

GATEWAY MASTER PLAN

Engagement Summary

February 2025



GATEWAY PREFERRED MASTER PLAN

Held public meetings to garner feedback about the preferred master plan for Gateway's future

DATES

January 21, 2025: In-person Information Session at the Dept. of Recreation and Parks Headquarters Building

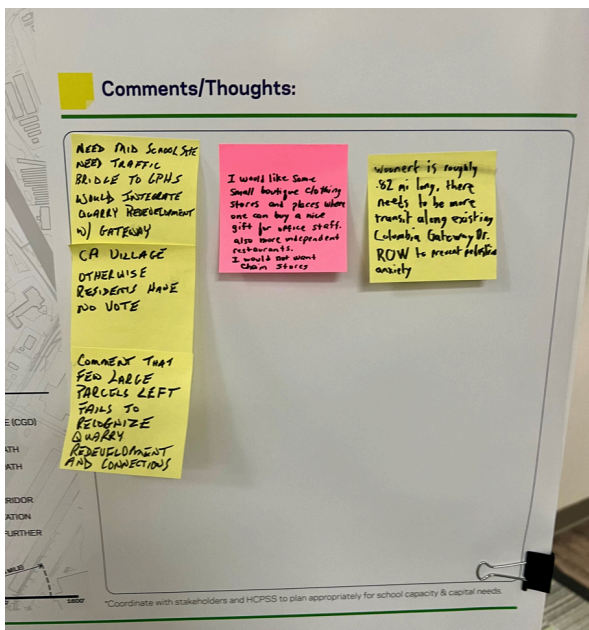
January 22, 2025: Virtual Information Session

January 21-February 2, 2025: Online Comment Card Open

STATS

138 attendees (57 in-person attendees & 81 virtual attendees)

62 comment cards received

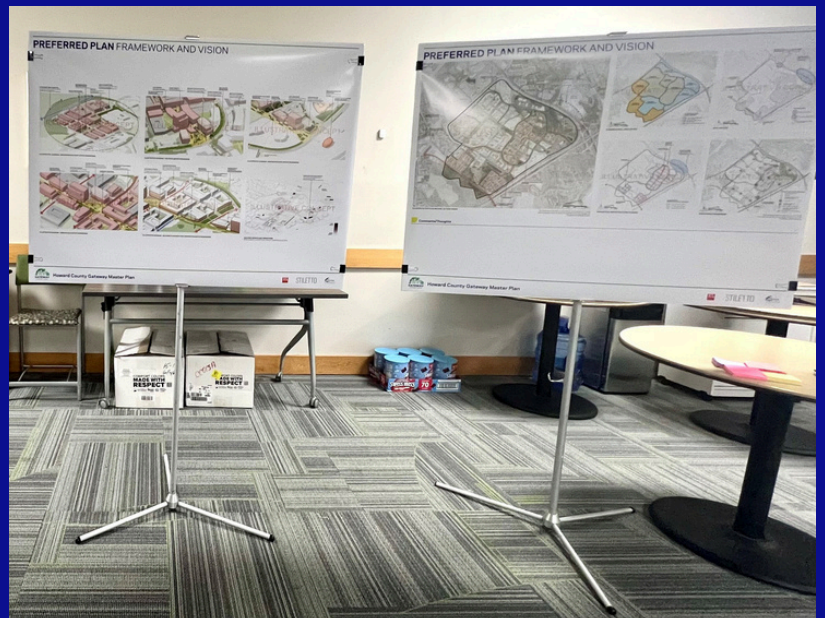


WHAT WE DID

During these sessions, community members heard presentations, engaged in Q&A, and offered feedback on the preferred master plan for Gateway. Attendees were able to interact with both County and consultant team members to better understand the vision for Gateway.

