best Practices" (Road Code). The Plan notes there are additional road typologies discussed in the Road Code.

## Park Boulevard

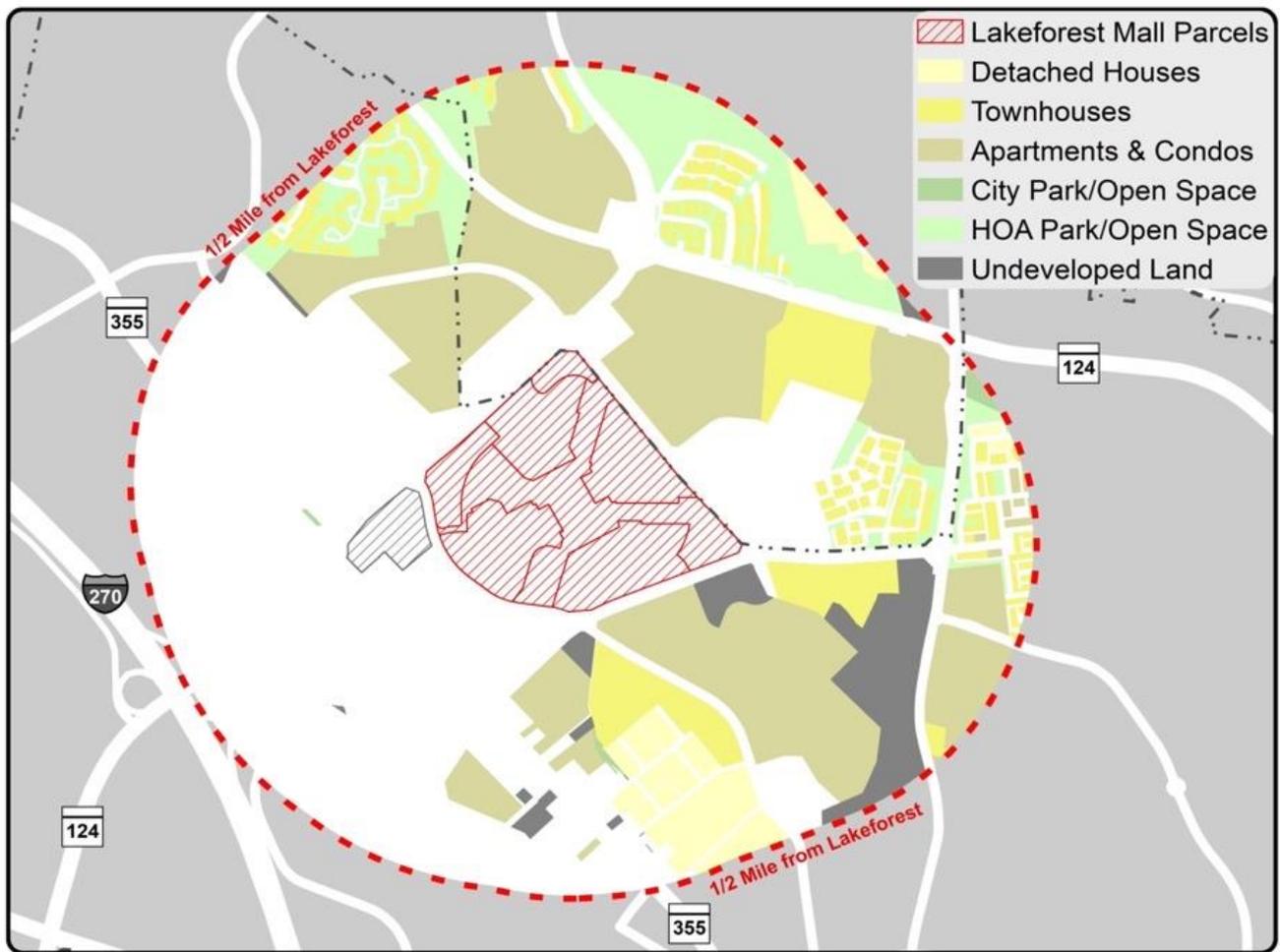
Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Park Boulevard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect commercial districts or neighborhoods</li> <li>• Medium to low density land uses</li> <li>• Buildings far to street</li> <li>• May feature mixed land uses</li> <li>• Medium to heavy pedestrian/bike activity, Provide continuous walking and bicycling routes to support longer trips</li> <li>• Some are major transit routes</li> <li>• Slow speeds (20-25 mph)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-4 travel lanes</li> <li>• Separated bike lanes and sidewalks, or Shared usepaths</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Median</li> </ul>

## Main Street

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed-use community centers</li> <li>• Medium to low density land uses</li> <li>• Buildings close to street</li> <li>• Heavy pedestrian/bike activity, Provide continuous walking and comfortable walking routes</li> <li>• Slow speeds (20-25 mph)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 travel lanes</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Low design speeds for shared travel lanes (vehicles &amp; bikes)</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Enhanced streetscape, space for street furniture, outdoor events &amp; dining</li> <li>• On-street parking (both sides, one-side only, may include back-in angle parking)</li> </ul>

## 4. Existing Conditions and Context

Creating a Master Plan must take into consideration the existing conditions and context of the area, and then determine how best to respond to those characteristics through the Plan’s recommendations. While some features are qualitative in nature, such as the “look” of a place, others are quantitative in nature, such as the number of buildings. Master Plans usually focus on the quantitative aspects of a surrounding area’s conditions to lend context to the plan, since qualitative aspects are prone to differences of opinion. The following subsections compile a variety of quantitative data on the existing economic, demographic, and physical conditions surrounding Lakeforest Mall, which provide a contextual foundation for the recommendations found within the Plan.



*Map 9. Lakeforest Mall and Surrounding Residential Uses*

## Expected City Growth and Trends

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With limited land available in the City for new development or redevelopment, residential and commercial/office development will often be competing for the same space. The areas of the City to the east of I-270 offer the greatest future redevelopment opportunities, with Lakeforest Mall in particular offering an opportunity to accommodate various development scenarios, given its size. To help bring focus to these possibilities, staff reviewed various studies to help frame elements that should be addressed in the Plan. The studies<sup>14</sup> included:

1. The City of Gaithersburg: Visioning Exercise Data Analysis (VDA), February 2019
2. The Montgomery County: Lakeforest Transit Center Feasibility Study, 2015
3. The Montgomery County: Retail Strategy, Q3 2017
4. The Montgomery Village Master Plan, March 2016
5. The Watkins Mill Cluster CIP for FY 2021
6. The Office Market Overview of Montgomery County and Submarkets, August 14, 2019
7. The Round 9.1 MWCOG Cooperative Forecast, adopted October 10, 2018
8. The City of Gaithersburg July 2020 Dwelling Units and Estimated Population Report

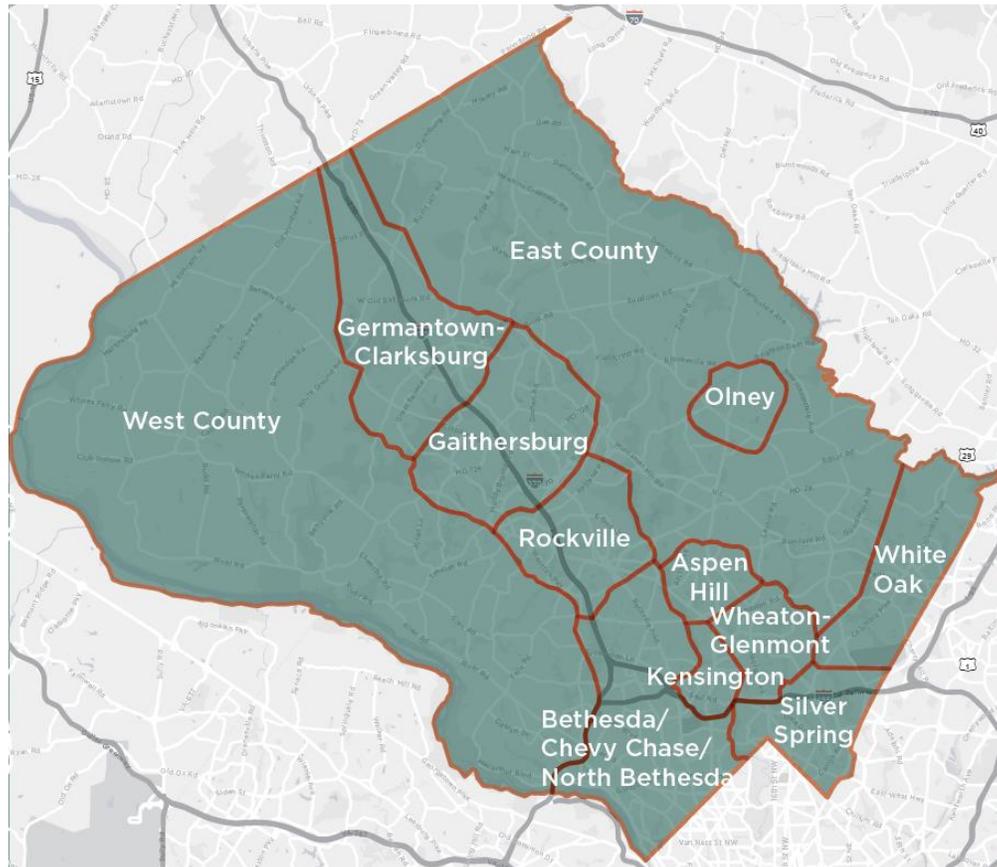
Highlights taken from some of these studies, referenced in brackets, show:

- The City is forecast to add approximately 20,000 new jobs by 2045, for a total of 66,000 jobs. [7]
- The City's development pipeline (how much development is approved but unbuilt) can only accommodate half of the projected job growth. [8]
- The projected strongest future job growth is in Professional, Scientific, Technical and Healthcare jobs. The weakest is in Retail. [1]
- The City is forecast to add approximately 20,000 new residents, for a total of 89,000 people by 2045. [7]
- The City's population growth is increasingly among families who rent based on age, income, ethnicity, and work status [1].
- The City is forecast to add between 8,800 and 11,500 new households by 2045. [1]
- The City will need between 6,700 and 9,700 additional housing units to meet that household growth demand by 2045. [1]

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<sup>14</sup> Copies of each study are available on the City's website.

- Multifamily housing, particularly rental, appears best positioned to meet the needs of growing populations, including some of the City's largest or fastest-growing groups, such as foreign-born residents and families. [1]
- Future residential development, whether townhouses, multifamily rental, or multifamily condos, will need to include 2 and 3-bedroom units to accommodate families. Development of studio and 1-bedroom units will not meet the projected growth needs. [1]
- The Lakeforest Mall Transit Center serves seven Ride On bus routes and one Metrobus express route and serves as a major transit connection between upcounty and downcounty. [2]
- The 2015 Feasibility Study projected daily boardings at the Lakeforest Mall Transit Center to increase from 3,500 to 4,884 in 2040, not including bus rapid transit riders. [2]
- The Gaithersburg submarket's Primary Trade Area (PTA) is located between two other major submarkets in Montgomery County, Germantown-Clarksburg and Rockville. The PTA identifies the area from which the majority of a submarket's shoppers come. [3]
- 55% of the retail within the Gaithersburg submarket is General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO) which includes establishments such as clothing stores, furniture stores, bookstores, jewelry stores, pet stores, sporting goods stores, home goods stores, craft stores, antique shops, electronics stores, etc. [3]
- Retail is and will remain oversupplied into 2025 in all categories except for Neighborhood Goods & Services (NG&S), which includes grocery stores, drugstores, florists, bakeries, specialty food stores, delicatessens, dry cleaners, laundromats, hair and nail salons, etc. [3]



**Map 10. Montgomery County Retail Submarkets<sup>15</sup>**

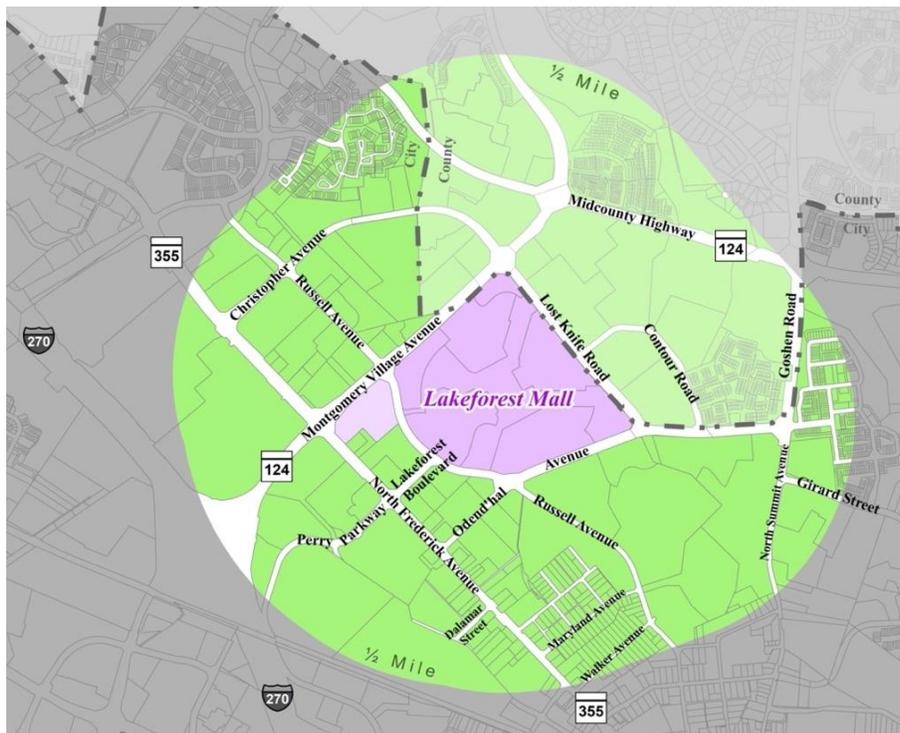
### Key Points

The City's expected population growth through 2045 creates a strong demand for additional housing, which will compete with the same land that can be used to meet the expected job growth. New housing should focus on multifamily units, which are better able to meet the projected needs of a variety of households, including foreign-born residents, young workers, seniors, and families. New commercial space to accommodate job growth in the professional/scientific/technical and healthcare sectors should be encouraged, while additional General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO) retail space should be discouraged. A Lakeforest redevelopment has the potential to address many aspects of future growth in a meaningful way.

<sup>15</sup> Montgomery County Retail Study, Q3 2017

## Surrounding Land Use

To better understand the existing context of Lakeforest Mall, staff looked at demographic, employment, and land use information for the surrounding area. In order to focus on the areas that would be most impacted by a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment, a distance of one half mile from the mall was used, which represents an approximate 10 minute walk or 5 minute bike ride. Rather than using the center of the existing mall building as the starting point for the half mile distance, the outer boundary of the seven parcels that form the “core” area of redevelopment (dark purple on the map below) were used.



