

## President's Message

It has been a challenging year, and our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19 and to those who have lost jobs or saw a reduction in income. We certainly hope that the situation returns to normal this spring as vaccines become available, and employment opportunities begin to improve.

While our personal lives were being upended, there were still some ongoing efforts and issues that will affect our future. There are three major national issues other than the pandemic, and many lesser but still important ones. The major ones are the economy, racial & social equity, and climate change. To be effective, the issues must be addressed at all three levels of government; national, state and local.

Police reform is just one of the many facets being addressed to achieve racial and social equity. There have been many meetings on this subject by both the Council and State legislature. There are a number of bills that will be considered by the state legislature during the 90 day session that begins January 13, 2021.

GCCA's efforts have largely centered on county efforts dealing with the economy, climate change, and some facets of equity. Many of the articles found elsewhere in this Clarion explain what is happening with these efforts.

The County Executive's draft Climate Plan has 87 proposed actions of which 25 directly address the issue. A number of those require action outside the county by the state, federal, or private industry (e.g., electrified cars). The county's role in such actions is mostly one of encouragement. Other efforts are strictly a county responsibility and a number of them will require a large expenditure of County funds which it currently lacks, since the pandemic has negatively impacted the county and state budgets.

In order to be effective, we think that some proposed climate actions require changes to the land use patterns, which the plan

(Continued on page 3)

GCCA Officers and Chairs: President Dan Wilhelm, Vice President Marguerite Raaen, Treasurer Noel Gregos, Recording Secretary David Michaels, Clarion Editor Nancy Laich

## Upcoming Events Calendar

### January

18 **Martin Luther King Day**

No school, MCPS

20 **Inauguration Day**

### February

7 **Super Bowl**

9 **GCCA Board Mtg.**, 7:30 pm

(see telecon instructions below)

15 **Presidents' Day**

No school, MCPS

16 **Mardi Gras**

### March

9 **GCCA Board Mtg.**, 7:30 pm

(see telecon instructions below)

14 **Day Light Savings Time**

Turn clocks forward 1 hour



Upcoming **GCCA Board meetings** will be held via Zoom. For video and computer audio please go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8896456479> where the **meeting ID is 889 6454 6479**. For phone, please dial 301-715-8592 and enter the **meeting ID 889 6454 6479**. For information contact GCCA President Dan Wilhelm 301-384-2698 or email address [djwilhelm@verizon.net](mailto:djwilhelm@verizon.net)

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## President's Message continued

doesn't address. The Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan (an update to the 51 year old General Plan) does address land use and includes some of the same actions that are found in the climate plan. Maybe they should be considered as complementary plans. The Thrive Plan also provides a vision of how the county should develop independent of climate issues. The historical pattern of new development using green fields is no longer possible since nearly all such land in the county has already been developed.

Neither the climate nor Thrive plans will be very effective without economic development, where a number of the desired actions in the two plans can best be implemented by the private sector which also will result increase county revenue. The recently approved Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP) and related changes to the impact taxes would allow more private development to occur. That policy also targets growth in economically depressed centers and along premium transit corridors (Metrorail, Purple Line and Flash), which matches the Thrive vision. The council

considered that plan the most important item on their agenda for the year, other than pandemic-related actions. The council and its committees took 19 work sessions to sort through the large number of issues, a high number for them. Before the approval of GIP and related change in impact taxes, Global LifeSci Development Corporation (GLDC) couldn't get potential tenants to talk with them, but now they are in serious talks about development in the Viva White Oak planned development along FDA Blvd.

Read the articles below to learn more about these three efforts. There are also articles about much needed development efforts in our area.

Our monthly meetings have been over Zoom and that practice will continue until spring, at least. You are always welcome and encouraged to attend our meetings, which last about an hour. The zoom and phone call-in information is on the bottom right of the front page. You can also email or call me.  
Dan Wilhelm, President GCCA

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## Draft Climate Action Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gas

The county has a climate goal to reduce our community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035. To achieve that goal, the County Executive published a Draft County Action Plan on December 14. Public comments are due by February 28, 2021. GCCA has yet to review it in detail.

