

**Testimony by Barney Rush,  
Mayor of the Town of Chevy Chase  
Public Hearing on the 2022 CIP,  
February 9, 2022**

President Albornoz and County Councilmembers.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak today regarding funding for the parks creation project as part of the Farm Women's Market redevelopment.

Six years ago, residents from 25 communities in and around Bethesda, came together to support the creation of additional open green space in our rapidly urbanizing downtown. Thousands of signatures were collected on a petition calling for more parks. We remain thankful to the Council of that year for incorporating our vision into the final wording of the new plan. Several councilmembers here today were on that Council.

Now is the time to turn this vision into reality. Progress has been made. The developers, The Bernstein Management Corporation and EYA, have developed a sketch plan that is enthusiastically endorsed by the communities. A new underground garage would replace most of the existing surface parking, and approximately 2 and ½ acres of new urban parkland would be created. After the hiatus of the pandemic, the developers are ready to undertake the preconstruction work and launch the project. But the predicate for this is a feasible, credible financial plan committed to by the engaged parties.

Some of the funding will come from density purchased by the developers for a new building on a portion of one of the parking lots. And the Town of Chevy Chase has agreed to fund up to \$4 million. What is still needed is the necessary amount – and the commitment to that amount – from the County.

However, no money was provided in the draft CIP. Instead, the County Executive stated only his commitment to find the required funding. We appreciate the support that the County Executive has shown, but we are keenly disappointed that the CIP did not include even a placeholder amount for this project. It is vital that the County Executive provide an amendment to the CIP that will set out the amount needed; and we ask the Council to urge the County Executive to do so.

This is the time to create these parks. Action not taken will result in this land being taken for more development. This opportunity, if not seized now, will never come back.

Thank you.