



Testimony before the Prince George's County Planning Board regarding:

Support with recommendations for the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-15009 and  
Detailed Site Plan 14028, Prince George's County Regional Hospital

By Cheryl Cort, Policy Director  
June 25, 2015

Good afternoon, my name is Cheryl Cort and I am the Policy Director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG). The Coalition for Smarter Growth is the leading organization working locally in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan 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 want to express our strong support for this proposal. We applaud Prince George's County and its partners for locating a state-of-the-art new Regional Medical Center at the Largo Metro station. We agree that this new healthcare facility at this Metro location is a game-changing investment for the county. To ensure the full potential of this investment, we need to create pedestrian-oriented designs for buildings, streets, and public spaces. Given this task, the following are our recommendations:

**1. Avoid an oversized Public Road A**

- The new spine road should knit together the area with a low speed, multi-modal street. We recommend one travel lane in each direction with turn pockets. If the board approves the four lane configuration, we recommend 10' inside lanes, and 11' outside lanes. We ask that the designated pedestrian crossings are raised or sheltered to ensure driver compliance with the pedestrian right of way.
- Implement managed on-street parking on both sides of Public Road A. Use 7' parking lanes, and additional 10' travel lanes where needed to fit on-street parking and non-automobile modes. On-street parking on both sides of the street is also an important urban street element that draws a variety of users to the street, calms vehicle travel speeds, buffers moving vehicles from pedestrians, and offers convenience to drivers. On-street parking could be managed with pay-by-phone metering, and multi-space or single/double meters that accept credit cards and cash.
- Continue to design the road section between the main entrance of the hospital and the plaza across Public Road A as a narrowed roadway crossing. Use the public square design found in the street sections exhibit rather than the circle configuration found in earlier drawings for the Boulevard at Capital Centre site. Avoid excessive open areas unneeded for vehicles. This encourages people driving to increase speeds and endanger pedestrians and bicyclists.

2. **Directly connect a walk pathway from the hospital's front door to the shops at the Boulevard at Capital Centre.** Align the main entrance of the hospital to directly connect via the sidewalk along the drop off drive and crosswalk to the retail buildings at the Boulevard at Capital Centre. This can be done by shifting the bio-retention facility in front of the entrance slightly south. Otherwise, the bio-retention facility serves as a barrier that forces pedestrians out of the way to cross the street to visit businesses.
3. **Institute an aggressive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program** for the hospital in order to reduce vehicle trips and perceived need for wider roads and parking supply. A traffic reduction approach to managing road capacity and parking supply saves money, takes advantage of non-driving modes, and enhances the quality of the area as an attractive place to live, work, and do business. We are surprised that this is not required under the current zoning and subdivision regulations. We ask that this oversight be rectified.
4. **Enhance the employee entrance and intersection connecting to the Metro bridge.** The plan offers little detail about the walking connections between the Metro pedestrian bridge and the employee entrance to the hospital. We ask that the board clarify details for enhancing the access to the Metro station. The crossing distance can be shortened and visibility of people walking across the service road from the sidewalk connected to the Metro pedestrian bridge can be enhanced. The pathway to the employee building entrance should also be refined to ensure this is a quick, direct route from the Metro station. The entry area should also feature amenities such as tables, chairs, and benches to encourage workers to relax outside in a plaza area. Encouraging use of this plaza can enhance the safety and attractiveness of this building entrance so that it is more than a back door. Secure, covered bicycle parking should also be offered here to encourage employees to bicycle to work.
5. **Do not add a third travel lane to Arena Drive, and retrofit overly-wide Arena Drive, Lottsford and Harry S. Truman.** The connecting arterial roads are all designed to be too wide and fast, making them dangerous places and impediments to creating multi-modal access to the area and supporting walkable, transit-oriented development. In addition to avoiding widening Arena Drive, the county should conduct a broader assessment of the multi-modal retrofit needs of the area if it is to become a true downtown. This includes the recommended two way conversion of Harry S. Truman and Largo Center Road. The fact that most of the intersections in this area operate at LOS A and B indicates that they are overdesigned and are uncomfortable if not dangerous places for people walking.
6. **Animate the surface parking lots on parcels 7, 8, and 9 with temporary shops or uses.** Even if the surface parking lots are temporary, they threaten to degrade the environment for walking, and supporting local businesses by discouraging people from wanting to walk, and encouraging people driving to drive at higher speeds on Road A. We suggest mitigating the negative impacts of the surface parking lots by requiring temporary structures offering food or services for hospital workers and visitors.

## **Conclusion**

With human-scaled urban designs; low speed multi-modal streets; small, animated and connected public spaces; and a robust TDM program, this major public investment can be a catalyst for economic development that can create a new downtown anchored by a leading regional medical center.

Thank you for your consideration.