

July 2, 2019

The Honorable Todd Turner, Chairman
Committee of the Whole
Prince George's County Council

RE: Support for:

CB-011-2019, An Ordinance Concerning the Countywide Sectional Map Amendment;
CR-026-2019, A Resolution Concerning the Countywide Sectional Map Amendment;
CR-027-2019, A Resolution Concerning Preparation of a Countywide Sectional Map Amendment and Approval of Goals, Concepts, and Guidelines; and Public Participation Program

Dear Chair Turner and members of the committee:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. The Coalition for Smarter Growth is the leading organization working locally in the Washington, DC 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 wish to express our support for initiating the countywide sectional map amendment to advance the implementation of the zoning rewrite enacted by this Council in the fall of 2018. This zoning rewrite is a significant advance for the county. We appreciate that this is an important change for the county, and we commend the level of public engagement required to implement the countywide sectional map amendment.

This change is worth the effort because it replaces the county's current obsolete and cumbersome zoning regulations which are holding back the county. Here are some of the ways the zoning and subdivision process will improve:

- **Design and building form standards:** the document establishes transit-oriented zones at the local and regional scales to support the goals of walkable urbanism, creating walkable, and bikable areas that are well-connected to transit;
- **Parking standards for urban and transit-oriented areas:** the zoning rewrite reduces excessive minimum parking requirements in transit-oriented centers in order to support more multimodal designs and uses.
- **Street designs:** the revisions require interconnected streets, shorter blocks, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. It implements newly adopted urban street design standards that support walk and bike friendly streets.

- **Transportation demand management:** the regulations also establish progressive traffic reduction measures that emphasize encouraging more people to ride transit if available, bicycle, share rides and walk.
- **Ease of use:** The zoning and subdivision regulations are presented in a more readable format providing tables and graphic illustrations to better understand and visualize the standards.
- **Ending perpetual approvals:** The proposed rules establish limits on approvals after a number of years. Today, approvals are allowed to live on forever, despite significant changes that may occur after initially projected conditions. While some of the provisions seem overly generous, setting the proposed limits would be a big step forward for the county.

Adopt this critical reform

We believe implementation of the zoning and subdivision rewrite is a tremendous improvement for the county and the community. It is a once in a generation opportunity. We urge the Council to vote to initiate the countywide sectional map amendment process in order to keep the zoning rewrite timeline on track. The countywide sectional map amendment is the next essential step to ensuring the timely implementation of the county's modernized zoning and subdivision regulations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort
Policy Director