**Map 11. Half-mile Area Surrounding Lakeforest Mall**

## Residential Uses

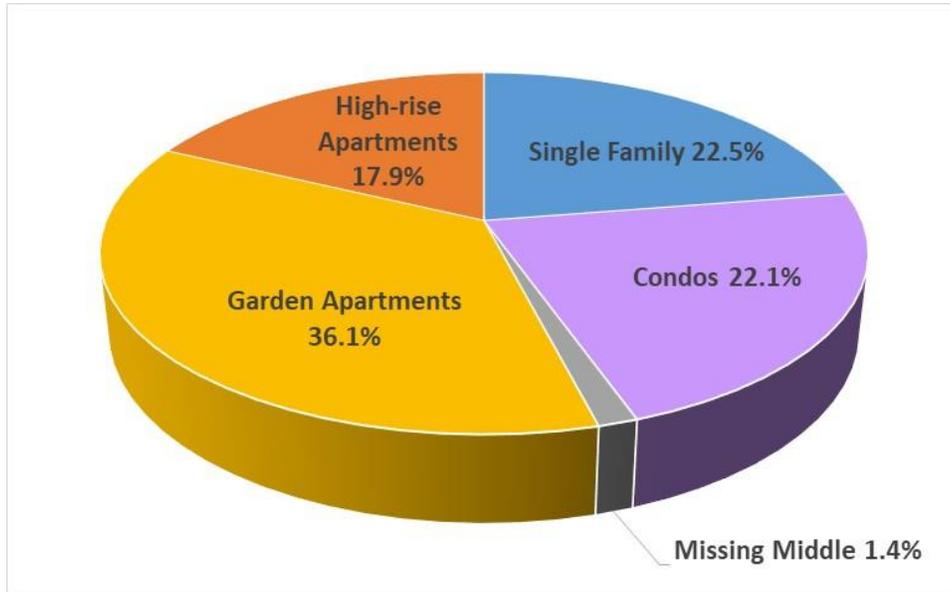
Within one half mile of Lakeforest Mall are 15,782 people who live in 6,893 dwelling units<sup>16</sup>. Most of the housing units are multifamily rental apartments, with a good amount of single family and condo units, and a few Gap Housing units<sup>17</sup>. Over one fourth of the apartments are age-restricted, but only a few are income-restricted or both age and income restricted<sup>18</sup>. The households living in the surrounding housing mirror the dwelling unit mix<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> City of Gaithersburg July 2020 Dwelling Units and Population Report, July 2020 Households/Population/Jobs-by-Parcel GIS Feature Class, July 2020 SDAT real property information

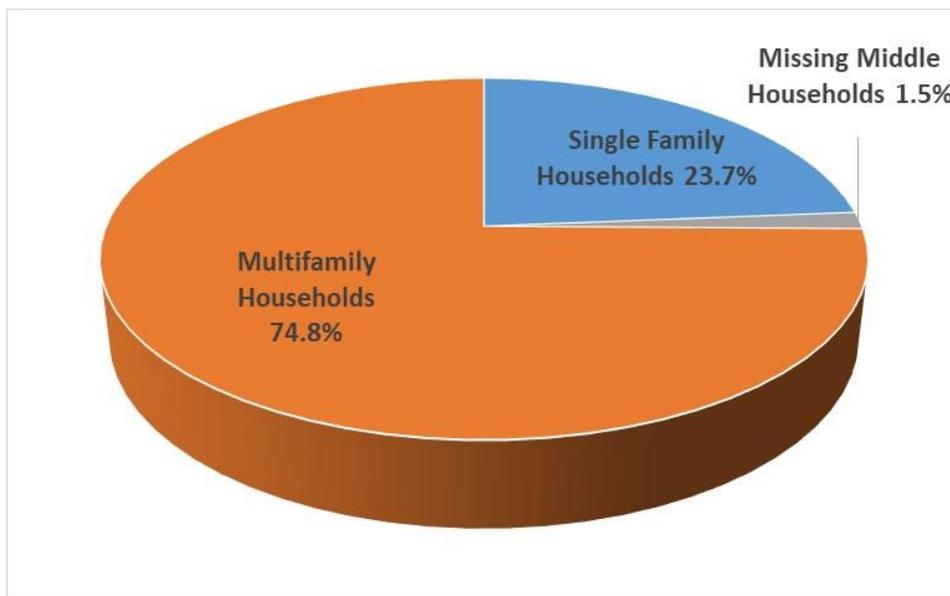
<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

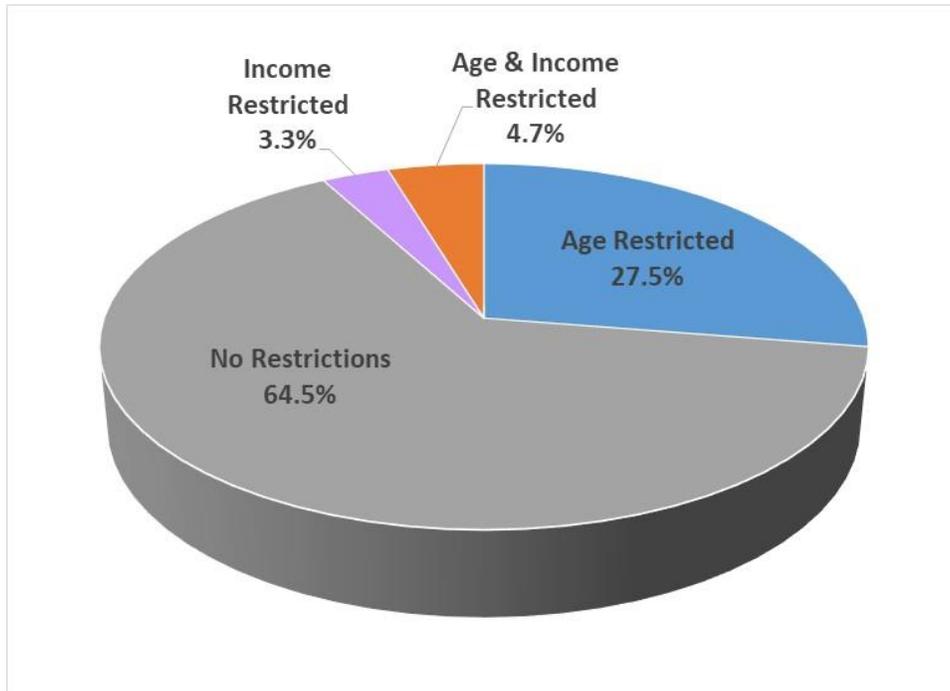
<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



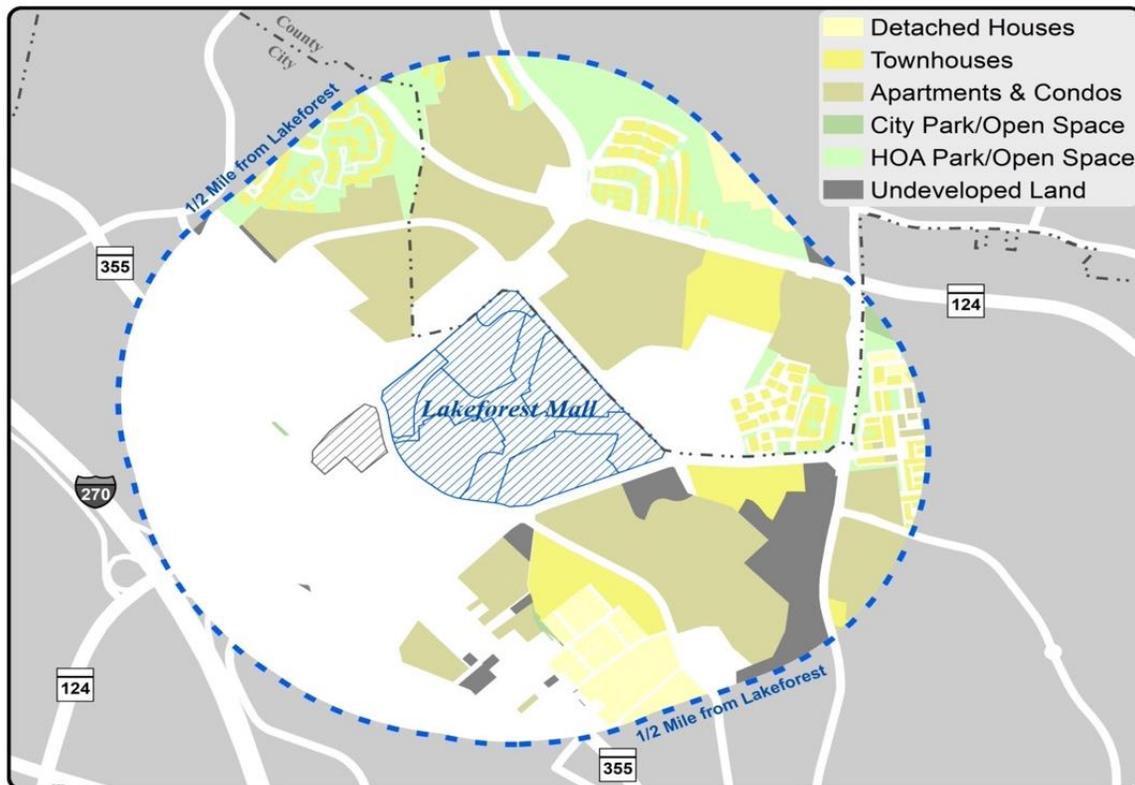
**Chart 1. Dwelling Units within 1/2 Mile of Lakeforest Mall**



**Chart 2. Households within 1/2 Mile of Lakeforest Mall**



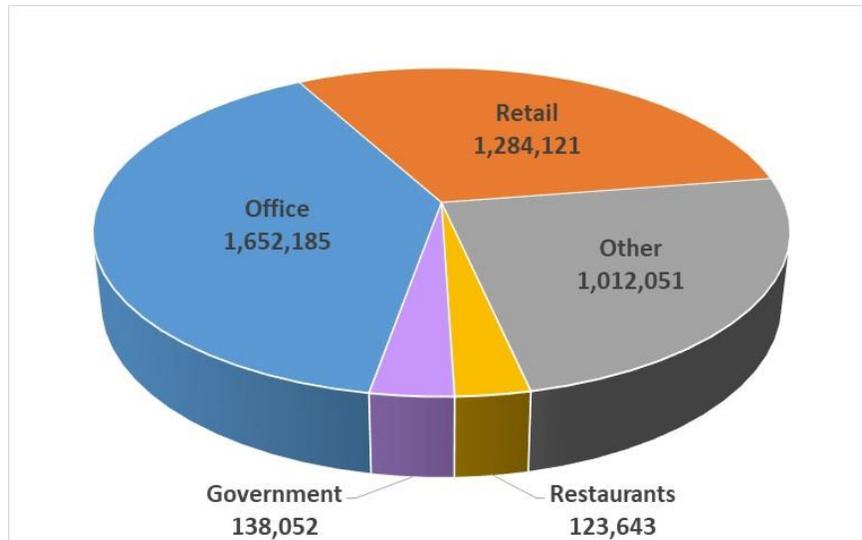
**Chart 3. Apartments within 1/2 Mile of Lakeforest Mall**



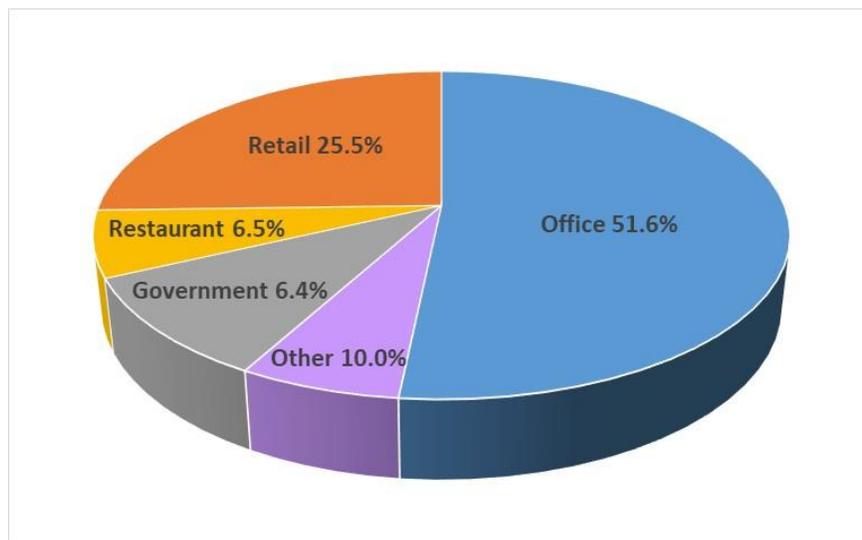
**Map 12. Residential Uses within 1/2 mile of Lakeforest Mall**

## Nonresidential Uses

Excluding the mall itself, there is approximately 4,210,052 square feet of nonresidential uses within one half mile of Lakeforest Mall, split between office, retail, and other uses<sup>20</sup>. Together, these nonresidential uses generate approximately 9,915 jobs, with more than half of those in general and medical office and nearly one-third in retail and restaurants<sup>21</sup>.



