



Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

James T. Smith, Jr.
Secretary

August 23, 2013

The Honorable Candice Quinn Kelly
President
Charles County Commissioners
P.O. Box 2150
La Plata MD 20646

Dear Commission President Kelly:

I am writing to the Board of County Commissioners in order to clarify prior comments and identify additional concerns of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) with the draft 2013 Charles County Comprehensive Plan as approved on August 5, 2013 by the Charles County Planning Commission. It is my understanding that the Plan will be transmitted to the County Commissioners, who will hold a public hearing on the Plan in the near future. Prior to a vote by the County Commissioners on the draft 2013 Comprehensive Plan, I wanted to share the Department's additional concerns with the draft Plan as approved by the Planning Commission.

This Department is concerned that there are inconsistencies between the stated policy goals of the Plan and the recommended land use map as approved by the Planning Commission. The draft Comprehensive Plan (text) states that the County's goals of limiting sprawl development and improving the quality of development and urban design, as well as the quality of life, have been priorities expressed in the current draft and in previous comprehensive Plans. The Department feels the stated policy goals are consistent with the State's 12 Planning Visions, as well as with the MDOT's transportation policy goals. However, these policy goals appear to be in conflict with the recommended land use map that re-designates the majority of the 2006 Plan's Agricultural Conservation and Rural Conservation land uses as Rural Residential and will enable low density residential development and large lot development in conservation areas outside of the existing development district.

MDOT is concerned that given a finite market (as is true for any county), opening new rural areas to proposed growth and additional development will compete with the proposed mixed use development in the Transit Corridor. As high frequency transit service requires higher density and intensities of development to operate efficiently and effectively, diluting focused growth away from the Transit Corridor appears to conflict with the County's stated transportation priorities. Further, this may adversely affect the competitiveness of any future Federal application for transit funding as part of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTAs) scoring is for local land use policies/regulations and the relative supportiveness of these policies and regulations to the success of the proposed transit service.

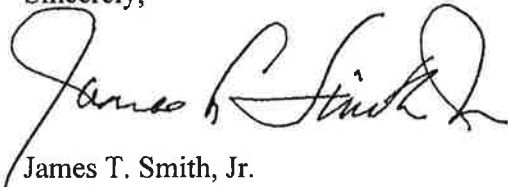
My telephone number is 410-865-1000
Toll Free Number 1-888-713-1414 TTY Users Call Via MD Relay
7201 Corporate Center Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076

The Honorable Candice Quinn Kelly
Page Two

The Comprehensive Plan will be the framework for land use, growth management, rural/agricultural policies, economic development, water resources, natural environmental resources, community facilities, and energy efficiency decisions through approximately 2040. If one of the Comprehensive Plan's goal is to support the transit densities necessary for rapid transit in the Transit Corridor, then both the Plan's policies and land use recommendations should be made consistent. Therefore, it is the recommendation of MDOT that the inconsistencies between the Plan's policies and recommended land uses be corrected. MDOT would be happy to discuss this further with Charles County staff.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter prior to voting on the 2013 draft Comprehensive Plan. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Donald Halligan, Director, Office of Planning & Capital Programming, at 410-865-1275, toll-free in Maryland at 800-713-1414, or via email at dhalligan@mdot.state.md.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James T. Smith, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

James T. Smith, Jr.
Secretary

cc: Mr. Donald Halligan, Director, Office of Planning & Capital Programming

The Honorable Candice Quinn Kelly
Page Three

bcc: Mr. Martin Harris, State Legislative Officer, MDOT
Ms. Colleen Johnson, State Legislative Coordinator, MDOT
Mr. Andrew Scott, Director of Real Estate, MDOT
Ms. Kristen Weiss, State Legislative Analyst, MDOT