



Public Hearing on 2016 Subdivision Staging Policy and Bill 37-16 Impact Taxes
September 13, 2016

Testimony Delivered by Dusty Rood,
Chair, MCCC Business Environment Council
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

Support with Amendments

Good evening. My name is Dusty Rood, and I am here this evening on behalf of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce in my capacity as the Chairman-elect of the Board of Directors and the Chair of the Business Environment Council.

I'd like to start off by sharing a couple of stories about communities that have recognized they needed to alter the way they think about and plan for growth, and how that relates to Montgomery County.

The first community is a large City that was stagnating. Crime was rampant. Schools were deplorable. The transit system - unreliable and dangerous. That City imported it's predominantly professional and government workers from outside the City. Of course, I'm talking about the District of Columbia 20 years ago.

While it's unfortunate that it had to get as bad as it did before it could get better, the District's epiphany that they needed to be attractive to new residents, especially young professionals, was well-timed. Today, the District has made significant progress to solving those problems and has become a truly vibrant and thriving City.

Another quick story. A Maryland county to our immediate east with incredible transportation connectivity with the District has already recognized the opportunity to attract aging millennials. Not only is Prince Georges' County extremely accessible to the District and beyond, one of their greatest assets is a stock of housing that is affordable, especially to the next generation of top talent in the middle class. You would have to drive to Frederick County to find comparably-priced housing.

Both the District and Prince George's County, along with many other cities and regions around the Country recognize that a deliberate and well executed strategy of attracting the next generation of top talent is what fuels economic development, great schools and quality of life.

Montgomery County is strategically located to attract millennials as they advance in their life stages, but we are at a disadvantage as it relates to matters that this policy affects, particularly the supply and affordability of housing and getting around the County and into the City.

We applaud many of the proposed tools that align with the place making priority in the County's economic development strategy. I refer you to the specifics in our written testimony. We share the values that many here tonight do about our transportation and schools infrastructure and understand the need to invest. But we need to do so strategically. 30 years ago, when there was a strong correlation between new housing and student generation, the use of housing moratoria to manage growth was rational. Today, such moratoria have little effect on school utilization, yet send shockwaves to the investment community; a perception Montgomery County can no longer continue to proliferate. We need to be relevant.

In closing, we have submitted written testimony with far more detailed and specific comments and recommendations. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this policy and over the coming years to enhance Montgomery County as a great place to attract and retain the next generation of top talent. Thank you.

Attached: MCCC Written Testimony