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Great Seneca Science Corridor Planning Board Draft

Testimony of William DePippo Alexandria Real Estate Equities June 12, 2024

Good evening, Council President and members of the Montgomery County Council. My name is William DePippo and I am the Senior Vice President for Alexandria Real Estate Equity's Mid-Atlantic region. As you are aware, ARE has been very active in implementing our real estate model, in which we own, operate and develop collaborative life sciences campuses in Montgomery County and, in particular, the Life Sciences Center. Since 2019, ARE has developed almost 1 million square feet of biotech and lab uses in the County and is poised to add to its total of 1.6 million square feet in the coming years. We applaud your efforts to facilitate this continued growth in the Great Seneca Plan by lifting the current density cap that had previously been imposed on the Plan area. The effort to create new development opportunities by advocating for the relocation of publically owned lands is also laudable.

My comments mostly focus on the impacts the Plan will have on two sizable ARE properties that have been identified as Opportunity Sites in the Life Sciences Center area of the Plan. The first is the approximately 18.1 acre Traville Parcel and the second is known in the Plan as Montgomery Medical (the former Johns Hopkins Medical Center), which is approximately 34.4 acres in size.

The Great Seneca Plan recommends urban-style connectivity for these established campuses, including new streets and alleys. This is incompatible with the campus-like nature of the properties and does not recognize the privacy imperative for the biotech campus operations that will take place on them. An example of this disconnect is found in the Plan statement at page 26 that asserts the Life Sciences Center is "anchored by a core downtown" without identifying where this downtown is located. The assertion creates the illusion of urban growth emanating from the downtown core to justify the Plan's overall urban approach, even though there is no downtown and the Plan area is actually suburban.

Rather than the urban street grid connectivity in the Plan, ARE advocates for strong pedestrian connections between campus clusters to facilitate biotech growth. Specific changes that should be made to the Plan include a change in designation of Road G, which runs north and south through the Montgomery Medical property, from an 80-foot wide Downtown Street to a 44-foot wide Commercial Street. This designation is a more compatible connection to the existing approximately 37-foot wide north-south driveway (20 feet curb to curb and as much as 10 feet of sidewalk on the west side) that will remain in any future development scheme. Photos of the driveway are submitted with this testimony. The commercial street designation would also connect well to the 44-foot planned Street F that will intersect with Street G from the west.



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Other changes that achieve the campus flexibility needs discussed above are set forth below in a markup of narratives for ARE's Opportunity Sites. ARE also seeks other minor clarifications that should be addressed in the final Plan:

- Figure 9 at p. 19 erroneously indicates that university facilities still exist at the Montgomery Medical campus.
- Figure 15 at p. 31 identifies the recommended land use for the Montgomery Medical property to be mixed use, instead of "research and development". This is a disadvantageous label for would-be tenants who seek to locate at a research and development campus and should be changed.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you our thoughts on the Plan.

