

County Executive Testimony, Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Amendment

Good afternoon. Greg Ossont on behalf of County Executive Marc Elrich.

The County Executive appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony today.

The Executive Branch will follow up with additional written comments regarding several transportation related concerns that were raised during the Planning Board's review and remain open items for our Department of Transportation. These include a lack of consideration for the Managed Lanes Project and the Shady Grove Park & Rides, insufficient traffic analyses and cross-section details, and a lack of demonstrated ability to achieve Non-Auto Driver Mode Share goals.

As the Council is acutely aware, the Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Amendment and its predecessor leverage proximity to the terminus of the Red Line and CCT as well as the intersections of the I-270 corridor and Inter-County Connector. The Plan proposes to build upon the successes of the 2006 Plan and enhance efforts to create housing and employment opportunities on underutilized properties that enjoy existing and planned infrastructure.

The County Executive reiterates his commitment to relocate the MCPS Bus Depot facility from Jeremiah Park. As the County Council knows, the effort to relocate the MCPS facility from Crabbs Branch and redevelop the site is long overdue. The site will be redeveloped to include a school site, a park, and a significant amount of affordable housing. Relocation of the depot has been a County Executive priority since Day 1 and remains so now.

The Executive supports recommendations to leverage publicly owned properties for greater housing affordability. Jeremiah Park already includes a 25% affordable housing plan with a work force housing component. When Jeremiah Park develops, the County Executive intends to require a more robust affordable housing component with deeper levels of affordability than 'work force'. It is not clear if properties owned by WMATA can be classified as 'public' but the County Executive agrees that these redevelopment opportunities present potential to significantly enhance the County's affordable housing stock.

Related to sustainability, the Executive notes the omission of specific percentage requirements for tree canopy and suggests the Council consider minimum requirements rather than general guidance. He supports recommendations for on-site forest retention and believes the Master Plan should insist on requirements that reinforce the County's Climate Action Plan. Resiliency and net zero should not be characterized as 'aspirational' if we are to address the ongoing climate emergency.

Finally, the County Executive supports retaining the existing zoning on the vacant parcel at the southeast intersection of MD 355 and Shady Grove Road for the possible location of a new fire/rescue station.