



Lincoln Park Nonprofit Hub

A proposal for the reuse and reactivation of the Lincoln School

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Abstract

This proposal from the Rockville Science Center and the Rockville Bike Hub is submitted in response to Montgomery County's public notice regarding the proposed disposition of the Property through a lease with an option to purchase, issued pursuant to the cited provisions of Maryland and Montgomery County law. The proposal presents an alternative use and operating approach for the County's consideration consistent with the community-focused objectives described in the notice.

Introduction

The Lincoln Park High School is a historic landmark within the Rockville Community. The school was built in 1935 to facilitate the education of African Americans students in Montgomery County. After 15 years of service as the foundation of African American education in Rockville throughout its history (Peerless Rockville, n.d.). Its resilient staff and student body endured overenrollment, unequal conditions compared to white schools in the area, and a growing repertoire of programs underneath its roof. In 1950, It was replaced by the Carver School in Rockville (Montgomery County Public Schools, n.d.). Today, the building still stands as one of the Nation's oldest surviving schools built for African American students (Lincoln High School Community Development Corporation, 2026). Located on 595 N Stonestreet Ave, the school presently sits unoccupied and owned by Montgomery County. On 7/7/2026, it was announced by the Montgomery County Department of General Services, that the division intends to dispose of the property through lease.

Statement of Needs

Our group identified the following needs that both the property and this proposal addresses.

1. Redevelopment of the Lincoln Park Neighborhood

- a. The Lincoln Park Neighborhood is known as planning area 6 in Rockville City Comprehensive plans. In the most recent comprehensive plan (2040), the authors examine a large-scale redevelopment of the property the Lincoln Park High School currently resides on. In the plan, the proposed development plan included a concept of a park-like development that

retained the school as a historic landmark with park space adjacent. Moreover, other redevelopment concepts in both the 2040 plan, and the 2002 comprehensive plan include concepts on reducing the industrial sectors adjacent to the Lincoln Park neighborhood.

2. Montgomery County's Nonprofit Sector

- a. Montgomery County is a defined nonprofit hub. There are over 7,000 nonprofits located in Montgomery County, MD as of 2025. There are also significant challenges for nonprofits to operate in the greater Rockville Area. Many longstanding regional nonprofits currently have issues specifically regarding real estate in Rockville. According to Nonprofits Montgomery, a key issue among nonprofit leaders in the region is a lack of facility infrastructure in the County. They recommend that the county provide more intentional projects that address growing spaces and facilities for nonprofits to help reduce costs for nonprofits, and increase collaboration between local government and nonprofit organizations to meet county needs (Nonprofit Montgomery, 2026)

3. Vacant Properties in Montgomery County

- a. Vacant properties are a severe concern for Montgomery County. They represent a visual symptom of the declining economic opportunity in the county. Since 2023, Montgomery County has continued to conduct measure after measure to reduce the number of vacancies in commercial properties in the County. Various efforts to reduce the number of vacant properties include, but are not limited to; conducting increased research to gain a true number of vacant properties (Ali, 2023), enacting grants to reduce cost of business relocation to Montgomery County (Office of Councilmember Evan Glass, 2024), and enacting methods to convert offices to housing (From the Offices of Councilmembers Andrew Friedson and Natali Fani-González, 2025).

Objectives

1. Restore the Lincoln Park High School Area Building into usable space
2. Reoccupy the Lincoln Park High School with a coalition of nonprofits to create a local nonprofit hub center.
3. Conduct programming that harnesses the unique neighborhood attributes and the coalition of nonprofits.

Restoration of the Lincoln Park High School Building

We envision a restoration for Lincoln High School that maintains the following priorities:

- Historical preservation
- Space Maximization
- Openness to the community

For historic preservation, the look and feel of the original building is tantamount so exterior changes will be kept to a minimum. Interiorly, we envision that a significant proportion of space will be reallocated to multi-use program spaces that can accommodate a variety of uses. We anticipate setting co-working space for resident organizations or those conducting program administration at the facility. Exteriorly, there are auxiliary buildings adjacent to the main school building. We anticipate restoration of the buildings, and the construction of new ones to serve as additional storage or multipurpose space. Lastly, we plan to maintain the current greenspace on the property and move to enhance the greenspace by adding outdoor furniture and an expanded greenspace footprint on the property to promote visitation by the local community. Parking is slated to be ample and useful for visitors and resident organizations.

A demonstrative example of the space use allocation can be found below.