The plan can be found at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/climate/index.html>.

The county formed five workgroups of more than 150 members who developed action recommendations over a period of 8 months starting in July 2019. The workgroups proposed 894 actions which were then evaluated and ranked in terms of primary benefits and feasibility. The plan includes 87 recommended actions. The more impactful recommendations in the seven categories are:

- Clean Energy (5 actions), including
  - Generate 100% of electricity from renewable sources.
  - Require on-site solar electricity in new and existing buildings.
- Buildings (7 actions), including
  - Electrify existing buildings, including residences (gas and oil would be eliminated)
  - Ban natural gas in new construction.
  - Require net zero energy code for new construction. (This would limit the height of buildings, or require a solar panel farm outside the building and parking area.)
- Transportation (13 actions), including
  - Require all vehicles be electric (both public and private, car and truck). Will require much more electric generation capacity.
  - Reduce private vehicle trips, including doubling the proportion of bus, rail and bicycle trips over 2018 by 2035.
  - Limit cars in urban areas
- Carbon sequestration or use the natural environment (6 actions)
- Climate adaptations or improve infrastructure to reduce impacts from extreme weather (20 actions)
- Governance (16 actions)
- Public Engagement (20 actions)

# Subdivision Staging Policy Update

The 2020-2024 Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP), now called the Growth and Infrastructure Policy, and changes to the related transportation and school impact taxes, were approved by the Montgomery County Council by a 9-0 vote on Monday, November 16, 2020. The Executive vetoed the tax bill, which the council overrode on Dec 8. One aspect is to ensure public facilities, particularly schools and transportation infrastructure, are adequate to accommodate new development. It also helps guide the county's growth to desired areas and in desired forms. The summary below identifies those items that more directly communities.

## Taxes

The tax changes are some of the most significant in terms of allowing needed development to occur. The resulting new development will increase property taxes and also increase the number of well-paying jobs. Together they will provide the county with additional revenue, which can be used to fund transportation, schools and other public services. During the two years before the pandemic, there was no job growth in the county. There were also two studies within the last decade that showed the job growth has largely been minimum wage, which leads to limited tax revenue. We need a mix of well-paying jobs and lower paying jobs. The impact tax changes are:

- Reduce the calculation for school impact taxes from 120% to 100% of the cost of a student seat using School Impact Area student generation rates to more accurately reflects the true cost.
- Provide a discount on transportation impact taxes in desired growth and investment areas to further incentivize development in these areas. The resulting charge is 60% of the base tax in the orange policy category and 78% in the yellow policy category. The base rate is much higher in the yellow category than the orange category. White Oak and the Burtonsville Town Center are in the orange category and the remainder of East County south of the MD 198 is in the yellow category. The county is divided into four transportation categories: red, orange, yellow and green in order of progression from high to low density. Desired growth areas are the Metro Washington council of Governments (MWCOC) Activity Centers and a 500-foot buffer along three BRT corridors (US29, MD 355 and Veirs Mill). The White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan area is a MWCOC growth area. As used here, East County is the area overseen by the East County Government Center, except the Aston area, and is approximately bounded by Northwest Branch, PG County Line, Howard County Line and slightly north of MD 198.
- Exempt from both school and transportation impact taxes any development located in a federal designated Qualified Opportunity Zone. The purpose of the zone is to spur economic growth and job creation in low-income communities while providing federal tax benefits to investors. Since the impact taxes are so high even with the federal benefit, development is frequently not economical in many parts of the county, except for areas with high property values, like Bethesda. This exemption is needed for Viva White Oak in order to be economically viable. Downtown Silver Spring and Wheaton are also in Qualified Opportunity Zones. In East County the Opportunity Zone is bounded by Cherry Hill Rd, US29, New Hampshire Ave and county line, except for an area between Stewart Lane and Paint Branch stream. The Opportunity zone expires in 2028.
- Eliminate the impact exemption for former Enterprise Zones (i.e. Silver Spring and Wheaton). The exemption still applies for areas where the state designation has not expired. Enterprise Zones expire after 10 years. There are four such active zones in the county, including Glenmont (expires in 2023) and Burtonsville/Briggs Chaney (expires in 2027). The Enterprise Zone is a state program with the goal similar to the Opportunity Zone.