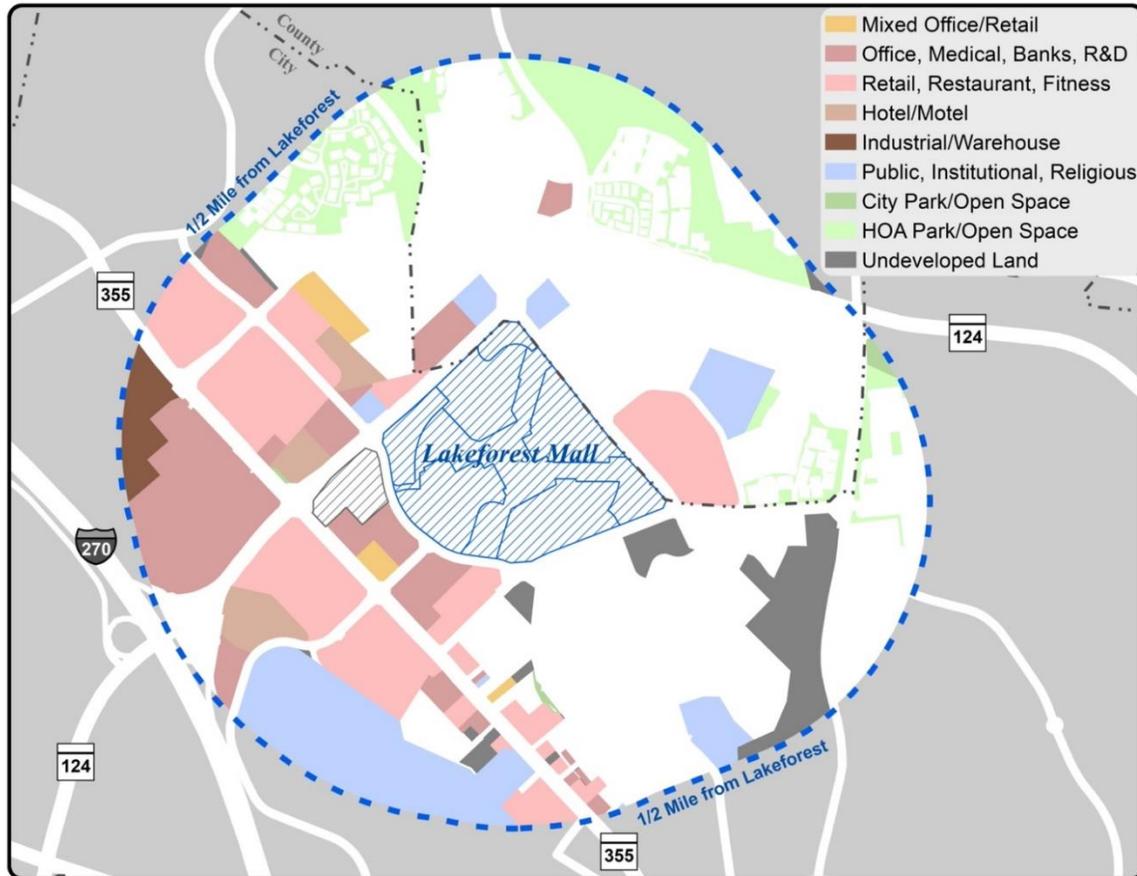
**Chart 4. Nonresidential Square Feet within ½ Mile of Lakeforest Mall**



**Chart 5. Estimated number of Jobs within ½ Mile of Lakeforest Mall**

<sup>20</sup> City of Gaithersburg July 2020 Dwelling Units and Population Report, July 2020 Households/Population/Jobs-by-Parcel GIS Feature Class, July 2020 SDAT real property information

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



**Map 13. Nonresidential Uses within 1/2 Mile of Lakeforest Mall**

### Key Points

Most of the housing within a half mile of Lakeforest Mall is multifamily apartments, with the remainder split between single family townhouses and multifamily condos<sup>22</sup>. There are very few Gap Housing units within a half mile of the mall<sup>23</sup>, so these units should be prioritized to eventually become the second largest number of housing units within the Lakeforest redevelopment. Because there is a significant amount of retail space within a half mile of Lakeforest Mall, approximately 1.2 million square feet<sup>24</sup>, retail should be a smaller component of a redevelopment than other types of commercial uses and jobs, but not prohibited as part of the redevelopment.

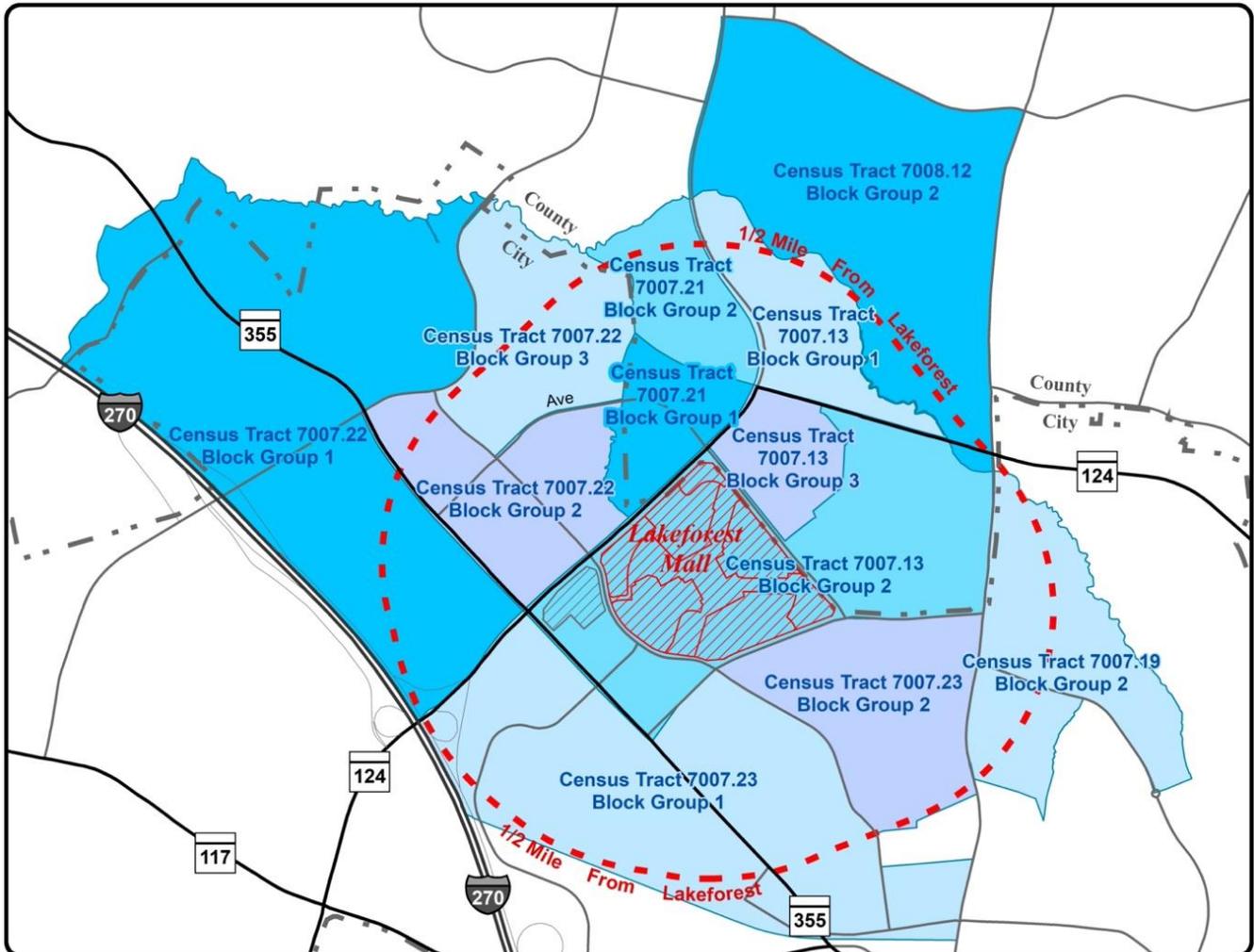
<sup>22</sup> City of Gaithersburg July 2020 Dwelling Units and Population Report, July 2020 Households/Population/Jobs-by-Parcel GIS Feature Class, July 2020 SDAT real property information

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

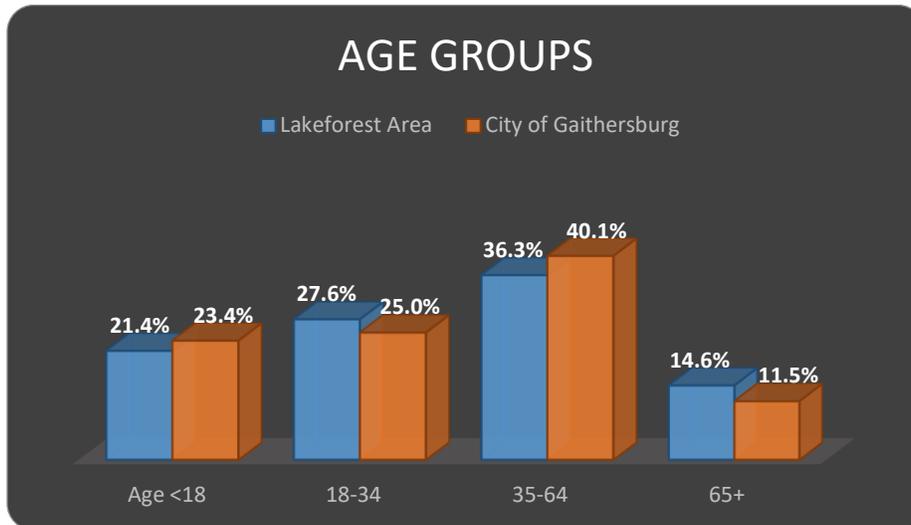
## Surrounding Demographics

Based upon the Census Block Groups<sup>25</sup> that surround Lakeforest Mall, there are 22,344 people in the area, who live in 8,545 households among 9,094 housing units.



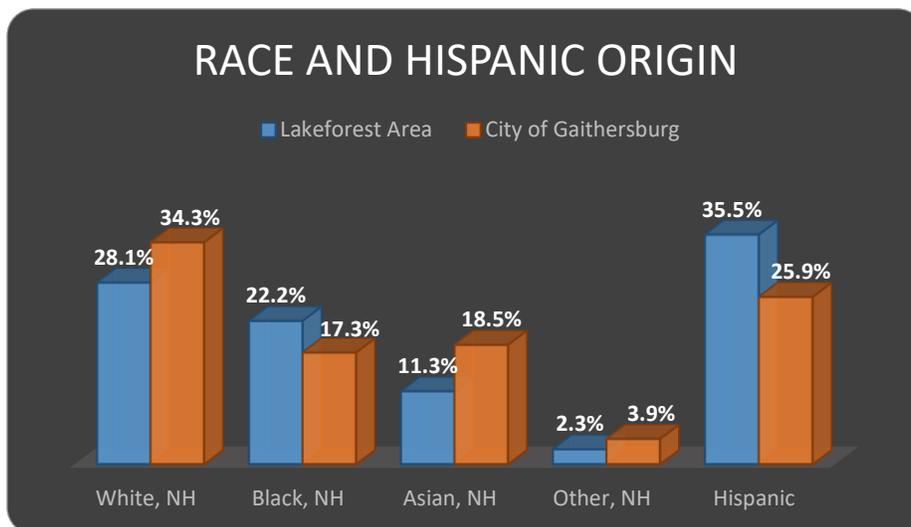
<sup>25</sup> 2014-2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS)

Compared to the City as a whole, there are more people 18-34 years old, more people 65 and older (in part a function of the Asbury Methodist Village), and fewer people under 18 and between the ages of 35 and 64 in the Lakeforest area<sup>26</sup>.



**Chart 6. Age Groups**

The racial makeup of the area around Lakeforest Mall is diverse, with no single race forming a majority of the population<sup>27</sup>. The Lakeforest area has fewer white, Asian, and multiracial non-Hispanic (NH) persons and more Hispanics and black non-Hispanics than the City as a whole<sup>28</sup>. The Plan should encourage the inclusion of amenities that respond to and reflect a diverse population.



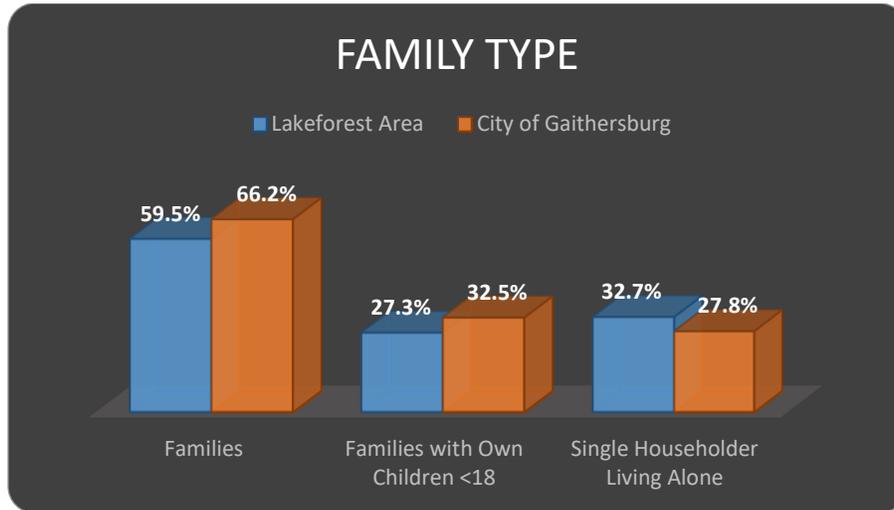
**Chart 7. Race and Hispanic Origin**

<sup>26</sup> 2014-2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS)

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

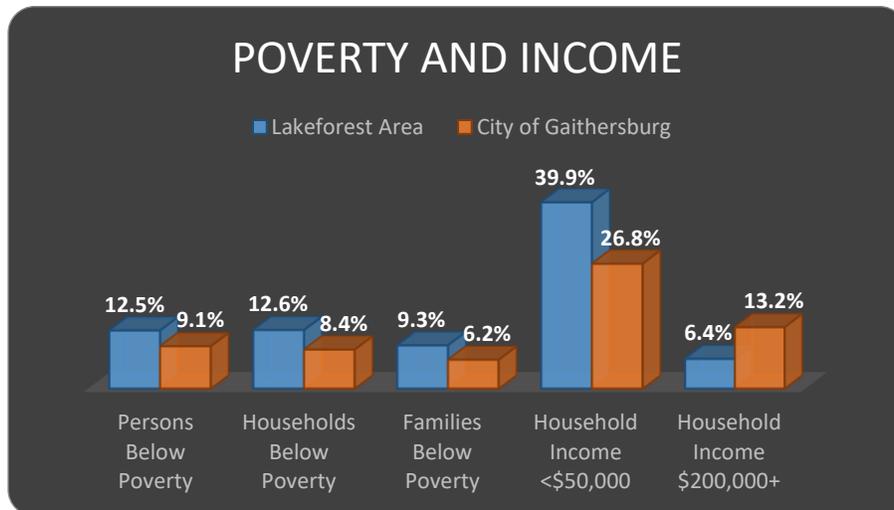
<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

There are fewer families, fewer families with children, and more single persons living alone in the Lakeforest area than in the City as a whole<sup>29</sup>. 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<sup>30</sup>.



**Chart 8. Family Type**

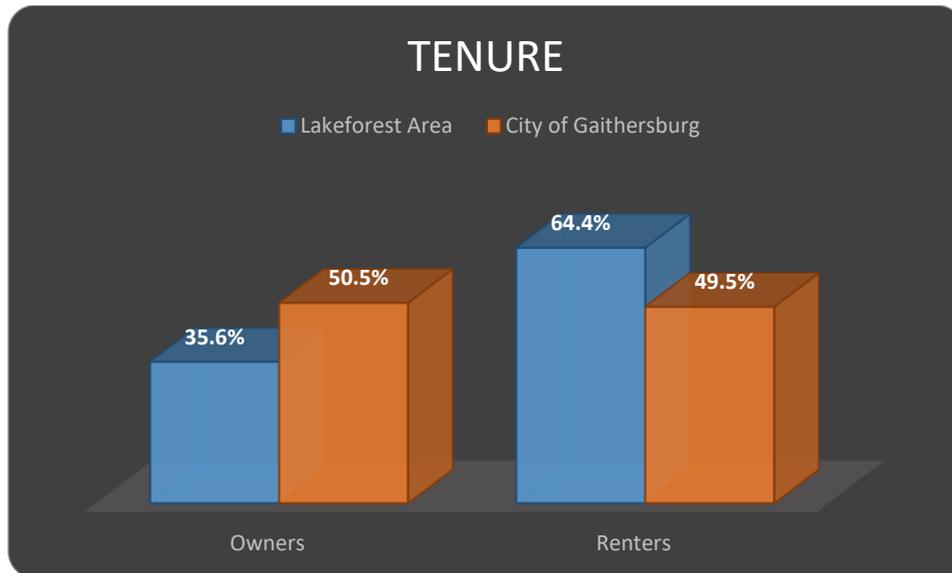
In the interest of equity, the Plan should encourage the income diversity of the area by including housing that offers a variety of price points for both new and current residents. The Plan should discourage creating a predominance of higher-priced housing. The Plan should strive to ensure there are housing opportunities for a variety of socio-economic groups, including the current area residents with low and moderate incomes.



