

September 10, 2018

The Honorable Dannielle Glaros, Chair
Committee of the Whole
Prince George's County Council

RE: Support for the Zoning Rewrite and Amendments, re. CB 13-2018

Dear Chair Glaros and members of the committee:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG). 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 add to our previous testimony provided at the May 14 and July 17, 2018 work sessions of the Committee of the Whole. We'd like to reiterate our strong support for adopting the bills that implement the zoning rewrite by the end of the shortened 2018 legislative calendar. To not act this year would leave this major undertaking for a new Council, which would mean the Council would need to start over and lose a tremendous amount of time and effort. Starting over could also stall out the effort altogether.

We wish to raise two specific issues for the Council's consideration as you move to finalizing these bills:

1. **Phase out Legacy MXT zoning.** The proposed language already gives property owners with MXT zoning essentially two years to propose a complete application if the owner wants to use old MXT zoning. Given that the MXT zone has no standards, it should be phased out and appropriate new zones should be put in place. Allowing MXT to persist will undermine the value of the updated zoning regulations. Prince George's has the opportunity to bring its outdated zoning code into a modern era. Prolonging the phase-out of MXT harms the County's ability to establish clear and predictable standards.
2. **Raise the low residential caps in transit-oriented zones.** The proposed unit per acre limits for LTO and RTO zones are extremely low and inconsistent with necessary densities to create walkable places and feasible investments around transit stations. At minimum, LTO should match Town Center standards of 80 dwelling units/acre, but a higher number of homes would be more appropriate for the transit-served locations. For RTO, the low dwelling units/acre limits should be raised to be consistent with the FAR limits for the zones. We recognize that Planned Development (PD) can be a useful approach for providing a more flexible and negotiated review of larger projects. For smaller projects, however, PD is likely to be too expensive to undertake. If the Council adopts low residential caps for mixed use buildings at Metro stations, it could discourage quality infill buildings on smaller lots.

Page 2
Coalition for Smarter Growth
Support for Zoning Rewrite
September 10, 2018

Thank you again for your diligent work to complete this critically important task for the county. We again urge you to enact these bills this year.

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