



## AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

March 22, 2023

Mr. Evan Glass, Council President  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update – Planning Board Draft

Dear Council President Glass,

The Montgomery County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board (APAB) discussed the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan update during its March 2023 meeting and writes to provide comment for the public hearing about the update and recommendations contained therein.

The APAB would like clarification on the recommendation on the membership of the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC). During the February 9, 2023, Planning Board work session on the master plan, the Planning Board had robust discussion about proposed membership changes to the RRAC. After the discussion, the APAB thought the proposed changes to the membership of the RRAC were as follows: (1) adding two members, RRAC would now have 9 members, (2) there would be a 4<sup>th</sup> farmer member, recommended by the Agricultural Advisory Committee to the County Executive, who would not have to meet the 50% income from farming requirement, (3) one member would be a person familiar with rural preservation techniques, (4) one member would be a person familiar with roadway engineering, and (5) three at-large members.

Contained on page 59 of the Planning Board draft the following recommendations are proposed for the RRAC membership:



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### Recommendations:

28. To add diversity to the Committee while continuing to give commodity farmers a strong voice, the County Council should revise the membership criteria in Section 49-80 as follows:

*Membership. The County Executive must appoint, subject to confirmation by the County Council, a Rustic Roads Advisory Committee. In making appointments, the Executive should strive to achieve diversity on the Committee in support of racial equity and social justice. The Committee has nine voting members. Each member must be a resident of the County. The Executive should appoint:*

- (1) three members who operate commercial farmland earning 50 percent or more of their income from farming;*
- (2) one member who is a representative of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and has been recommended to the Executive by the AAC;*
- (3) one member who knows rural preservation techniques through practical experience and training;*
- (4) one member who knows roadway engineering through practical experience and training; and*
- (5) three at-large members to be drawn from other users of rustic roads. Examples of the at-large members include, but are not limited to: a table crop farmer who does not earn more than 50 percent of their income from farming; an expert in tourism or historic sites along the roads; a member of a religious institution on a rustic road; an operator of an agritourism business, such as a winery, brewery, farm stand, or recreation or entertainment venue on a rustic road; or a person who regularly uses the roads to engage in or reach places for outdoor recreation, such as to bike, boat, kayak, hike, fish, ride horses, or go birding.*

The APAB is asking that the recommendations include a requirement for the member recommended by the AAC to operate commercial farmland.

Maintenance of the rustic roads is important and the APAB thanks the Planning Board for the renewed effort in highlighting these necessary practices. These include tree trimming, roadside drainage, road surface and shoulders. Rustic roads are the main travel network for our farmers and they must be able to move products and customers safely. Routine maintenance will protect all users of the road network.

We look forward to working with the Council on this master plan.

Sincerely,



**AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD**

Michael Jamison, Chairman

cc: Jeremy Criss, Director, Office of Agriculture  
Dale Tibbitts, Special Assistant to the County Executive  
Doug Lechluder, Chair, Agricultural Advisory Committee  
Mike Scheffel, Office of Agriculture

