



November 13, 2014

The Hon. Elizabeth M. Hewlett, Chairman
Prince George's County Planning Board
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Re: Melford Village, CSP-06002-01

Dear Chair Hewlett:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. The Coalition for Smarter Growth is the leading organization in the Washington, D.C. region dedicated to making the case for smart growth. Our mission is to promote walkable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities, and the land use and transportation policies and investments needed to make those communities flourish.

We are writing to request the Board to deny approval of the Conceptual Site Plan for Melford Village. While the proposed development contemplates a combination of residential, retail, and commercial uses, it would do little to increase walkability or transit connectivity or improve the significant jobs imbalance in the County that is responsible for some of the worst commuting times in the region. Rather, it is another example of a sprawl development that will divert limited development resources away from areas in the County that need it the most.

The Proposal Would Increase Sprawl and Auto Dependency. The mix of uses proposed in the Conceptual Site Plan may meet the formal M-X-T zone use requirements and the density requirements of the Bowie Town Center of which the site is now a part, but, at bottom, the Melford Village development is another poorly conceived sprawl development far from existing transit and older communities. The poorly connected site will force new residents to rely on driving for every trip, and force longer driving trips to reach destinations. Of primary concern is the fact that there is a single entry point on Route 3 for gaining access to the entire development, and public transit services are not proposed to serve the development. This means that the only viable means of access to the development is by car – for every trip in and out of the development. The result would be a significant increase in auto traffic on Route 3 and the surrounding area and little incentive or opportunity for residents and commuters to choose any other transportation mode other than driving.

The Proposal Puts Too Much Residential Development in the Wrong Place. In addition to increasing auto dependency, the Conceptual Site Plan calls for far too many residential units in a relatively isolated area of the County far from existing transit and adequate employment opportunities. Although the County has identified the Bowie Town Center area (of which the Melford Village site is now a part) as an “Employment Area,” this proposal will perpetuate more residents driving long distances to get to work rather than focusing new housing closer to transit and concentrations of jobs.

The Proposal Diverts Development From Areas Better Served by Existing Infrastructure. Growth should be directed to the County's 15 underdeveloped Metro stations. In addition, the County has identified closer-in areas that are well served by existing transit, road, and utility infrastructure and in

need of revitalization. It makes little sense to promote auto-oriented development at the far eastern edge of the County when these other areas could be developed in ways that take advantage of the County's sizable infrastructure investments.

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We urge the Board to reject the current proposal in favor of better-placed development that takes advantage of the County's significant existing transportation infrastructure and that is more in line with the County's long-term development goals. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Cort', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cheryl Cort
Policy Director