



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

HANS RIEMER
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

June 17, 2014

Tom Downs
Chairman of the Board
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 Fifth St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Chairman Downs:

As an at-large member of the Montgomery County Council, I am writing to you about the development plan for the Takoma Metro Station. Although the site is in the District of Columbia, it is adjacent to Montgomery County and the City of Takoma Park and the site is part of the regular commute for many of my constituents.

I support the concept of transit-oriented development and I believe the Takoma Metro Station is an appropriate site for housing. Last year I was one of the County Council's lead advocates against a plan to develop in a sensitive watershed near Clarksburg. Building over Metro stations, however, is an environmental positive, because residents are less likely to drive. Nevertheless there are community impacts that must be addressed.

In a location as closely situated as this one is to Montgomery County, it is important for our residents to be heard, and I request that Maryland residents be given equal opportunity to participate in planning for this project, including through the Takoma Park planning staff.

I believe that the project should focus on enhancing the walkability of the adjacent area to encourage transit access and use. It should incorporate wide sidewalks and plenty of space for bicycles and bike parking. The Metropolitan Branch Trail, an important piece of infrastructure that I have worked hard to move forward at the County Council, must also be included in the planning and construction.

The bus service circulation should be improved from the current operations. I am concerned by reports that I have heard about a loading dock near the sidewalk creating conflicts with pedestrian access -- that should not be allowed as it would degrade the pedestrian environment around the site.

The project should enhance public safety by creating a safe environment for those who need to return to their vehicles at night. The current parking lot does not feel safe to many residents and this is an important opportunity to improve it.

The green buffer should be improved with park features, and the massing of the housing should step back away from the street and towards the tracks. I would urge you to limit parking for the new residences as much as possible, and to keep all of the existing parking that is used, so as to minimize disruption for existing residents. Finally, please do not miss this important opportunity to increase the supply of dedicated affordable housing in an area that is well served by public transportation.

I hope that our resident's concerns will be heard and the result will be a better design.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hans Riemer', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hans Riemer
Council Member At-Large