

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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PLANNING BOARD

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PUBLIC HEARING: LONG BRANCH SECTOR PLAN

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THURSDAY

JANUARY 31, 2013

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The Board met in the MRO Auditorium of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland, at 6:00 p.m., Francoise M. Carrier, Chair, presiding.

PRESENT

FRANCOISE M. CARRIER, Chair
MARYE WELLS-HARLEY, Vice Chair
CASEY ANDERSON, Member
NORMAN DREYFUSS, Member
AMY PRESLEY, Member

ALSO PRESENT

MELISSA WILLIAMS, Project Manager

SPEAKERS

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Tony Hausner	5
Amanda Hurley	8
Dan Reed11
Chris Ruhlen14
Bill Commoners18
Marilyn Piety25
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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

CHAIR CARRIER: I'd like to bring our meeting to order. This is our public hearing on the Long Branch Sector Plan.

Welcome everybody.

Ms. Williams.

MS. WILLIAMS: Good evening. For the record, my name is Melissa Williams, and I am project manager for the Long Branch Sector Plan. Can folks hear me?

CHAIR CARRIER: No. You'll have to bring the mic closer.

MS. WILLIAMS: Is that better?

CHAIR CARRIER; Yes.

MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

Once again, for the record, my name is Melissa Williams, and I am the project manager for the Long Branch Sector Plan. Tonight is the public hearing on the public hearing on the draft Long Branch Sector Plan, which was advertised in the Gazette on December 26, 2012.

1 This Sector Plan is an amendment
2 to the 1990 approved and adopted used for
3 Silver Spring and the Park Master Plan, as
4 amended, as well as the General Plan on wages
5 and corridors for physical development of the
6 Maryland-Washington Regional District and
7 Montgomery and Prince George's counties, as
8 amended the Master Plan of Highways for
9 Montgomery Counties, as amended; the Master
10 Plan of Bikeways, as amended; the Purple Line
11 Functional Plan, as amended; and the Master
12 Plan of Historic Preservation in Montgomery,
13 County, Maryland, as amended.

14 There are accompanying technical
15 appendices which refer to documents and are
16 not part of the sector plan.

17 Staff is also requesting that the
18 public record remain open through the last
19 scheduled Planning Board work session;
20 currently, that is March 7, 2013.

21 Additionally, we have received
22 numerous emails testimonies on the plan since

1 the opening of the public record on December
2 26, and those emails will be included in the
3 public record.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
6 much. Does that conclude your presentation?

7 MS. WILLIAMS: That concludes my
8 presentation.

9 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay.

10 I'd like to call the first group
11 of speakers -- Tony Hausner, Amanda Hurley,
12 Dan Reed, Chris Ruhlen, Bill Commoners, and
13 Vicki Vergagni.

14 (Pause.)

15 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay, Mr. Hausner,
16 you're first tonight.

17 MR. HAUSNER: Okay -- and I
18 submitted a copy if you'd care to read along
19 with me. I submitted it just by email, not
20 knowing that I needed earlier, just today.

21 I am Tony Hausner, Chair of Save
22 Silver Spring, a board member of the Purple

1 Line, now, and the Indian Springs Citizens
2 Association, which is adjacent to Long Branch,
3 and I am speaking for myself.

4 I greatly appreciate that the
5 planning Board approved my request for a
6 community meeting on this plan. The community
7 learned a great deal at the meeting, and Ms.
8 Alyssa Williams' presentation was excellent.

9 I feel that this plan is
10 well-developed. Not only does it effectively
11 address the usual issues of land use, zoning,
12 and housing, but also those of environment,
13 green space, parks, etc I particularly commend
14 including sections on health and public
15 safety, which are less traditional. I've long
16 been an active supporter of the Purple Line.
17 However, I have two areas of concern on the
18 impact of the Purple Line when it is bill.

19 My first concern is the restricted
20 access to the community center and swimming
21 pool. I have shared some possible solutions
22 with staff. And the big concern is the big

1 reduction in the number of affordable housing
2 units at an increase in the rent and many of
3 these units. Since there is a relatively high
4 percentage of low-and moderate-income
5 immigrant families in Long Branch who benefit
6 from a sense of community, there is a great
7 need to retain the current level of affordable
8 housing, and without significant increases in
9 rent. The plan does the best job possible
10 using the current available tools. However,
11 the county will need to develop new policies
12 to address these issues.

13 I met with Portland someone's
14 staff light rail staff a few years ago when I
15 was in Portland. That light rail displaced
16 many low-income minority families, which the
17 staff will only regret it. They suggested a
18 website, which I've included in here, as a
19 possible source for ideas. I'm sure there are
20 many other ideas that this county can come up
21 with.

22 The City of Portland also provided

1 loans to those small businesses that were
2 threatened with survival during construction
3 and established an office to address this
4 issue, including steps to minimize
5 construction impacts.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you, Mr.
8 Hausner.

9 Ms. Hurley?

10 MS. HURLEY: My name is Amanda
11 Hurley, and I have lived in Long Branch for
12 almost SEVEN years. I love having neighbors
13 from all over the world, and delivering
14 conversations in Amharic and Spanish when I
15 wait for the bus or take my son to the
16 playground.

17 Diversity is a term that's used a
18 lot these days, sometimes too glibly. But
19 Long Branch is a neighborhood that's truly
20 diverse in ethnic, economic, and cultural
21 terms.

22 For all that it has to offer,

1 though, Long Branch isn't always easy place to
2 live. It's rundown from the bleak, treeless
3 main streets and aging low-rise buildings,
4 you'd never know that this is an area with the
5 same population density as Brooklyn or San
6 Francisco. You'd also never guess that the
7 median household income for a mile around is
8 more than \$70,000.

9 Long Branch is designed for and
10 ruled by car. We have some great businesses
11 in the neighborhood, but due to the current
12 zoning, there's a preponderance of convenience
13 stores that cater to passing car traffic.
14 This makes walking around Long Branch
15 unpleasant at best and hazardous at worst. I
16 live two blocks from the stores on Flower
17 Avenue and Piney Branch, and I'm sorry to say
18 that I almost always drive to them; that's
19 what they're designed for, after all.

20 The Long Branch Sector Plan calls
21 for making Long Branch a safer, livelier, and
22 more welcoming place to live and work.

1 Mixed-use walkable urbanism is the right
2 prescription for our neighborhood, and
3 rezoning should spur much-needed investment.

4 Fortunately, Long Branch already
5 has a valuable asset that can catalyze
6 renewal. The Flower Theater is a wonderful
7 example of art deco architecture and a beloved
8 local landmark. Many residents of East County
9 have fun memories of seeing movies there.

10 Sadly, the theater has sat empty for several
11 years now. Every month it remains closed is
12 a lost opportunity for revitalization. It's
13 imperative that the theater be preserved and
14 restored as a community anchor.

15 The Flower Theater Project, a new
16 community group I belong to, wants to return
17 the theater to beneficial public use. We've
18 heard some great ideas, like turning it into
19 the Latin foods market or a youth center. But
20 Long Branch residents have heard a lot of good
21 ideas over the years. So many studies and
22 plans have come before this one. It's past

1 time to turn recommendations into action.

2 With the continued growth of
3 Silver Spring and the future construction of
4 the Purple Line, there are exciting changes on
5 the horizon for Long Branch. But 10 or 20
6 years is simply too long to wait. We need to
7 get started making our neighborhood greener,
8 more walkable, and more vibrant tomorrow.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIR CARRIER: Mr. Reed?

11 MR. REED: Hi. My name is Dan
12 Reed, and I'm a recent graduate of University
13 of Pennsylvania where I studied urban
14 planning. I grew up in Silver Spring, and I'd
15 like to testify in support of the Long Branch
16 Sector Plan.

17 I support the transformation of
18 Long Branch's main streets -- Flower, Piney
19 Branch, and University -- into complete
20 streets that welcome everyone, whether they're
21 coming on foot, by bike, by the Purple Line,
22 or even by car.

1 I feel that by allowing new
2 development to occur in the business district,
3 it will enrich local businesses by providing
4 them with more customers. And judging from
5 the success of Veterans Plaza in here in
6 downtown Silver Spring, I'm excited by the
7 potential for a new urban gathering space as
8 well.

9 I support these improvements
10 because even though I don't currently live in
11 Long Branch, I have a personal interest in
12 reviving the Flower Theater, where I used to
13 watch movies when I was little.

14 Last summer, I cofounded the
15 Flower Theater Project, which seeks to find
16 ways to bring this long-shuttered theater back
17 to life. I believe the Flower is integral to
18 the neighborhood's identity and that it can be
19 a destination and a catalyst for
20 redevelopment.

21 Over the past six months, I've had
22 the privilege of conversing and working with

1 committed Long Branch residents, business
2 people, and community leaders along with
3 historic preservation staff and the theater's
4 owner, who graciously took our suggestion to
5 turn the marquis on at night. Business owners
6 say it's already had a positive impact on the
7 neighborhood.

8 What we of the Flower Theater
9 Project have found is that all of these
10 parties have valid, but often contradictory,
11 interests and concerns. But we all share the
12 goals of celebrating Long Branch's character
13 and bringing investment to the area sooner,
14 rather than later.

15 For the most part, the sector plan
16 does this. What we're concerned about is the
17 staff recommendation to preserve the entire
18 Flower Shopping Center. While the entire
19 property has some historic merit, we feel that
20 historic designation needs to be the outcome
21 of a discussion that takes all of those
22 aforementioned views into consideration, which

1 doesn't seem to have occurred yet.

2 As a result, we've chosen not to
3 take a position on designation of the Flower
4 Theater and Shopping Center until there's
5 agreement that it can be done in a way that
6 doesn't unnecessarily complicate or delay the
7 investment that Long Branch so sorely needs.

8 I believe that successful and
9 well-loved places have a mix of old and new
10 which allow them to celebrate their history
11 and culture while providing new opportunities
12 to create new history and culture. I realize
13 how important the health of Long Branch is to
14 the Flower Theater and vice versa. And while
15 I support the Long Branch Sector Plan, there's
16 still some work to be done so that we can
17 assure both.

18 Thank you for your time.

19 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you, Mr.
20 Reed.

21 Mr. Ruhlen?

22 MR. RUHLEN: Hi. Good evening.

1 My name is Chris Ruhlen with the Law Firm of
2 Lerch, Early, and Brewer. I'm testifying
3 tonight in place of Mark Solomon with Finmarc
4 Management, who is registered to speak but was
5 unable to attend at the last minute.

6 I wanted to quickly make a couple
7 of observations regarding the Long Branch
8 Sector Plan as it's currently drafted. In
9 December 2000, the County Council approved the
10 Silver Spring Master Plan. The Master Plan
11 acknowledged the need for revitalization of
12 the commercial center of the Long Branch
13 community and recommended that a commercial
14 revitalization overlay zone be utilized to
15 simulate reinvestment in the commercial core.

16 The CROZ was recommended for
17 roughly the same properties that are proposed
18 to comprise the town center in today's Sector
19 Plan, as shown on page 14 of the public
20 hearing draft. These properties include not
21 only the superbblock but also certain
22 properties on both sides of Flower Avenue and

1 Piney Branch Road.

2 In the 13 years since the adoption
3 of the 2000 East Silver Spring Master Plan,
4 the CROZ has generally failed to attract
5 reinvestment into the Long Branch commercial
6 center. The Urban Land Institute convened a
7 technical advisory panel in 2005 to examine
8 why the private sector had not utilized the
9 CROZ and concluded that the CROZ did not
10 provide sufficient density or building heights
11 to make redevelopment feasible. Not that the
12 CROZ does not allow any additional density and
13 limits building heights for commercial
14 development to a maximum of 50 feet with
15 Planning Board approval.

16 ULI, in its technical advisory
17 panel report, specifically recommended that
18 the CROZ be revised to allow for additional
19 density and greater heights. The TAP Report
20 specifically stated as follows:

21 In order to create the critical mass to bring
22 to Long Branch the services and businesses

1 that the community is seeking, the density
2 within the commercial core needs to be
3 increased to three FAR. A minimum of three
4 FAR would be more appropriate for this future
5 town center area, making redevelopment more
6 economically feasible and ultimately bringing
7 about long-delayed revitalization.

8 With regard to implementation,
9 note that the public hearing draft currently
10 proposes to phase commercial development in
11 two sectional map amendments, the first of
12 which is anticipated to be adopted prior to
13 the construction of the Purple Line. Even
14 though the sector plan describes the town
15 center as representing the "greatest
16 opportunities for positive change" in Long
17 Branch, the sector plan does not include all
18 of the town center properties within the first
19 sectional amendment. As we know, there's
20 great uncertainty surrounding the funding of
21 the Purple Line. The town center is too
22 critical to the long-term objectives of the

1 plan to be tied to Purple Line funding.

2 Instead, all of the properties
3 within the town center should be afforded the
4 opportunity to redevelop with the first
5 sectional map amendment.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

8 Mr. Commoners?

9 MR. COMMONERS: Thank you, Madam
10 Chair; members of the Board. My name is Bill
11 Commoners with Lerch, Early, and Brewer. I'm
12 here to share my concerns about the draft Long
13 Branch Sector Plan this evening.

14 As Mr. Ruhlen just noted, the
15 commercial revitalization overlay zone didn't
16 do what it was supposed to do, and the draft,
17 because of the insufficient density and
18 insufficient height to make redevelopment
19 feasible. The draft Sector Plan tries to
20 solve that but doesn't go far enough. It
21 proposes to limit density in the town center
22 properties to raise 1.5 to 2.5 FAR. Yet it's

1 doubtful that even 2.5 FAR under the CR zones
2 will provide sufficient incentive to stimulate
3 the redevelopment of existing income-producing
4 properties.

5 A minimum of three FAR would be
6 more appropriate for the entirety of the
7 future town center, as recommended by the ULI
8 report for the commercial core, and as was
9 endorsed by the Long Branch Task Force.

10 Within this 3-FAR, commercial
11 density allocations should be increased to a
12 minimum of 0.5 FAR. This can make
13 redevelopment more economically feasible,
14 attractive, and ultimately bring about the
15 long-delayed revitalization.

16 But the sector plan also proposes
17 to require 15-percent MPDUs in connection with
18 residential development and LEED Gold
19 certification for all new building
20 construction. These requirements create
21 significant financial impediments. Fifteen
22 percent is already the maximum percentage of

1 MPDUs contemplated under the MPDU law, for
2 which the law already provides a corresponding
3 density bonus of 22 percent to offset the
4 financial impacts. Where is that density
5 bonus accommodated in the sector plan?

6 Similarly, the LEED Gold
7 certification is a full two levels of
8 certification above the level otherwise
9 required under the county's green building
10 law. On top of the insufficient total
11 density, even the recommended density must be
12 acquired through the CR incentive density
13 process. This forces property owners to buy
14 back density they already have, in addition to
15 the new amounts. The incentive density comes
16 with too many strings attached for an area
17 comprised of smaller properties and lesser
18 heights and densities. For years, these areas
19 did not redevelop under the existing zones
20 without those strings. There's little reason
21 to expect that they will do so now, with this
22 new panoply of costs.

1 The ability to build residential
2 in areas that have been C-1 is not a panacea,
3 and it is not alone overcome the economic
4 reality. As a result, the draft plan becomes
5 a blueprint for the status quo.

6 These increased MPDU and LEED
7 requirements also interfere with the
8 fundamental premise of the CR zoning, to
9 provide latitude to decide which public
10 benefits will best support a given project.
11 Rather than increasing regulatory requirements
12 in Long Branch, the sector plan should
13 encourage maximum flexibility under the CRT
14 zone for the town center properties to better
15 encourage reinvestment.

16 Finally, with regard to
17 implementation, the sectional map amendments
18 don't work. The sector plan doesn't include
19 all the town center properties in that first
20 SMA even though, as Mr. Ruhlen just said, the
21 sector plan calls it the area of the greatest
22 opportunity for positive change.