The preferred plan presentation covered:

- Innovation Districts and Market Opportunities
- Framework & Vision and Redevelopment Approach
- Sustainable Design
- Transportation & Mobility
- Public Infrastructure: Types, Phasing, and Financing

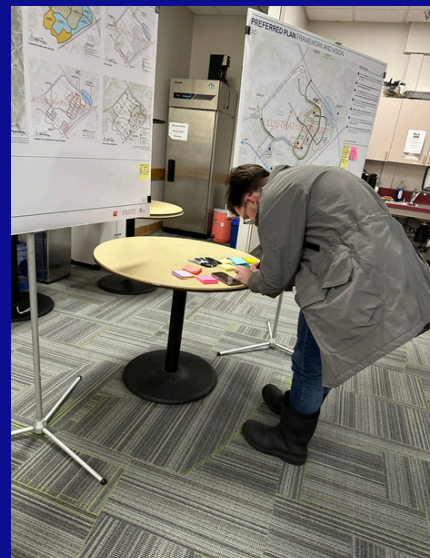


GATEWAY PREFERRED MASTER PLAN

WHAT WE HEARD

General Topics: residential development - affordable housing, managing growth, walkability, new zoning, alternative school models, mixed-uses, maintaining open space, planning for public infrastructure, the woonerf, anchor projects/institutions, gateway entrance - highway connections, pedestrian only paths, maintaining non-residential land uses

- Generally the community expressed support for the preferred plan, specifically the opportunity to transform Gateway from a traditional business park to a mixed-use innovation district. The plan's potential for walkability, bikability, and public transit was overwhelmingly supported.
- The proposed Woonerf (planned to be a living street and public focal point), received largely positive feedback. Some respondents asked for the design to ensure safety of pedestrians and make the space more inviting by restricting vehicles.
- Feedback demonstrated support for the plan's emphasis on innovation and opportunities to partner with and attract aligned institutions and businesses in targeted industries (i.e. cybersecurity, scientific research & development services, and medical laboratories & imaging).
- The open space framework's linear park and shared-used path connections were supported.



GATEWAY PREFERRED MASTER PLAN

WHAT WE HEARD - CONT.

- The alternative school concepts received mixed reviews, some respondents see them as a creative and reasonable way to incorporate a school in denser environment, while others expressed concerns about students needing appropriate space for safe extracurricular activities.
- Regarding future residential development, some expressed a desire for Gateway to address the County's need for affordable and moderate-income housing. Others emphasized the need to balance residential development with infrastructure needs (i.e. schools, transportation, etc.).
- Respondents highlighted the need for additional vehicular and pedestrian/bike access points to and from Gateway. Some respondents expressed concern that existing traffic conditions could worsen with residential development.
- Regarding the possibility of a future intersection at MD 108 and 175, some saw this as a necessary improvement, while others thought it would cause even more traffic congestion.
- Some responses acknowledged Gateway's industrial opportunity and expressed desire to protect industrial uses as an economic generator.
- Respondents highlighted the need to further research the financing strategy for public amenities and public infrastructure.



ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: GATEWAY PREFERRED MASTER PLAN

NOTABLE QUOTES

- "I really liked the idea of a new zoning type that will encourage mixed-use development and create denser, multimodal, and transit-friendly development."
- "Connect as much as possible to other areas using public transit; include electric circulator buses where people can hop on and then ride over to other nearby attractions like Columbia Mall; Merriweather; [and] other shopping areas."
- "Better use of the land. I love that it's being inclusive of the land all the way from Snowden to I-95. There's [a] major opportunity to reimagine this space for more residents to have a space to be with their families and communities."
- "I think infrastructure needs to be developed sooner [rather] than later to facilitate a real difference in [the] use of mass transit, walking, and bicycling. Otherwise it will just be another driving destination that will worsen traffic."
- "The mixed-use and additional density is a good use of the space. The emphasis on walkability and bikes is very welcome. The staged approach seems sensible. It (hopefully) brings innovative new companies to eastern HoCo, backfilling the recent losses the area has had from companies moving to downtown Columbia."
- "I like the idea of making the buildings environmentally friendly and having sustainability in mind."
- "My office building is here, and there is not really anything making me want to come into the office these days. The designs shared here could make it possible and even desirable to come in, collaborate with coworkers, and spend time after work in this area."