**Chart 9. Poverty Status and Income**

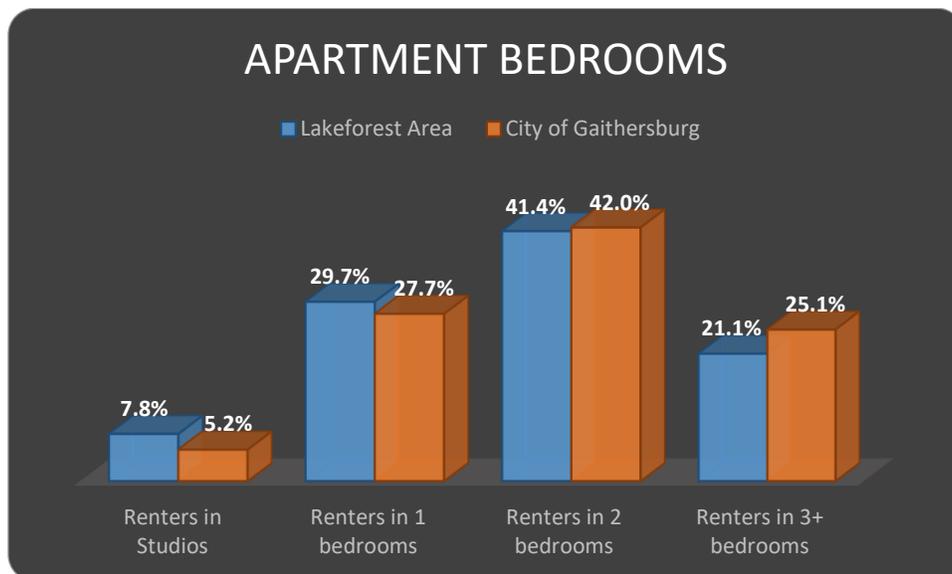
<sup>29</sup> 2014-2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



**Chart 10. Tenure**

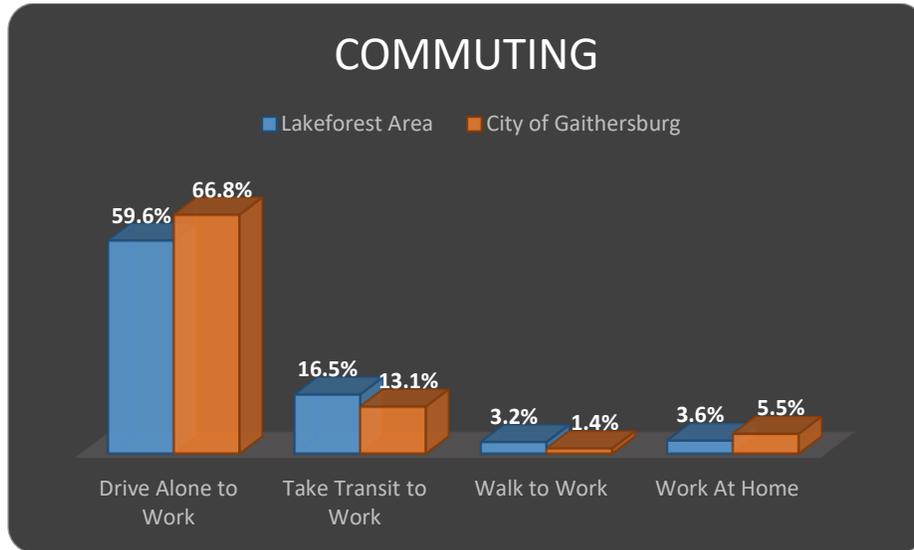
More renters and fewer owners reside in the Lakeforest area, when compared to the City as a whole<sup>31</sup>. There are more renters in studios and one bedroom units in the Lakeforest area than the City as a whole, and fewer renters in units with three or more bedrooms<sup>32</sup>. These attributes likely reflect both the diversity and age groups in the area, and as mentioned previously, the Plan should seek to retain this diversity and include amenities that respond to the age groups and diverse population.



**Chart 11. Apartment Bedrooms**

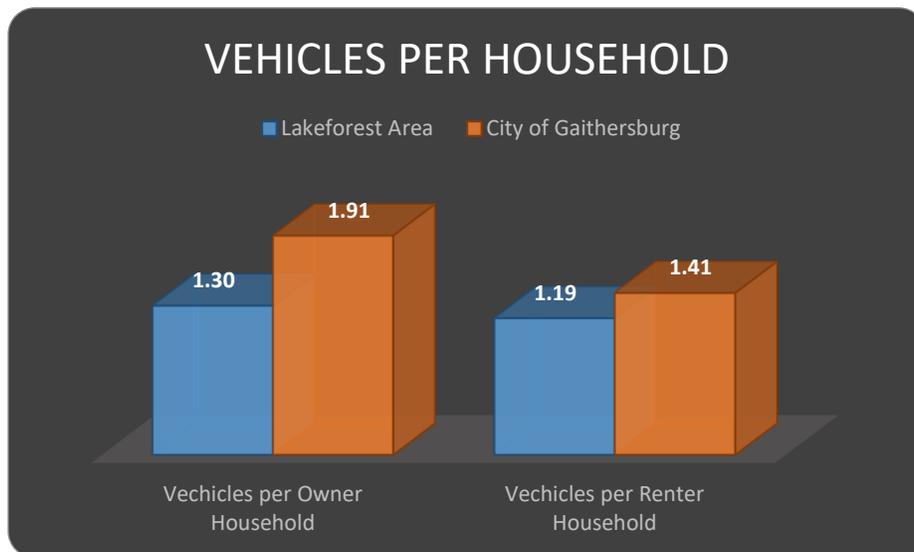
<sup>31</sup> 2014-2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS)

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



**Chart 12. Commuting**

Compared to the City as a whole, people in the Lakeforest area are less likely to drive alone to work and to work at home, but more likely to take transit and walk to work, and there are fewer vehicles available per household<sup>33</sup>. The Plan should seek to retain and expand the higher use of transit and walking for commuting to jobs, by providing high-quality transit facilities and pedestrian spaces and reducing the overall amount of parking required for a redeveloped Lakeforest Mall. The Plan should not diminish transit options presently associated with the location. Emphasizing expanded transit will serve the existing community and a future, more urban redeveloped Lakeforest.



**Chart 13. Vehicles per Household**

<sup>33</sup> 2014-2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS)

### **Key Points**

The population surrounding Lakeforest is diverse, in terms of race, age, and incomes<sup>34</sup>, and the Plan should seek to respond to and retain this diversity. Fewer people drive alone in a car to work and more people use transit or walk to work in the Lakeforest area<sup>35</sup>. These tendencies should be encouraged and expanded as part of the Plan.

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<sup>34</sup> 2014-2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

## 5. Vision Framework

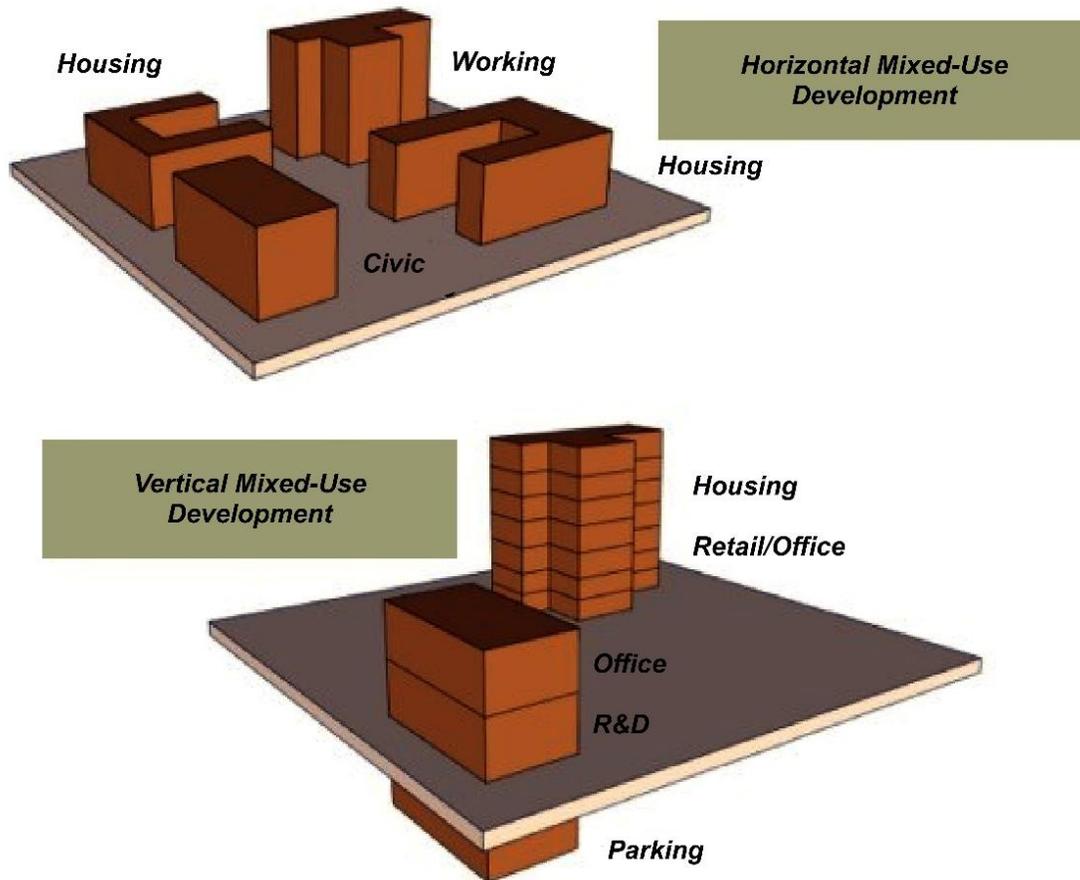
Key to the successful redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall is a cohesive, overarching vision. An overarching vision inspires and guides action towards a desired future. The vision framework presented in this plan communicates the “big picture” of what the City wants Lakeforest Mall to become, and provides the basis for more specific goals and recommendations throughout the rest of the Plan.

Due to its large size and central location, the Lakeforest Mall site has great potential to be a unique asset in the City and a catalyst for revitalization in the surrounding area. The City is largely built-out with very limited greenfield development opportunities, so growth must be accommodated through redevelopment of existing areas. The area east of I-270, particularly the MD 355 corridor, is prime for redevelopment due to recent growth trends and the prevalence of aging commercial buildings as evidenced in the City’s *Visioning Exercise Data Analysis*. Lakeforest Mall is central to and a key component of this area. A vibrant Lakeforest Mall site redeveloped according to the Plan’s established vision can set the standard for future redevelopment in the surrounding area. It can improve the quality of life of nearby residents by providing amenities and needed goods and services and spurring further reinvestment. Therefore, it is important that the Plan’s vision establishes a future worth striving towards; that it represents the desires of the community while also taking into account future growth needs.

The Lakeforest Mall Master Plan’s vision is informed by extensive research, sound planning principles, and the values and concerns expressed by the community. Staff conducted a public outreach effort consisting of an online survey, a targeted mailed survey, focus groups, and public forums to ascertain what is important to the community. While there were some divergent views expressed by community members on certain topics, some common themes and majority opinions emerged. The vision framework that establishes the Plan’s recommendations are:

- That a Lakeforest redevelopment should be mixed use and that mixed use means much more than retail and residential.
  - Mixed use development has historically been thought of as residential over top of traditional retail (soft goods stores and restaurants). This model may have been successful in the past, but with the changing nature of retail and the City’s current oversupply, a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment should look beyond those traditional uses to include others, such as research and development, integrated light manufacturing, makerspaces, and civic uses.

- That it should include a coordinated, well-integrated horizontal and vertical mix of uses.
- A variety of commercial, employment, civic and residential uses, including diverse housing types needed to support future growth, should be included and designed so that neighboring uses complement one other and all uses together contribute to a harmonious community.



**Figure 10. Vertical vs. Horizontal Mixed-Use<sup>36</sup>**

- That it is important for Lakeforest to become a destination with its own “sense of place” that draws people of all ages, including families, and offers unique experiences, amenities and opportunities.

<sup>36</sup> Modified version of an illustration found in <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0924271615002786>

- That connectivity with the surrounding area is important.
  - A Lakeforest redevelopment can best benefit the surrounding area if it is easily accessible by multiple transportation modes.
- That walkability and the inclusion of recreational, open and green spaces is a priority.
- That there be a focus on job creation generally and having a variety of jobs that offer new opportunities and upward mobility.
- That there be flexibility in the master plan to account for unforeseen challenges.

The subsequent sections included in this Plan contain recommendations that are intended to support and help achieve the overall vision framework. Each section focuses on one priority facet. These facets represent the logical categorization of those topics that were viewed as essential to ensuring a successful redevelopment. The sections are amenities, transportation, residential, commercial, and post master plan.

## Recommendations

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- Redevelopment of the mall creates a unique and strong sense of place and ensures economic and community stability, resiliency, and desirability over time.
- Connectivity, both internally and externally, that accommodates a variety of transportation options in a safe manner is a design priority. Connectivity should also be accomplished through other design elements such as architecture, signage, massing, and streetscapes that create a visually inviting environment not only for the Mall's future residents and workers, but also for the surrounding communities and developments.
- The existing surface parking lots are replaced with denser, more intensive uses that create economic activity, generate jobs for various career levels, and support housing needs.
- There is an integrated and coordinated mix of uses that goes beyond the typical retail and residential types; it should include uses such as makerspaces, integrated light manufacturing, research and development, and community/civic uses. Residential should include new housing types that foster a variety of rental and ownership opportunities at various price points.
- Integrated mixed-use can be achieved at the project scale and does not require it to be reflected within every individual multifamily or non-residential building, though some mixed use buildings should be included.
- There is an interconnected network of community spaces, useable open spaces, and green areas that offer experiential, recreational, and social gathering opportunities and are available to the surrounding areas.
- Flexibility is important to allow for social, technological, economic, and unforeseen changes over time, while staying true to the overall Master Plan vision.
- Rezone the Lakeforest Mall parcels from C-2 to MXD. Given the mixed use concept, MXD is the most appropriate zone. MXD can accommodate both the types and densities of uses needed to accommodate future growth and is best positioned to achieve the above stated vision framework.