1 The town center should not be
2 split up. It should be promoted as an
3 integrated whole. All properties within the
4 town center designated on page 14 of the plan
5 should be afforded the opportunity to
6 redevelop under the first sectional map
7 amendment. Allow them all the opportunity to
8 create a critical mass for success.

9 Thank you very much for the
10 opportunity to speak on this.

11 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you, Mr.
12 Commoners.

13 I called Ms. Vergagn. Is she here
14 this evening?

15 (No response.)

16 MEMBER DREYFUSS: I just had a
17 quick question on the Gold LEED. Is that
18 unusual in a master plan, or is it just this
19 one?

20 MR. KOMINERS: I think it is. I
21 mean, it could be --

22 MEMBER DREYFUSS: I mean have we

1 seen it in other ones, or just here?

2 MR. KOMINERS: I don't think so.

3 MEMBER DREYFUSS: Okay. I was
4 just curious.

5 MR. KOMINERS: It's one thing as a
6 goal or as a desire. But as a requirement, I
7 think it's different.

8 MR. RUHLEN: One additional thing
9 on that --

10 CHAIR CARRIER: No, I'm sorry. We
11 really, we're not going to start dialog. I'm
12 sure Mr. Dreyfuss didn't mean to.

13 MEMBER DREYFUSS: All I wanted to
14 know was whether it was --

15 CHAIR CARRIER: We have 200
16 minutes where the speakers.

17 And we'll have work sessions
18 individual. If individual property owners
19 have something we need to discuss, we will
20 bring people up at that time.

21 Okay, thank you, folks.

22 I'm going to call Tina Slater;

1 Brett Rouillier;

2 Rosalba Guzman;

3 Marilyn Piety;

4 Jose Cabrera

5 -- six.

6 You appear to be the only one of
7 the six who's actually here, Ms. Piety.

8 MS. PIETY: (Off mic comment.)

9 CHAIR CARRIER: No, I'm sorry. I
10 guess I'll come back maybe, to those people.

11 PARTICIPANT: Yeah, they are on
12 their way.

13 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay.

14 Ivan Zacarias;

15 Alvaro Cabrera;

16 Laura Pinto;

17 Carlos Perozo;

18 Lynn Westrope p

19 Are you Mr. Peroso?

20 MR. PEROSO: Yes.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: William Mentzer,
22 Jr.;

1 Marcie Stickle;

2 George French.

3 (Pause.)

4 CHAIR CARRIER: Did I call up one
5 too many?

6 (Off mic comments.)

7 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay, why don't
8 you take a seat in the audience.

9 Okay, Ms. Piety, go right ahead.

10 MS. PIETY: I'm Marilyn Piety,
11 Vice President of Sligo-Branview Community
12 Association and Chair of our land-use and
13 zoning committee.

14 We have concerns with the
15 appropriateness of the recommendations for
16 zoning and density, streets and roads, traffic
17 and parking, parks, and recreation. I will
18 focus on zoning and density issues, especially
19 as they impact single-family areas that adjoin
20 commercial areas, and other members will
21 address other points.

22 One, the zoning map and other

1 references to the so-called "Superblock" at
2 the northeast quadrant of Piney Branch and
3 Flower, including both is the east-west and
4 north-south segments of Arliss Street,
5 discussed this area as if it were one parcel
6 of land that was basically flat. It is
7 neither one piece of land nor of a uniform
8 elevation. It comprises seven separate
9 properties at very different heights or
10 typography. The sizes of the different
11 properties vary from a low of 6,700 square
12 feet to 2,000 -- 3,700 square feet.

13 Along the face of Flower Avenue,
14 just to give you a picture of what this is --
15 beginning at Piney Branch is the Flower Avenue
16 Shopping Center, comprising several shops, the
17 Flower Theater and a small parking lot.

18 Immediately north are two separate
19 single-family-size lots with a restaurant and
20 dental law that provide their own parking.

21 Immediately north of that, at the
22 intersection of Arliss Street, is

1 7,250-square-foot vacant lot owned by the
2 Flower Avenue Shopping Center and used for
3 parking.

4 Along the north face of Piney
5 Branch are a Midas muffler shop, a
6 supermarket, and a couple of small shops all
7 under one ownership, with 112,300 square feet.
8 A separately owned gas station on 16,000
9 adjoins the above property at the east end of
10 the block.

11 The above properties are long and
12 narrow, with a depth of only about 150 to 160
13 feet, including the right-of-way, after which
14 they drop sharply, to about 10 to 15 feet
15 behind Piney Branch and behind Flower. At the
16 bottom of these drops is the
17 237,000-square-foot property that is the Giant
18 Supermarket, bank, and beauty shop. This drop
19 was probably created in the '50s and '60s by
20 scooping out the natural slope that goes to
21 Long Branch Creek.

22 While the plan intends that there

1 should be a joint development with shared
2 parking, there's no evidence that this is
3 likely to occur in the foreseeable future.
4 The plan does not explain how such disparate
5 topography can be developed into one
6 coordinated development. In other words,
7 building facing Flower and Piney Branch will
8 appear much taller and intrusive because they
9 begin on the highest points, while taller
10 buildings facing Arliss can accommodate more
11 height because they begin at a lower point --

12 Excuse me.

13 CHAIR CARRIER: It's distracting.
14 Perhaps you could leave the table just, until
15 it's this lady's turn to testify.

16 TRANSLATOR: But how is she
17 supposed to understand what's going on?

18 CHAIR CARRIER: I'm just
19 suggesting that you translate a little bit off
20 to the side if you are distracting other
21 speakers.

22 TRANSLATOR: (Off mic comment.)

1 CHAIR CARRIER: And then you can
2 come back to the table for her to speak, and
3 you can translate at the table.

4 TRANSLATOR: (Off mic comment)
5 should be a translator.

6 CHAIR CARRIER: You know, if we
7 had gotten a request a week ago, we would have
8 had it done out loud so everyone could hear
9 it. We would have had headphones for people.

10 Clearly, it's distracting this
11 speaker. So, perhaps, just while this lady is
12 speaking, maybe the other speakers won't mind.

13 Yes.

14 TRANSLATOR: (Off mic comment.)

15 CHAIR CARRIER: How about right
16 there at that front table? That sounds like
17 a great idea.

18 (Pause.)

19 MS. PIETY: Thank you.

20 Therefore, unless and until there
21 is some coordinated plan, an ownership
22 agreement to merge these disparate properties

1 into one, each parcel should be evaluated and
2 zoned on its own --

3 CHAIR CARRIER: Excuse me; we
4 don't allow signs. The signs will have to
5 leave.

6 (Pause.)

7 CHAIR CARRIER: Could somebody
8 please translate for me that the signs are not
9 permitted?

10 Go ahead.

11 MS. PIETY: Therefore, an
12 ownership agreement to merge these disparate
13 properties into one, each parcel should be
14 evaluated and zoned on its own merits and
15 location.

16 Two, the Superblock should not be
17 in phase 1. A large part of this property and
18 surrounding roads will both affect and be
19 affected by the Purple Line. Allowing
20 development on the scale proposed now is
21 inappropriate.

22 CRT zoning with an FAR of 3 is

1 inappropriate for buildings on the east side
2 of Flower, part of which face single-family
3 residences and a small playground.

4 Four, a sixty-foot building, even
5 with an FAR of 1 on the west side of Flower is
6 also inappropriate because it adjoins the
7 backyards of single-family residences. A
8 zoning category of CRN is more appropriate for
9 both the east and west sides of Flower,
10 including the Superblock p although, if there
11 were another change, some uniform agreement
12 that might be able to be handled.

13 Five, the proposed commercial
14 apartment building proposed for the north side
15 of Arliss is especially egregious. How can a
16 50-foot building immediately adjacent to the
17 backyards of single-family homes be a
18 "transition," as the sector plan calls it?
19 There is no shortage of affordable apartment
20 buildings in Long Branch. We have the largest
21 concentration of very old, low-cost buildings,
22 low rental cost buildings, in the county.

1 They should be redeveloped. We don't need
2 more; we just need better of what's there.

3 This plan attempts to accomplish
4 too many things on too little land. Our
5 infrastructure and amenities is the
6 infrastructure of the '40s and '50s. We are
7 already one of the densest areas in the county
8 with the least amount of parkland and stream
9 valley protection. Our residential roads are
10 narrow compared to those built by modern
11 times. Our major roads are overcrowded, and
12 traffic is not expected to be eased either by
13 this plan or by the Purple Line.

14 This area needs redevelopment but
15 it must be at a scale that is sustainable and
16 makes improvements, not one that compounds
17 existing problems and harms single-family
18 neighborhoods. This entire area should be
19 zoned CRN. More parkland and open space should
20 be created, and transitions should be
21 transitions in deed as well as words.

22 Thank you.

1 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

2 I think that Mr. Perozo was next.

3 MR. PEROZO: Hello. My name is
4 Carlos Perozo. I am the Long Branch Business
5 League president. I am also a member of the
6 FDC; that is the Fair Development Council .
7 And I'm an owner of ZPTAX just across the
8 street from the Flower Theater.

9 CHAIR CARRIER: Are you speaking
10 on behalf of an organization?

11 MR. PEROZO: Yes. I'm speaking on
12 behalf of the Long Branch Business League.

13 CHAIR CARRIER: Great. Thank you.

14 MR. PEROZO: I just wanted to
15 introduce myself.

16 I came to the area in 2007. I
17 noticed that the Flower Theater was empty, and
18 I started to investigate what happened with
19 the Flower Theater. I noticed that the last
20 10, 15 years, the area has been going down
21 because the theater is closed. So I started
22 to talk about that. And because of that, I

1 became the Long Branch Business League.

2 the sector plan looks for plans in
3 the long-term, and it's not looking for
4 short-term solutions on what's going on in the
5 area. In my interviews to the smaller
6 businesses that around the area, we have
7 actual things that need to be addressed, like
8 drainage and the support of businesses,
9 especially in helping work with MHP and
10 helping the area work with the Council.

11 I had the opportunity to meet with
12 people from Montgomery County, thanks to the
13 Flower Theater. And we need things like, for
14 example, public restrooms, parking -- parking
15 needs to be redeveloped in the area so people
16 have access to the businesses that are there.

17 Also, in talking about the Flower
18 Theater, it is urgent to do something with the
19 Flower Theater so we can redevelop the area.
20 The designation of a historical building of
21 the whole commercial center doesn't seem to be
22 the right thing to do. I will say, the façade

1 of the Flower Theater because that's what
2 gives the identity to that commercial center,
3 but not to the whole commercial factor. It
4 would not do that.

5 Also, business owners are very,
6 very concerned about displacements. Any
7 construction of any kind in that area will
8 mean that the owners are going to have to be
9 displaced. So we would like to see something
10 that will guarantee a partial moving in the
11 meantime so that we can go back and continue
12 doing business in the area.

13 Thank you very much.

14 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

15 Sir, what was your name, please?

16 MR. MENTZER: William Mansur.

17 CHAIR CARRIER: Could you press
18 the microphone?

19 MR. MENTZER: William Mentzer.

20 CHAIR CARRIER: Please go ahead.

21 MR. MENTZER: I have lived two
22 blocks north of the Long Branch sector border

1 since 1964. I am the corresponding secretary
2 of the Sligo-Branview Community Association.
3 My testimony is my personal position.

4 I'm commenting on the rezoning of
5 the Arliss Street townhouse tract and a
6 proposed study of the relocation of the
7 recreation center and swimming pool.

8 Regarding the Arliss Street
9 townhouses, Marilyn has already brought up a
10 major point. My feeling that is the existing
11 townhouses meet your requirement of an
12 appropriate transition from redevelopment to
13 existing single-family neighborhoods by having
14 lower buildings at the age of the redeveloped
15 area. And today, those 15 townhouses really
16 represent that transition to single-family
17 houses behind them. Whereas, a 50-foot
18 structure suggested in the plan or as zoning
19 would allow, a 60-foot structure would
20 overwhelm that community on Plymouth Street
21 that backs up against it.

22 My second concern is the proposed

1 relocation of the recreation center structure
2 and outdoor swimming pool to a site closer to
3 the library. There's nothing in the sector
4 plan about why that that should be considered.
5 Moving the rec center and the pool may free up
6 some play space, but if you look at the site,
7 there's not even enough room if you took the
8 pool and rec center out to have a full-size
9 soccer field, unless you would do serious
10 regrading to that site because of the terrain
11 there.

12 Expending funds for construction
13 of new facilities when the existing facilities
14 now relatively new would seem to face
15 resistance for various reasons. The plan
16 calls for the development two new urban parks,
17 improvement of two existing neighborhood
18 parks, and major renovation and expansion of
19 a third neighborhood park. In an area of
20 tight budgets, funding priority for Long
21 Branch should be to get those park needs met
22 first.

1 And also, it would seem that
2 throughout the county, areas with no pools or
3 rec centers would take priority over funding
4 to relocate our rec center and pool.

5 Also, the land around the library
6 is covered with mature trees, many of which
7 would have to be removed to accommodate the
8 footprint of a rec center in the bowl. And in
9 today's environment of tree canopy
10 preservation in Montgomery County, it would
11 seem you'd get a lot of resistance to trying
12 to cut down trees to relocate the rec center
13 and pool.

14 And lastly, public access to the
15 library and rec center complex would generate
16 a lot more traffic at the Arliss Street-Walden
17 Road-Garland intersection. And when the
18 Purple Line comes in, that intersection is
19 going to be quite a much busier intersection.

20 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
21 much.

22 Ma'am, would you please press that

1 large button and start with your name?

2 MS. WESTROPE: My name is Lynn
3 Westrope and I'm President of the
4 Sligo-Branview Community Association, a
5 neighborhood that includes a substantial part
6 of the Long Branch sector. I'm speaking for
7 myself.

8 We're heartened by the county's
9 attention to the Long Branch and Piney Branch
10 commercial areas and welcome the energy and
11 promise of investment. My comments follow:

12 One, Flower Theater -- I support
13 preservation of the façade of the Flower
14 Theater.

15 Next, the Long Branch Library and
16 community center bridge. I don't support
17 expansion of the current pedestrian bridge.
18 If it's widened for vehicle passage, that
19 route will become a shortcut for traffic
20 between Piney Branch and Arliss.

21 Next, transitional building sites
22 already touched on previously -- I don't

1 support proposed five-story buildings adjacent
2 to single-family houses. The gradual
3 transition to single-family houses in the
4 neighborhood should be no longer than three
5 stories immediately adjacent to the limit.

6 Next, parking -- today, with
7 available transit service options, even so,
8 parking shortages are constant. The new
9 sector plan proposes a 50-percent increase in
10 commercial ventures and more than a
11 200-percent increase in residential units.
12 But at the present time, there is insufficient
13 parking for apartment dwellers. Tenant cars,
14 vans, trucks overwhelm parking provided by
15 their landlords.

16 Adjacent single-family
17 neighborhoods are absorbing the overflow.
18 Overflow vehicles parked too close to
19 intersections and driveways -- this is a
20 constant irritant to affected homeowners, and
21 this illegal parking detracts from the
22 desirability of the neighborhood.

1 Next, ingress and egress to the
2 development areas -- the map on page 18 shows
3 two points of access to the Superblock. One
4 point is Flower Avenue about midblock between
5 Piney Branch and Arliss. The Flower Avenue
6 entry will funnel a lot of cars in and out of
7 the Superblock. I hope it will be regulated
8 by a three-way stop sign, but specifically,
9 not a circle.

10 The other is a complicated
11 intersection of Arliss, Walden, and Garland.
12 Now Garland appears in the proposed sector
13 plan to become connecting road behind the
14 Flower Branch Apartments to connect Arliss and
15 Piney Branch. This intersection, the
16 Walden-Arliss-Garland intersection, armed with
17 a traffic signal, will deal with traffic from
18 three different streets, bicycles on both
19 sides of Arliss, and trains from the Purple
20 Line. This will become a choke point that
21 will have a relatively long signal at which
22 traffic is very likely to back up.