(continued on page 5)

## **Subdivision Staging Policy Update continued**

- Eliminate the additional charge for single family units larger than 3500 sq. ft. since data shows they do not produce additional school students.
- Provide a 40 percent school impact tax discount (not transportation) for construction of three-bedroom units in multifamily structures located in the Infill School Impact Areas to encourage construction of the larger units. Such housing is presently rarely built.

### Schools

- Classify neighborhoods into School Impact Areas, termed Infill or Turnover, based on the area's recent and anticipated growth. The goal of this change is to provide a more context-sensitive measure for the calculation of school impact taxes and development evaluation. The tax rates are higher for Turnover Areas compared with Infill Areas (except for multifamily high-rise units). All transportation red category areas are in the Infill Area. The White Oak RDA is also in the Infill category. The White Oak RDA is the area between Cherry Hill, US29, Paint Branch stream and county line. Other parts of East County are in the Turnover Impact Area. (Most of the county is classified as a Turn-over.) Housing within Infill Areas is made up largely of multiple-family units while it is mostly single-family or townhouse in Turnover Areas.
- Eliminate school tests at the cluster level leaving individual school tests. The tests project four years into the future now rather than five years previously. The cluster test would sometimes hide a school that was severely over utilized (i.e. overcrowded).
- Eliminate the residential development moratorium countywide, since much of the overcrowding comes from turnover, not new development. In East County, less than 10% of the overcrowding comes from new development. The aim of eliminating the moratorium is to eliminate the uncertainty and inefficiency associated with residential development moratoria and to further support the county's housing goals, while still addressing the fiscal needs for additional student seats.
- Create a three-tiered Utilization Premium Payment (UPP) to slow the growth in overcrowding due to new development. The overcrowding is defined in terms of school utilization percentage and seat deficit where both conditions must be satisfied. The three school overcrowding levels are: 105%, 120% and 135%. The UPP is determined by multiplying the base school impact tax by a factor based upon the degree of overcrowding and school level. The development would pay an UPP for each school level (ES, MS and HS) that is overcrowded.

### Transportation

- Classify all Metro Station Policy Areas and Purple Line Station Policy Areas in the red category. These are areas with premium transit and where development is desired.
- Prioritize motor vehicle mitigation strategies designed to improve travel safety as part of the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR). The cost that results from the LATR is separate from the Transportation Impact Tax.
- Require a Vision Zero Statement under the LATR for all projects estimated to generate 50 or more peak-hour person trips. Vision Zero strives to eliminate accidents for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- Eliminate the LATR motor vehicle adequacy test for the red category where multimodal transportation options are more prevalent and desired. Because of the degree of development, limited road improvements are possible and where possible they often result in less safe situations. Transit, pedestrian and bicycle tests are still required and these tests have been strengthened as the desire is that more travel would use these modes.

(continued on page 12)

# Thrive Montgomery 2050 Updates General Plan

The Planning Department is working on a complete update to the General Plan. A partial update to the 1969 plan in terms of polices was undertaken in the early 90's. GCCA provided seven pages of comments on the 166 page draft at the November 19 hearing. Key among them was that the draft was more like a collection of ideas from many different people put together with minimal organization and focus. Since the Planning Board also had similar concerns, the document is being reorganized while keeping the main thrust. Planning Board work sessions started on Dec. 17 and will continue through Feb. 18.

The new structure has three key outcomes and three minor ones. These outcomes are then discussed under six subject areas, each in its own chapter. The key outcomes which we think are very important are: (1) economic performance and competitiveness, (2) racial & social equity & inclusion, and (3) environmental resilience and sustainability. The minor outcomes

are: (1) elevating design and the role of arts and culture, (2) public health and active lifestyles, and (3) better access to amenities for high quality of life. The six subject areas are: (1) compact growth, (2) complete communities, (3) transportation and communications networks, (4) affordable and attainable housing, (5) design, arts and culture and (6) parks and recreation for an increasingly urban and diverse community.

