



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Adam Ortiz  
Director

July 13, 2020

Councilmember Sidney Katz, President  
Montgomery County Council  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Katz,

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has received numerous letters from concerned citizens about the proposed use of artificial turf on Ellsworth Avenue and believes that a more environmentally preferable alternative should be utilized.

The proposed application is unusual in that the turf will be applied directly to the underlying pavement. In addition to concerns raised about increased wear and tear on the turf, this proposal misses an opportunity to remove the existing impervious cover and provide treatment of runoff from the impervious surfaces. The preferred option for this site would be to replace the existing impervious surface with pervious alternatives such as permeable pavers. If this option is determined to not be feasible, consideration should be given to eliminating the use of artificial turf on this section of Ellsworth Drive for what appear to be aesthetic considerations.

Although engineered synthetic materials may have some limited appropriate public applications, turf in a high traffic pedestrian area introduces the likelihood of fugitive non-degradable particles into the stormwater envelope, which can end up in local streams and waterways. Consistent with the principles of low impact development, a preference for natural features and permeable hardscape can achieve aesthetic and ecological benefit as well as placemaking.

Issues have also been raised to DEP concerning human health issues which would need to be addressed by Health and Human Services, and safety issues which have already been addressed by Department of Transportation. These are not issues, that DEP has the expertise to address.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this issue with County Council. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adam Ortiz".

Adam Ortiz

c: Mitra Pedoeem, Department of Permitting Services