## 6. Amenities

A primary goal of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment is to provide ample amenity space for residents and visitors. Amenities can take the form of a variety of different facilities, including but not limited to hardscape plazas, open green space, athletic fields, performance venues, community centers, and other civic uses. Access to these types of amenity spaces can greatly improve one's quality of life, helping to meet fitness, leisure, intellectual, and social needs. Additionally, communities with quality amenities hold value and attract reinvestment over time. However, in order to be successful and provide the greatest benefit, amenity spaces in a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment should not be an afterthought, but should be treated as an essential component of the overall development. This does not mean that amenities should necessarily make up the greatest amount of land area, but rather they should be usable to residents and visitors, easily accessible and integral to the development. The inclusion of these different amenity spaces can add vibrancy and help foster a unique sense of place in a future Lakeforest redevelopment.

***“...amenity spaces in a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment should not be an afterthought, but should be treated as an essential component of the overall development.”***

Another goal of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment is to create a place that embraces diversity. A variety of types and sizes of amenity spaces should be included to appeal to and support a diverse group of people. Open outdoor space can provide for community gathering that helps bring together people of

various backgrounds, while both indoor and outdoor public facilities can provide space for cultural and educational events. An emphasis on amenity space can also help the future Lakeforest redevelopment become a central, distinctive, unifying public space for the City.

### Green Space and Open Space

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Given the projections on future residential growth and the conclusion that higher density development will be required to meet future demand, amenity space, particularly open outdoor space, becomes even more important. 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. The pandemic has increased the demand for this public, open outdoor space. This demand will probably extend well beyond the pandemic, as there is increased awareness that having these types of quality spaces is a public health issue – these outdoor spaces are important to one's physical and mental well-being.

To ensure an adequate amount of open green space is provided on site to accomplish the goals discussed above, a green area requirement that exceeds that required per Code will need to be established. The recommended zone for this property, MXD, has a 40% green area requirement for the residential portion of a mixed use development and a 25% green area requirement for the commercial portion of a development. Green area includes “designated parks, public and private open space, active and passive recreational areas,” meaning that private yards, sidewalks, street trees, and portions of the public right of way can count towards the green area requirement, even though these are not truly open, usable park-like spaces. The existing stormwater management ponds themselves also count towards the required green area. These percentage requirements of the MXD zone, due in part to what is included in the definition of green area, become difficult to apply in areas where there are a mix of uses in a single building or where a detailed design plan is not available. The ponds and their associated surrounding green space account for approximately 15 acres, and when added to the other public and private non-park green areas mentioned above, constitute a significant amount of the required green area under the MXD zone. In order to ensure that there is adequate space to develop a truly useable open space network, the Plan establishes a 35% requirement for green area across the entire 102-acre Lakeforest Mall site, which equates to approximately 30% green area for any phased redevelopment that comes in parcel by parcel, excluding the parcel closest to MD 355. Staff estimates that this green area requirement will result in approximately 11 acres of useable green space outside of the pond areas, private lots, and right of ways, regardless of whether the redevelopment occurs holistically or piecemeal.

Amenities in the form of green and open space can take a variety of different forms. The City’s Parks, Recreation & Culture Element of the Master Plan lays out seven different park typologies:

CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	SIZE	SERVICE
Regional	Includes lands or facilities administered by other agencies	50+ acres	0-25+ miles
Community	Contains multiple uses: Attracts users City-Wide	10 to 50 Acres	0-25 miles
Neighborhood	Both active and passive recreation: Serves the residents who live within walking distance of the park	0.5 to 10 Acres	0- 5 miles
Pocket	Small open space; mainly single use for immediate residents	Up to 0.5 acres	Up to 1 mile
Conservation / Greenway	To preserve natural resources and open space & provide enhanced buffering: use for recreation is a secondary goal	Varies	Citywide
Special Use / Destination	Areas intended for specialized or single-purpose recreation activities: Aquatic, senior center, historic parks	Varies	0-100 miles
Shared Use	Includes parks that share facilities with schools	2-20 Acres	0-25 miles

**Figure 11. Park Typologies<sup>37</sup>**

<sup>37</sup> City of Gaithersburg 2019 Master Plan, Parks, Recreation & Culture Element

Given the size of the developable area, a combination of neighborhood and pocket parks are the most appropriate for a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment to meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors. Other park typologies may be considered where appropriate. As documented above, neighborhood parks consist of 0.5 to 10 acres and include both active and passive recreation. These types of parks could provide a variety of different activity opportunities within a Lakeforest redevelopment. Pocket parks, including both green areas and hardscape plazas, should be included throughout the development, including the commercial areas, to break up the denser built-up areas and enhance the pedestrian experience. It is important for these pocket parks to be usable by residents and visitors, and not solely taken up by stormwater management facilities or overly landscaped. While a neighborhood park can be as small as one half acre, it is important to include “right-sized” parks that are large enough to function as a community gathering space. A neighborhood park(s) should facilitate passive activities as well as be able to be programmed for events such as festivals. This can help fulfill the goal discussed previously of Lakeforest having a distinctive, unifying public space that supports community gathering and diversity.



**Figure 12. Pocket Parks: Olde Towne Plaza and Constitution Gardens<sup>38</sup>**



**Figure 13. Neighborhood Park: Future Discovery Park<sup>39</sup>**

<sup>38</sup> City of Gaithersburg

<sup>39</sup> Triad Engineering & Floura Teeter Landscape Architects

## Programming

As discussed in the City's Parks, Recreation & Culture Element, different demographic groups use park space differently, so "parks must be programmed to address the diverse populations within a community" (pg. 17). As shown in the Existing Conditions and Context section, the area of the City around Lakeforest Mall is racially diverse, further emphasizing the need for appropriate programming. Any future Lakeforest redevelopment should include formal amenity space that allows organized activities, as well as natural, scenic areas for solitary and passive recreation. Proper programming that recognizes and reflects the diversity of users in age, physical ability, and culture can increase park use and contribute to the development's vibrancy and sense of place.

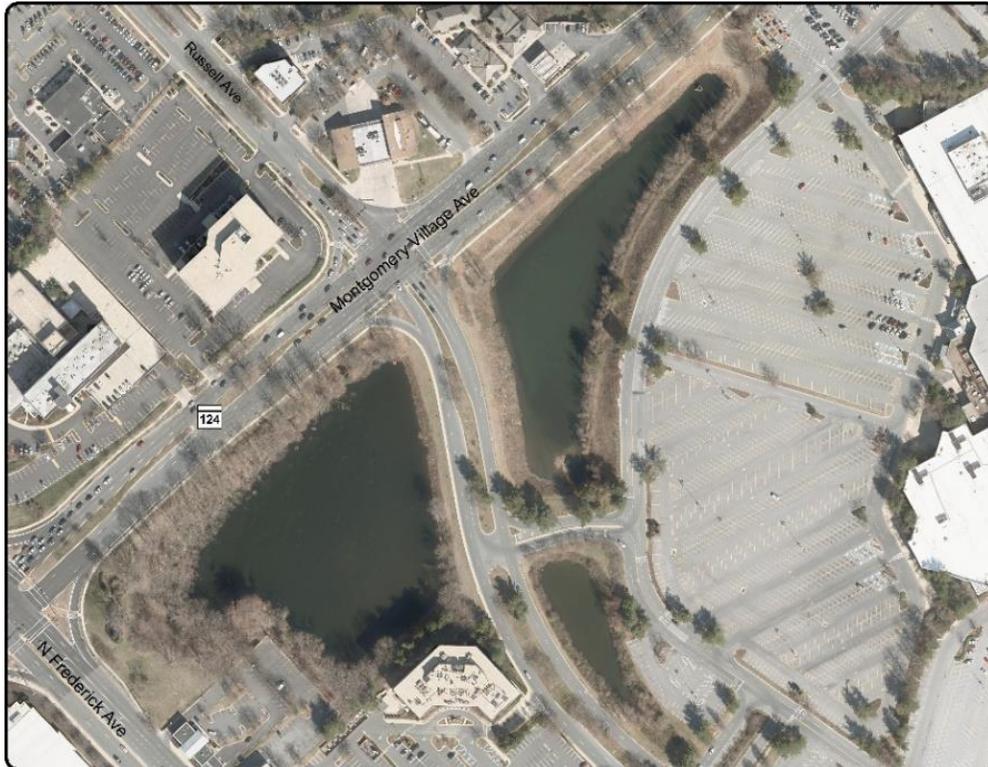


*Figure 14. Examples of Potential Programming<sup>40</sup>*

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<sup>40</sup> City of Gaithersburg

## Stormwater Management Ponds



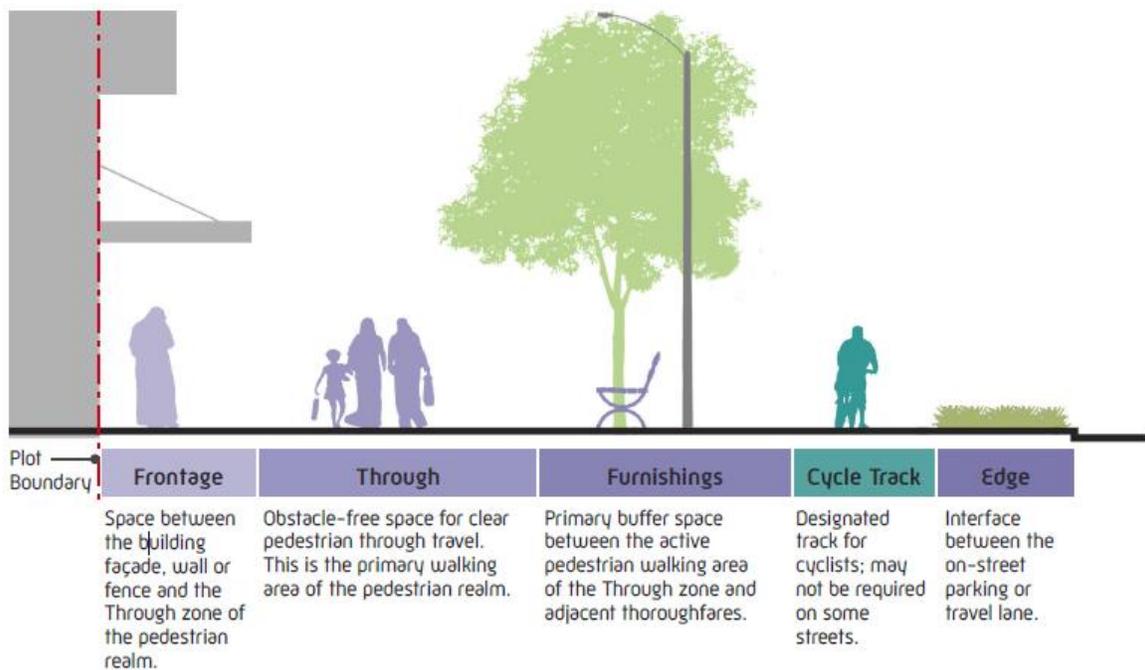
*Figure 15. Existing Stormwater Management Ponds<sup>41</sup>*

The stormwater management ponds are a unique asset that should be incorporated into any future redevelopment. These ponds function as regional stormwater management facilities. Additionally, one of the ponds will require a 100 foot stream valley buffer due to its hydrologic connection to nearby streams. The ponds, having associated established canopy areas, bring added value to a redevelopment by leveraging their environmental benefits as an urban forest resource. The pond areas should be utilized to help fulfill the site's forest conservation requirements and should be placed under a Category II forest conservation easement. This type of easement functions as a tree save area and allows the incorporation of paths, furniture, and public art so these areas may be included in a green space / park network. It is important for the ponds and their green areas to be enhanced and incorporated into the larger green space / park network. Although the ponds may be used as a conservation/greenway park typology, they should be improved with appropriate landscaping enhancements and made accessible through the addition of paths, so future residents and visitors can fully enjoy them. The ponds should be viewed as an integrated part of the greater redevelopment and not as separate, disconnected assets.

<sup>41</sup> City of Gaithersburg GIS Data, 2017 Aerial Orthophoto

## Pedestrian Realm

An important factor in adding energy and vibrancy to a new development is an enhanced pedestrian realm related to denser multifamily housing and commercial streets. An expanded, safe, and comfortable pedestrian experience increases foot traffic and contributes to on-site business success. It can often serve the same “community gathering” functions as a more traditional park or plaza discussed above. A future Lakeforest redevelopment should include an enhanced pedestrian realm through the use of appropriately located wide sidewalks, attractive landscaping and street furniture, and the inclusion of other design elements that enhance pedestrian safety and offer protection from automobiles. Attention should also be paid to the area immediately adjacent to the sidewalk and buildings fronting the pedestrian realm. Outdoor seating areas for restaurants and more transparent, attractive buildings fronting the sidewalks can contribute to a more pleasant pedestrian experience.



**Figure 16. Pedestrian Realm Zones<sup>42</sup>**

<sup>42</sup> Khalid Sabri, Arwa; Galal Ahmed, Khaled. 2019. "Replacing Land-Use Planning with Localized Form-Based Codes in the United Arab Emirates: A Proposed Method" Land 8, no. 3: 47. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land8030047>

## Buildings and Centers

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*Figure 17. Civic Use Example<sup>43</sup>*



*Figure 18. Civic Use Example<sup>44</sup>*

<sup>43</sup> <https://mercyhealthsportscore.com/isc>

<sup>44</sup> <https://gbdmagazine.com/mass-timber-clemson-university/>

Amenities can also take the form of buildings, such as community centers, sports arenas, fitness and recreation centers, theatres and other civic uses. These types of amenities have the potential to not only provide fitness and leisure activities, but also provide space for various cultural, educational and social support programs. These opportunities help bring people together to learn from one another and enable individuals to build skills and improve their quality of life. These amenities can often act as the defining element of a community. One challenge with these types of uses, however, is funding and programming. Large civic uses, other than schools, (like ball parks, performance venues, sports facilities, etc.) although desirable, are costly to construct, maintain and operate, and may not be considered as feasible primary uses. Smaller civic uses could be more appropriate and be publicly or privately owned and funded. In order to be successful financially and provide the greatest public benefit, any civic facility should be designed to allow flexibility in programming and be usable year round. While the Plan does not define which type of civic use is most appropriate, it does recognize the importance of having such an amenity (or amenities) included. Further, the Plan encourages exploring public-private partnerships with various levels of government (Federal, State, County, City) to realize these uses and overcome potential funding or operational challenges, should the private sector not be able to independently provide a civic use(s).