Lincoln High School Reuse



Figure 1: Overview of general proposed arrangement of Lincoln Park High School Grounds

Coalition

Local nonprofits marked 2025 and 2026 for the Rockville Region of Montgomery County by significant demands for increased funding for nonprofit programs. Moreover, both years were marked by notable disruptions of regarded nonprofit organizations local to Rockville. For example, in 2025 Rockville Bike Hub relocated from their facility on N. Washington Street in Rockville. In 2026, Visarts, Maryland's Women Business Center under REDI, and Rockville Science Center were removed from their facilities on Maryland Avenue by the property management (Kalil, 2026). Shared experiences regarding commercial property in the County creates the basis for a coalition of organizations that are looking for new facilities with a shared obligation to maintain a space separate from the ebbs and flows of commercial properties.

For inaugural members of the coalition, Rockville Bike Hub, and Rockville Science Center have listed their potential proposals for reuse of the Lincoln Park High School Building and grounds. This proposal has been discussed with the Lincoln Park Civic Association and received support from the association and residents of the neighborhood. The Rockville Bike and Rockville Science Center have been attendees of community meetings and make appearances at neighborhood events.

Community Redevelopment Through Programming

Rockville Bike Hub

The Rockville Bike Hub (RBH) is a diverse group of cyclists who have established a community bike shop in Rockville Maryland. Incorporated in September of 2014 as a non-profit corporation, our goal is to provide a place where cyclists of all kinds can go to learn how to fix and maintain their bikes, borrow space and tools to build or upgrade a bike, or just get advice and talk about bikes. We are also working on bicycle-related projects in the community to help educate people about the benefits of bicycling to enhance health, improve the environment and promote more human-scaled communities.

As of 7 July 2015, RBH has been granted tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code with an effective date of exemption of 15 September 2014. RBH is considered a Public Charity under Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code meaning that all contributions to the organization are tax deductible.

RBH has supported a variety of community events in the Rockville and Montgomery County area over the years. Details are available in our annual reports on the RBH website (<https://www.rockvillebikehub.org/annual-reports>), but the following summarizes some of those events. RBH has routinely supported charity bike rides in the area, such as Tour de Cookie (benefiting the Tree House Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County), Breaking the Cycle (benefitting the Dwelling Place), the Lymphoma Research Ride (benefitting the Lymphoma Research Foundation) and the Wild Goose Chase (a women's ride benefitting the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Cambridge, MD).

RBH also regularly provides support at one of the Bike to Work Day pitstops in May each year and supports the Montgomery County Family Bike Festival in September. Also in May, RBH runs the bike giveaway for the Rockville TERRIFIC Kids Program. The twice-a-year Gaithersburg Fix-It Fair has also started to become a regular part of our schedule.

Since 2016, RBH has worked with Montgomery County to run a bike donation event in October. This event regularly brings in around 300 bikes that we share with Bikes for the World, another local nonprofit. Along with regular donations from the public and from the Trek Bicycle Rockville store, this comprises a large source of bikes for RBH programs.

Indoor workspace is critical for building a volunteer base and for providing space and time to provide our services. Indoor storage space is important for bike storage, especially for storage of bikes completed for the Rockville TERRIFIC Kids Program. Having bike storage at the same location as the workspace would increase efficiency and eliminate the need to transport bikes between locations. Currently bikes are stored in the garage at Redgate Park, several miles from the shop location. Under the current City of Rockville Redgate Master Plan, that garage might be removed.

The Open Shop Hours program at RBH supports a variety of services. RBH is generally open 2-3 days per week for 3-4 hours to support the following services:

- Support the supply of bicycles for the Rockville TERRIFIC Kids Program. Around 150 bikes are refurbished each year for 80 participants.
- Support the supply of bicycles provided to other charitable organizations. About three dozen bikes are distributed to other charitable organizations each year.
- Support the supply of economically priced bicycles and parts for sale. Approximately 200 bikes were sold in the past year at affordable prices.
- Provide instruction on bike maintenance and repair, supporting the education part of our mission.
- Provide space, tools and advice for those working on their own bike maintenance and repair projects.

RBH is the only nonprofit community bike shop in Montgomery County and serves around 200 Montgomery County residents each year during open shop hours in addition to the bikes donated through our aforementioned programs. In addition to our 5-person Board, RBH has 8 regular volunteers with another 8 volunteers who help on a less regular basis supporting our mission to provide education on bike maintenance and repair, and advice for those working on their own bike maintenance and repair projects.

RBH proposes using approximately 4000 square feet of space. Our approximate space needs would be allocated as follows:

- 1000 ft² – Workspace, including space for workbenches and workstands, truing stands, consumable supplies, specialty tools and a utility sink.
- 1000 ft² – Storage for bikes. This includes completed bikes for the TERRIFIC Kids Program and donated bikes awaiting repair.
- 1000 ft² – Storage for donated parts and accessories for use in refurbishing bikes and for sale.

- 500 ft² – Reception area, office, restroom, kitchenette and meeting room.
- 500 ft² – An area for display of refurbished bikes for sale.
- Depending on the availability of shared spaces and facilities, and the existing building infrastructure, the exact space allocation may change.

