

January 26, 2026

The Honorable Natali Fani-Gonzales, Council President  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Clarksburg Gateway Sector Master Plan

Dear Council President Fani-Gonzalez and members of the County Council,

The Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce (GGCC) is pleased to provide feedback regarding the Draft Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan. We thank the Planning Board and staff for hearing community concerns throughout the plan development process, and presenting a plan that addresses inadequate past plans, missed opportunities to build needed infrastructure, and positions Clarksburg for the future. We appreciate that the plan is flexible, protective of environmental assets, and responsive to the neighborhood.

Clarksburg has been passed over for infrastructure and development projects for many years. Clarksburg has potential to become a complete community with jobs, housing, retail, parks, and effective transportation infrastructure and transit options. This draft plan sets forth a framework to accomplish that complete community.

The GGCC supports the draft plan for the following merits:

- 1) We support the Board and the Technical Staff's recommendation not to designate the COMSAT Laboratories building as historic. The data from the related feasibility studies concludes that adaptive reuse of the property is not feasible and the building deteriorating. The property has been vacant for over 20 years, and represents one of the last remaining (if not the only remaining) large parcel of land along a major transportation corridor in Montgomery County, that could attract a large national or global corporate user. Designating the building as historic would undermine any effort to redevelop the property to maximize the economic development potential of the property. The building's architectural and technological historic significance can be acknowledged in a future redevelopment, while still partially or fully demolished. Imagine the growth that Clarksburg might have seen by now if we had not missed out on 20 years of economic benefits – new housing, jobs, increased commercial and real estate tax revenue, and more mixed-use areas for the Clarksburg community to feel complete.
- 2) We support the inclusion of the Little Seneca Parkway interchange on I270 and the interchange ramps, which will be necessary if we can attract a major institutional, life science, or corporate user. a) Any major employer will need access to the site from multiple areas. b) Without the interchange, the neighborhood streets would face increased congestion making BRT lanes less feasible and undermining pedestrian safety, not to mention unattractive to major commercial use.



# Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce, Inc.



- 3) We request that the Observation Drive extended project be funded and constructed as soon as possible. This project provides an alternative artery for I270 to move goods, services, and employees throughout the Upcounty.
- 4) We support the protection of environmental assets: 1) the Observation Drive extension project is relocated out of the stream valley, 2) net increase in forest coverage, 3) a 50-ft buffer along I270 to provide additional forest plantings, 4) a 35% green cover requirement that flexibly and responsibly allows the green cover to be integrated throughout the developed area.
- 5) We support the inclusion of a Community Recreation Center in the plan area to support Clarksburg's growth and development into a complete community, and a community that attracts and retains a talented workforce with necessary amenities. Ideally, the Recreation Center would be located on the West Old Baltimore Road site already owned by the Parks Department, since an elementary school is not needed.
- 6) We appreciate the inclusion of the opportunities to attract and incentivize developers and property owners to develop a site for employment uses, potentially using a TIF district and/or other economic development tax credits.

The Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce looks forward to providing feedback and support throughout the implementation periods of this plan.

Sincerely,



Paula Ross  
President & CEO  
Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce

*For over 75 years, the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce has been the leading advocate for businesses along the upper I270 corridor in Montgomery County, commonly called the "Upcounty." We specifically serve the business communities in Gaithersburg, Germantown, Clarksburg, and Damascus; our membership currently includes approximately 470 members in dozens of industries. Our members range in size from volunteer-run nonprofits with zero employees, to solopreneurs, to businesses with thousands of employees in the Upcounty and surrounding region. We are committed to being a voice for all businesses in the Upcounty, providing resources that drive growth, foster connections, and strengthen our local economy.*