## Connectivity

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These various amenity spaces need to be well-integrated and connected to form a greater network in order to be successful and provide the greatest public benefit. As stated in the Parks, Recreation & Culture element,

*“An ancillary yet equally important facet to parks is the connectivity to, within, and among these features. Trails/paths are the non-roadway tool designed to provide walking, bicycling, and other nonmotorized recreational opportunities and connectivity. These modes of connectivity can determine the success and use of a particular park. They provide linkages in a safe, non-vehicular option for travel throughout the community.”*

Amenities should be connected by paths or trails either within the public right-of-way or off-street. An adequate trail and path network connecting the various amenities, both green space and buildings and centers, should be accessible to residents and visitors of varying abilities, and is necessary to ensure the spaces are used to their greatest potential.

## Recommendations

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- Provide a variety of different types and sizes of amenity spaces appealing to people from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensure any amenity space is usable and accessible to residents and visitors with various backgrounds and physical needs.
- Provide green and open areas appropriately sized to support community gathering and host cultural and civic events.
- Retain the three stormwater management ponds and place them under a Category II forest conservation easement.
- Enhance the three stormwater management ponds and integrate them into the larger open and green space network.
- Include an enhanced, attractive, and welcoming pedestrian realm.
- Include a civic use facility (or multiple facilities).
- Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships in funding a civic use.
- Provide both programmed and unprogrammed amenity space.
- Create a well-integrated green space network throughout the site connected through sidewalks, paths, and trails.

## Special Conditions

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- For a singular holistic redevelopment plan application for the entire Plan area, establish an overall minimum of 35% green area, as defined in the MXD zone, distributed across the entire 102-acres.
- For a phased, fragmented redevelopment plan strategy, each application must include a minimum of 30% green area, as defined in the MXD zone.

## 7. Transportation

Creating a successful, sustainable development with a diversity of land uses can only occur when a well-designed transportation network is incorporated. The Lakeforest Mall Master Plan envisions a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use development served by various transportation options that safely accommodate the needs of residents, employees, and visitors.

The Lakeforest Mall's existing physical form is reflective of traditional suburban regional malls: a single-use development separated from the surrounding areas by wide arterial and connector roadways and expansive surface parking lots connected by a "ring road" with gaps in sidewalk and crosswalk

***"The Lakeforest Mall Master Plan envisions a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use development served by various transportation options that safely accommodate the needs of residents, employees, and visitors."***

connectivity. This development form ensures auto-dependence and discourages walking and biking. A redeveloped Lakeforest should seek to improve both internal and external connectivity and offer multiple transportation mode options. Although segments of the existing "ring road" could be incorporated into a new grid, it currently creates a disconnect between the core area and the surrounding road corridors. The existing adjacent roads defining the corridors in the Introduction should serve as the external frame of any future grid network, rather than the existing "ring road" drive aisles.

The City's Road Code, also called Street Design Standards and Traffic Calming Best Practices, are regulations that define the various types of roads found in the City and the minimum engineering design standards. The regulations "seek to design all roadways to respond to adjoining land use contexts and improve multimodal travel for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and other alternatives as well as the automobile."

Using the various typologies defined in the City's Road Code, a proposed redevelopment will include a street network creating an interconnected grid that improves vehicular and bicycle/pedestrian circulation and connections between modes. The new grid should afford residents, employees, and visitors the ability to safely get to any internal destination without the need to drive. All new commercial, mixed-use and high-density residential developments' loading and delivery areas should be accessed by Commercial Service Roads. Residential neighborhoods should include Alleys and Neighborhood Residential streets. Park Boulevards and Main Streets should also be incorporated to serve mixed-use and solely commercial areas. Additional points of access should be incorporated, including a second connection to Odend'hal, a potential roadway connection between Lakeforest Boulevard and

Contour Road, and a possible third access point to Russell Avenue related to a possible relocation of the Lakeforest Transit Center. While the physical context and traffic volumes of MD 124, Montgomery Village Avenue, make an additional point of access difficult, the existing access point should be preserved. The other existing access points may be considered for relocation through the design process.

To improve overall external connectivity:

- Odend’hal and Russell Avenues should be redesigned as Park Boulevard “C” under the City’s Road Code and incorporate shared use paths and reduce the speed limit from 40 MPH.

EXAMPLE PARK BOULEVARD C CROSS SECTION : SUP & FOUR TRAVEL LANES

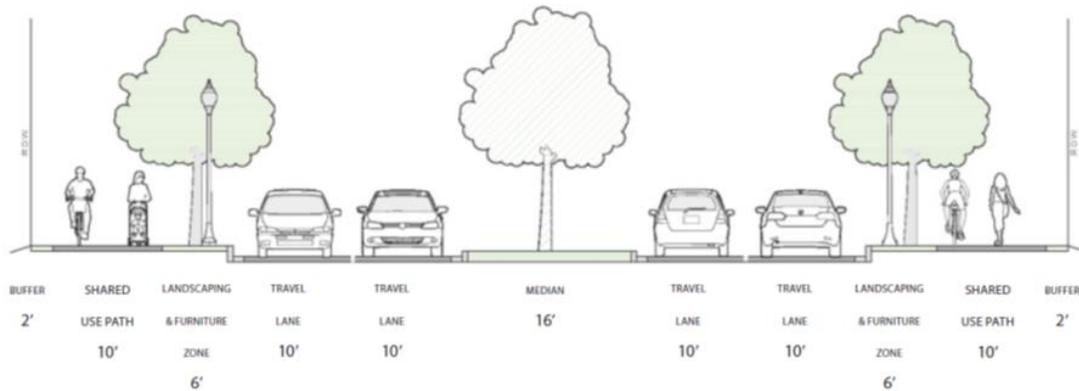


Figure 19. Park Boulevard Cross Section<sup>45</sup>

Inclusion of a shared use path along MD 124 should be explored with the State Highway Administration and a redevelopment should support the master planned changes recommended by the County Montgomery Village Master Plan and amended through the 2018 Montgomery County Bicycle Master Plan<sup>46</sup> that will improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity on Lost Knife Road.

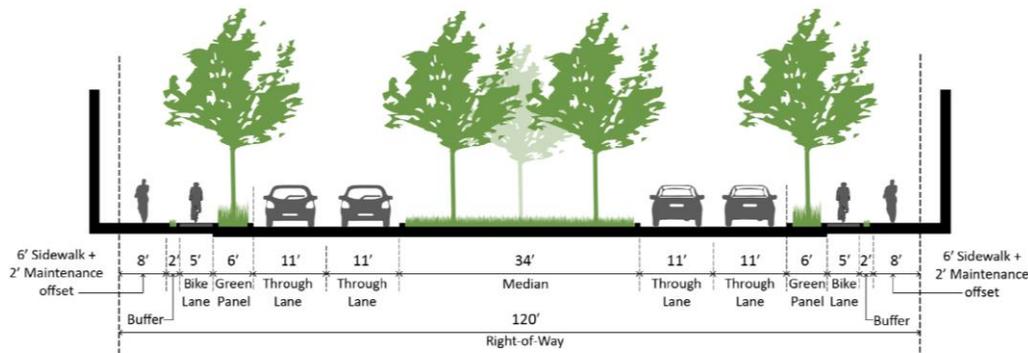


Figure 20: Lost Knife Road Cross-Section (4-lane section East of Montgomery Village Avenue, looking West)

Figure 20. Lost Knife Road Cross Section, 2016 Montgomery Village Master Plan<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> City of Gaithersburg Road Code, <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=5176>

<sup>46</sup> The illustrative section in Figure 20 was amended with the following features:

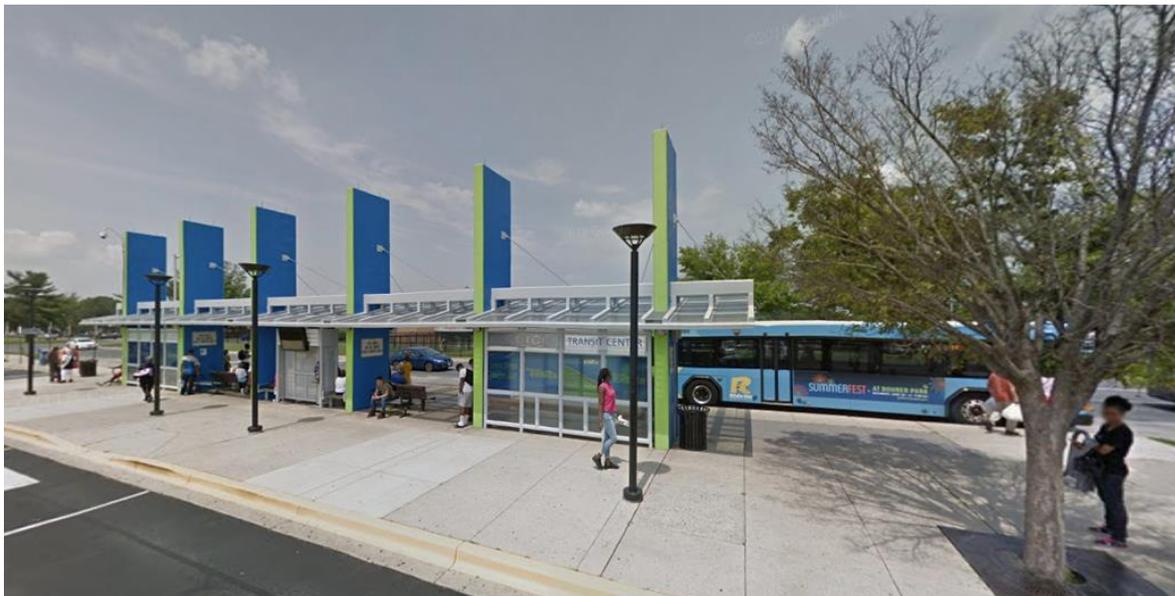
- At minimum, 10' sidepaths on both sides of the roadway rather than 15' of separate facilities
- 11' outside through lanes and 10' inside through lanes

<sup>47</sup> 2016 Montgomery Village Master Plan, <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/midcounty/montgomery-village/>

The City of Gaithersburg, State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation should consider the removal of the various uncontrolled right-turn lanes at MD 124 and Lost Knife; Lost Knife and Odend’hal; Odend’hal and Russell; and Russel and MD 124. Removing these lanes will support connectivity by decreasing pedestrian crossing distance; reducing bicycle/pedestrian conflict points with right-turning vehicles; and will slow vehicles overall with signalization.

The City of Gaithersburg, State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation should consider adding high visibility crosswalks to all four legs of every intersection, where such crosswalks are currently missing.

Throughout the public engagement process leading to this plan, the role of transit was acknowledged and there was broad support for an enhanced and integrated Lakeforest Transit Center to be included in a redevelopment. This integration could include relocating the transit center closer to MD 355 and incorporating the center into a vertical mixed-use building with shared parking as part of a public-private partnership (P3). A relocated transit center could better serve, from an operational standpoint, the future MD 355 bus rapid transit (BRT) service. If the transit center cannot be relocated, it should be retained and enhanced. Enhancements may include but not be limited to inclusion of public art, smart trip signage, wayfinding related to redevelopment, three-sided shelters among others. The 2019 Maryland Department of Transportation Bus Stop Design Guide<sup>48</sup> is a useful resource in this effort. The transit center should incorporate micro-mobility stations (bike share and scooters et al) with satellite stations distributed throughout the redevelopment’s commercial, residential, and amenity areas. Large surface parking lots associated with the current or future transit center are highly discouraged, as is creating a bus depot – the long term, overnight storage of busses not in service.



**Figure 21. Existing Lakeforest Mall Transit Center<sup>49</sup>**

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.mta.maryland.gov/bus-stop-design-guide>

<sup>49</sup> Google Maps

As discussed, large surface parking lots impede bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and safety, as well as create isolated land uses. Large surface parking lots, related to retail in particular, should be discouraged as part of an ultimate vision, but can serve as an interim solution for a phased redevelopment. Shared and structured parking should be encouraged wherever feasible in order to make more land available for other uses. This Plan, however, acknowledges that structured parking is costly and may inhibit investment or the inclusion of certain uses. On-street parking should be incorporated per the City Road Code typologies. Addressing changes in a post-pandemic world, on-street, surface, and structured parking strategies related to non-residential uses should incorporate electric vehicle charging stations, “curb side” pick-up areas, micro-mobility nodes, and ridesharing pick up / drop off spaces. Further related to a post-pandemic reality, while drive-throughs are not prohibited, their use should be judicious and designed in such a way that avoids pedestrian and vehicular conflicts or inhibits connectivity. Drive through design is to be in accordance with the Planning Commission’s white paper on drive-through best practices.



*Figure 22. Micro-mobility<sup>50</sup>*

Lastly, following any approved redevelopment design, the City should explore opportunities to further link the Lakeforest area to Olde Towne (MARC) and the northern employment district of Frederick Avenue (Watkins Mill Interchange) through transportation network improvements.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/capital-bikeshare/2164/>

## Recommendations

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- Any redevelopment must be designed with a circulation system that encourages safe biking and walking throughout, and facilitates internal connectivity through a grid-like, low bicycle stress street pattern that serves all users regardless of age or mobility.
- The grid pattern should include short, walkable blocks composed of a hierarchy of public roads using the appropriate City Road Code typologies; responding to the associated land uses.
- If existing drive aisles, including the “ring road,” are used, these should contribute to a grid pattern and be redesigned to comply with the appropriate Road Code standards.
- Any design must include an interconnected pedestrian and bike system that may be separate from such facilities in the rights-of-way, which links parks, transit, and other land use destinations.
- Micro-mobility nodes/stations should be incorporated throughout any design’s residential, commercial, and amenity areas.
- The future design should acknowledge and respond to the known external connectivity points to the surrounding areas.
- Non-residential loading and delivery areas must be accessed by Commercial Service Roads.
- A connection between Lakeforest Boulevard and Contour Road should be encouraged.
- Explore coordination with the City of Gaithersburg, State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation on methods to improve safety, bicycle/pedestrian facilities and connectivity to the adjacent areas along MD 124, Lost Knife Road, Odend’hal Avenue, and Russell Avenue.
- Any redevelopment design should retain and enhance the Lakeforest Transit Center and explore a possible relocation closer to MD 355 with shared parking or other P3 strategies.
- Surface parking lots related to retail are highly discouraged as part of an ultimate vision. Shared and structured parking should be encouraged in order to make more land available for other uses.
- Non-residential uses should incorporate in their parking strategies electric vehicle charging stations, “curb side” pick-up areas for retail and restaurants, micro-mobility nodes, and ridesharing pick up / drop off spaces as appropriate.

## 8. Residential

The inclusion of housing in a redeveloped Lakeforest Mall is an important component of the Plan. The Plan envisions housing that is well integrated into the overall development, providing the “feet on the street” that creates vibrancy and supports the amenities and non-residential uses. While housing can serve as a catalyst for other redevelopment facets, it should not be the primary driver of the Mall’s redevelopment. The goal of a redeveloped Lakeforest is not to create a bedroom community, but rather to create a mixed-use, mixed income community with an emphasis on employment uses, which offers a diversity of housing options for young professionals, families with children, and older adults. Lakeforest should include more creative housing types with a broader range of affordability than is typically found in new development in the City. These housing types foster equity opportunities by creating wealth for residents who can now afford home ownership when they were previously priced out of the market.

