

Testimony to the Montgomery County Council on the Gaithersburg West Master Plan

September 15, 2009

Brian H. Taylor, Ph.D., MBA
President and Principal Consultant
Growing Company Solutions, Inc.
20271 Goldenrod Lane, Suite 2010
Germantown, MD 20876
Office Phone: 240-453-0001
Cell Phone: 240-678-0525
Fax: 240-293-4679
Email: btaylor@growingcos.com
Website: www.growingcos.com

Thank you, Chairman Andrews and Council Members. I'm Brian Taylor. For the last five years, I've been a life sciences consultant with Growing Company Solutions in Germantown, and I've worked in life science research and commercialization for thirty years. I also live in North Potomac about a mile from Belward Farm.

I've been around long enough to know that the science our children will do in Montgomery County in thirty years will be things we think are impossible today. While we're arguing about traffic, FARs, and transit stops, we shouldn't forget that the goal is to provide a place where breakthrough science can happen: Science that local companies can turn into drugs, diagnostics, and medical devices, and science that's a fair trade-off for those of us who will remember how beautiful Belward Farm looked before progress changed everything.

Scientific breakthroughs happen in laboratories and in formal meetings, but a surprising amount happens over a beer or on the sideline of a kids' soccer game. You may recall that the structure of DNA was worked out in a pub in Cambridge in the UK. The design of Gaithersburg West will bring smart life science people together and get them talking. When that happens, the community needs to have the resources in place to build on their discoveries and make useful products happen. Here, in Montgomery County.

Some of my neighbors have asked me why this development has to be so big and the buildings so tall. The challenges involved in making scientific breakthroughs, in developing new products, and in training new scientists are also huge and require a lot of people working together.

If we combine major research facilities with living space and commercial amenities in the space available, the buildings will have to be big. We can, to coin a phrase, scale it back and go with something smaller, but the Life Science Center that's outlined in the Master Plan will make a global statement that Maryland Means Business and that Montgomery County is where that business happens.

If we choose to step aside, the work may still get done, but it will be other counties, other states, and other countries that make the discoveries, and other people's children that have those jobs.

Scientific progress can create a better life for all of us, and I urge the Council to adopt the Gaithersburg West Master Plan.