



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

July 2, 2009

The Honorable David Brauning
Chair, Planning & Zoning Commission
Carroll County Office Building
225 North Center Street
Westminster, Maryland 21157

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Dear Mr. Brauning,

Following extensive review, we write to inform you that we cannot support the draft plan your staff has promulgated at the Planning Commission's direction. Despite repeated entreaties from staff that the document released is a draft and remains fluid up to implementation, we feel as state representation in Annapolis that it is important for our voices to be heard in the passionate debate that has occurred this summer in the county.

We agree with the Planning Commission's goal of "Preserving agricultural land, enhancing the commercial and industrial base, and directing residential development to towns and designated growth areas." However, several pieces of the draft plan impact residents and farmers in ways that are not appropriate or fair at this time. Zoning changes of this magnitude should have been decided decades ago.

Much of the debate that has occurred at meetings throughout the county and the source of our constituents' concern centers on a large 1728-acre tract in the Taylorsville area that would be rezoned. While it appears the Planning Commission will not impact tracts in the MALPF program, rezoning of the Taylorsville tract will impact the area in several ways. We do not believe there is adequate infrastructure in the area to support the development that may occur as a result of the rezoning. In addition, the location lacks proximity to major roadways that diminishes its appeal should development occur. Comments from constituents also focus on the long-term planning of families in that area concerning property to be conveyed to children and relatives that may be affected by the change in zoning. Planning Commission staff has indicated they are flexible with the end product concerning this specific area and we would like it removed from the final plan. In respect to the 600 acres south of Mount Airy considered for rezoning, again it is our view that changes in zoning would disadvantage property rights of people in that area. We oppose that suggestion of the Planning Commission staff.

The Pathways Plan touches on the contribution that municipalities can have in growing the county's tax base and employers. A good area where expansion for business purposes can occur is Taneytown. Taneytown is an example of a town in the county where growth is desired, and where expansion of roads such as Antrim Boulevard can produce positive results in attracting business and commerce. Carroll County's municipalities are the potential growth engines of the county, and we believe they should be at the forefront in producing greater opportunities for both residential and commercial growth. We are aware that the municipalities in Carroll may have their own ideas for what areas can or should be designated for expansion, but we believe that is where the County should look first.

At this time focus should center on maintaining the rural nature of the county and accepting that the residents of the county have spoken clearly that they value what separates Carroll from its surrounding neighbors. Because Carroll holds different qualities of life than Frederick or Baltimore Counties does not make it any less attractive to potential residents. Indeed, constituents have noted that they selected Carroll as a place to live precisely because of what makes it different. We are glad the county has taken a slow and deliberate approach to adopting a plan of this magnitude, and have been impressed with the discourse that has occurred between the citizens of the county and the planning commission staff. We look forward to continuing to participate in the debate as the Comprehensive Plan process continues.

Sincerely,

Donald B. Elliott
State Delegate, District 4B

David R. Brinkley
State Senator, District 4