GATEWAY MASTER PLAN OPTIONS

*Garnered feedback about Gateway's
Master Plan Options*

DATES

September 18, 2024:
In-person Information
Sessions at the East
Columbia 50+ Center

September 18-23, 2024:
Online Comment Card
Open

STATS

125 in-person attendees

51 comment cards
received

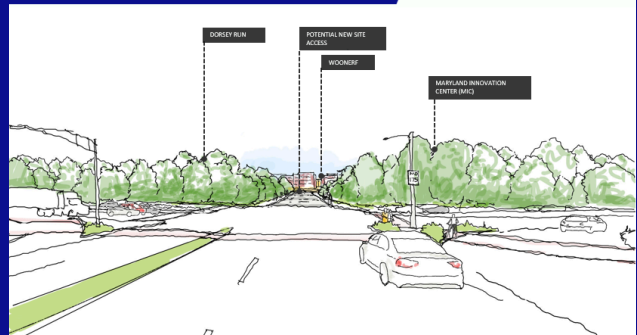
137 dots/sticky notes
placed on illustrative
concept boards



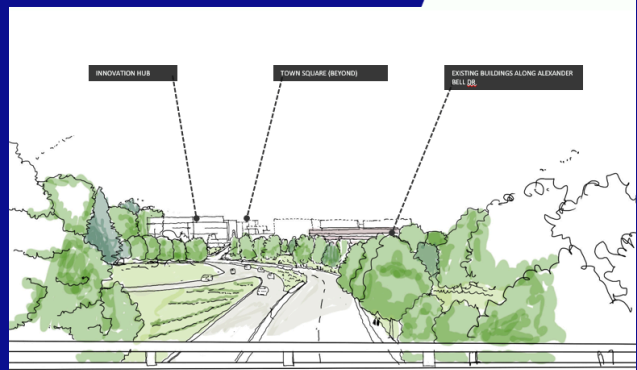
WHAT WE DID

During these sessions, community members viewed presentations, spoke with the project team, and were asked to give feedback on three master plan illustrative concepts and their various elements, such as, the placemaking strategy, conceptual land use framework, and transportation/mobility within and to/from the site.

