



# City of Bowie

15901 Excalibur Road  
Bowie, Maryland 20716

June 11, 2019

The Honorable Dannielle M. Glaros, Chair  
Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee  
Prince George's County Council  
County Administration Building  
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

RE: CB-17-2019 (Townhouses and One-Family Detached Dwellings in the R-A Zone)

Dear Chair Glaros:

On Monday, June 3, 2019 the Bowie City Council conducted a public hearing on CB-17-2019, which will provide a limited provision for Townhouse and One-Family Detached residential dwelling uses in the R-A (Residential Agricultural) Zones of Prince George's County, where the property proposed for the development meets appropriate criteria and has certain residential development regulations imposed on the development of said uses pursuant to a Detailed Site Plan approval process. After hearing from a total of 14 speakers, the majority of whom were against the proposed text amendment, the City Council voted to make an UNFAVORABLE recommendation for CB-17. This letter provides the rationale for the City Council's recommendation.

We understand the legislation is intended to apply to the Freeway Airport property and that the overall density anticipated for the 129-acre property is approximately 4.25 dwelling units per acre, which could potentially yield over 500 dwelling units. However, the proposed legislation could have major land use implications for the Bowie area, since CB-17-2019 would introduce the maximum densities under the R-T zone, including three family dwellings at 9 dwelling units per acre, townhouses at 8 dwelling units per acre and other attached dwellings at 6 dwelling units per acre. The current density allowed in the R-A zone is only 0.5 dwelling units per acre. No development in the entire Church Road corridor has a density greater than 1.7 dwelling units per acre (Fairwood mixed use community).

Another primary consideration is that CB-17-2019 would undermine the process of updating the 2006 Bowie and Vicinity Master Plan, which has just begun. The City Council believes it would be appropriate to review alternative land use and zoning scenarios for the subject property in the context of the Master Plan update.

The proposed zoning text amendment also conflicts with the zoning pattern established for this part of the Bowie and Vicinity planning area. The Sectional Map Amendment conducted at the conclusion of the 2006 Bowie and Vicinity Area Master Plan update retained the low density zoning pattern on the Freeway Airport parcels, and other properties in the Church Road/Enterprise Road corridor, which was established in the previous Master Plan, the 1991 Bowie-Collington-Mitchellville and Vicinity Area Master Plan. This zoning pattern uses the low density residential zones, Residential Agriculture (R-A) and Residential Estate (R-E) to preserve the single-family and rural character of the area between MD 193 and the City of Bowie. The area is recognized as Community VII in the 1991 Master Plan, and that

Letter to Chair Dannielle Glaros re: CB-17-2019

Plan's Community Character Map identifies Community VII as "Permanent Low Density", with a density variation recognized only east of Church Road.

The 1991 Master Plan text, on page 72, states that Permanent Low-Density communities are intended to retain a rural living area character and/or promote low-density development alternatives:

*Generally conventional large-lot areas will not be encouraged to utilize public sewer. Areas where alternative low-density communities offer opportunities for traditional large-lot estate, rural low-density, planned low-density comprehensive developments, and equestrian subdivisions within the R-E, R-A and O-S zones....Portions of Communities VII, VII, and IX will retain a low-density character in the R-E, R-A zones and/or the alternative low-density development options, except where Low Suburban density neighborhood variations are recognized. These three communities will provide a low-density transition between the suburban areas in the Largo area and Community I.*

Community I is the portion of Bowie located between US 50 and MD 214, including the Bowie Town Center. Detailed recommendations for Community VII are provided beginning on page 88 of the 1991 Master Plan. On page 91, the Plan states: *"The R-E and R-A Zones are recommended extensively for Communities VII, VII and IX to establish a pattern of Large Lot/Alternative Low-Density land use and to function as a base density. Neighborhood density variations are recognized, but should not detract from the Large Lot/Alternative Low-Density character."*

In addition to Master Plan zoning issues, CB-17-2019 conflicts with several major, longstanding City Council development policies. CB-17-2019 would introduce development types and zoning densities that are clearly inconsistent with these policies.

Furthermore, the proposed zoning text amendment would thwart the purposes of the newly created Agricultural-Residential (A-R) Zone and disrupt the established pattern of development that has occurred under the permanent low density R-A and R-E zones in the Church Road corridor. In October 2018, the Prince George's County Council approved the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite. The Ordinance will not become effective until Fall, 2020. The zoning of the subject property is expected to be changed to the A-R Zone in the Countywide Map Amendment, with no significant changes from the current R-A zoning. Development allowed pursuant to CB-17-2019 would not satisfy the purposes of the A-R Zone, which are:

- (A) To provide for large-lot one-family detached residential subdivisions, while encouraging the retention of agriculture as a primary land use;
- (B) To encourage the preservation of trees and open spaces; and
- (C) To prevent soil erosion and stream valley flooding.

Because the bill is harmful to the existing development character and zoning in the Church Road corridor and does not comply with the purposes of the existing or proposed zoning under the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite, the City recommends the your Committee's UNFAVORABLE vote on CB-17-2019.

Letter to Chair Dannielle Glaros re: CB-17-2019

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this pending legislation and for your serious consideration of the City's recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Frederick Robinson". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Bowie City Council  
G. Frederick Robinson  
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Derrick Leon Davis  
The Honorable Todd M. Turner  
Mr. Robert Antonetti, Esq.