The challenge for any residential component of the Plan is to address the need for density to support future growth while encouraging both rental and ownership opportunities within a limited land area. Reviewing the amount of existing and planned housing in the immediate area discussed in the Existing Conditions and Context section, including the approximately 600 new single family homes approved in Montgomery Village beginning construction in 2021, multifamily should generally be the foremost housing type for Lakeforest, followed by Gap Housing units. Traditional, single family detached units on individual lots are not appropriate for this site and townhouse development should be minimized, given its relatively low density per land area ratio.

A redeveloped Lakeforest, aside from multifamily, should also focus on adding Gap Housing units (triplexes, bungalow courts, 2 over 2 condos, etc.), some types of which are not commonly found in the City. The residential strategy for Lakeforest must include opportunities at a variety of price points that address housing “affordability” and create a rental/ownership housing continuum within Lakeforest to allow residents to move to newer/different housing as their economic or household situations change. Housing “affordability” is the goal of offering market rate housing at a variety of price points to expand residential opportunities for multiple incomes, not to be confused with regulatory “affordable housing.” A Lakeforest redevelopment must offer both rental and ownership housing in order to achieve the “affordability” goal.

The City’s Affordable Housing Ordinance ensures the provision of regulated affordable housing throughout the City. The Ordinance requires any new construction or redevelopment containing 20 or more units to set aside a minimum of 15% of the units as affordable to those below a certain income. For for-sale units, 7.5% must be Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU) and 7.5% must be Workforce Housing Units (WFHU). For rental units, all 15% must be MPDUs.



**Figure 23. Triplex<sup>51</sup>**



**Figure 24. Bungalow Court<sup>52</sup>**

The Plan, in balancing these various goals, establishes a residential unit cap of 1,600 units (15.6 units per acre overall) for a redeveloped Lakeforest. This residential density cap ratio is consistent with the City's other MXD-zoned developments' residential components. Per the adopted City Municipal Growth Element (MGE), the Plan's proposed density is similar to Crown's and still less than the 20-32 units per acre used in the MGE to analyze feasible future growth. Further, the almost 16 units per acre proposed in addition to the existing one million plus square feet of commercial scenario could be facilitated within WSSC planned capacity for water and sewer per the City's adopted Water Resources Element. In order to achieve the cap and balance the residential development land needs with the other mixed-uses' land needs, the following housing type percentages are established for the Plan:

- Townhouses: up to 10%
- Gap Housing: at least 25%
- Multifamily (rental and owned): 40%-65%.

For the various housing types, the following standards apply:

- Housing should be integrated in a way that is complementary to other uses and will not negatively impact or even discourage a mix of uses.
- Amenities (tot-lots for example) must be balanced with and reflect proposed housing densities, types, and locations.
- Townhouse and Gap Housing areas must be served by residential streets and alleys as defined in the City's Road Code.

<sup>51</sup> <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/triplex>

<sup>52</sup> Opticos Design, <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2017/11/29/missing-middle-close-bungalow-courts>

- The inclusion of townhouses less than 20' in width require 0.75 on-street parking spaces per unit within the same block in addition to the required off street parking.
- In bungalow courts, each unit must be no larger than 1,200 square feet above grade, included in a condominium regime, and utilize shared parking for all units within the court.
- Triplexes and quadplexes must be parked at a ratio established at schematic development plan reflecting their situational context within the development.
- Gap Housing units are encouraged to be incorporated within the same blocks as townhouses, multifamily, and/or a variety of Gap Housing typologies (triplexes with 2-over-2 condos for example).
- Gap housing overall should reflect all of the typologies discussed in the Plan and should not consist of 100% of any single type.
- Multifamily may be stand-alone or in a vertical mixed-use configuration, but must include an inviting, activated pedestrian-scaled ground level elevation when adjacent to a sidewalk.
- An enhanced pedestrian realm should be included in any multifamily development.
- Multifamily must be balanced by siting open space and amenity needs in close proximity (5 minute walk or ¼ mile).
- Each multifamily building should provide a greater percentage of larger units, rather than one bedrooms and efficiencies.
- Taller multifamily buildings that are 8-10 stories high, rather than 4 story garden-style, are encouraged, should market conditions allow. This does not prohibit the construction of multifamily buildings that are less than 8 stories in height.

Lastly, the inclusion of new residential always raises the issue of increased demand on community facilities and public school capacity in particular. The Lakeforest area has in the immediate area a library, the referenced transit center, an elementary school, and the Station 8 fire station. The new District 6 Police station is planned to be constructed one (1) mile away near the Spectrum development. The Montgomery Village Master Plan includes recommendations to construct both a potential future elementary and middle school and explore an expanded relocated Station 8. The existing and planned expansion of services, including the civic uses discussed under the Amenities section, can accommodate the Plan's projected growth.

At the time of this Plan's adoption, elementary school capacity currently exists. However, school enrollments in the area will change over time and it is not possible to fully define the impact of the Plan on enrollments since it is uncertain how many actual new housing units will be built as part of and during the life of the Plan, coupled with Montgomery Village growth. The Plan therefore does not require any specific land reserve for a school; however, all residential development proposals should be coordinated with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to determine whether the existing and planned

elementary and middle schools at the time of proposal can accommodate the projected student generation. If they cannot, the proposed redevelopment plan should then incorporate an applicable school site.

## Recommendations

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- Include more creative housing with a broader range of affordability.
- Any housing proposed must also include an amenity and open space plan.
- Housing must reflect the design standards discussed for amenities, parking, multifamily unit sizes and building height, street design, integration with other uses, and the pedestrian realm.
- The impact of residential build-out on public schools must be monitored and, if needed, a design plan should then incorporate an applicable school site for a future elementary or middle school.

## Special Conditions

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- Establish a residential unit cap of 1,600 units with the following percentages:
- Townhouses: up to 10%
- Gap Housing: at least 25%
- Multifamily (rental and owned): 40%-65%.
- Single-family detached homes sited on individual lots are prohibited.
- The inclusion of townhouses less than 20' in width require 0.75 on-street parking spaces per unit within the same block in addition to the required off street parking.

## 9. Commercial

Commercial uses proposed to be included in a redeveloped Lakeforest must recognize that market demand for office and traditional retail was weak even before the pandemic, and there is currently approximately one million square feet of both general office and retail within a half mile of the Mall site, excluding the Mall itself. These facts contribute to the theme and vision that “mixed-use” in a redeveloped Lakeforest needs to evolve from being residential and retail dominant to include a broader spectrum of commercial sectors.

The Plan envisions that the commercial focus should leverage growth sectors such as biotech, health, and professional services; should provide unique shopping/entertainment/dining opportunities contributing to the “sense of place;” should contribute to and enhance, rather

***“...“mixed-use” in a redeveloped Lakeforest needs to evolve from being residential and retail dominant to include a broader spectrum of commercial sectors.”***

than take from, the surrounding commercial areas; should provide employment opportunities at a variety of pay scales; and should include buildings designed to accommodate changing uses as markets and public tastes shift. A diversity in commercial uses, in addition to expanding employment opportunities and growth, fosters resiliency and sustainability overall in uncertain market conditions or with changing public behaviors. As the Covid-19 pandemic illustrates, unforeseen upheavals may disproportionately negatively impact a specific sector such as hospitality, food and beverage, or retail. By having the Plan not focused on one sector, the ability for a redevelopment’s overall commercial base to withstand such challenges increases.

Retail has a role in a Lakeforest redevelopment, but the Plan recommends that retail be limited and include more neighborhood goods & services and restaurants, rather than General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO). Commercial spaces can and should explore incorporating uses such as makerspaces, experiential retail and entertainment, and integrated light manufacturing, rather than traditional GAFO tenants. Stand-alone, traditional big box retailers with large surface parking lots are highly discouraged, as are disconnected single tenant retail/restaurant pad sites and single story retail strip centers. This does not mean that the uses themselves are discouraged; only traditional suburban, inefficient designs that impede walkable connectivity and the ability to increase density. An example of a non-traditional design is one of the first two-story Target stores developed nationally at Rio/Washingtonian in the City.



*Figure 25. Two-story Target at Rio/Washingtonian Center<sup>53</sup>*

Job creation of various wage levels and advancement potential should be a primary goal, reflecting a diverse commercial component and not solely minimum wage related sectors. This jobs diversity will contribute to a more sustainable community and should create an environment where workers can afford to live where they work and avoid creating another bedroom community. The Plan encourages the inclusion of non-traditional tenants such as makerspaces, integrated light manufacturing, experiential uses (galleries and the like), nonprofit (NPO) and non-governmental organization (NGO) facilities, and education and job training centers. Such non-traditional uses will help foster equity and a lead to a more balanced and resilient community.

Further, while the Plan promotes integration, interconnectivity, and vertical development opportunities broadly, the mix of commercial uses can be applied at the project scale; it is not required in every building. The Plan acknowledges that certain desirable commercial sectors for inclusion may have development requirements that warrant stand-alone structures or surface parking.



*Figure 26. Vertically Mixed-Use Commercial<sup>54</sup>*

<sup>53</sup> City of Gaithersburg

<sup>54</sup> Left: <https://www.metrojacksonville.com/article/2009-jul-elements-of-urbanism-baltimore>  
Right: <https://www.bdcnetwork.com/stantec17west>

Additionally, various commercial uses may have inherent conflicts with other commercial and residential uses; therefore, the Plan emphasizes the importance of design in creating an integrated, interconnected community:

- Commercial spaces should be designed to have the flexibility to morph over time as demand and business facility requirements change. Single-use retail buildings should be minimized.
- Separate commercial buildings and uses should be connected through the use of planned walkways and shared open spaces.
- Locations abutting the MD 124 and Russell Avenue Corridors, described in the Introduction, have characteristics more desirable to larger commercial users (health, research & development, professional office), so the design of the road network and green space system will be vital to bring these corridors together.
- Commercial tenants will seek the locations that meet site location criteria (traffic count, visibility, truck access, etc.), so competition for these key nodes will need to be judged within the overall Vision framework's goals.
- Use of shared, structured parking should be utilized wherever possible, freeing up land for other uses.
- The inclusion of drive-throughs, while not prohibited, must be done in conformance with the Planning Commission's white paper on design best practices.
- Commercial self-storage facilities should be "right" sized, not the sole use in a freestanding building, and only in response to and associated with the amount of proposed multifamily called for in the Plan.
- Common accessory uses should be considered and planned for when reviewing a primary commercial use.
- Ground level retail, restaurants, and other experiential commercial, such as makerspaces, should incorporate an expanded pedestrian realm to facilitate outdoor seating, classes, and/or shopping.



*Figure 27. Commercial with Expanded Pedestrian Realm: Crown<sup>55</sup>*

## Recommendations

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- Commercial uses must reflect the design standards discussed in this section.
- There is no square footage or acreage cap on retail spaces included in vertical mixed-use developments or when incorporated as an accessory use to another primary use.
- Dedicated surface parking lots for stand-alone retail or solely retail buildings is discouraged and should be limited.
- Neighborhood goods and services, including restaurants, is the preferred retail rather than General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO).

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<sup>55</sup> City of Gaithersburg

## Special Conditions

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- Stand-alone (single retail tenant) or solely retail (multi-tenant, but all retail) facilities are limited to a maximum of 5 acres total, including surface parking lots, across the entirety of the redevelopment.
- Stand-alone retail or solely retail facilities' building footprints must not exceed 30,000 square feet each<sup>56</sup>.
- The following list of uses, in addition to those defined in the MXD Zone, are prohibited as they include inherent design or operational aspects that are antithetical to the Plan's greater vision:
  - Automobile filling station
  - Automobile service centers that include the overnight storage of vehicles
  - Automobile Sales Lot
  - Warehousing and distribution, when not an accessory use to a permitted use
  - Outdoor storage of goods, materials, and products

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<sup>56</sup> This does not limit the total retail square footage of a building, only that the ground floor cannot exceed 30,000 square feet, nor does it limit retail to only one 30,000 square foot building. Multiple 30,000 square foot solely retail buildings can be incorporated within the five (5) acre limitation.

## 10. Post Master Plan

Once a master plan is adopted, the expectation is often that implementation and realization of the plan will soon follow. The hope is that the Lakeforest Mall will be redeveloped under a single sketch plan from a single ownership/ developer group or a consortium of owners. As with other large scale developments, the City looks forward to helping and working with entities to make this possible. However, due to ownership structures, financing, and construction costs and timing, master plans may take longer than the public hopes. While the optimism is that the Lakeforest Mall Master Plan will be implemented soon after its adoption, the reality is this may not be the case. The Plan acknowledges the likelihood that the mall will be redeveloped in phases, possibly over an extended time period.

The Plan notes that near-term market dynamics following adoption might not support the expressed long-term vision. What is not economically feasible now, however, could be within the coming decade. Phasing of the Plan's implementation, coupled with interim uses under the current C-2 zoning, should be expected and may in fact provide a financial means to reach the ultimate visioning goals. The Plan cannot and should not define all of the possible phasing scenarios, timing, and/or interim uses. The Plan, however, can recognize that there be flexibility in reviewing interim uses and designs, but any interim development must not detract from nor preclude the ultimate goals and visions of the Plan. For example, new buildings or pad sites approved under the current C-2 zoning should be designed to facilitate the Plan's envisioned grid-based road and path interconnected network, future uses and open spaces, and eventual conversion of surface parking to structured parking, without having to actually incorporate these elements. The Plan recognizes the need for flexibility in how these interim conditions will be reviewed. The Plan does not recommend a comprehensive rezoning, in order to allow interim development under the C-2 zone and afford a greater level of review for implementation phasing.

***“The Plan, however, can recognize that there be flexibility in reviewing interim uses and designs, but any interim development must not detract from nor preclude the ultimate goals and visions of the Plan.”***

A phased implementation of the Plan, via rezoning to MXD and an accompanying sketch plan, should be balanced as to what is being proposed. Phases are not required to include every aspect of mixed-use, but each phase should reflect more than one aspect or single building. Each phase's extent should at a minimum address the incorporated amenities, open space and road networks in addition to a particular land use. Design of these phases must express the logical connectivity points to adjoining future phases and clearly reflect its role in the Plan's greater vision. While the Plan itself establishes the framework and overall expectations for redevelopment, the REA discussed earlier gives owners of the properties the legal authority to control the construction of a phased redevelopment through their vetoes. Individual owners will have veto ability over the construction of phases that would not complement their future goals for redevelopment in accordance with the Plan. Punitive use of veto authority under the REA, however,

would inhibit reinvestment and limit new development to only that which can occur within the existing mall footprint. Therefore, the Plan strongly encourages any developer of a phase to engage and coordinate with adjacent property owners on the proposed layout and design guidelines.