1 To relieve anticipated heavy usage
2 of this complicated three-way intersection,
3 another entry should be provided to siphon off
4 traffic coming from Piney Branch onto Arliss.

5 And lastly, the Piney Branch
6 Neighborhood Village -- although slated for
7 redevelopment in phase one of the amended
8 sector plan, little detail is offered in the
9 plan for the Piney Branch Neighborhood
10 Village, which of course also lies along a
11 very heavily used intersection.

12 The issue of parking --

13 CHAIR CARRIER: Just please, bring
14 your thoughts to a conclusion.

15 MS. WESTROPE: -- last sentence --
16 the issues of parking, ingress, and egress are
17 very similar to those of the Flower-Piney
18 Superblock.

19 We look forward to hearing more
20 thoughts about this. Thank you.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
22 much.

1 We have several chairs here that
2 are not going to be used if anyone would like
3 to come them to put them along the back of the
4 to use.

5 Do I have any staff members who
6 would like to come help with that? We have a
7 bunch of people standing in the back.

8 PARTICIPANT: I help.

9 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you; very
10 kind.

11 Nobody's going to sit in the ones
12 that have their backs to us.

13 Thank you very much.

14 Okay, I'm going to go back to
15 people who weren't here the first time I
16 called them --

17 Tina Slater;

18 Brett --

19 PARTICIPANT: It's that lady up
20 front --

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Oh, I'm so sorry.
22 You may go first in the next group.

1 Brett Rouillier;

2 Rosalba Guzman;

3 Ivan Zacarias -- is he here?

4 Alvaro --

5 (Pause.)

6 CHAIR CARRIER: Ma'am, please
7 press the big button and start with your name.

8 MS. PINTO: My name is Laura
9 Pinto. I live in 1028 University Boulevard,
10 and I'm Case de Maryland volunteer.

11 What I'd like to say now is that
12 the effect that the Purple Line will bring, I
13 don't believe that only 15 percent of housing
14 should be for low-income people. And the
15 community wants it to be 100 percent.

16 Thank you very much.

17 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you, Senor
18 Pinto.

19 (Applause.)

20 CHAIR CARRIER: No clapping,
21 please. We have a very long evening.

22 Ms. Slater.

1 MS. SLATER: Sorry that I was
2 late. Good evening, commissioners. I'm Tina
3 Slater, speaking as an individual.

4 The Long Branch Sector Plan is an
5 exciting pedestrian-oriented concept for
6 mixed-use development with public gathering
7 places. It will take great advantage of the
8 two Purple Line stops, one at each of the
9 planned commercial sectors, to make Long
10 Branch a destination for culture, multiethnic
11 restaurants, and specialty shops. The parks,
12 recreation center athletic amenities, the
13 library and schools will lend strength and
14 support to the feel of this newly redeveloped
15 walkable community. I would support building
16 at a density that would allow MPDUs.

17 Also, there's a special piece of
18 history here in the Long Branch, the Flower
19 Theater. I watched movies there as a child,
20 and I took our daughter to see her first movie
21 there in 1986 when Disney reissued Lady and
22 the Tramp. I really think that maintaining

1 the historic theater's façade, and those of
2 the adjoining shops, is a very good idea and
3 would make a lovely focal point along the
4 pedestrian-friendly Flower Avenue.

5 In the meantime, before full
6 redevelopment takes place, Dan Reed, urban
7 planner and blogger of just up the pike, has
8 held various design charrettes with local
9 stakeholders and has come up with a variety of
10 potential uses to reactivate the large empty
11 space of the theater. I hope the planning
12 staff and Dan Reed can connect on some of
13 these ideas and encourage the owner to
14 reinvigorate the space in the near term.

15 Thank you very much.

16 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

17 Mr. Rouillier.

18 MR. ROUILLIER: Brett Rouillier; I
19 live at 9302 Ocala Street, Silver Spring,
20 Maryland. I'm a member of the Sligo-Branview
21 Community Association. I was president for
22 several years , and I'm speaking as an

1 individual.

2 I would like to just touch on some
3 of the transportation issues, if I might, for
4 my couple minutes. It's certainly the intent
5 of the plan, which is said to provide
6 incremental changes is a very good idea.

7 Our association worked very hard
8 on trying to moderate some of the congestion
9 in our area. Flower Avenue, which goes
10 through the center of our community, we worked
11 very hard with the state to try to get some
12 traffic mitigation on that street and were
13 pretty unsuccessful until we were able to
14 work. The county helped us out and we put
15 some traffic control devices on Flower Avenue.
16 And we worked on Franklin Street, Franklin
17 Avenue, when we were able to work again with
18 the county to put some traffic dividers on
19 Franklin Avenue.

20 And of course, this was quickly
21 overridden when downtown Silver Spring decided
22 to make Wayne Avenue and Flower Avenue like a

1 ring road, and Franklin Avenue a ring road to
2 get around Silver Spring and onto the Beltway.
3 So all the traffic just increased right again,
4 much to our displeasure.

5 Part of the effort of this plan --
6 we have a couple of failing intersections and
7 a near-failing intersection; Piney Branch and
8 University Boulevard will always be a failing
9 intersection. And of course, Sligo Creek and
10 Piney Branch is almost failing.

11 the plan talks about the critical
12 lane volumes. And again, at Sligo and Piney
13 Branch, the lane boundary is almost 1,500
14 critical lane volume. And at 1,600, it's
15 feeling. So I'm not sure if you're aware, but
16 Piney Branch backs all the way up into the
17 Flower Avenue development now. So we are
18 quite concerned about what this increased
19 development is going to do for us.

20 We're also quite surprised at
21 these road extensions they're building around
22 Piney Branch, mainly because Piney Branch and

1 University is a failing intersection. They're
2 building like little ring roads to get around
3 that intersection. One of them is Glenville
4 Ave, and Glenville Avenue is a very small
5 street going right through a neighborhood, all
6 residential housing.

7 And they're actually trying to
8 make that an arterial street, which is absurd;
9 how can you make this road an arterial street
10 through out community?

11 They're also making Wendy Hill
12 Lane, which is like an alley, they're trying
13 to widen that to 20 feet, again, too skirt
14 traffic around Flower and Piney Branch. So --

15 CHAIR CARRIER: So that indicates
16 your time is up, so I need you to bring your
17 thoughts to a close.

18 MR. ROUILLIER: Well, we just hope
19 you look at of all this when you look at this
20 plan.

21 That's all.

22 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very

1 much.

2 Mr. Cabrera, please press the big
3 button and give us your name to start. Let go
4 of it now.

5 Is it on?

6 MR. CABRERA: Yes.

7 Good evening. My name is Alvaro
8 Cabrera. I am a CASA de Maryland member. I'm
9 on 8619 Piney Branch Road. I want to speak
10 about two things, housing and jobs.

11 I've been living in this area for
12 16 years. I don't want to be displaced. I'm
13 now paying \$1,318 per month for my housing.
14 I really hope, and I'm asking you to not raise
15 those rents, those monthly rents, even more.

16 With respect to jobs, it would be
17 good for you to consider the local workforce
18 in the development plan, in the construction
19 of Purple Line.

20 Thank you. Good night.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
22 much.

1 Okay, thank you all.

2 I'm going to call up

3 Marcy Stickle;

4 George French;

5 Jonathan Halpern;

6 Melinda Ulloa p

7 excuse me.

8 PARTICIPANT: (off-mic comment.)

9 CHAIR CARRIER: She's working on

10 it --

11 Alba Barillas;

12 Uriel Salas;

13 Miriam Lemus.

14 Okay, we've got a winner.

15 (Pause.)

16 CHAIR CARRIER: Ms. Stickle, Mr.

17 French -- who's speaking first?

18 Go right ahead.

19 MS. STICKLE: Marcy Stickle,

20 Advocacy Chair, Silver Spring Historical

21 Society.

22 The Silver Spring Historical

1 Society enthusiastically supports designating
2 the Flower Theater and Shopping Center in its
3 entirety in the Master Plan for Historic
4 Preservation. Joining with the unanimous
5 Historic Preservation Commission, HP staff
6 expert Clare Kelly and her superlative
7 research reports and the planning Board staff.

8 Flower Theater and Shopping
9 Center, National Register-eligible, was
10 launched as a vibrant community center and
11 continues in that tradition. It joins with
12 architects John Jacob Zink's Art Deco Atlas
13 theater and Shopping Center in the National
14 Register of Historic Places as a community
15 center, now referred to as the Atlas District
16 in the newly reenergized H Street in DC.
17 Likewise, Zink's colleague John Eberson's
18 Silver Theater and Silver Spring Shopping
19 Center is the same.

20 These comprehensive
21 theater-shopping center complexes are the
22 crown jewels of revitalization. Flower

1 Theater and Shopping Center includes our
2 elegant theater with incredible acoustics; the
3 unique El Golfo Restaurant, now a live music
4 venue with stage; bustling Laundromat;
5 optician shop; Bernstein's Bakery, now Mary's
6 Community Health Center; ever-popular Flower
7 Avenue Deli; hardware store, now the Cyber Web
8 Latino Caf,/el Rosal Boutique. Whelans
9 Pharmacy can restore its sweeping display case
10 windows and be enlivened by an imaginative,
11 adaptive reuse.

12 Importantly, urban renewal should
13 not mean people removal. Long Branch is a
14 vibrant multicultural community. Its vitality
15 is of all the people, all the residents, not
16 only some of the people. Its diverse nature
17 is its heart and soul. Renewal should not be
18 gentrification and loss of current housing and
19 affordability with all its convenient
20 amenities for all its residents.

21 Good Acre and Pine Ridge, and
22 likely Fox Hall, were specifically designed to

1 welcome home returning veterans from World War
2 II. So, too, have they welcomed into their
3 new homes embracing long-time and arrived
4 energetic, hard-working immigrants and their
5 families. The 1946-1950 Veterans Emergency
6 Housing Act encouraged affordable garden
7 complexes by providing desirable financing,
8 FHA approved.

9 The 1947 Good Acre, Pine Ridge
10 Apartments were designed by the prestigious
11 architects Corning and Moore, approved by
12 James Hewitt, FHA, covering 10 acres. Rents
13 were \$80 on average for a two-bedroom unit.

14 Corning and Moore were leaders in
15 designing garden apartments and million-dollar
16 luxury apartments, churches, retail,
17 commercial buildings, including the B'Nai
18 B'rith Building, Watergate, Joseph Harris
19 Store in Silver Spring, the Bradley Boulevard
20 Shopping Center, and many more.

21 Flower Branch Apartments were
22 originally called Freeman's Americana Flower.

1 Builder Carl Freeman and his architects
2 Kronstadt and Collins were recognized experts
3 in garden-style apartments commencing 1954,
4 designed and built the Americana Modernist
5 Apartment, a model countrywide. They had a
6 land planning expert. Trendsetters, they
7 created a new breed of garden apartments.

8 In 1964, House and Home magazine
9 named Freeman one of the top 12 builders in
10 the United States. His Americana series were
11 designed to fit into the landscape in a park
12 setting. Americana Flower (1956) is designed
13 into the verdant landscape with many mature
14 trees adjacent to the county public pool,
15 community center, library. Americana series
16 features windows, walls, and balconies to
17 bring the outside in. They tout one- to
18 three-bedroom affordable apartments.
19 Americana Riggs and the University Flower were
20 the first in the series.

21 MoCo Council and MNCPPC gave
22 Americana Glenmont a prestigious award.

1 Please see Kelly's extensive research on
2 Americana Apartments, and please see Freeman's
3 accolades, which will soon be showing up on
4 the screen.

5 The HPC recently voted Americana
6 Glenmont be added to the Locational Atlas of
7 Historic Properties.

8 CASA knows firsthand the value of
9 adaptive reuse and the relationship of
10 preservation and conservation and a sense of
11 home. After tireless work to raise funds,
12 CASA's headquarters are located in the
13 restored historic McCormick-Longhart Mansion
14 in the nearby Langley Park.

15 These ever-affordable garden
16 apartment complex homes deserve further
17 research by HPC staff for a garden apartment
18 historic district, which we enthusiastically
19 request and endorse.

20 I, too, am a Long Branch garden
21 apartment dweller enjoying all amenities
22 within very easy reach -- shopping, schools,

1 community center, pool, library, churches,
2 pharmacy -- four corners of a lovely, lively
3 Art Deco commercial district -- county parks,
4 playgrounds, myriad buses, Metro and Ride-On.
5 It is imperative that all the vibrant, vital
6 residents of Long Branch are secure and will
7 remain in their truly affordable and beloved
8 homes.

9 Renewal should never be removal of
10 the heart and soul of our community.

11 (Pause.)

12 MR. FRENCH: George French.

13 I also join with the many groups
14 and individuals that support designation of
15 the Flower Theater and Shopping Center on our
16 Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic
17 Preservation.

18 We actively supported designation
19 during the East Silver Spring Master Plan
20 process over 12 years ago, and testified at
21 the HPC hearing in July 2010 when the
22 Commission voted unanimously that this

1 resource has historical, cultural, and
2 architectural significance and meets four
3 county criteria for historic designation.

4 We also testified at the special
5 session of the planning Board on this issue on
6 December 2010, which I hope you will consider.
7 In the intervening years, county historic
8 preservation expert Clare Kelly expanded her
9 scholarly research and analysis, inventory of
10 historic properties report. And on this
11 basis, this nomination was recently declared
12 National Registry eligible. All together,
13 this makes a compelling case for designation.

14 This same level of research and
15 report needs to be undertaken for the other
16 corners and corridors in Long Branch. The
17 ZigZag Shopping Center across Flower Avenue
18 from the theater is older, and the Morris
19 Miller Center and others are worthy of study.
20 Retaining these structures guarantees
21 affordable space for multicultural independent
22 businesses which are thriving today.

1 Likewise, the adjacent garden
2 apartments along with the small businesses'
3 centers that contribute to a vibrant community
4 need research to develop a historical context
5 for the 20th century historic resources, as
6 outlined in the 2008 East Silver Spring Master
7 Plan. SSHA has laid a promising groundwork
8 that warrants attention and further study.

9 The HPC recently recommended
10 adding the Americana Glenmont Apartments to
11 the county locational atlas. The sister,
12 Americana Flower, renamed Flower Branch
13 Apartments, needs the same level of
14 protection.

15 I reject the notion that rents can
16 only be controlled by constructing new, higher
17 density apartments with their minimal MPD use
18 in the place of already existing affordable
19 apartment communities. This would cause
20 wholesale displacements, as the staff housing
21 analysis predicts, presenting in net loss of
22 640 affordable units.

1 Separately, the advent Purple
2 Line, as staff mentioned, could result in a
3 30-percent rise in rental rates. Whether or
4 not the Purple Line is built and/or
5 development occurs in the Long Branch area,
6 officials have an obligation to find a
7 mechanism for keeping residential and business
8 rentals portable.

9 This could be in the form of
10 extending to a rent stabilization policy to
11 Long Branch or enforce mandatory rent increase
12 guidelines. I propose a historic district for
13 Long Branch comprised of the garden apartments
14 in commercial portraits, with the Flower
15 Shopping Center as centerpiece. This would
16 have the double benefit of protecting her
17 church properties and rental affordability.
18 Both commercial and residential and thus
19 preserving the character of wild branch
20 community.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very

1 much.

2 Mr. Halpern?

3 MR. HALPERN: Good evening. My
4 name is John Halpern. I'm a resident of East
5 Silver Spring. A live two blocks from the
6 Long Branch commercial area. I'm active in my
7 civic association, Sligo-Branview, and a
8 member of its zoning committee, and the Purple
9 Line Advisory Committee for the last couple of
10 years.

