

**Impressions based on the Chevy Chase Land Company's 4/27/2011 presentation at the 4-H Center
David H. Baker, homeowner
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I am a homeowner in the Farmington neighborhood adjacent to the Chevy Chase Lake neighborhood. Here is a short report that I prepared for the Farmington neighborhood on the Chevy Chase Land Company's presentation on their proposed development at Chevy Chase Lake at the 4 H Center on April 27, 2011. This report represents my personal views, and I appreciate that others may have different views.

The Chevy Chase Land Company made a very lengthy presentation, with five different speakers, so there is a lot to report and this brief email report will not do justice to it. However, the Reader's Digest version of the presentation is that they propose to develop 49 acres along the existing Capital Crescent Trail from the Einsteins/Starbucks on the west side of Connecticut to the Coquelin West neighborhood off of Jones Mill. Essentially, they would add slightly over 4 million square feet of useable space, including 200,000 square feet of retail space and 900,000 square feet of office space. There would be a new "Main Street" from T.W. Perry's to Coquelin West with a new high rise hotel, twelve 10 to 19 story commercial buildings and several more high rise apartment buildings and a townhouse development. Then there would be a "garden district" with homes or townhomes abutting Coquelin West. There would be development along both sides of the Trail as I understand it, with the elevated Purple Line station as the center of the development. They have plans for northbound buses on Connecticut Avenue to drop at one side of the station and southbound buses to drop at the other side of the station (they were most impressed that the buses would not need to cross Connecticut Avenue). And this will be a LEEDS development (sustainable, green and all that good stuff.)

Significantly, for those owning homes in The Hamlet and the Farmington neighborhoods, they propose to develop what they call the "forested land" and stream into Chevy Chase Lake Park for the benefit of the new neighborhood. There will supposedly be paths connecting the existing neighborhoods to the new development. They estimate that there will be some 3,000 residential units, including apartments, condos and homes in the 49 acres. One estimate was that this would add about 10,000 residents to the Chevy Chase Lake area. I suspect, however, that developing this Park will not be a high priority for the Land Company, but they had a pretty set of photos with trail markers, and a sign about protecting the frogs that I particularly enjoyed.

They suggest that the Purple Line construction will start in 2014 and that the real estate development will start *before* the rail construction. I am not sure any of these dates are really firm or fixed. However, as they present it, they will begin construction regardless of whether the Purple Line is approved for funding.

I would guess that housing values west of the Einsteins and Starbucks, south of the existing Crescent Trail and north of Manor Road would be very adversely impacted by the development. I can't imagine that future home buyers will want to overlook what looked a lot like Crystal City or Tysons Corners. And the other quiet neighborhoods surrounding the stream and forested area will apparently be teeming with 10,000 new residents. Here is a link to the Chevy Chase Land Company's website with the drawings of this new paradise:

http://www.cclandco.com/downloads/PP_Lake_East_Sector_Plan_FINAL.5.pdf

The artist's drawing of the new development, with the huge train stations and a series of at least ten very high rise buildings, drew a lot of laughter. However, it appears that they are going forward in some manner, so those living nearby need to get ready for twenty years of construction noise and probably a lot of flat tires. And good bye Capital Crescent Trail!

It is important to note that this is ONLY the Chevy Chase Land Company's proposal. Currently, the Montgomery County Planning Staff is putting together their draft plan for the area taking into account input from the public. Hopefully, it will be a more restrained effort than the Land Company proposal.

I can only imagine what adding 3,000 homes will do to traffic congestion at Connecticut and Manor and Jones Bridge. The area is already at a standstill from 4 pm to 6 pm every day. Perhaps now the rush hour will start at 2 pm and go until 7 pm. And what will all those new homes do for existing home sales, which are often stretching out to 180 days or more. What a time to add to the glut of homes on the market!

Anyway, this was my take on the presentation. Perhaps it really is a brilliant plan to manage growth, take cars off the beltway and put people in slow moving trains between Bethesda and New Carrollton. However, it seems very ill conceived to me.

David H. Baker