An integral part of any redevelopment under the MXD Zone will be the approval of design guidelines. Future design guidelines, either for phased or holistic Mall redevelopment, must address, in addition to basic residential and/or commercial architectural standards, other aspects that will help fulfill the Plan's Visions and the policies of the City. Unified or multiple complementary design guidelines will provide a tool to help actualize the recommendations established in the Plan. Topics to be defined in the design guidelines must include:

- How the various guidelines to be established create a sense of place and promote the non-transportation "connectivity" discussed under the Vision Framework section of the Plan.
- How to foster an enhanced pedestrian experience, with attention being given to the treatment of ground floor multifamily and commercial architecture and the interplay between hardscaped, developed areas and open and green spaces.
- Green and sustainability strategies including ways to incorporate renewable energy sources into residential and commercial buildings.
- Environmental Site Design (ESD) stormwater strategies and how they can be integrated with open spaces.
- Landscaping standards related to streetscapes and open spaces.
- Open space programming – that there is consideration for various types per the Plan's Amenities section.
- Signage standards for commercial uses and for broader community identification and wayfinding.

The Plan recognizes that the Lakeforest Mall parcels have both State Enterprise Zone and Federal Opportunity Zone designations that should encourage private investment. However, the reality is that there may be a need for direct public investment to invigorate and bring to fruition the Plan's vision should redevelopment lose traction or wane for an extended period of time. Direct public investment does not mean the City alone; this public investment could be federal, County, or State as well as the City, or a combination thereof. Of note, the referenced designations above have been identified as *Areas of Critical State Concern* under the State's *A Better Maryland* plan, therefore Lakeforest will be a priority for specific State resources and programs. Lastly, the Land Use Article of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) requires that a Master Plan, including all elements, be reviewed every 10 years. The Plan supports an individual assessment regarding the success or failure in implementing the recommendations contained herein, separate from the mandated plan review, in 10 years. The Plan further acknowledges the importance of reviewing the surrounding properties as part of the next Land Use Element amendment in light of and in response to the recommendations contained herein.

## Recommendations

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- The City will help facilitate communication and coordination amongst Mall site owners to encourage that a single, holistic development application is submitted to avoid piecemeal or a disconnected implementation plan
- Acknowledge the potential need for interim uses and be flexible in their review.
- The Plan does not support comprehensive rezoning in order to allow interim development under the existing C-2 zone and avoid unnecessary procedures related to MXD Zoning.
- The first phase of any multi-phased implementation must incorporate a minimum of 10 acres in conformance with the MXD Zone, exclusive of the pond areas.
- Any interim uses or phases must not prevent the realization of the Plan's vision and recommendations for the entire area.
- The City will, in ten (10) years from adoption, perform an assessment regarding the success or failure in implementing the Plan's recommendations, including the review of any impacts on properties in proximity to Plan's area.

# 11. Recommendation Matrix

The following matrix lists all recommendations and special conditions in the Plan and indicates which of the 12 Maryland State Planning Visions each satisfies. Note that the order of recommendations in these tables may differ slightly from the order in the document.

	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Vision Framework</b>												
Redevelopment of the mall creates a unique and strong sense of place and ensures economic and community stability, resiliency, and desirability over time.	✓		✓	✓				✓			✓	
Connectivity, both internally and externally, that accommodates a variety of transportation options in a safe manner is a design priority. Connectivity should also be accomplished through other design elements such as architecture, signage, massing, and streetscapes that create a visually inviting environment not only for the Mall's future residents and workers, but for the surrounding communities and developments.				✓	✓	✓						✓
Integrated mixed-use can be achieved at the project scale and does not require it to be reflected within every individual multifamily or non-residential building, though some mixed use buildings should be included.			✓	✓								



	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Vision Framework (continued)</b>												
The existing surface parking lots are replaced with denser, more intensive uses that create economic activity, generate jobs for various career levels, and support housing needs.	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓				
There is an integrated and coordinated mix of uses that goes beyond the typical retail and residential types; it should include uses such as makerspaces, integrated light manufacturing, research and development, and community/civic uses. Residential should include new housing types that foster a variety of rental and ownership opportunities at various price points.	✓			✓			✓	✓				
There is an interconnected network of community spaces, useable open spaces, and green areas that offer experiential, recreational, and social gathering opportunities and are available to the surrounding areas.	✓			✓					✓	✓		
Flexibility is important to allow for social, technological, economic, and unforeseen changes over time, while staying true to the overall Master Plan vision.												✓
Rezone the Lakeforest Mall parcels from C-2 to MXD. Given the mixed use concept, MXD is the most appropriate zone. MXD can accommodate both the types and densities of uses needed to accommodate future growth and is best positioned to achieve the above stated vision framework.		✓										✓



	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Amenities</b>												
Provide a variety of different types and sizes of amenity spaces appealing to people from diverse backgrounds.		✓		✓								
Ensure any amenity space is usable and accessible to residents and visitors with various backgrounds and physical needs.	✓			✓								
Provide green and open areas appropriately sized to support community gathering and host cultural and civic events.	✓			✓								
Retain the three stormwater management ponds and place them under a Category II forest conservation easement.									✓	✓	✓	✓
Enhance the three stormwater management ponds and integrate them into the larger open and green space network.				✓					✓	✓	✓	
Include an enhanced, attractive, and welcoming pedestrian realm.				✓		✓						
Include a civic use facility (or multiple facilities).				✓								
Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships in funding a civic use.											✓	✓
Provide both programmed and unprogrammed amenity space.				✓								
Create a well-integrated green space network throughout the site connected through sidewalks, paths, and trails.				✓	✓	✓						



	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Amenities (continued)</b>												
For a singular holistic redevelopment plan application for the entire Plan area, establish an overall minimum of 35% green area, as defined in the MXD zone, distributed across the entire 102-acres.	✓			✓							✓	✓
For a phased, fragmented redevelopment plan strategy, each application must include a minimum of 30% green area, as defined in the MXD zone.	✓			✓							✓	✓



	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Transportation</b>												
Any redevelopment must be designed with a circulation system that encourages safe biking and walking throughout, and facilitates internal connectivity through a grid-like, low bicycle stress street pattern that serves all users regardless of age or mobility.				✓		✓						✓
The grid pattern should include short, walkable blocks composed of a hierarchy of public roads using the appropriate City Road Code typologies; responding to the associated land uses.				✓		✓						✓
If existing drive aisles, including the “ring road,” are used, these should contribute to a grid pattern and be redesigned to comply with the appropriate Road Code standards.						✓						
Any design must include an interconnected pedestrian and bike system that may be separate from such facilities in the rights-of-way, which links parks, transit, and other land use destinations.				✓		✓						✓
Micro-mobility nodes/stations should be incorporated throughout any design’s residential, commercial, and amenity areas.				✓		✓						
The future design should acknowledge and respond to the known external connectivity points to the surrounding areas.						✓						
Non-residential loading and delivery areas must be accessed by Commercial Service Roads.						✓						



	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Transportation (continued)</b>												
A connection between Lakeforest Boulevard and Contour Road should be encouraged.						✓						
Explore coordination with the City of Gaithersburg, State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation on methods to improve safety, bicycle/pedestrian facilities and connectivity to the adjacent areas along MD 124, Lost Knife Road, Odend'hal Avenue, and Russell Avenue.						✓						✓
Any redevelopment design should retain and enhance the Lakeforest Transit Center and explore a possible relocation closer to MD 355 with shared parking or other P3 strategies.					✓	✓						✓
Surface parking lots related to retail are highly discouraged as part of an ultimate vision. Shared and structured parking should be encouraged in order to make more land available for other uses.				✓								
Non-residential uses should incorporate in their parking strategies electric vehicle charging stations, "curb side" pick-up areas for retail and restaurants, micro-mobility nodes, and ridesharing pick up / drop off spaces as appropriate.				✓		✓						



	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Residential</b>												
Include more creative housing with a broader range of affordability.			✓				✓					
Any housing proposed must also include an amenity and open space plan.	✓			✓								
Housing must reflect the design standards discussed for amenities, parking, multifamily unit sizes and building height, street design, integration with other uses, and the pedestrian realm.	✓			✓								
The impact of residential build-out on public schools must be monitored and, if needed, a design plan should then incorporate an applicable school site for a future elementary or middle school.			✓		✓							
Establish a residential unit cap of 1,600 units with the following percentages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Townhouses: up to 10%</li> <li>• Gap Housing: at least 25%</li> <li>• Multifamily (rental and owned): 40%-65%.</li> </ul>			✓	✓			✓					
Single-family detached homes sited on individual lots are prohibited.			✓				✓					
The inclusion of townhouses less than 20' in width require 0.75 on-street parking spaces per unit within the same block in addition to the required off street parking.				✓			✓					



	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Commercial</b>												
Commercial uses must reflect the design standards discussed in this section.				✓				✓				
There is no square footage or acreage cap on retail spaces included in vertical mixed-use developments or when incorporated as an accessory use to another primary use.			✓	✓				✓				
Dedicated surface parking lots for stand-alone retail or solely retail buildings is discouraged and should be limited.				✓	✓							
Neighborhood goods and services, including restaurants, is the preferred retail rather than General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO).			✓					✓				
Stand-alone (single retail tenant) or solely retail (multi-tenant, but all retail) facilities are limited to a maximum of 5 acres total, including surface parking lots, across the entirety of the redevelopment.				✓				✓				
Stand-alone retail or solely retail facilities' building footprints must not exceed 30,000 square feet each.				✓				✓				



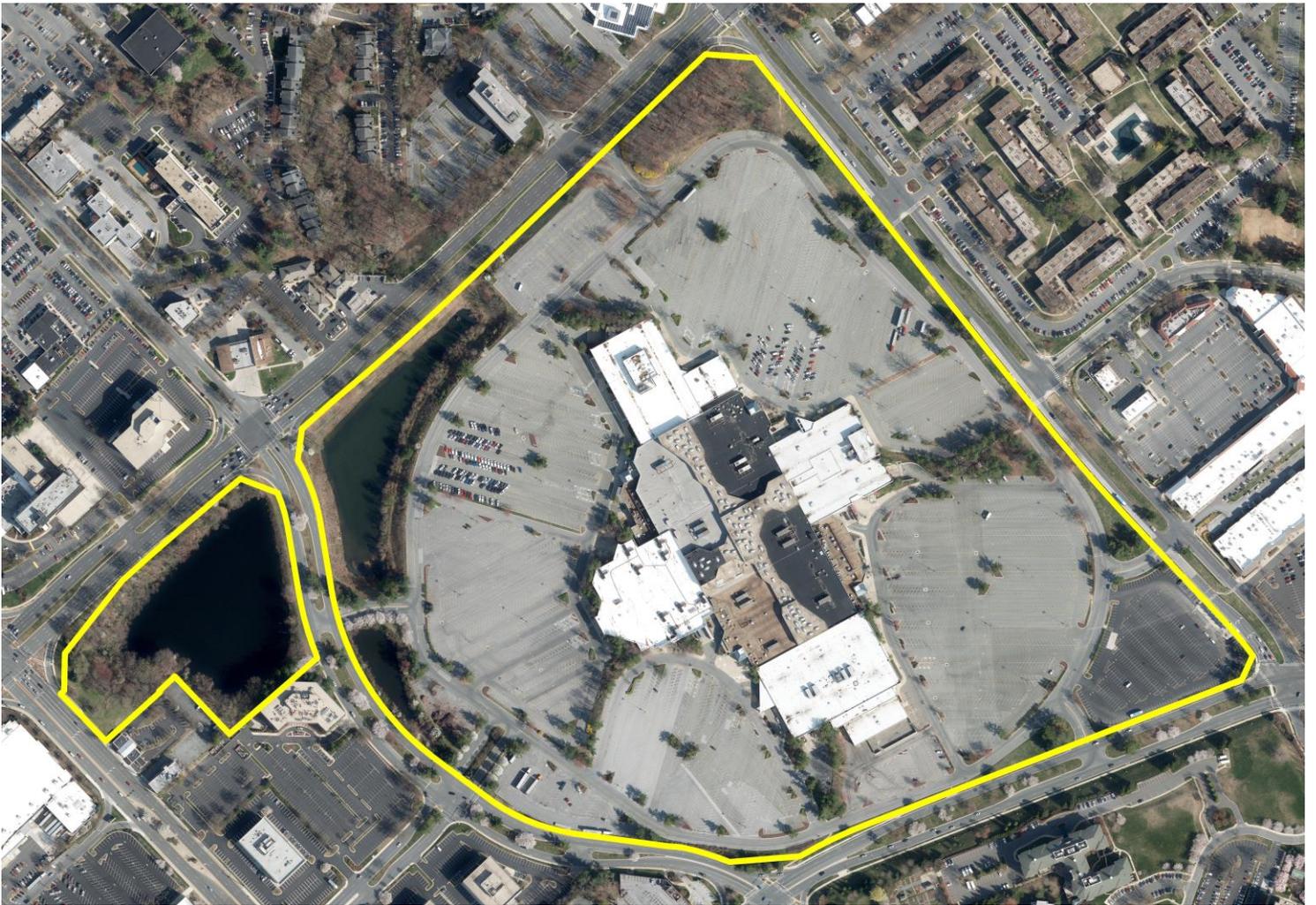
	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Commercial (continued)</b>												
<p>The following list of uses, in addition to those defined in the MXD Zone, are prohibited as they include inherent design or operational aspects that are antithetical to the Plan's greater vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automobile filling station;</li> <li>• Automobile service centers that include the overnight storage of vehicles;</li> <li>• Automobile Sales Lot;</li> <li>• Warehousing and distribution, when not an accessory use to a permitted use;</li> <li>• Outdoor storage of goods, materials, and products.</li> </ul>				✓								✓



	Quality of Life and Sustainability	Public Participation	Growth Areas	Community Design	Infrastructure	Transportation	Housing	Economic Development	Environmental Protection	Resource Conservation	Stewardship	Implementation
<b>Post Master Plan</b>												
The City will help facilitate communication and coordination amongst Mall site owners to encourage that a single, holistic development application is submitted to avoid piecemeal or a disconnected implementation plan		✓									✓	✓
Acknowledge the potential need for interim uses and be flexible in their review.												✓
The Plan does not support comprehensive rezoning in order to allow interim development under the existing C-2 zone and avoid unnecessary procedures related to MXD Zoning.											✓	✓
The first phase of any multi-phased implementation must incorporate a minimum of 10 acres in conformance with the MXD Zone, exclusive of the pond areas.				✓	✓							✓
Any interim uses or phases must not prevent the realization of the Plan's vision and recommendations for the entire area.												✓
The City will, in ten (10) years from adoption, perform an assessment regarding the success or failure in implementing the Plan's recommendations, including the review of any impacts on properties in proximity to Plan's area.												✓



# CITY OF GAITHERSBURG



Lakeforest Mall Master Plan: Adopted August 16, 2021