In a nutshell, the idea is that there will be many complete communities, which will be along premium transit corridors (Metrorail, purple line and BRT). These communities will be urban in nature, which are walkable and bike-able with parks and contain needed government and commercial services. We pointed out in the GCCA testimony that the communities will be of various sizes and have different levels of service in urban, suburban and rural parts of the county.

## Hillandale Gateway Project Update

The final plans for the Hillandale Gateway Project on New Hampshire Ave (NH) adjacent to the beltway ramp had been scheduled for approval before the Planning Board on December 17. However, at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, the Planning staff dropped a requirement for a waiver due to beltway noise. The staff could not react fast enough for the December hearing so it was postponed, we assume, to sometime in January.

We have been pushing for this project for the better part of a decade. It will have 155 age-restricted dwelling units, 288 non-age restricted market-rate dwelling units, and 20 non-age-restricted Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs).

Of the 155 age-restricted units, 96 are replacements for the 52 year-old outdated Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) Holly Hall. There will be two 11 story buildings with a 691 car parking structure between them. The age-restricted units will be in the building closest to NH and be operated by HOC. There will also be a stand-alone building near Powder Mill Rd and New Hampshire that we understand will house a Starbucks. The plan calls for a future 59K sq. ft. commercial building near the parking structure.

The buildings will incorporate a number of methodologies that far exceed code requirements to reduce energy and water consumption, and reduce noise. The buildings and parking structure will include solar panels which will hopefully allow the age-restricted building to achieve Zero Net Energy, which is very hard to achieve.

The site is adjacent to a Ride On station and future Flash Transit Station. Residents will be able to walk or bike to the shopping center and employment across the New Hampshire Ave or FDA about two miles up New Hampshire Avenue.

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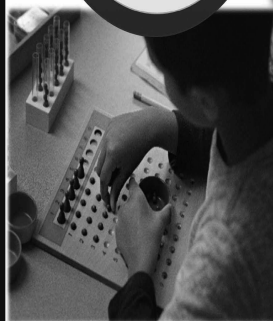
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The next issue of the Clarion will be mailed in May 2021. The deadline for submitting news and photographs is Friday, April 23 2021.

Contact Editor Nancy Laich at 301-412-5301, or  
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## Hillandale Transportation

Over three years ago The Duffie Companies started looking at traffic improvements they could make in the area of New Hampshire Ave and Powder Mill. They would use the funds they would otherwise need to pay the county under the Local Area Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP) or impact taxes. A number of improvements were proposed and after a public hearing, improvements on Powder Mill Rd on either side of NH were approved in January 2019.

However, MC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) deferred action on a proposed slip ramp from Elton Rd onto the westbound beltway ramp until they could undertake additional study of area residents concerns about long standing cut-through problems from Riggs Rd (in Prince George's County). The slip ramp would for the first time provide a direct route from the shopping center, hotel and employment buildings to access the westbound beltway without using one of four roundabout routes. (See page 5 of the March 2019 Clarion)

Finally, after repeated broken promises, DOT published the study results on December 8. It did provide much more data but it no longer supports the slip ramp (which MCDOT and SHA had previously supported). They did propose some changes to Riggs Road and proposed additional neighborhood speed humps in PG County that they would need to install. The study also proposed providing a northbound right turn lane from NH that would require them to take a row of parking from the shopping center in an area where parking is a premium. We are unhappy with the recommendations but are talking with The Duffie Company and some local citizens before providing comments to MC DOT.

## White Oak Medical Center

Adventist Healthcare has opened an Alternate Care Site under the White Oak Medical Center license at their previously closed hospital in Takoma Park. This site takes care of those patients who are not seriously ill yet need to have continued care from an acute care perspective.

They are approved for up to 200 beds and are currently operating 70 beds. They have had to recruit temporary staff (over 80 to date) for the site. That strategy has allowed White Oak Medical Center to continue carrying out most surgeries.