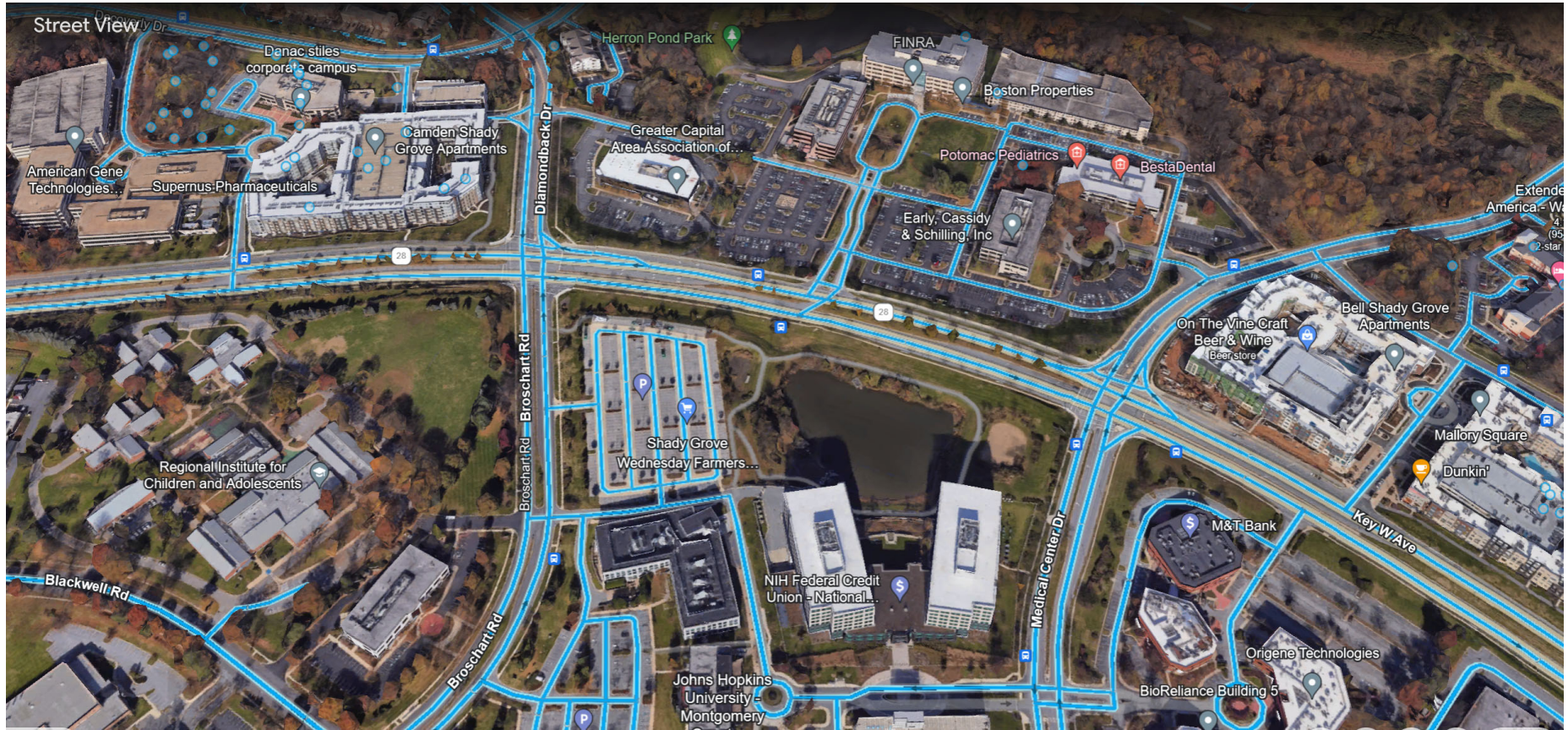
Plan Narrative Changes (in red)

P. 57. - **Traville Parcel**

Traville Parcel N is phase two of a larger research and development campus that includes Parcel M immediately to the south, which has already been developed. This property has an approved preliminary and site plan. The most recent development phase includes three research and development buildings; two are under construction and the final building has a pending regulatory application. This Plan envisions that the site will continue to build out as approved, delivering open space on the northeast corner of the parcel, and an extension to Great Seneca Highway through the property. Beyond current approvals, this Plan imagines that future development could add a mixed-use component to the open campus if it is compatible with the existing research and development uses.

P. 57 - **Montgomery Medical** (formerly JHU Montgomery County Medical Center)

The former home of the Johns Hopkins Montgomery County Medical Center, this property is primarily owned by Alexandria Real Estate and currently contains the National Cancer Institute headquarters and research laboratories, as well as several life sciences buildings. The Plan recommends infill development to replace the existing surface parking lots and activate frontages along Broschart Road, Blackwell Road, and Key West Avenue, which should be designed as pedestrian-friendly urban streets. The Plan further recommends a north-south Road G as a continuation of the existing internal driveway. The cross-section of Road G should be compatible with the driveway.





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