11 CHAIR CARRIER: Are you speaking
12 for the civic association?

13 MR. HALPERN: No. I was just
14 getting to that. I'm speaking on my behalf.
15 Okay. Go ahead. Also better and its
16 infrastructure economist the last 30 years
17 around the world, so I have a professional
18 interest in helping to develop as well.

19 I think it's fair to say that I
20 and my immediate support to the plan's vision
21 and the bulk of the measures to revitalize
22 Long Branch. But at this time, I limit my

1 comments to particular issues of concern. The
2 first is inadequate provision for public
3 parking in the draft sector plan itself, and
4 the second is displacing placing and linkage
5 of the sector plan with the Purple Line.

6 Regarding parking, the Long Branch
7 commercial area has suffered worsening traffic
8 congestion years. Brett Rouillier spoke about
9 the specifics of that. But it's also suffered
10 from wildly insufficient parking, and in a
11 number of the strip malls, chaotic parking.
12 There is nothing in the draft sector plan or
13 the MPI studies to suggest that these problems
14 would be really rooted by the measures that
15 are currently in the sector. And if the
16 developments envisioned actually materialize,
17 parking congestion will probably get worse.

18 And the sector plan itself, from
19 what I understand, actually projected a
20 decline in public parking capacity. The draft
21 sector plan has a single bullet point
22 acknowledging the need for more and better

1 designed public parking. That doesn't have
2 any specific plans. It would therefore be
3 appropriate for the sector plan to include
4 more specifics on public parking. That's the
5 first point.

6 The second point is the linkage of
7 the sector plan with the Purple Line. The
8 sector plan is by and large motivated by and
9 built around the future presence of the Purple
10 Line.

11 The concern is the absence of a
12 plan B in the sector plan. The draft plan
13 proposes a two-phased approach to
14 redevelopment, with Phase 2 commencing after
15 the start of Purple Line operations. It is in
16 a second phase that the lion's share lion's
17 share of public investment in Sligo are
18 slighted, particularly those related to
19 widening our arterials, improving
20 connectivity, pedestrian mobility, and safety.
21 It's basically backloaded.

22 These measures are needed now

1 irrespective of when the Purple Line
2 commences. Moreover, the Purple Line has
3 already experience two years of delay and
4 faces uncertain prospects given the lack of
5 dedicated stiffening for capital and ongoing
6 capital costs.

7 Moreover, the U.S. Congress has
8 repeatedly failed to replenish funding for the
9 the program, which is the primary source of
10 funding construction of the Purple Line, and
11 the prospects of Congress doing so the next
12 few years are limited.

13 Okay. Thank you.

14 It would therefore be appropriate
15 and useful for the sector plan to include a
16 plan B in terms of public investment in zoning
17 changes, which could be implemented in the
18 absence of the Purple Line if it doesn't
19 materialize.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you, Mr.
22 Halpern.

1 And you are?

2 MS. ULLOA: My name is Melinda
3 Ulloa. And let me just say how thrilled I am
4 that the Montgomery County Planning Board and
5 the Montgomery County Council are finally
6 working to improve the Long Branch area. I've
7 lived in Takoma Park for 13 years, and both of
8 my children went to school in Long Branch.

9 The neighborhood definitely needs
10 attention. I do want to say that I also agree
11 that it should be open, whether or not the
12 Purple Line comes through, seeing that the
13 funding may actually not make it.

14 The neighborhood desperately,
15 desperately needs a helping hand. The vibrant
16 community that inhabits Long Branch needs your
17 help, and the surrounding communities will
18 benefit from a positive transformation of the
19 neighborhood.

20 In particular, I would like to say
21 that I think the Flower Avenue Shopping Mall
22 is should serve as a focal point for

1 development. I do not let my children walk
2 through that part of the neighborhood now
3 because I think it's too dangerous, the
4 traffic patterns for crossing the street at
5 the corners of Piney Branch and Flower Avenue
6 at any point, to navigate.

7 The liquor store, including the
8 flower shop, attract and less desirable
9 elements of the neighborhood. The substandard
10 street conditions, potholes, and substandard
11 parking lots adjacent to shopping contribute
12 to the situation. It is in desperate need of
13 a makeover.

14 I encourage the Council to enter
15 into serious conversation with the owner of
16 the theater and all to come to an agreement as
17 to how to proceed with its development.
18 Whether or not the entire shopping mall or
19 just the theater, it should be designated
20 historic. It would be lovely to have a
21 working theater and art space with live music
22 or quality restaurants and businesses.

1 The community welcomes faith-
2 friendly, open space that will contribute to
3 the well-being of businesses and patrons
4 frequenting those businesses.

5 The traffic patterns along Flower,
6 Piney Branch, University, are a disaster.
7 Anybody who lives there were has to drive
8 through or walk is constantly in danger
9 because it is so congested. The backup on
10 Piney Branch in the morning, as well as in the
11 afternoon for the commute, does back up all
12 the way to the Long Branch Community Center,
13 and the Planning Board really does need to
14 address these issues.

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you. Ms.
17 Lemus?

18 MS. LEMUS: My name is Maria
19 Lemus, and I'm one of the owners of the small
20 business at Piney Branch, 8515 Piney Branch
21 Road. I've been there for a long time, like
22 25 years, and I am just wondering about how

1 it's going to affect us as a small business.

2 During the construction and after
3 the construction, it is nice to have the
4 project. But also I'm worried about how it's
5 going to affect us as a small business. We
6 don't know anything about how it's going to
7 affect us during and after the construction.

8 That's it. Thank you very much.

9 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

10 MEMBER DREYFUSS: What is your
11 business?

12 MS. LEMUS: America Hair Design.

13 MEMBER DREYFUSS: Oh.

14 MS. LEMUS: Thank you very much.

15 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay, let's see.

16 Karina Velasco?

17 (Pause.)

18 CHAIR CARRIER: Karina is signed
19 up.

20 Ms. Harris, are you here for the
21 Giant Food?

22 MS. VELASCO: (Off-mic comment.)

1 CHAIR CARRIER: Because they --
2 you're not speaking on behalf of the people in
3 the Giant Foods. Okay, then you may come up.

4 They're going to be at the end
5 because they asked for extra time.

6 (Pause.)

7 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay, Ms. Perez,
8 whenever you're ready.

9 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Good
10 evening. Pat Harris with Lerch, Early, and
11 Brewer. I wanted to take a moment to address
12 several of our overarching observations
13 regarding the Long Branch Sector Plan. We
14 appreciate the staff's work on the sector plan
15 and applaud the goals and objectives but are
16 concerned that a number of the goals have been
17 established with no consideration given to the
18 economic realities of the Long Branch area.

19 More so than other areas
20 Montgomery County, including several that have
21 recently gone through the sector plan
22 amendment process, such as Wheaton and

1 Kensington, the Long Branch area of the County
2 of struggling economically. Given the lack of
3 commitment to Long Branch over the years, the
4 land values of Long Branch are some of the
5 lowest in the county. This suggests that the
6 reinvestment in Long Branch will inevitably be
7 more challenging than another more prosperous
8 area.

9 At the same time, without any
10 apparent acknowledgment of these factors, the
11 sector plan imposes certain financial burdens
12 on Long Branch property owners in connection
13 with the future development of their
14 properties. Notably, these requirements are
15 not part of other sector plan requirements in
16 other more economically sound areas of the
17 county. I'd like to touch on a few of these.

18 The draft plan recommends
19 15-percent MPDU used as a requirement. There
20 is no question that affordable housing is
21 needed through the county, especially in this
22 area. There are existing sites within the

1 sector plan area which are exclusively
2 commercial, and redevelopment of these sites
3 to mixed-use would only be providing more
4 residential opportunities.

5 Therefore, we ask the planning
6 board to consider recommending 50 percent
7 requirement only on those sites currently
8 developed with housing, which may redevelop
9 and cause displacement.

10 The MPD lot recognizes that
11 additional MPDUs are provided at a cost, which
12 is why the law provides for 22-percent bonus
13 density when 15 percent MPD is provided.
14 Accordingly, to the extent that a 15-percent
15 MPDU requirement is recommended, it should be
16 accompanied by a corresponding 22-percent
17 increase in the overall density, which you
18 should be specifically provided for in the
19 sector plan.

20 The second requirement, which was
21 touched on previously, is the golf lead
22 requirement for all redevelopment. The county

1 adopted the goal of the green building law
2 several years ago, requiring most buildings to
3 be LEED certified or the equivalent. As a
4 matter of course, many applicants can commit
5 to achieving Silver LEED during the approval
6 process.

7 There is a significant cost
8 differential in achieving Silver versus Gold.
9 And while we understand the importance of
10 achieving a sustainable environment, the
11 county must prioritize what is most important
12 and certain areas. If it is determined that
13 affordable housing is most important in this
14 area -- and I would contend that it is -- then
15 affordable housing should be the focus of the
16 sector plan. Requiring LEED Gold imposes yet
17 another financial burden on an area where
18 redevelopment is already questionable.

19 Finally, the sector plan
20 recommends the creation of public parking on
21 the Superblock without, it appears, any real
22 understanding of the economics. And while

1 above-grade structure parking is slightly less
2 than below-grade, I think that this issue
3 needs to be readdressed.

4 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

5 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

6 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay, Mr. Ozberk.

7 MR. OZBERK: For the record, my
8 name is Erkin Ozberk. I'm a planner with the
9 City of Takoma Park. Tonight, I am
10 representing the city, filling in for Jared
11 Smith, who is a council member for Ward 5,
12 which includes the southwest corner of the
13 Long Branch Sector Plan within the City of
14 Takoma Park.

15 I would first like to thank the
16 Montgomery County Planning Board and staff for
17 developing the sector plan to address the
18 well-being of the existing community and
19 future redevelopment, growth, and investment
20 in the Long Branch area.

21 The southwest corner of Flower
22 Avenue and Piney Branch Road is both an

1 important gateway into the city and an
2 integral quadrant of the Long Branch town
3 center and community. City investments in the
4 area include the recent redevelopment of 8435
5 Piney Branch Road that leveraged \$100,000 of
6 community legacy grant funds from the state,
7 the upcoming installation of a gateway public
8 art piece, as well as pedestrian and storm
9 water improvement included in our Flower
10 Avenue Green Street Project.

11 The City Council is very
12 supportive of the Long Branch Sector Plan and
13 particularly the recommendations would
14 inclusion of bilingual way-finding signage and
15 increasing the affordable housing provision to
16 15 percent by the MPDU program. Nevertheless,
17 we're concerned that affordable housing be
18 maintained for existing residents the Piney
19 Branch area and strongly urge the County
20 Executive and County Council to allocate
21 funding and other resources for affordable
22 housing preservation and development in the

1 Long Branch area.

2 On Monday night, Takoma Park City
3 Council passed a resolution urging the
4 adoption of a plan with the following two
5 conditions:

6 First, change the designation of
7 Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue Southwest
8 from a long-term to an interim development
9 site. Situated in the Piney Branch town
10 center at this site includes commercially
11 zoned properties at 8640 Flower Avenue and
12 8435 Piney Branch Road, identified as number
13 four in Map 17 plan on page 71, and also
14 described in detail on page 73.

15 Changing the designation will
16 initiate rezoning for the site through the
17 first sectional map amendment upon adoption of
18 the Piney Branch Sector Plan. This
19 recommendation is in keeping with the
20 rationale for interim development sites
21 outlined and the plan. This underutilized
22 site sits at an intersection with existing

1 high-transit use served by six Ride-On routes
2 and the J4 MetroExtra route. Rezoning this
3 site in the interim can expedite the
4 completion of Winding Hill Way as a public
5 alley for redevelopment, improving mobility
6 and productivity in the Piney Branch town
7 center. Consisting of one- and two-story
8 commercial uses, implementing the
9 recommendation for higher density mixed use at
10 the site in the interim can also contribute to
11 building the reservoir of affordable housing
12 via the MPDU Program in advance of Purple Line
13 construction.

14 The second condition is to revise
15 the text and the plan as described in Exhibit
16 A appended to the City's resolution, which was
17 transmitted to the Chair earlier this week.
18 These revisions deal primarily with factual
19 updates to the plan associated with Flower
20 Avenue and the City's Green Street Project.

21 The City of Takoma Park
22 appreciates the opportunity to address you

1 regarding the draft sector plan and
2 acknowledges the project's sensitivity to the
3 residents and the community during the
4 planning process. We look forward to working
5 with you on the opportunities this plan
6 represents for the future of Long Branch.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
9 much.

10 Mr. Orellana?

11 MR. ORELLANA: Good evening. My
12 name is Edson Orellana. I live at 1108
13 Gilbert Street, Apartment 5 in Takoma Park.
14 I am a CASA de Maryland member. I've been
15 living in this area for 11 years.

16 We're asking you to not displace
17 our families with these new changes that are
18 going to take place. Thank you. That's
19 everything.

20 Sr. Garcia?

21 MR. GARCIA: Yes. My name is
22 Edgar Garcia. I live at 8104 Tahona Drive.

1 I'm very excited about the prospect of the
2 building of the Purple Line, but we really
3 need a walkway, an overhead walkway, to be
4 built to make sure that pedestrians are out of
5 harm's way in the intersection.

6 That's all we came to ask, on
7 behalf of CASA de Maryland.

8 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
9 much.

10 Sr. Amador.

11 MR. AMADOR: Good evening. My
12 name is Jos, Raul Amador. I live at 8602
13 Carroll Avenue. I'm also very excited about
14 the Purple Line, but we are asking, during the
15 construction, for the small businesses to be
16 respected, that basically those small
17 businesses can stay where they are, that their
18 rents stay the same because those are the
19 businesses that create jobs in our community.

20 That's it. Thank you.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you all.

22 Gregory Baker;

1 Elizabeth Fall;

2 Perry Berman;

3 Leslie Miles;

4 Gilberto Martinez;

5 Mr. Baker?

6 MR. BAKER: Good evening, Madam
7 Chair and fellow Planning Board members. I'm
8 here representing Montgomery Housing
9 Partnership. I just want to confirm that I
10 have five minutes.

11 CHAIR CARRIER: Yes, you do.

12 MR. BAKER: Okay, thank you.

13 CHAIR CARRIER: (Off-mic comment.)

14 MR. BAKER: I will try to.

15 As I mentioned, I represent
16 Montgomery Housing Partnership. I want to
17 thank you for allowing us to speak before you
18 today. Today regarding the plan.

19 Our mission is basically to
20 preserve and expand affordable housing in
21 Montgomery County. We've done this
22 successfully over the years through three main

1 things: housing people, empowering families,
2 and strengthening neighborhoods. Over the
3 past 10 years, we have invested over \$40
4 million in public and private funds in Long
5 Branch and Silver Spring through the
6 acquisition and substantial rehabilitation of
7 22 apartment buildings.

8 In these various areas, we have
9 also engaged residents through the formation
10 of resident associations and a business
11 league. And we Road up our sleeves in tandem
12 with them to improve the conditions of the
13 neighborhood.

14 So, first, I'd like to commend the
15 Planning Department staff on the staff draft,
16 which we believe establishes a solid vision
17 for the future of Long Branch, building on its
18 strengths while also helping them realize its
19 full potential.

20 But we did want to speak on three
21 items in particular, one of them being
22 affordable housing, the other being commercial

1 development, and lastly, regarding our own
2 communities.

3 With respect to affordable
4 housing, we feel that the plan could propose
5 a more robust set of policies to bolster and
6 preserve existing housing as well as
7 proactively plan for future housing in light
8 of private market development pressures that
9 may change the affordable housing landscape
10 once the Purple Line is built. We feel, for
11 instance, that the 15 percent MPDU dedication,
12 pursuant to the optional method, could
13 actually be higher, 20 percent, for instance,
14 when near transit lines.

15 We feel that a dialogue is needed
16 between the public and private sectors to
17 determine the elasticity of the 15-present
18 number, particularly if there are incentives
19 that can be offered to make this more feasible
20 for the development community.