Woonerf CONCEPTUAL SKETCH



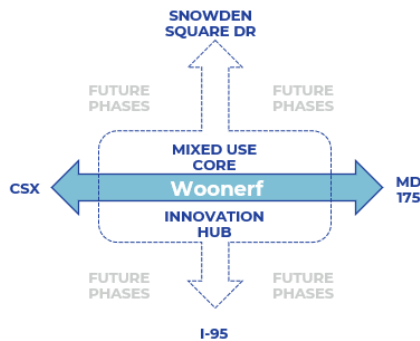
Town Square CONCEPTUAL SKETCH



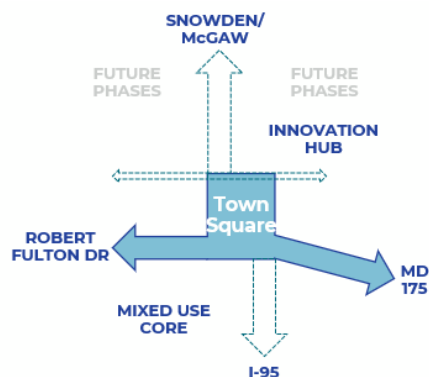
The Nodes CONCEPTUAL SKETCH



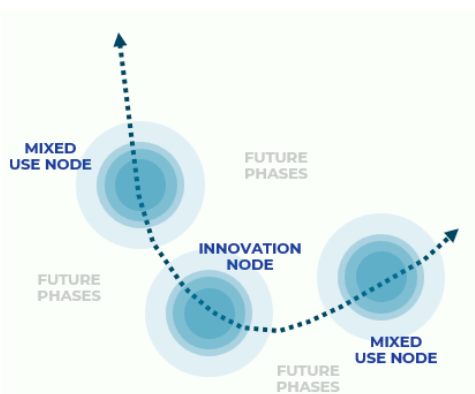
GATEWAY MASTER PLAN OPTIONS



**OPTION 1
The Woonerf**
A pedestrian-oriented spine and development with high visibility along I-95



**OPTION 2
The Town Square**
A mixed-Use Core in the heart of Gateway



**OPTION 3
Nodes**
Multiple activity nodes across Gateway, and Robert Fulton Drive as a mixed use, walkable corridor

WHAT WE DID - CONT.

- **Option 1 “The Woonerf”** included a pedestrian-oriented spine as the main public/community space and development that maximized high visibility along I-95. Other defining characteristics included: 1) creating more walkable blocks, 2) encouraging a mix of uses along the Woonerf frontage to enhance and activate the public realm, and 3) opportunities for a mix of uses with residential focus along a future multi-modal corridor.
- **Option 2 “Town Square”** included a mixed-use core in the heart of Gateway. Other defining characteristics included: 1) initiating transformation from the center of Gateway, 2) maximizing frontage around the Town Square, 3) ensuring that the Innovation Hub has visibility from the existing access on MD 175, 4) consolidating the north side of Columbia Gateway Drive as the "Main Street," 5) multi-modal corridor access to a wider range of users, and 6) locating a mix of uses with a residential focus close to the CSX bike/pedestrian trail.
- **Option 3 “Nodes”** included multiple activity nodes across Gateway, as a mixed-use walkable corridor. Other defining characteristics included: 1) building on the existing energy along Snowden River Parkway and Robert Fulton Drive, 2) regrading of the intersection of Robert Fulton Drive and Snowden River Parkway to create a more urban and pedestrian oriented "Gateway to Gateway", 3) consolidating Robert Fulton Drive as a high density, mixed-use corridor with focus on employment, and 4) locating an Innovation Hub at the end of Robert Fulton drive.

GATEWAY MASTER PLAN OPTIONS

WHAT WE HEARD

- Generally very supportive of the mixed-use nature, focus on multi-modal transportation, and opportunity for affordable housing contained in all three proposed master plan options.
- Some community members emphasized the importance of maintaining an equitable balance of innovative commercial/industrial and residential uses, considering the dwindling developable land in the County. Others expressed concerns about future market challenges to achieve mixed-use environments in the County, the potential competition between Downtown Columbia and the Gateway Innovation District, and the possible strain on public school infrastructure.
- The comment card asked about what amenities would make Gateway an attractive destination; respondents said that restaurant/dining would be the biggest draw. Green open spaces was the second biggest draw, followed by housing, and pathways.
- The common thread was that public school infrastructure, traffic concerns along entrances to major roads, and affordable housing must be a continued focus moving forward, and that a mix of the three options provides the most opportunities for transforming Gateway into a Regional Activity Center, as envisioned by HoCo By Design.



GATEWAY MASTER PLAN OPTIONS

WHAT WE HEARD - CONT.

- Participant feedback on Option 1 revealed strong support for the place-making strategy, the woonerf, a shared-use pedestrian-oriented spine as the public focal point. Participants felt it would make the area feel “innovative, welcoming, and distinctive.”
- Participant feedback regarding Option 2 demonstrated strong support for the town square public focal point, which would foster a sense of community in a centralized hub with mixed uses and opportunities for private and public gatherings. The concept for a multi-modal corridor integrated into the right of way of Columbia Gateway Dr. was popular as well. Some participants expressed concern for Option 2’s early phasing focusing on the middle of Gateway, and a lack of overall connectivity between Gateway and surrounding communities and amenities.
- Participant feedback regarding Option 3 highlighted its practicality, flexibility, and community integration/connectivity to other areas in Columbia. Participants also suggested that the nodes scheme incorporate either a Woonerf or town square public focal point. Additionally, participants appreciated Option 3’s proximity to existing commercial assets, such as, the Snowden Square Shopping Center and the Maryland Innovation Center (MIC). There was also interest in Option 3’s higher density along the proposed multi-modal corridor and Robert Fulton Drive. Some participants expressed concern for a lack of distinction between this plan and the vision of Downtown Columbia and limited connectivity between nodes (or that they could feel disjointed), suggesting a potential need for additional place making strategies.



ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: GATEWAY MASTER PLAN OPTIONS

NOTABLE QUOTES

- "The concept of a broad pedestrian-oriented mixed-use retail/residential shared street is innovative, welcoming, and distinctive. It is like similar streets I have seen in European cities. It is an exciting, dynamic urban feature to have lively pedestrian street activity. This feature would clearly distinguish Gateway from Downtown Columbia, where the center of activity is the Mall and the Lakefront--and it is important to develop Gateway in a manner that distinguishes it from Downtown Columbia."
- "Ultimately a combination of the woonerf and the nodes would suit the site the best. Having something that would attract people to the area (main st) while ensuring there are amenities for people living in the area and spreading some of the amenities onto the larger site (nodes)."
- "Every plan should take into account the need to provide schools."
- "I liked certain elements in each of the three options and a blending of all three will be the theme of my responses. I loved the "long spine" shared street, which connects a large area of Gateway and serves as a pedestrian friendly main street corridor. The Maryland Innovation Center provides a gathering area as well as a focal point."



GATEWAY OPEN HOUSE

Garnered feedback about Gateway's future as an innovation district

DATES

January 25, 2024:
In-person Open House in
Columbia Gateway

January 25 – February 13,
2024: Online Comment
Card Open

STATS

145 in-person attendees
61 comment cards
completed at the event
15 online comment cards
completed following the
event



WHAT WE DID

At this event, community members viewed a Gateway presentation and spoke with the project team about their vision for Gateway's future. The presentation was then posted online.

Open House attendees also shared their feedback at several stations, including:

- “Building on HoCo By Design,” which asked people to prioritize different considerations for the Gateway Master Plan that were presented in the County’s general plan.
- A Housing station, where people gave feedback on several potential market segments, including singles and couples, the Gateway workforce, and first-time homebuyers.
- The Innovation District station, which explained the Innovation District concept and asked for feedback on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the future of the Gateway Innovation District.
- The Mapping District station, where attendees viewed and commented on maps and initial observations that noted nearby context and retail centers; building ages; site access and circulation; walkability; and open space, natural resources, and opportunities for sustainability.
- “Be Part of the Conversation,” where, at the closing of the event, attendees were able to fill out a comment card to share their thoughts about Gateway and sign up to stay informed in the planning process.

GATEWAY OPEN HOUSE

WHAT WE HEARD

- General support for an Innovation District at Gateway with significant job and household growth as envisioned in HoCo By Design. Some participants emphasized how growth can support the County's tax base and result in a mixed-income, mixed-use community. However, others expressed concerns regarding possible market challenges to achieve mixed-use environments in the County.
- A variety of housing options – including affordable, accessible, and age-friendly housing – as essential to the future of the Gateway Innovation District.
- Some concerns about infrastructure needs related to future growth, particularly educational facilities.
- Strong support was expressed for improving connectivity in and around the District. Community members noted several challenges with walking and biking around Gateway today, including lack of connections, sidewalks, protected lanes, and entrances or exits to the area.
- Various opportunities for sustainability in the Gateway Innovation District, including expansion of multi-modal and transit opportunities; energy efficient buildings; habitat protection and restoration; community solar arrays; water re-use; and open space.
- Support for maintaining some existing industrial uses in Gateway, but also noted the potential for reuse of existing warehouse sites.

