

North College Park Citizen's Association
c/o College Park Youth & Family Services
4912 Nantucket Road
College Park, MD 20740

January 22, 2013

The Honorable Andrea C. Harrison, Chair
Prince George's County Council
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Dear Chair Harrison,

The Members of the North College Park Citizens Association have closely followed the progress of the Preliminary Greenbelt Metro and MD 193 Sector Plan & Sectional Map Amendment. Actually, our involvement with this planning effort extends far beyond most of our memories, since several residents of College Park participated in the discussions that established the final alignment of the Green Line, as well as the selection and ultimate design of current Greenbelt Metro Station, its transportation network, and its new pedestrian path into our community.

The Preliminary Sector Plan you now have before you is therefore the latest entry into a long line of discussion in which the concerns of our community were previously recognized and incorporated into adopted design plans. Most notably, the 2001 Greenbelt Metro Sector Plan not only addressed numerous issues raised by our community for future redevelopment of the Greenbelt Station, but it clearly indicated the proximity and significance of adjacent neighborhoods in College Park. In fact, pgs. 119-124 of the 2001 Sector Plan were devoted exclusively to future design concerns and preservation of the North College Park community, and made clear that development of Greenbelt Metro must be integrated with the residential neighborhood on the west side of the railroad tracks.

However, despite our participation in the Sector Plan discussions of the past year and the specific requests of our letter that was sent to the Planning Board and the Prince George's County Council on October 2nd (see attached) the Sector Plan transmitted for your approval does not protect our community, and does not provide an acceptable template for future development at Greenbelt Metro.

As noted in our Oct. 2nd letter, the brunt of any negative impacts related to development of Greenbelt Metro must be borne by those who live closest to it. As shown in the Sector Plan, 100% of the affected residents within ¼ mile radius of the Greenbelt Metro Station live in single family homes in College Park. Within ½ mile from the Station, 75% of affected residents live in College Park.

What this means is that roughly 1,000 single family homes and 3,000 residents of the City of College Park live within ½ mile of the Greenbelt Metro Station. At current values, nearly \$220,000,000 of residential real estate in College Park lies within ½ mile of the Greenbelt Metro Station. Even small changes in property values for such a large number of homes would mean major changes to the tax base of Prince George's County and College Park. Thus, while development of this project is entirely within the City of Greenbelt, the impacts of that development will involve potentially significant impacts on the character of our community, and upon the owners of those 1,000 homes.

Quite naturally, the residents of those 1,000 homes would prefer to maximize the positive impacts of this development, and to reduce and minimize the negative impacts. Our previous track record on that has been clear: The residents of North College Park have consistently supported development concepts at Greenbelt Metro that functionally, architecturally, and economically enhance our community and integrate it into the redeveloped Greenbelt Metro area.

We fully realize the potential value of this development to our County and for the future of our community. We do not oppose development. However, other major projects in the DC metropolitan area have shown how important it is for new developments to fit into and enhance their surrounding communities. We want the same thing. No one welcomes developments that seem likely to compromise the present and future value of their homes and neighborhoods. To be truly successful, this development must enhance, and not reduce the livability of neighborhoods in College Park.

Regrettably, the document you have been asked to adopt does not provide such guidance:

- The Preliminary Sector Plan does not provide adequate guidance for building materials and architectural massing that are consistent with the preservation of our community. We strongly support the use of attractive architectural designs and materials that minimize the apparent mass and bulk of buildings. We are especially concerned about the maximum height of buildings at the Metro Station, near Al Huda School, near Hollywood Neighborhood Park, and elsewhere along the railroad tracks. As envisioned in the 2001 Sector Plan, we believe that building heights of 4 to 8 stories are appropriate in the areas closest to our community. We also suggest that buildings taller than envisioned by the 2001 Sector Plan might be appropriate near the Beltway and closer to Indian Creek. The 2001 Sector Plan included extensive guidance for building height, massing and architectural materials based on the input of nearby residents. The current plan is not adequate, and is not compatible with our neighborhood.
- The Preliminary Sector Plan does not provide sufficient guidance for future transportation infrastructure and circulation. The design of Beltway ramps and major new road infrastructure will have visual, noise, light and air pollution impacts on our community. These factors will also affect pedestrian and bike travel to and through our community. The Sector Plan must include strategies from the perspective of our community to minimize impacts and maximize benefits, so that future development plans may respect and incorporate them into their designs.
- The Preliminary Sector Plan does not provide adequate guidance for the placement, traffic circulation, and materials used to construct new parking structures for Metro. Guidance for any parking garage built near our community should include specific guidance for construction materials, screening, interior and exterior lighting, and other guidance to reduce impacts from vehicle noise, horns, alarms, as well as potential for criminal activity. We would prefer that large garages not be constructed adjacent to our community, and suggest that smaller garages might feasibly be located in other parts of the Greenbelt Station area. The design of Metro parking structures is a matter of serious concern to us, and must be fully explored and addressed in the Sector Plan.

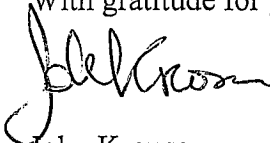
- The Preliminary Sector Plan does not propose adequate guidance and measures to reduce light and noise production, transmission, and reflection into our community. The selection of brick or glass, noise barriers, architectural orientation and forms, screening, lighting design, and other techniques have successfully been used elsewhere to reduce noise and light pollution. We have consistently requested that these concerns be addressed from the perspective of our residential community, but such guidance has not been included in the Sector Plan.
- The Preliminary Sector Plan does not really acknowledge that our community exists as a part of the Greenbelt Metro area, or that the needs of residents who live within such a short distance must be considered in its future design. Residents of North College Park will not only live nearby, but they will also work, shop, visit and travel through it. We have consistently asked to be integrated into the concept and design of this development, not just because our homes are so close to it, but also because we will be among its most dedicated core of patrons and users. The Sector Plan does not adequately reflect the economic and functional significance of our adjacent community, and this also must be addressed in the Sector Plan.

It is our contention that the Sector Plan that you have been asked to adopt is both unfinished and inadequate, and we strongly believe that it should not be adopted until it has been amended to address our concerns. At their January 10th meeting, the members of our Association voted unanimously to express their concerns regarding deficiencies of the Preliminary Sector Plan in this letter, and to request your support to modify that document in ways to ensure its benefit to our community.

We realize that it may take awhile to develop the appropriate amendments, but the process has already taken a long time, and has been delayed by both scandal and economic distress. We also understand that this project will take years to fully construct, and will require significant funding for transportation improvements and other infrastructure. But we also believe that the efforts that you take now to amend the document will make it stronger, and will lead to a more successful development for all of us.

We therefore ask your patience to work us, and with our representatives in the City of College Park and the 21st Maryland Delegation to ensure a vision and plan of development at Greenbelt Metro that acknowledges the design constraints of a large development adjacent to a long-established community. We ask you for a Sector Plan that preserves our quality of life, and justifies the public funding that will inevitably be required to implement it.

With gratitude for your efforts on our behalf,



John Krouse
President, North College Park Citizens Association

cc: Mayor, City of College Park
Senator & Delegates, Md. 21st District
Mayor, City of Greenbelt

Mayor, Town of Berwyn Heights
Citizens to Conserve and Restore Indian Creek