21 Let's sit down and take a closer
22 look at affordable housing strategies that

1 have been utilized in other parts of the
2 country. For instance, in-fill development,
3 land trusts, land banking, equity funds, no
4 net loss of affordable housing policies,
5 public-private partnerships, working with
6 faith-based institutions, low- or no-interest
7 loans to property owners for home improvements
8 in exchange for affordable housing set-asides.
9 These are just some of the methods and
10 strategies used by other jurisdictions
11 throughout the country to preserve and protect
12 affordable housing.

13 MHP, through a project funded by
14 the United Way, had begun engaging residents
15 in Long Branch through a community-wide survey
16 on the topic of the Purple Line and preserving
17 affordable housing. We will be delving
18 further into these discussions with the
19 ultimate goal of producing policies that would
20 have to preserve affordable housing in Long
21 Branch and in other areas within Montgomery
22 County where the transit lines may be

1 development developed. We welcome a
2 partnership with the planning department and
3 the county, other non-profits, and interested
4 stakeholders in this discussion.

5 Next, regarding commercial
6 development, we have been working with the
7 small business owners through one of our
8 neighborhood improvement programs,
9 particularly the Long Branch business league.
10 The area is referred to as the Long Branch
11 Town Center and the Piney Branch Village nodes
12 within the plan.

13 The challenge is this: how do you
14 preserve existing strengths in the diversity
15 of the small business community while also
16 stimulating re investment and new uses that
17 will appeal to a wider market, making Long
18 Branch more of a destination as opposed to a
19 purely convenience/commercial area is the key.
20 This requires a concerted effort at
21 place-making that will take incremental public
22 and private investments over the long-term.

1 As part of our efforts, we have
2 partnered with arts organizations in the City
3 of Tacoma Park and other stake holders to
4 bring about an interest in arts-based
5 revitalization. We expect a mural, and as was
6 mentioned earlier, a public sculpture to go up
7 within the year; the mural, within the next
8 month.

9 So we also feel that the Long
10 Branch theatre is a great asset which could
11 shore up and jumpstart the art-based
12 revitalization.

13 While we do not forward as stance
14 on the theater's historic qualities or the
15 plan's preference for historic historic
16 preservation, we do feel that historic
17 designation of the full complex -- meaning the
18 theater and the strip center -- may impede if
19 not fully stunt long-term or even near-term
20 development.

21 Rather, we feel that what would be
22 beneficial is a dialogue with the owner and

1 key stakeholders, such as the county, the
2 planning department, regarding incentives to
3 assist redevelopment of the complex in return
4 for uses that benefit the community and
5 establish the basis of a destination place.
6 For instance, we looked at what was done with
7 the Fillmore Theater and wonder if something
8 similar could be done in Long Branch.

9 On that same theme, the Urban Land
10 study recommended a 3.0 FAR for commercial.
11 We're wondering if that level of FAR could be
12 advanced, for instance, to the complex in an
13 agreement with the county and the owners to
14 stimulate development at that site, again, in
15 exchange for further incentives, such as
16 further affordable housing.

17 Does that mean I'm --

18 CHAIR CARRIER: That means your
19 time is up.

20 MR. BAKER: Okay. Yes.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: And you can bring
22 it to a close. Do you have one more thought?

1 MR. BAKER: Just the last thought.
2 We're opposed to, we have four properties at
3 Glenville Road. We do not like the idea of
4 connecting Glenville Road to Piney Branch.
5 There's more details in a letter that I'll
6 leave with you about that.

7 CHAIR CARRIER: I would like to
8 suggest to everyone that if you have your
9 testimony in writing, you're welcome to submit
10 it. The staff summarizes all the testimony
11 for us, and it's, I'm sure, easier for them to
12 see it in writing.

13 MEMBER DREYFUSS: I have just a
14 quick question for MHP.

15 Were those projects re-do's or
16 rebuilt, the ones you --

17 MR. BAKER: The 22 buildings?

18 MEMBER DREYFUSS: Yes.

19 MR. BAKER: Yeah, they were
20 basically adapted, they were all
21 rehabilitated.

22 MEMBER DREYFUSS: Rehabilitated --

1 Okay. Thank you.

2 CHAIR CARRIER: Ms. Fall?

3 MS. FALL: My name is Lisa Fall,
4 and I am a resident and Sligo-Branview but I'm
5 speaking as an individual.

6 I'm excited about the coming of
7 the Purple Line and the redevelopment of the
8 Long Branch business district, but I feel
9 strongly that the CRT zone that would allow
10 for buildings up to 60 feet is not appropriate
11 for the west side of Flower. Site 3 on page
12 72 in the redevelopment plan draft is adjacent
13 to a row of about 10 single-family homes that
14 will cause serious problems for the residents.

15 The current zoning is much more
16 appropriate, as it caps the height limit at 45
17 feet and does not allow for additional
18 residents. To add a six-story building
19 immediately behind a street of single-family
20 homes is a very dramatic change, not the
21 transitional that's proposed in the draft. It
22 would negatively impact the single-family

1 residences on Geren Road.

2 Buildings adjacent to the site for
3 a downward slope the homes adjacent to the
4 site or on a downward slope, so building of
5 any height actually is perceived as much
6 higher from the point of view of the residents
7 residences. An 89 as a proposed unit
8 apartment building is far too dense for this
9 small of an area.

10 Parking -- as it is now, there's
11 very little parking on Geren Road, which is
12 the road immediately behind Site 3. It is a
13 two-way street that is essentially reduced to
14 one lane because of all the current street
15 parking.

16 There's already an apartment
17 building at the bottom of Geren Road, and the
18 entire street accommodates much of their
19 overflow.

20 In addition to this, Geren Road is
21 a very popular road with pedestrians and it
22 will only increasingly so, with the

1 rejuvenation of the business district.

2 Creating a situation that could dramatically
3 increase car traffic on such a small road with
4 no sidewalks and no curbs poses a danger to us
5 all.

6 Adding such a tall building on the
7 site will but most of the homes behind it in
8 perpetual shade. The great backyard spaces
9 that drew us to this neighborhood will be
10 compromised.

11 As it is now, the commercial
12 buildings behind our homes generate a lot of
13 noise pollution, but there's at least a
14 reprieve at night as the businesses slow down.

15 The trash for all the residents of
16 the proposed building, I assume, will be in
17 the back of the building, once again causing
18 an imposition on the backyards of the current
19 residence. With the amount of people the
20 proposed zoning allows, I can only imagine the
21 amount of trash that will be produced.

22 Finally, my family has lived in

1 this area for only four years. We have tried
2 to become active members of the community by
3 joining the Sligo-Branview Association and are
4 frequent patrons of many of the Long Branch
5 businesses. We appreciate the rich diversity
6 of the area and hope to grow our family here.

7 As the draft states, there's a
8 goal of protecting the existing community
9 character and the quality of life that both
10 the residents and visitors enjoy today, and I
11 hope you will keep that in mind that you
12 consider the zoning for Section 3.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

15 Mr. Berman.

16 MR. BERMAN: Good evening. For
17 the record, my name is Perry Berman, and I'm
18 a land-use planning consultant. Today I'm
19 speaking for HOC. HOC has asked me to
20 testifying on a variety of master plans and
21 development issues so that there would be more
22 integrated in your everyday work. They are an

1 owner of a building, an apartment on 8401
2 Manchester Road, and I'd like to talk about
3 that.

4 First, I think I'd like to
5 compliment the staff of the planning for doing
6 this master plan. Clearly, from the testimony
7 you hear tonight, I think this is an excellent
8 time for this kind of discussion as to the
9 direction of the community, and I think the
10 master plan review is a perfect time to do
11 that.

12 HOC strongly supports several of
13 the key goals of sector plan, and I would like
14 to just talk about them that address the needs
15 and desires of a diverse population, to
16 preserve and improve the community's
17 affordable housing, and to provide various
18 housing options that serve all the residents
19 at different life stages.

20 HOC's position is that's what we
21 do, and would like to do more of that in this
22 area. We'd like to do it at our site, and

1 we'd would like to do it with other property
2 owners in this area. We feel that this is an
3 excellent location to improve our existing
4 facility and to work with existing property
5 owners to do joint private-public partnerships
6 in that area.

7 In terms of our Manchester Manor
8 project, it's about an acre of land. We
9 bought it at a distress sale. It's a very old
10 apartment. There are 53 units. Your zoning
11 recommendation or land use recommendation will
12 increase the number of units from 53 to 80.
13 In our judgment, that's not enough to really
14 probably spur a redoing of that project. We
15 have to make a decision shortly. Our tax
16 increment financing limit expires in a couple
17 of years, and we have to make a decision on
18 how to proceed with this kind of project.

19 We requested an increase in the
20 residential density and height. We would like
21 very much to use this building and this
22 property is a hub for other kinds of social

1 services in the area as it redevelops.

2 One of the biggest concerns we
3 have about this property is the staging
4 recommendations in the plan, and we're will
5 make that about the Chevy Chase Plan as well.
6 We don't believe that affordable housing
7 should be staged until the opening of the
8 Purple Line, or projects associated with
9 affordable housing.

10 We feel that the Purple Line is
11 important to a transportation need. But every
12 day, our lists are frozen and we have real
13 needs today, and we'd like to be able to move
14 our projects quicker than waiting for the
15 Purple Line to come.

16 We are willing to work with the
17 community and your staff to work on the joint
18 development applications and the redesign of
19 our future project.

20 I thank you very much, and I'll
21 give you back one minute and 30 seconds.

22 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you, Mr.

1 Berman. You know you get points for brevity.

2 Ms. Miles?

3 MS. MILES: Thank you, Madam
4 chair. I am Leslie Miles. I am Chair of the
5 Historic Preservation Commission. On July 14,
6 2010, the Historic Preservation Commission
7 evaluated the Flower Theater and Shopping
8 Center for historic designation. After
9 holding a public hearing and work session, the
10 commission voted unanimously in favor of
11 designating the theater and shopping center on
12 the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

13 The commission finds that this
14 historic resource meets criteria 1A, 2A, 2B,
15 and 2E of the preservation ordinance, having
16 both historic and architectural significance.

17 This was a post-war park-and-shop
18 complex first designed in 1948 and built to
19 serve as a community center. It was Main
20 Street, and shopkeepers provided a wide range
21 of services for local residents. The shopping
22 center has the only remaining Woolworth's in

1 the county, and the Woolworth's lettering is
2 preserved in the terrazzo floor entrances.
3 The Flower Shopping Center also contains the
4 oldest surviving Giant Food store in the
5 county, which opened in January 1950.

6 The commission recommends an
7 environmental setting of the entire 2.4 acre
8 parcel on which the resources located. The
9 commission also requests the Planning Board
10 and the Flower Theater and Shopping Center to
11 the locational atlas and index of historic
12 sites as an interim measure until the Council
13 has taken action on the proposed designation.

14 The County Council previously
15 identified the Flower Theater as a potential
16 historic resource in the East Silver Spring
17 Master Plan of 2000. This resource is now
18 being evaluated as a historic site in the
19 context of the Long Branch Sector Plan, which
20 will provide for redevelopment and new
21 opportunities in association with the proposed
22 Purple Line.

1 The commission supports the public
2 hearing draft plan, which identifies the
3 historic Flower Theater and Shopping Center as
4 a public asset that strengthens local
5 character and community identity. Through
6 careful planning and design, this historic
7 site can be an engine of, and not obstacle to,
8 the neighborhood's revitalization. Examples
9 where similar resources have contributed to
10 vibrant communities are all around us, from
11 the Silver Theater and Shopping Center right
12 here to the Atlas Theater and Shops at H
13 Street, Northeast in Washington, to Cary Park
14 and Shop in Richmond.

15 The commission recognizes the need
16 to exercise flexibility in evaluating
17 proposals for reuse of the theater and
18 shopping center. Therefore, we support
19 adoption of design guidelines to guide future
20 redevelopment and rehabilitation.

21 Thank you -- and I'm returning to
22 minutes 41 seconds.

1 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you. This
2 is a very positive trend.

3 Okay, Mr. Martinez.

4 MR. MARTINEZ: Good evening. My
5 name is Gilberto Martinez.

6 CHAIR CARRIER: Please press the
7 button.

8 MR. MARTINEZ: I'm sorry. My name
9 is Alberto Martinez. She talk English for me;
10 I talk in Spanish. All right?

11 I would like my neighborhood to
12 stay as it is. I've been listening for a long
13 time about the developments that are going to
14 happen because of the Purple Line, and in
15 these plans, a lot of these plans will cause
16 displacement of various Latino businesses,
17 where a lot of us other Latinos go to buy our
18 goods and services. I've lived a long time in
19 this place, and I'd love to continue living
20 here.

21 Additionally, the plan requires
22 the displacement of CASA de Maryland, the

1 relocation of CASA de Maryland. Everyone that
2 I've been a member of CASA D Maryland for a
3 very long time, and a lot of people find a lot
4 of support for custody Maryland. It's an
5 employment center. A lot of families depend
6 on CASA de Maryland. They provide so much
7 help with social problems.

8 I'm not worried about the
9 development. What I'm worried about is
10 displacement. Many families and historical
11 sites will be displaced because of this plan.
12 Many low-income people -- my family, my
13 friends, my church, my school -- will be
14 displaced. That's why I'm not in agreement
15 with what's being planned.

16 I support the development but not
17 the displacement of the community.

18 Thank you very much.

19 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you, sir.

20 Thank you all.

21 I'd like to call up --

22 Adam Perez;

1 Silvia Cabrera;
2 Magali Benitez;
3 Luis Gustava Alvarez; and
4 Jose Carballo.

5 (Pause.)

6 CHAIR CARRIER: All those names,
7 and I only got one.

8 (Off mic comments.)

9 CHAIR CARRIER: Oh, he was on the
10 list twice then. Okay.

11 No, there was a Sylvia Cabrera on
12 my list. Maybe she's coming.

13 (Pause.)

14 CHAIR CARRIER: Did you already
15 speak?

16 MR. CABRERA: (Off-mic comment.)
17 I'm sorry.

18 CHAIR CARRIER: That's okay.

19 Is Sylvia here?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay. Is Zorayda
22 Moreira-Smith here?

1 (No response.)

2 (Pause.)

3 CHAIR CARRIER: I'm going to try a
4 few of the names of people who weren't hear
5 when I called at the beginning, just in case.

6 Rosalba Guzman -- oh, look, we
7 have one more.

8 (Pause.)

9 CHAIR CARRIER: Ivan Zacarias?
10 I think that's it.

11 Alba Barillas.

12 And last one, Urial Salas.

13 Okay, that's the last --

14 MR. MARTINEZ: (Off mic comment.)

15 CHAIR CARRIER: No. I've called
16 everybody -- oh, there's one.

17 Karina Velasco?

18 (No response.)

19 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay.

20 (Pause.)

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Is there someone I
22 didn't call? Oh, I'm sorry. I was on the

1 wrong last page.

2 What's your name, sir?

3 PARTICIPANT: (Off mic comment.)

4 CHAIR CARRIER: Yes, there you
5 are. I beg your pardon. I got a new second
6 page, but I was looking at the wrong one.

7 All right, is there a Mary
8 Reardon?

9 (Pause.)

10 CHAIR CARRIER: No. She's at the
11 bottom. Yes, we are reaching the end, believe
12 it or not.

13 Okay. Sir?

14 MR. CARBALLO: Good evening. My
15 name is Lindolfo Carballo.

16 I live at 9046 Piney Branch Road,
17 Apartment 102, Silver Spring, Maryland. I'm
18 a member and representative of the Fair
19 Development Coalition, a coalition of
20 faith-based organizations, non-profit
21 institutions, small businesses, and residents
22 from both Montgomery and Prince George's

1 Counties. On Wednesday, January 16, 2013,
2 more than 60 members of the Fair Development
3 Coalition participated in a community meeting
4 organized by the Montgomery County Planning
5 Department staff, where this proposed sector
6 plan for our Long Branch neighborhood was
7 presented.

