



Testimony
Subdivision Staging Policy
Montgomery County Planning Board
June 2, 2016

I am Pete Tomao, the Montgomery County Advocacy Manager at the Coalition for Smarter Growth. We are a 19-year-old organization dedicated to making the case for walkable, transit-oriented, and inclusive communities. Firstly, I want to thank the Montgomery County Planning Board and Planning Department for the hard work that went into the draft SSP. The draft builds a strong case for increased investment in transit-oriented development. The Coalition for Smarter Growth strongly supports the recommendations for ending solely auto-based approaches to land use.

As the information in the SSP draft makes clear, development in Montgomery County is not a question of growth or no growth, change or no change, but how we grow and how we change. The county is projected to grow by over 200,000 residents between now and 2045. 14% of the county's land will absorb 82% of new jobs, 76% of new households, and 73% of population growth.

The staff report documents the many environmental, fiscal and equity benefits of compact, mixed-use transit-oriented development. Compact, transit-oriented development and redevelopment reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It partners the private and public sectors in retrofitting stormwater management where none exists today. It generates far higher tax revenues per acre and lower infrastructure costs while replacing aging infrastructure. Access to transit to reach jobs has been found to be the single greatest indicator in someone's odds of escaping poverty. In contrast, as sprawl increases, social mobility decreases. Applying improved tests to TOD -- which provides an economic edge in today's market -- will help these projects move forward while ensuring they are maximizing walk, bike and transit mode share.

In short, we support the amendments to the SSP because of the environmental, fiscal, equity, and competitive benefits it will provide. This document lays out a well-thought out strategy on how we as a county can grow in a sustainable, equitable way. We'll focus today on the transportation recommendations which include: ending solely auto-based traffic tests, incentivizing reduced parking, updating new vehicle trip generation rates, exempting 'core' areas from auto-based mitigation, and moving toward assessing transit accessibility versus auto level of service.

My Executive Director, Stewart Schwartz, and I reviewed the staff report in depth and we conclude that its findings are reasonable, conservative and justified. Specifically:

- 1) The new policy areas are defined in a reasonable way appropriate to their location and character.
- 2) The new Policy Area Test horizon years for expected transit investments are appropriate and tied to specific capital improvement programs, while also offering the flexibility for updated evaluations as additional transit funding is provided.



- 3) The Policy Area 60-minute walk-access transit-accessibility test is appropriate and review of Figure 7 shows an accurate correlation to those policy areas that have the most access to transit and those the least. We agree the test need not be applied in Core or Rural areas -- in the first because of the significant transit service, and in the second, because it can't be served by transit.
- 4) Non-auto mode share and the VMT measure are also appropriate and in keeping with the latest practice. CSG has been doing its own VMT analysis for transit-oriented projects using the Urbemis Model and finding miles driven and CO2 emissions emitted per capita by TOD to be far lower than regional averages.
- 5) For the Local Area Transportation test, we agree with setting the initial vehicle trip threshold higher for Metro station areas, and with the conservative vehicle trip adjustment factors in Table 1. We also agree with the incentive to reduce parking supply and provide TDM measures, which will allow for additional vehicle trip reductions. Our research agrees that reduced parking supply combined with transit proximity and TDM measures significantly reduces vehicle trips and VMT.

As a young Montgomery County worker, I choose to live in Silver Spring because of the walkable, urban environment. It is not just childless Millennials making the choice to live in urban areas -- my building is filled with families, older folks, younger folks, recent arrivals, and long-term residents. Residents of all backgrounds are choosing to live in walkable locations like Silver Spring because of the amenities those communities provide. Adopting the new policies as proposed in the SSP will ensure that Montgomery continues to develop in a smart, sustainable and competitive way.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and thank you for your service to our community.