

July 18, 2014

Honorable Craig Rice, President  
Montgomery County Council  
Stella B. Warner Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

**RE: White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan**

Dear Council President Rice:

I am writing on behalf of the South Four Corners Citizens Association (SFCCA), which represents nearly 1200 households living in an area of the eastern county just south of White Oak. At the most recent bi-monthly SFCCA meeting, held this past Monday evening, members discussed the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan currently before the Council. A motion was passed with unanimous consent to communicate to all Councilmembers, and to the County Executive, the following position of our Association:

- **Staging as described in the September 2013 Planning Board approved draft of the Master Plan must be reinstated.** Phased staging with hard stops and strict, well-defined milestones -- as incorporated in other recently adopted master plans -- are needed in order to guarantee that new development will be supported by adequate infrastructure (transit, schools, etc.).
- **Existing traffic standards must be used until necessary transit improvements are fully funded and implemented.** Whatever zoning density is approved needs to reflect realistic transportation capacity, and therefore should not be predicated upon implementation of the aspirational, unfunded Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service that may be more than a decade away, if it is ever built at all. We also believe that designating US 29 north of MD 650 as a freeway, to allow for greater development, is only a prescription for greater traffic congestion gridlock further south.
- If high quality job creation for East County residents is one of the primary goals of the Plan, and we believe it should be, then **allowable residential units need to be scaled back significantly by rezoning the area from commercial/residential (CR) to employment zones.** The proposed CR zoning allows the developers to decide what is most profitable for them to build, regardless of what is in the best interests of County residents and their employment needs.
- **There needs to be a greater focus on the revitalization of the Hillandale and White Oak shopping centers,** as opposed to the more remote sites in the Plan that will only draw business away from the area's long standing retail and transportation centers along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor.

In closing, we wish to emphasize that SFCCA supports elements of the plan that promote the creation of high quality employment opportunities and amenities along the entire US 29 corridor. However, **we urge you to remain mindful of the challenges and limitations of the existing transportation network and other infrastructure, and to approve a master plan with the level and type of new development -- appropriately staged -- that will serve the needs of the residents of White Oak and the county's eastern sector.** While this project may provide a rare opportunity for creating jobs and amenities in the East County, it does not relieve the Council of its responsibility to make sure that master plans being revised for areas with major transportation challenges contain staging to ensure infrastructure keeps up with development. Failing to take prudent action would have unprecedented negative impacts on traffic conditions and other public infrastructure demands for many years.

Thank you for your consideration of our Association's views,

John Holden  
President, South Four Corners Citizens Association (SFCCA)

cc: Councilmembers Andrews, Berliner, Branson, Elrich, Floreen, Leventhal, Navarro, Riemer  
County Executive Leggett