8 According to the staff of
9 Montgomery County Planning Department, the
10 planning would improve our neighborhood in
11 ways never seen before, such as enhancing our
12 community's way of living, our land use,
13 zoning, and character, our mobility and
14 sustainability. In short, this is how they
15 are proposing to do it.

16 Phase 1 -- build two town centers,
17 the Long Branch Town Center and the Piney
18 Branch Neighborhood Village. Phase 2 will
19 happen after the light railroad, Purple Line,
20 is built if it's built at all. And that will
21 convert almost the entire area from a
22 commercial zone to a mixed-use zone. That's

1 if the proposed Purple Line is built.

2 Any building redevelopment will be
3 converted into commercial and residential
4 buildings. Any new construction would be
5 developed as a commercial residential
6 building. Any old or new construction could
7 be as high as 60 feet. If development uses
8 the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Program,
9 or MPDU, for any new development, then 15
10 percent of all units will be affordable to
11 households earning up to 65 percent of the
12 median income.

13 But what does this mean? In that
14 plan, there is no protection proposed for
15 current tenants, no protection proposed for
16 current small business, very little safe
17 measures to come to both proposed town
18 centers. According to the Montgomery County
19 Planning Department, if private developers
20 decide not to use the MPDU Program after the
21 Purple Line is built, there will be a net loss
22 of market-rate affordable housing, which is

1 going to be about 180 apartments.

2 Today, our current median rental
3 rates for our four bedrooms that are there,
4 targeted buildings, of those complexes in Long
5 Branch would be impacted by this proposed
6 plan.

7 What our Fair Development
8 Coalition is asking for, or a commitment from
9 this Board, is to implement phase 1 and 2 just
10 in one phase, whether the Purple Line is built
11 or not. But with zero displacement of current
12 residence, preservation and an increase in
13 affordable housing, zero displacement current
14 small business, zero net loss of existing
15 local jobs, and save CASA de Maryland
16 welcoming center.

17 As you know, when you develop
18 these two town centers, there is the mart is
19 going to be lost.

20 So thank you very much.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
22 much. Ma'am, Ms. Zorayda Smith.

1 MS. MOREIRA-SMITH: That's Moreira
2 Smith.

3 CHAIR CARRIER: Sorry, I mixed up
4 your first and last name.

5 MS. MOREIRA-SMITH: Thank you.

6 For this evening. For the record,
7 my name is --

8 CHAIR CARRIER: I think you need
9 to bring a little closer though.

10 MS. MOREIRA-SMITH: Closer?
11 Better?

12 For the record, my name is Zorayda
13 Moreira-Smith, and I'm staff attorney for CASA
14 de Maryland, and I'm here on behalf of
15 cosseted Maryland.

16 CASA is Maryland's largest
17 nonprofit immigrant organization with offices
18 in Silver Spring, Langley Park, Wheaton,
19 Rockville, in Baltimore. We are the largest
20 service provider to the immigrant community in
21 this state, providing legal and social
22 services assistance to day-laborers,

1 low-income tenants, and domestic workers,
2 among others.

3 the sector plan's goal is to
4 capture the dreams, hopes, and aspirations for
5 Long Branch. However, and unfortunately, the
6 sector plan, as is, fails. The plan in its
7 current state allows and encourages the
8 displacement of thousands of existing members.

9 CASA has four main issues to
10 address. One, CASA Silver Spring Welcome
11 Center; two, affordable housing; three, the
12 small business community; and four, the safety
13 measures for pedestrians.

14 First, CASA strongly opposes the
15 plan's recommendations to acquire CASA Silver
16 Spring Welcome Center. This is unacceptable
17 to be and the plan. CASA Silver Spring
18 Welcome Center opened its doors to the
19 community in 1994, 19 years ago. The
20 recommendation re-acquire the subject is not
21 a viable option for us.

22 Second, the plan fails to properly

1 address the affordable housing crisis. The
2 plan states that "redevelopment will result in
3 the losses of 882 existing unit for affordable
4 to low to moderate income households." The
5 only affordable housing recommendation the
6 plan offers is the MPDU program. But more
7 importantly, the MPDU program only helps in
8 circumstances of new construction. There are
9 no protections in place for existing rental
10 units to stop steep rent hikes.

11 As a solution, CASA offers five
12 recommendations -- one, the creation of an
13 affordable housing preservation plan; two,
14 manage and develop intervention purchase
15 programs for properties in Long Branch,
16 including both single-family and multifamily
17 properties -- the County should commit to
18 target its resources and focus on investing in
19 the Long Branch community to ensure long-term
20 affordability; three, increase the percentage
21 of MPDU units recommended; four, I know this
22 is a hot issue, but rent stabilization; five,

1 make Long Branch revitalization efforts a
2 model for the County Executive's pledge to
3 ensure no net loss of affordable housing.

4 Third, the plan fails to protect
5 the testing small local business community.
6 Long Branch is comprised of over 100 small
7 businesses. The plan calls for the
8 preservation of small businesses. However,
9 the plan fails miserably in protecting the
10 existing small businesses.

11 As a solution, CASA offers three
12 recommendations. One, focus on the retention
13 and preservation to the existing small
14 businesses; two, the creation of the public
15 market and one of the town centers; three, an
16 MPDU-like program for the existing small
17 businesses to ensure affordable rental space
18 in new development.

19 Fourth, the plan fails to provide
20 sufficient safety measures for the diverse
21 pedestrians once the Purple Line is
22 constructed. The Long Branch community is a

1 walking community and is a very high-traffic
2 community without the Purple Line, making it
3 unsafe for walkers.

4 As a solution, CASA offers the
5 following three recommendations: One, all
6 transportation signs should be multilingual;
7 two, the crosswalks must be multilingual; and
8 three, two walking bridges should be well, one
9 over University Boulevard at the intersection
10 of Piney Branch and University, and two
11 possibly at the second Purple Line station
12 over Piney Branch at Arliss Road.

13 Lastly, CASA strongly recommends
14 the Planning Board to ensure that all planning
15 documents be provided in Spanish and all
16 Planning Board meetings have an interpreter
17 available.

18 The existing Long Branch community
19 is an active one. The community has
20 participated, is participating, and will
21 continue participating throughout this
22 process.

1 In conclusion, CASA opposes the
2 reacquisition of the CASA Silver Spring
3 Welcome Center and recommends more protections
4 for preservation of affordable housing and
5 preservation for existing small businesses.
6 In essence, CASA recommends the preservation
7 of the existing community.

8 Also, for your review, I am
9 submitting a small business report, and also
10 a report on creative ways to deal with
11 affordable housing.

12 Thank you for your time tonight.

13 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

14 Ms. Reardon?

15 MS. REARDON: My name is Mary
16 Reardon and I'm a resident of Silver Spring
17 and a vice president of Montgomery
18 Preservation, Inc. I'm speaking for the
19 organization.

20 Do I get five minutes?

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Yes, you do.

22 MS. REARDON: MPI, Montgomery

1 Preservation, is a countywide preservation
2 advocacy organization. MPI strongly supports
3 the recommendation of the Long Branch draft
4 Sector Plan to designate the Flower Theater
5 and Shopping Center as an historic resource.
6 The Flower complex should be listed on the
7 county's master plan for historic preservation
8 to ensure that this valuable resource is
9 protected and that nearby development is
10 sensitive to its architectural integrity.

11 Preservation has long recognized
12 the significance of the Flower complex.
13 Several preservation organizations, for
14 example, testified for historic designation
15 when the East Silver Spring Master Plan was
16 being considered in 2000. We now have an
17 opportunity to finally designate this
18 resource.

19 I live in Baltimore, where the
20 Senator Theater, designed by prominent theater
21 architect John J. Zink, is acknowledged as one
22 of the city's architectural jewels. So I was

1 delighted to learn after moving here that
2 there's also a Zink-designed movie theater in
3 Silver Spring.

4 The Senator, which is on the
5 National Register, is currently undergoing
6 renovations with the support of Baltimore
7 civic activists, the city council, and the
8 business community, all of whom saw its
9 historic architectural significance. The
10 nearby shopping center, largely one-story
11 buildings, is a vibrant destination for
12 patrons from throughout the city and nearby
13 suburbs. And if you look at the graceful
14 shape of the Senator and the Flower, you will
15 realize that we can't just designate or
16 preserve the façades. It has to be the entire
17 building, and that goes for the shopping
18 center as well.

19 The Flower Theater is no less
20 significant than the Senator and, in our
21 estimation, is in the same league
22 aesthetically as any other John J. Zink

1 creation. Recall that the Silver Theater in
2 downtown Silver Spring and the Art Deco
3 Shopping Center it anchors together created
4 the centerpiece and gateway to a revitalized
5 downtown. The Flower complex can be the
6 anchor of a revitalized Long Branch commercial
7 core also, preserving the area's unique
8 identity while incorporating development.

9 The story of community, regional,
10 and neighborhood shopping centers is one of
11 the most fascinating chapters in American
12 urban history. The historic designation
13 nomination for the Flower complex provides an
14 excellent overview of the Flower's place in
15 that story. We should never obliterate this
16 physical manifestation of a key period in the
17 evolution of the community-serving shopping
18 center, when movie theaters and shopping
19 centers were combined in the post-war period.

20 This collection of buildings
21 recalls and preserves our history, and I know
22 that the Preservation Commission staff

1 envisions preservation combined with
2 development. Moreover, relatively recent
3 changes to the façade of the stores are
4 reversible, and likely, they left the original
5 features intact.

6 The structure should be considered
7 as a unit for purposes of designation and
8 treatment. The theater was intended from the
9 beginning as an integral part of the shopping
10 center, with complementary materials and
11 details and consistency of design.

12 We hope that Long Branch's
13 revitalization does not create an
14 unrecognizable Long Branch. There's much to
15 value and Long Branch. The draft sector plan
16 states, for example, that many Long Branch
17 businesses are quite popular regionally;
18 notably, its ethnic groceries and restaurants.
19 Moreover, it's home to a diverse population,
20 many of whom could conceivably be displaced in
21 this process.

22 Availability of future MPDUs and

1 high-rise complexes does little to assuage the
2 sting of displacement, and it's doubtful that
3 the required MPDUs will be sufficient to make
4 of all units lost in redevelopment. In a
5 market economy, it's sometimes difficult to
6 prevent this, but it's very possible that a
7 case could be made for the significance of
8 Flower Branch, Piney Branch, and Fox Hall
9 Apartments to Long Branch's history. If that
10 case can be successfully made for historic
11 designation, a bonus result could be a chance
12 for the prevention of displacement.

13 Revitalization should never mean
14 massive rent increases or destruction of
15 affordable housing. I think there's enough
16 evidence uncovered by Historic Preservation
17 staff in the Silver Spring Historical Society
18 that these four properties, these four
19 apartment complexes, warrant future study.
20 And we need a diversity of housing types. We
21 need to keep a lot of these garden apartments.
22 There was a time in history when these would

1 be considered dense development. This is not
2 an inefficient use of land.

3 To sum up, I end by reiterating
4 that Montgomery Preservation urges the Board
5 to recommend that the Flower Theater and
6 Shopping Center as an integrated unit be added
7 to the County's Master Plan for Historic
8 Preservation and that this recommendation be
9 reflected in the final sector plan. Also, in
10 the interim, I hope you will put this complex
11 on the locational atlas to protect it while
12 the revitalization is proceeding.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
15 much.

16 Mr. Flores?

17 MR. FLORES: Flores?

18 CHAIR CARRIER: Yes.

19 MR. FLORES: Good evening. My
20 name is Robinson Flores. I am a member of
21 CASA de Maryland. I am speaking as an
22 individual. I have a small business in 8723

1 Flower Avenue, which is next to the Flower
2 Theater. So it looks more likely I will be
3 affected directly in my business but we try to
4 come up with this master plan.

5 I've been there for almost 18
6 years in that location. What can happen to
7 me, the owner, in that particular place, I'd
8 be displaced. I'd have to moving to
9 somewhere, I'd be more likely in limbo. I
10 don't know what can happen like me, like a
11 small business in the area.

12 So what is the solution --

13 MEMBER ANDERSON: What is your
14 business, sir?

15 MR. FLORES: We provide eye exams,
16 contact lenses and fittings. I am an
17 optician. We have a doctor there in the
18 office who works for us, and we've provided
19 services for almost 18 years, as I say, for
20 our community in that particular area.

21 So that's more likely my concern,
22 you know, what will be the renovations coming

1 up to the area, and where are we moving?
2 Where are we going? What will be the solution
3 for us, the small businesses in the area?

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
6 much.

7 Señora.

8 MS. GUZMAN: Good evening. My
9 name is Rosalba Guzman. I live on 8623 Piney
10 Branch Road.

11 I'm here to say it but it's very
12 nice, the plan that's been proposed, but my
13 biggest concern is displacement. I'm a single
14 mother of two children, and I'm worried about
15 where they're going to send me if the rent
16 raises.

17 I don't really make enough money
18 to take care of two kids and pay such high
19 amounts of rent.

20 And that's my word. Thank you.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you.

22 Thank you all.

1 I -- there are two more speakers,
2 and I want to make sure there isn't anyone --
3 is there anyone else who signed up to speak
4 whom I have not called?

5 (No response.)

6 (Pause.)

7 (Whereupon, the Chair inquired in
8 Spanish about remaining speakers.)

9 MS. VELASQUEZ: Hi. My name is
10 Flor Velasquez. I live in 814 University
11 Boulevard.

12 I'm worried because the Purple
13 Line that they are proposing to build, I don't
14 understand why they're proposing to build a
15 Purple Line when we have everything close to
16 us. We have bus stops. We have schools. We
17 have stores.

18 I don't understand why they're
19 proposing to build a Purple Line that would
20 really put us more in danger in several
21 respects, than to actually help us.

22 And just one more thing. I don't

1 want them to take away CASA de Maryland
2 because it helps so many of us live close to
3 there.

4 Instead of building the Purple
5 Line, why don't they redevelop our apartments,
6 make them nicer, and keep them at low enough
7 rents for us?

8 And that's it. Thank you.

9 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay. Thank you
10 very much.

11 I'd like to call Stacy Silber.

12 (Pause.)

13 MS. SILBER: Good evening. For
14 the record, my name is Stacy Silber. I'm with
15 the law firm of Lerch, Early, and Brewer, and
16 I'm here today on behalf of the owner of the
17 Flower Avenue Shopping Center property and
18 theater.

19 The ownership owns both the Flower
20 Shopping Center and Theater as well as a
21 parking lot that's on the corner of Arliss and
22 Flower Avenue. With me here today is Mr. Greg

1 Fernabach, who's sitting to my right, who
2 represents the owner, Mr. Robert Sponseller,
3 an architect with Shalom Baranes Associates,
4 and Dr. David Rotenstein, an architectural
5 historian.

6 We respectfully suggest that staff
7 has done a great job of beginning the
8 conversation among Long Branch. But the
9 sector plan needs revision to ensure that the
10 enterprise zone, which is Long Branch,
11 constitutes and has the opportunities of other
12 areas of the county.

13 We object to full preservation of
14 the shopping center and theater or placement
15 of the property in the locational atlas, as
16 recommended, for the reasons we will discuss
17 today.

18 With the Flower Avenue Shopping
19 Center property, all of the recommendations
20 are driven by the singly focused presumption
21 that the property will be designated. And
22 frankly, this designation fails to balance all

1 of the many public policies that must be
2 weighed in the sector plan process -- policies
3 such as increasing housing, and affordable
4 housing, as recommended by the county's
5 housing policy, encouraging revitalization in
6 an enterprise zone, and ensuring that
7 regulations do not discourage reinvestment.