The State has also approved Adventist Healthcare to temporarily open a 16 bed Intensive Care Unit at Takoma Park in response to the Pandemic, which they expect to open sometime in January.

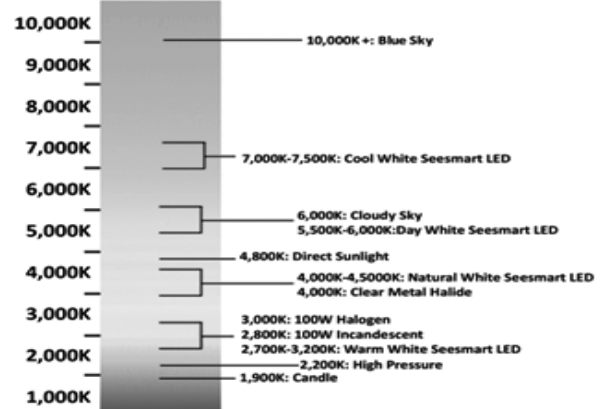
Earlier this year White Oak Medical Center received approval from State officials to add a total of 20 new patient rooms and two Labor/Delivery/Recovery Rooms (LDRs). This project converts existing, non-clinical space on each inpatient unit into patient rooms. They have completed the first phase of the project, adding eight patient rooms. The second phase is scheduled for completion in January. In addition, the eighth floor on the south tower is under construction with the shell targeted for completion by summer. That space will provide additional acute care beds.

The Pavilion is about 75% occupied. The Pavilion includes physician offices and administrative offices and is located between the hospital and parking structure. The Cardiac Surgery Program was once again recognized among the elite and best in the nation for heart surgery from the Society of Thoracic Surgery, with a 3-star rating.

## LED Light Buying

Many stores are stocking more LED lights and less incandescent and CFL light bulbs. A number of us find it confusing as to which bulb to buy. The LED light color is determined by the Kelvin temperature scale rating. Traditionally, the incandescent lights operated in the 2000-3000 Kelvin temperature range, or the yellow end of the spectrum. Newer LED lights provide a wide range of light colors from the yellow end (bottom) to the Blue-White end (top) of the spectrum. The diagram should help you decide which color bulb to buy.

### Kelvin Color Temperature Scale



# GCCA Area Representatives

(3 representatives per area)