Rockville Science Center

A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established in 2009, the Rockville Science Center is a thriving center for STEM education in Montgomery County. A community of engaged learners from age 4 - 94 (and beyond!). In 2025, RSC served over 9,000 residents, many of whom we regularly keep in touch with through our 5,400+ mailing list, as well as our growing social media presence;

- A pipeline of K-12 students interested in STEM. In 2025, we served over 1,200 students in our on-site STEM programs;
- Highly qualified, trusted instructors and volunteers who are background-checked and trained in safe practices for working with children and teens;
- Four part-time staff, all of whom have decades of professional experience and degrees in science, with a collective 25 years of planning and leading programs at RSC;
- An active Board of Trustees composed of local community leaders, scientists, and business owners who are passionate about STEM education

Programs

STEM programming for children/youth that provides a positive introduction to science and expands on the typical school science curriculum. We emphasize hands-on learning and experimentation. Students are encouraged to explore, make mistakes, and think critically, helping them build confidence, creativity, and problem-solving skills. This approach allows a deeper understanding of science and empowers students to become independent learners and innovators;

- A successful community makerspace and Montgomery County's only public tool library.
- An award winning high school engineering program, which has produced back-to-back National Champions in the UAS4STEM drone competition (2024 & 2025);

Capabilities

The Rockville Science Center maintains connection and goodwill with key stakeholders including:

- local businesses, MCPS and private schools, nonprofit organizations, City Council, County Council, and State legislators;
- Experience and expertise in managing the largest public STEM events in Montgomery County;
- A wide array of tools and equipment and a team of knowledgeable Makerspace staff and volunteers.

Planned Programming

The principle thrust for programming at Lincoln High School is developing our growing makerspace and tool library. The Rockville Makerspace and Tool Library operates through a low-cost membership model that provides the community with access to tools, training, workspace, and a growing community of creative and knowledgeable makers to help with projects. We offer classes and project assistance with activities including laser cutting, 3D printing, sewing, vinyl cutting, soldering, vinyl transfers and screenprinting, woodworking, leatherworking, and jewelry making. We also have a Tool Library where members may borrow from a growing list of more than 300 tools. We also manage a Seed Library, which enables visitors to both donate seeds, as well as take home seeds free of charge for use in their own gardens. These two programs are the only ones of their kind in Montgomery County.

These programs provide incredible enrichment and benefit for the residents of Lincoln Park. Our membership pricing is well below market average for makerspaces in the state of Maryland at \$60/year or \$15/month. Our typical member hours attract persons from Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, and Bethesda. Our regular members are engineers, technologists, business owners, scientists, and artists who enjoy crafting and designing. Many local students, residents, and business owners come to our space to receive technical, design, and tool assistance.

Furthermore, our educational classes and workshops cover topics and themes that are incredibly helpful for homeowners. We conduct classes on topics such as upcycling, clothing repair, and home repair. Notable classes include drywall repair, cloth patching, and understanding home electrical switches.

Our tool and seed library is another potential great resource for the community. Our catalogue of tools include tools for woodworking, repair, gardening, camping, and more. Our program allows for members to borrow the tools, take it to their home or workspace for their project, and then return the item after 7 days. Similar to traditional libraries, borrowers can extend their tool usage for their project. Our members have used our tool library for home repairs, automotive projects, gardening, and business prototyping.

Funding and Resources

Funding this proposal involves a variable stakeholder approach that utilizes multiple stakeholders to fund the project in phases. In the first phase, we currently utilize existing resources that exist for the maintenance of the Lincoln Park building. This phase provides the ability to allow a surveyor or inspector to conduct a review of the property and compile a report outlining a scope of work sufficient to bring the facility up to code. In the second phase, key stakeholders turn to the coalition of nonprofits. In this arrangement, each organization is asked to contribute to a project using a funding framework to be agreed on once the financial needs of the site are completely understood. Furthermore, in this model, each of the nonprofits have individual plans and programming for the benefit of the neighborhood, in tandem with regular collaborative meetings to bring further unique programming for the neighborhood, its residents, and the surrounding community. In the third phase of the project, attention is given to the surrounding grounds of school. The grounds of the school currently contain 3 accessory buildings and a surface level parking lot. We anticipate the coalition and its programming will bring an influx of people into the neighborhood. As such, attention is paid to provide sufficient parking while maximizing accessory space for programming.

Phase Number	Primary Monetary Stakeholder	Time Horizon
Phase 1	Montgomery County Office of General Services	4-6 months
Phase 2	Nonprofit Coalition	18-24 months
Phase 3	Nonprofit Coalition	18-24 months

Table 1: General overview of Phases with respective primary financial stakeholder and estimated time horizon to completion.

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