8 Many have studied the Flower
9 Avenue properties and how to encourage
10 reinvestment, including ULI and the Long
11 Branch Task Force. None of these have
12 recommended preservation of the shopping
13 center and theater in total. All have
14 concluded that revitalization is essential and
15 that a spark is needed to encourage
16 redevelopment. The sector plan and the
17 possibility of a Purple Line present that
18 opportunity for a spark that has been
19 accomplished elsewhere in the county.

20 The pictures that you are seeing
21 are pictures of the shopping center today, and
22 it's a tired center. What you may not know is

1 that it provides an economic return. And
2 unless there are real incentives to encourage
3 revitalization here, and reinvestment, it's
4 not going to happen.

5 The other item that you may not
6 know is that the county has actually funded
7 facade modifications over time. Ironically,
8 we're now discussing returning or restoring to
9 whence it once was.

10 I wanted to just comment one thing
11 we've heard today. There have been multiple
12 efforts to bring back the theater, to release
13 the space. It's obviously in the owner's
14 interest to have that space leased. The issue
15 has been that he's had really no ability to
16 attract anyone at this time.

17 One of the issues has been that
18 the space has been, there's nothing there
19 anymore. There's no interior in terms of a
20 theater. There's nothing to preserve because
21 it's no longer there. And to bring it back up
22 to an ADA-accessible level is upwards of a

1 half a million dollars. So, if there's an
2 interest in trying to do something, we're
3 going to need some county funding, as happened
4 with Fillmore where there was a \$4 million
5 contribution.

6 The experts are going to get into
7 specifically the various items that we've
8 discussed. The one thing that I wanted to
9 discuss is that Mr. Sponseller is going to
10 show one of our schematics, and it shows
11 actually a designation we were proposing, of
12 the façade of the theater and the two
13 shoulders.

14 But it does not suggest and we do
15 not support preservation of an environmental
16 setting at the entire shopping center and
17 theater. We believe that will willfully
18 thwart redevelopment, and we believe there are
19 other ways to ensure that the theater façade
20 and shoulder remain the prominent feature.
21 And we will be suggesting some sector plan
22 design guidelines that will ensure that the

1 Planning Board, not the HPC, retains control
2 over guiding redevelopment of the property
3 while at the same time ensuring that the
4 façade remains the focal point.

5 At this time, I'd like to turn
6 over our presentation over to Dr. Rotenstein.

7 DR. ROTENSTEIN: Thank you. For
8 the record, my name is David Rotenstein, and
9 I'm a historian and architectural historian.

10 Briefly, my credentials exceed the
11 Secretary of the Interior's professional
12 qualification standards in history and
13 architectural history. I have 29 years of
14 experience in historic preservation, and I
15 have served two full terms of the Montgomery
16 County HPC, including one year as its chair.

17 I was retained after the July 2010
18 HPC hearing. The commission recommended
19 designating the Flower Theater and Shopping
20 Center in the Montgomery County Master Plan
21 for Historic Preservation and placing the
22 property in the locational atlas and index of

1 historic sites.

2 My first task was to evaluate the
3 research Historic Preservation staff provided
4 to the HPC. The result of that evaluation was
5 presented in a report I prepared for the
6 property owner. That report subsequently was
7 submitted to planning department staff.

8 I found that the research upon
9 which the HPC based its recommendations to
10 designate was incomplete and not defensible.
11 Information introduced in my report included
12 the fact that at least three architects -- not
13 one, as suggested by Historic Preservation
14 staff in its first report to the HPC -- were
15 responsible for designing the theater and
16 shopping center.

17 My 2010 report also contained
18 considerable new information about the
19 property owners' business history and the
20 context within which the theater and shopping
21 center were conceived and executed.

22 This slide illustrates ownership

1 and control over time and encapsulates the
2 substantial amount of research that we have
3 conducted. My comments this evening relate
4 mainly to the Flower Shopping Center portion
5 of the property. It is still my professional
6 opinion, despite revised staff research
7 presented in a substantially rewritten
8 research form completed in 2011, that the
9 entire property does not merit designation in
10 the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

11 As this slide shows, the property
12 developed in three phases and four parts
13 between 1950 and 1954. The New Jersey
14 architecture firm Frank Grad and Sons designed
15 the shopping center's southern portion and
16 presumably the space first occupied by Giant
17 Foods, now Algolfo, and a Laundromat.

18 The Flower Theater was designed by
19 Baltimore architect John Zink. The Giant, the
20 theater, and the stores at the southern end of
21 the shopping center opened in 190. A retail
22 base south of the theater block remained

1 unbuilt until 1954 when a Woolworth's store
2 designed by Washington architect Edwin Weihe
3 was completed.

4 The Flower Shopping Center is a
5 common and unremarkable example of post-war
6 commercial architecture. The park-and-shop
7 concept introduced in the 1930s was nearly two
8 decades old by the time the Flower Center was
9 built. Notable examples of this property type
10 include Silver Spring Shopping Center, which
11 was completed in 1938 and Washington's
12 Connecticut Avenue Park-and-Shop, which was
13 built in 1930.

14 The property in its entirety is
15 not notable and is a ubiquitous, almost
16 mass-produced property type found throughout
17 the United States by the early years of the
18 Cold War when the Flower Center opened for
19 business. By the time the Flower Shopping
20 Center was a decade old, urban sprawl critics
21 were writing about how suburban shopping
22 centers were blighting landscapes. Peter

1 Blake wrote in his 1964 landmark book God's
2 Own Junkyard, "Suburbia's other symbolic"
3 buildings "are those of the shopping center,
4 which is certainly symbolic of something,
5 though perhaps not of anything which we would
6 particularly want to symbolize."

7 In its 63-year life, the Flower
8 Shopping Center has undergone significant
9 changes, including the removal of
10 character-defining architectural elements in
11 both of the shopping center's anchor stores.
12 The former Giant store with its missing
13 original display windows and the former Whelan
14 Drug Store, which has also had its original
15 windows removed and both streetside façades
16 significantly altered.

17 The Historic Preservation staff
18 has, in my professional opinion, not made a
19 compelling reason for designating the entire
20 property, and their preservation
21 recommendations are highly subjective,
22 relative to the portions of the property

1 identified as historically significant.
2 Despite comprehensive historical work
3 documenting shopping centers, staff failed to
4 consistently apply the lessons learned in
5 these studies by recommending redevelopment in
6 the character-defining north parking lot. The
7 Board must consider the prudence of
8 designating a parking area that covers more
9 surface area in the property than the
10 buildings.

11 Surfacing parking lots, as this
12 Board well knows, present planners with many
13 challenges. According to the 2000 Code studio
14 document outlining Montgomery County's future
15 land use goals, "Future redevelopment will
16 require creative reuse of underutilized areas,
17 such as the approximately 8,000 acres of
18 surface parking lots and strip shopping
19 centers that currently exist in the county."

20 Historic Preservation staff's
21 recommendations for the parking lots and
22 buildings do not appear to reflect a balanced

1 evaluation of the entire property within its
2 historic setting and the social and economic
3 context within which it developed. Architect

4 Robert Sponseller will now discuss
5 options for redevelopment of the property,
6 including alternatives for preserving the
7 Flower Theater building block's fa#ade,
8 flanking retail bays, and retaining
9 significant views of the theater's fa#ade and
10 marquis from Flower Avenue corridor.

11 I would be pleased to answer any
12 questions you may have once my colleagues have
13 completed their presentations.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. SPONSELLER: Good evening.
16 I'm Robert Sponseller. I'm an architect
17 practicing in Washington, DC, and I was asked
18 by the owner to analyze this site in terms of
19 the potential it had for future redevelopment,
20 and in specific light, focused on the
21 preservation idea that have been talked about
22 tonight.

1 My presentation is in two parts.
2 The first part is a sort of logistical,
3 logical redevelopment scenario that compares
4 preservation of the theater itself on this
5 site versus a larger preservation, as
6 recommended by HPC staff. So you can see the
7 two extremes, those two extremes, and how it
8 might impact development. And the second part
9 of the presentation is the series of case
10 studies on preservation that reflect our
11 collective experience as an office and include
12 a site in Silver Spring that you recently, I
13 think, reviewed recently, the Canada Dry site,
14 as well.

15 So, with that, I want to begin
16 just by restating briefly the opportunity that
17 the site provides in terms of being well
18 serviced by mass transit, in terms of the
19 Purple Line and bus stations. It's an
20 incredible opportunity, I think, for the
21 community to accommodate smart growth and
22 considerable housing in an area within a

1 three-minute walk to a Metro station, to a
2 Purple Line station. Many residents would not
3 even need a car, perhaps, to live here.

4 And our site that we're talking
5 about, the existing buildings are along the
6 Flower Avenue and Piney Branch side on the
7 southwest corner of the site, located here,
8 within this three-minute walking radius that
9 I mentioned. And when you consider how the
10 site might develop with the mass transit
11 provided, and future developments scenarios,
12 we've looked at introducing some of the
13 neighboring streets connecting through the
14 block to introduce smaller parcels. And it's
15 also very important to consider what's around
16 this central area in terms of future
17 development.

18 So, on the eastern, northern, and
19 western sides of the site, you really have
20 single-family houses and lower-scale
21 development. Whereas, on the southwestern
22 corner of the site here, along Flower and

1 Piney Branch, we have existing commercial uses
2 that happen to be the most compatible, make
3 this corner the most compatible for future
4 development because it has adjacent uses that
5 are already in place. And so we think it is
6 a very important prime site for this type of
7 redevelopment.

8 As I mentioned, there are two
9 schemes that I'm going to be showing you in
10 terms of the amount of preservation. One,
11 we'll look at what impact preserving all of
12 the façades that line Flower Avenue would
13 have. This is the outline suggested by HPC
14 staff. And a second option that we have
15 proposed involves just saving the Flower
16 Theater façade, as shown here in the image on
17 the lower right. This is the, I think, most
18 noteworthy building on the site. It has a
19 very strong frontal characteristic with two
20 characteristic side shoulders, if you will, in
21 Art Deco. And in our scenario of
22 redevelopment, we think it's very important to

1 keep this volumetric view of the building in
2 place.

3 Okay, so the first slide here
4 compares on the upper image the full
5 preservation scenario where all of the
6 building buildings are preserved, and the
7 lower image shows preservation of just the
8 theater building itself with development
9 around it to the east and to the south.

10 As you can see, what we've done is
11 we've put residential buildings on the site
12 for this scenario, up to about 60 feet in
13 height, which is, I think, the current
14 recommended zoning.

15 And the question is, on the upper
16 image, if you preserve all these façades, what
17 kind of development would occur behind it?
18 And to us, that's sort of a question in this
19 redevelopment scenario.

20 If this approach is taken on the
21 top, the FAR achieved on the site is about
22 0.75 FAR, well below the suggested 2.5 to 3.0

1 FAR.

2 And in the lower image, if we
3 place heights up to 60 feet, set back from the
4 theater so that it remained very prominent on
5 the street, the FAR achieved is right around
6 2.0 FAR. It's a little bit less than 2.0 FAR.

7 We then analyzed what would happen
8 if we increased the height allowable up to 75
9 to 80 feet. This is a very logical height to
10 consider for construction site considerations
11 as well. If somebody comes in and redevelops
12 this site, they'll want to do it in a very
13 efficient manner, and the 75- to 80-foot
14 height would allow kind of the maximum benefit
15 from a light-gauge construction type, which is
16 prevalent in this kind of a neighborhood.

17 So, if we do development up to 75
18 to 80 feet behind the theater, in the lower
19 image, we could achieve closer to 2.5 to 3.0
20 FAR total on the site.

21 CHAIR CARRIER: Isn't there also
22 an option of preserving the façades all the

1 way across but not whole buildings?

2 MR. SPONSELLER: Yes and so what
3 we're showing here is the façades preserved,
4 the theater preserved and then behind those
5 façades, two to three stories in height could
6 be achieved behind there, and that would give
7 you an FAR of between 1.0 and 1.5 total, so,
8 again, well below the target of 2.5. But I
9 think the issues related to the preservation
10 are important to consider in terms of the cost
11 and the entry fee for such an approach.

12 In these two images, we've looked
13 at the ground-level plan, which indicates the
14 amount of preservation in red patched tones
15 over the ground floor plan. So this upper
16 image here shows the preserved façade areas,
17 as recommended by HPC in what we call the
18 "strict preservation plan," and the lower
19 image is what I would call the more viable
20 redevelopment option that preserves the
21 theater frontispiece and allows redevelopment
22 of the ground level adjacent to it.

1 The issues that relate to this are
2 first the inherent complexities involved in
3 preserving existing façades. I have an image
4 to show you what that involves.

5 Secondly, you can see, there's a
6 very strong geometric interruption on the
7 floor plan that occurs along Flower Avenue.
8 The retail storefronts are set back from the
9 street 50 to 60 feet from Flower Avenue, and
10 this would greatly impact the viability of the
11 retail tenants and the flexibility.

12 Finally, the servicing and parking
13 areas that can be provided in that plan are
14 greatly restricted, as you can see in the
15 upper slide. They are greatly reduced, versus
16 what a new development plan would provide.

17 I also want to just talk about the
18 sections in our proposal. So, in looking at
19 the placement of the density on the site, what
20 we've done in order to keep the theater as the
21 most prominent element, is provide low-scale
22 development of up to 30 feet along Flower

1 Avenue, as we can see here in section.

2 And behind it, set back on the
3 eastern edge of the block away from the
4 street, we've gone up to either the 60 or 75
5 feet in height. And what happens with that
6 scheme in terms of massing is that the rear
7 volumes are essentially invisible from the
8 street. You can see the site lines here from
9 Flower Avenue. The lower volumes will Flower
10 Avenue essentially must be density from the
11 street as well. So I think that's an
12 important point.

13 So as I mentioned and the plan,
14 whenever you're preserving a facade, and these
15 areas of preservation are over 500 feet in
16 length on this strict preservation scheme,
17 what's involved in terms of architecturally in
18 terms of construction is a very intensive
19 bracing scenario, exterior bracing scenario
20 and preservation scenario, during
21 construction.

22 This is an image from a project

1 that we're doing downtown currently at the
2 City Market at O Street. And this upper image
3 reflects what is involved with the
4 preservation of a façade during
5 reconstruction. What it does essentially is
6 a just very much increases the initial costs
7 of redevelopment, and therefore, the expected
8 return that would happen during redevelopment.
9 I think that is important to consider.

10 What we're recommending in terms
11 of an approach is to develop these guidelines
12 that could be attached and approved along with
13 the sector plan that would instill these goals
14 as part of the redevelopment effort. And what
15 they, in a sense, say is -- and I'll be brief
16 -- is, in general, to provide, to allow this
17 site to develop to maximize potential for
18 smart-growth location, such as it is, with
19 additional housing and mixture of uses
20 adjacent to Metro, and architecturally, in
21 terms of preservation, to balance the
22 preservation goals with the smart growth goals

1 and preserve the, I think, most significant
2 architectural element, which is the lower
3 theater itself, designed by Zink.

4 Okay, now I'm going to share with
5 you three case studies, two of which we've
6 been involved in --

7 CHAIR CARRIER: Ms. Silber, two
8 minutes left.

9 MR. SPONSELLER: Do we have two?
10 Okay.

11 MS. SILBER: About one minute
12 left.

13 MR. SPONSELLER: I've got one
14 minute, okay.

15 The first is the Canada Dry
16 project. I think these are important because
17 I want to show you the issue in terms of
18 preservation is how much area of the site is
19 under preservation versus new developments; in
20 other words, how much area to the developer
21 has access to that is not encumbered with
22 preservation.

1 So, to put our site in
2 perspective, the Canada Dry site, which I
3 think is a recent example that you're all
4 familiar with, preserved about, I would say,
5 15 percent of the site area. The retained,
6 preserved area is this corner of the site, and
7 the amount that was allowed to be removed for
8 new development is the majority of site, so
9 about 85 percent of the site. And you can see
10 that in this slide.