1 Fred Pulliam	144 Bonifant Rd.	602-0825	19 Mark Pankow	908 Hobbs Dr.	703-851-1315
1 Deborah Pulliam	144 Bonifant Rd.	240-440-1758	20 Chris Naughten	800 Midland Rd	758-3633
2 Open			21 Jay Hagler	1325 Crockett Ln	240-994-8993
3 Marguerite Raaen	14404 Sandy Ridge	240-938-0523	21 Benedict Eng	1205 Crockett Ln	240-388-6263
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4 Henry Morrow	13812 Mills Avenue	384-0827	23 Dan Wilhelm	904 Cannon Rd.	384-2698
5 Open			24 Open		
6 Bill Backof	13814 Shannon Drive	384-7354	25 Ed Weiler	1008 Mondrian Terr.	236-5956
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8 Open			26 Bob Peters	1010 Cannon Rd.	384-4410
9 Michael Persh	208 Montvale Terr	879-4560	27 Open		
10 Open			28 Otto E. Lewis	12617 Billington Rd.	384-0567
11 David Michaels	508 Hawkesbury Ln	240-271-4951	29 Open		
12 Open					
13 Open					
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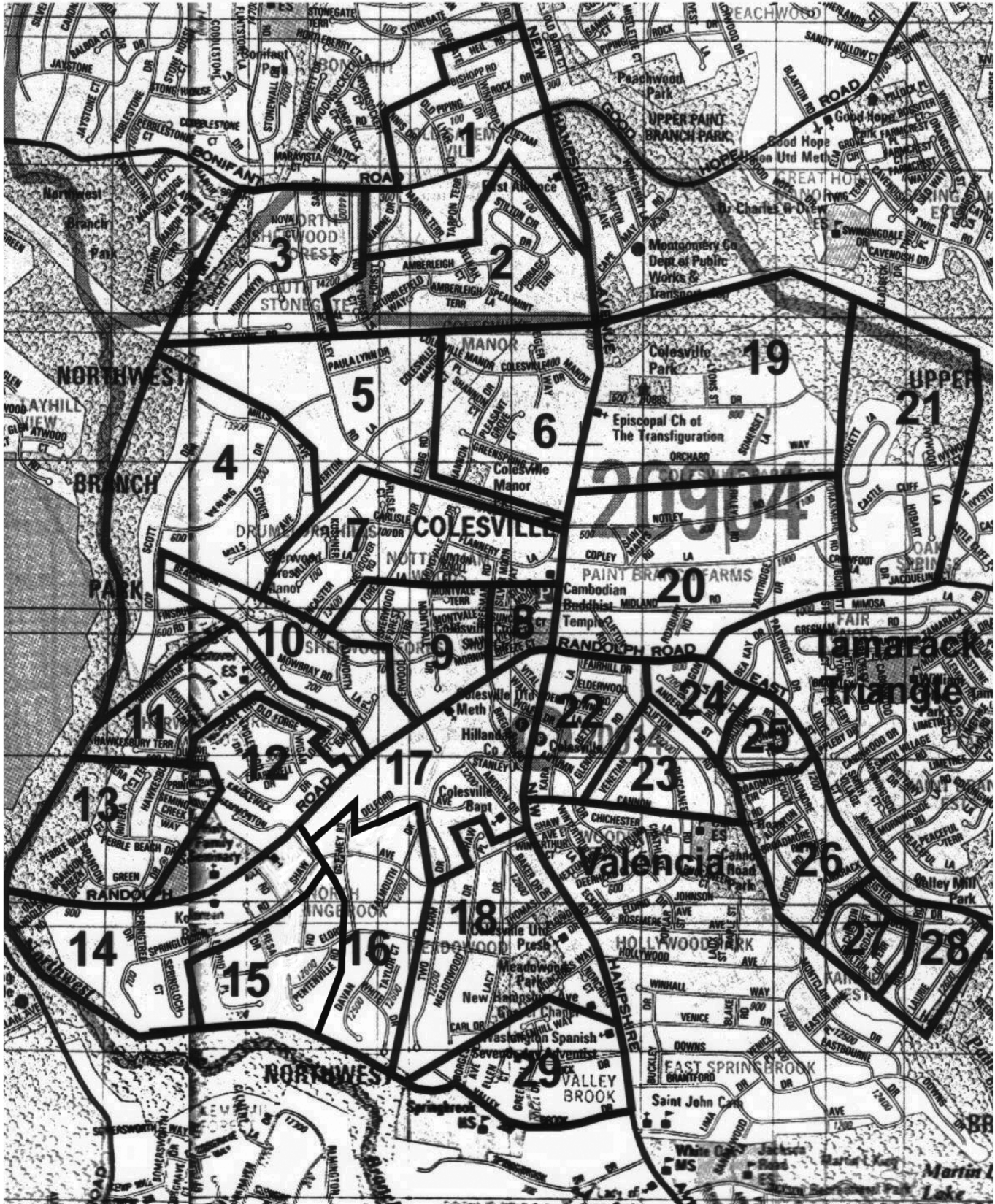
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## **Subdivision Staging Policy Update continued from page 5**

- Exempt bioscience facilities for the next four years from all LATR tests to provide faster approval of facilities that support biological research and development or the manufacturing of related products and provide significant employment opportunities in the county.
- Update the LATR requirements for developer-funded bikeways, sidewalks and bus shelters to be more robust.
- Retain the Local Area Transportation Implement Program (LATIP) for the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan area and Unified Mobility Program (UMP) in other areas of the county as they are developed and approved by the Council. The LATIP and UMP are essentially the same and replace the standard LATR. An UMP is under development for Bethesda. Under these programs, the developer makes a payment or he can opt to make one or more improvements identified in the LATIP/UMP and receive a credit. The projects are identified as a result of a DOT study of needed transportation improvements (all modes) and then each development pays its share to build them.