11 That ratio of 10 to 15 percent per
12 total site area is very consistent,
13 ironically, with two recent sites that I've
14 been involved in. The first is the Georgetown
15 Incinerator site -- which I spent way too much
16 time with my career involved in -- where the
17 existing heating plant, which is now the
18 Ritz-Carlton's main entry and lobby, was
19 preserved. But all the surrounding areas were
20 essentially redeveloped. And that leveraged
21 a lot of the developers to finally redevelop
22 that plan. And the O Street Market has a

1 similar ratio.

2 It's all yours.

3 MS. SILBER: In conclusion, we
4 believe that the shopping center has lots of
5 opportunities for revitalization,
6 incorporating, as a lot of the members have
7 indicated, the existing tenancy and
8 reincorporating. But the important portion of
9 this is that unless there are incentives to do
10 something with the shopping center, it's going
11 to stay exactly as it is, with no changes to
12 the facade or anything else.

13 We believe that the proposal that
14 Mr. Sponseller has developed will ensure that
15 theater can be preserved, remains a key
16 feature along that street, it can be
17 redeveloped, ensuring that that theater
18 remains the primary focus.

19 We believe that the entire
20 shopping center should not and does not merit
21 and should not be designated, and that should
22 not be the environmental setting.

1 And we believe that the design
2 guidelines will ensure that the Planning Board
3 will retain control over this very important
4 site and be able to balance all the public
5 policies.

6 Thank you very much.

7 CHAIR CARRIER: Okay. Thank you,
8 folks.

9 And our very last speaker of the
10 night is Robert Elliott.

11 (Pause.)

12 CHAIR CARRIER: We'll just look on
13 the screen.

14 MR. ELLIOTT: Okay. Great. Thank
15 you --

16 CHAIR CARRIER: You need to turn
17 on your microphone, and start with your name.

18 MR. ELLIOTT: Good evening. My
19 name is Bob Elliott. I'm Director of
20 Development for Washington Real Estate
21 Investment Trust, or REIT. I'm pleased to be
22 before you this evening to talk about the

1 county sector plan and our property at 8750
2 Arliss Street.

3 This is a property that REIT has
4 owned since 1963, 49 years. We've been in
5 business since 1960. We are a long-term
6 owner/developer/manager of real estate. And
7 Ipm pleased to tell you tonight about how we
8 believe that we will continue to investment in
9 this project and this property for many years
10 to come.

11 Over the last several years, REIT
12 has been working with the Maryland Transit
13 Authority as well as the county's planning
14 staff to discuss how the Superblock could be
15 redeveloped and the impact of future Purple
16 Line Arliss Street Station. Overall, we
17 support the sector plan but question whether
18 it has gone far enough to incentivize future
19 redevelopment.

20 As you can see from the map, the
21 Superblock here is roughly 12 acres, and our
22 site, which comprises roughly 46 percent of

1 that, is 5.4 acres. The southeast corner of
2 our property is actually directly in front of
3 the proposed Arliss Street station. The site
4 today has 55,000 square feet with three
5 commercial tenants, the current Giant Center
6 represents roughly 45- to 50,000 feet of that
7 center. We have no residential uses on our
8 property.

9 It's also important to note that
10 the site has a very steep slope from this part
11 of Arliss all the way down to Piney Branch of
12 roughly 30 feet. I mention this because what
13 we would propose would be higher heights for
14 this site, and think that it is actually
15 plausible given the fact that the site
16 actually slopes away from the neighborhood
17 down towards this intersection.

18 With this in mind, there's our
19 site; here's the slope. We begin to think
20 about light rail precedents -- Salt Lake City,
21 Portland, Minneapolis, and San Jose. This
22 important to us because Arliss Street, where

1 the Purple Line is expected run, fronts almost
2 the entirety of our property, effectively
3 controlling how we're going to be viewing the
4 retail of this site, not just now but once the
5 Purple Line arrives and in the future.

6 We also begin to think about new
7 urbanism, transit in-fill, mixed use, and how
8 we would ultimately bring a residential
9 component to this property, but also further
10 amenitize this with a strong retail base which
11 would effectively serve as a large community
12 amenity, provide generous sidewalks and
13 minimal street parking, and in particular,
14 provide structured parking that would be
15 hidden from normal public view.

16 With that in mind, we hired
17 nationally renowned architect Torti Gallas to
18 do an initial study for us, based on what we
19 anticipated the sector plan might say. This
20 test plan effectively shows what our vision
21 for the site was, which is a 2.5 FAR with the
22 70 to 75 feet, not too dissimilar from what

1 you just heard at the 75 to 80 feet from the
2 prior presentation. With this, it effectively
3 implied 475 units of residential, a 950-space
4 parking garage buried in the middle of the
5 block that could be accessed from two
6 locations, and 117,000 feet of ground-floor
7 commercial space.

8 One thing it's important point out
9 here is, today, this is the site of the
10 existing Giant Center. We are encumbered by
11 a long-term lease with that tenant. It will
12 cost a significant amount of money to
13 renegotiate that and relocate them on that
14 property. In order to incentivize
15 development, it has to be significant enough
16 to move them off the property, to build a
17 second store while they're in operation and
18 ultimately come back and back-fill that with
19 the parking garage -- not an insignificant
20 cost at \$20,000 a parking space above grade.

21 MEMBER ANDERSON: Can I ask you if
22 those parking assumptions are based on what

1 you think that you need to the market the
2 project, or is that your understanding of what
3 the code currently requires?

4 MR. ELLIOTT: This is not the
5 current code. This is four per thousand for
6 retail, five for grocery. It's pretty
7 consistent with what we believe; 0.9 per
8 residential unit is what would occur once the
9 Purple Line arrived.

10 Today, in order to park, we would
11 expect 1.3 to 1.6, based on our expectation.
12 So the 0.9 parking is a significant reduction,
13 but that assumes that the Purple Line actually
14 comes into play.

15 MEMBER ANDERSON: I think the
16 zoning rewrite's going to be lower.

17 MR. ELLIOTT: I'm sorry; what?

18 MEMBER ANDERSON: Well, we're
19 rewriting the zoning code. I think you're
20 going to find it's lower, which is why I
21 asked, is this your assumption, where you need
22 to do it, or is this --

1 MR. ELLIOTT: No -- well, I'll --

2 MEMBER ANDERSON: This is your
3 assumption about regulation that it requires
4 you to do it?

5 MR. ELLIOTT: Yes. This is
6 partially need and partially regulation.

7 MEMBER ANDERSON: Okay.

8 MR. ELLIOTT: Today, the challenge
9 is that, without the significant development
10 of other parcels adjacent to us, it's going to
11 be harder to make this a destination. People
12 are actually still, regardless of what you
13 think, going to get in their car until you get
14 enough scale in the density retail.

15 So we tested this. We tested the
16 theory. Obviously, the first challenge is the
17 fact that the sector plan caps the height at
18 60 Feet, which effectively lops off one entire
19 floor. I'll go through the numbers here in
20 just a second.

21 The second thing that's actually
22 occurring on our property which is somewhat

1 unique is the Maryland Transit Authority is
2 proposing anywhere from 40 to 60 feet of my
3 property be taken, effectively an encumbrance
4 on the future development, and in particular,
5 to this particular parcel, which actually
6 begins to limit how I could actually develop
7 that. I mention this because this is roughly
8 0.9 acres, or roughly somewhere between 17 and
9 18 percent of my overall property area.

10 With this in mind, we ran our test
11 case. I ran something based on the sector
12 plan, and I ran what the sector plan would
13 allow, including the MTA encroachment. And in
14 effect, I was able to come up with a 2.5.
15 With the sector plan, I effectively lost my
16 debate units, 23,000 square feet -- I'm sorry
17 -- 95,000 units, and I got to a 2.1 FAR. When
18 I went to the sector plan, I actually lost an
19 additional 23,000 feet of retail on the ground
20 floor. I was down 173 units over what I
21 proposed.

22 MEMBER ANDERSON: But you said

1 "base case." Are you talking about under the
2 current zoning and master plan?

3 MR. ELLIOTT: If you were to
4 approve a 2.5 FAR, 70, 75 feet, and MTA to
5 none of my property, that's effectively what
6 I could do.

7 CHAIR CARRIER: That's not what
8 the sector plan recommended.

9 MR. ELLIOTT: The sector plan is
10 recommending 60.

11 CHAIR CARRIER: That's what REIT
12 suggests would be appropriate.

13 MR. ELLIOTT: The sector plan is
14 proposing this, but I'm telling you that based
15 on what MTA is about to do as well, this is
16 where I end up.

17 The challenge here is the fact
18 that you see that there's a significant delta
19 between what could be done and what will
20 actually get done.

21 The second piece that I started to
22 do is to try to figure out how to make this

1 neutral from a value creation perspective.
2 The challenge here is that what we actually
3 shorten my site, shrink my site, and try to
4 get back to the 2.5 FAR and add those units
5 back, we find that I actually probably need
6 somewhere between six and seven floors in
7 order to complete this development.

8 Unfortunately, this leaves me in a
9 bit of a no-man's land because this pushes the
10 construction methodology type stick-built
11 construction to concrete. This is important
12 because you see that stick-built construction
13 today is roughly \$90,000 to \$110,000 per unit,
14 whereas concrete is roughly \$170,000 \$290,000.

15 MEMBER ANDERSON: Are you talking
16 about hard costs?

17 MR. ELLIOTT: Hard costs; just the
18 construction.

19 So this is --

20 CHAIR CARRIER: But what is it
21 that's pushed you out of --

22 MR. ELLIOTT: In order to try to

1 maximize it at 2.5 FAR, I want to try to be
2 value-neutral, so I'd have to go up in height.

3 MEMBER ANDERSON: Was that
4 compared to --

5 CHAIR CARRIER: We just had
6 somebody earlier tonight say that they would
7 go to 70 or 75 and still say it was
8 stick-built, so I guess --

9 MR. ELLIOTT: No, he said 70 to 75
10 can stay stick-built, but I have to go --

11 CHAIR CARRIER: Oh, you would need
12 to go higher

13 MR. ELLIOTT: I'd need to go
14 higher.

15 MEMBER ANDERSON: To go --

16 MR. ELLIOTT: In order to be
17 value-neutral -- basically, the point is that
18 on a 2.5 FAR, based on the current heights
19 you're proposing, nobody's ever going to get
20 to a 2.5. We'd argue that you get somewhere
21 between a 1.7 and a 2.0, at best.

22 When you have encumbrances on the

1 site as well with long-term leases and other
2 things, you need to find ways to incentivize
3 the development.

4 And lastly, looking at how you
5 make this value-neutral, taking into account
6 that if I had to build 50 percent of my site
7 as concrete, the 175-percent premium
8 effectively requires that I would build 415
9 units out of concrete, 237 out of stick,
10 putting in a normal 12.5-percent MPDU
11 requirement, that's an additional 22 units, or
12 675 units, a delta of roughly 200 units
13 strictly by shrinking the size of my site and
14 trying to go vertical.

15 MEMBER ANDERSON: What you didn't
16 throw in is the actual the price to you'd have
17 to charge because of the cost of construction.

18 MR. ELLIOTT: Well, I'm --

19 MEMBER ANDERSON: You're doing a
20 density --

21 MR. ELLIOTT: I'm doing a density
22 swap based on the value of construction to

1 have additional units in order to do that.

2 MEMBER ANDERSON: But those 600
3 units would cost you significantly more per
4 unit than the --

5 MR. ELLIOTT: 415 --

6 MEMBER ANDERSON: -- right.

7 MR. ELLIOTT: -- would cost me
8 significantly more. And by building 175
9 percent of that as opposed to one-to-one --

10 MEMBER ANDERSON: Right. So --

11 MR. ELLIOTT: -- in theory, I'm
12 creating more revenue, but I am basically
13 offsetting the loss of having to build more
14 expensive units.

15 MEMBER ANDERSON: But that revenue
16 would require higher rents or higher sales
17 price, whatever --

18 MR. ELLIOTT: I hope is that by
19 doing the value neutralization of the 175
20 percent or added units, in theory, I'm
21 charging the same rate.

22 MEMBER ANDERSON: Oh, okay.

1 MR. ELLIOTT: That's my assumption
2 here is that instead of asking for a
3 one-to-one unit of a cheaper unit or a more
4 expensive unit and then having the charge more
5 --

6 MEMBER ANDERSON: I see.

7 MR. ELLIOTT: I would suggesting,
8 build 75 percent more units and effectively
9 have the same rate.

10 MEMBER ANDERSON: Okay. So the
11 less equivalency you get, the higher the rent
12 or sales price, whatever you decide to do,
13 which would be probably not be marketable in
14 that market.

15 MR. ELLIOTT: Well, first, just to
16 be clear, REIT is a long-term owner of real
17 estate. We don't build condominiums. We'd be
18 strictly looking at an apartment type product.

19 MEMBER ANDERSON: Higher rents,
20 you would have to try to get, which are
21 probably difficult in this market.

22 MR. ELLIOTT: Today. We are,

1 however, believers that ultimately, with the
2 Purple Line station right in front of our
3 property, that if you look at what the County
4 has actually proposed for 2030, 2050 in its
5 growth strategies and the expectation that the
6 larger transit corridors at Metro Center
7 locations are ultimately going to be where
8 this county grows longer term. It's not going
9 to be in the suburbs; it's going to have to be
10 at these sorts of locations.

11 I realize we're dealing with a lot
12 of challenging issues tonight with regard to
13 dislocation and other things, but this is
14 effectively Ground Zero for MPAs -- it's not
15 Metro, but it's effectively the same thing --
16 it's public transit at your doorstep.

17 We have to be bigger believers.
18 We have to be bigger visionaries into the
19 future. Capping this at 60 feet today is not
20 incentive enough. You have to be willing to
21 go higher.

22 The precedents are obviously

1 things like White Flint. I'm not suggesting
2 we go to 300 feet. I think what this plan
3 does show, however, is the fact that we need
4 to be thinking about the fact that there have
5 to be reasonable steps. You have a step away
6 from that. When you go to density, within a
7 quarter-mile of the Metro station, that's when
8 people use it most. You have to be willing to
9 let people walk out the door and get on the
10 track.

11 And with that, our suggestion
12 would be more the idea that 150 to 90 to 60 to
13 30, to be honest, or even 30-foot increments.
14 But you could be doing that in a tiered way to
15 create the intersection here where it's
16 potentially very commercial at the station and
17 stepping into it so it blends into the
18 community. We think that that's not an
19 unreasonable suggestion, given what we've seen
20 in other locations. And it's probably more
21 forward thinking if you want to be thinking
22 longer-term about the opportunity.

1 The other recommendation, the next
2 recommendation we would have is obviously to
3 encourage MTA to relocate its right-of-way
4 more off of our property and move it to the
5 north and move it to the east.

6 The challenge with the current MTA
7 section is the fact that they are leaving an
8 eight-foot parking lane on the street. We
9 don't see the need to actually encourage
10 parking on a street that's going to widen in
11 order to have trains running through the
12 middle of it. By doing that, they could
13 actually move it eight to 10 feet at a minimum
14 off of our property. We think that there's a
15 realistically they could be done further.

16 The sector plan also proposes that
17 we locate an entrance from the existing
18 library, bifurcating our site and cutting
19 through the Superblock. Obviously, the
20 challenge with that is we own 5.4 acres; we
21 could do a significant independent
22 development.

1 But by bifurcating the site and
2 requiring that we have to work with the
3 adjacent development owners, the challenge
4 will ultimately be, it's going to eat up
5 density, it's going to require other people to
6 move at one time, whereas today we have 55,000
7 feet under our direct control. And as you can
8 see, we could do something fairly significant
9 on our own, independently.

10 We'd also suggest that the access
11 to our site occur on the far western edge,
12 also that it occur right below this sort of
13 little finger of land so that ultimately, when
14 and if decay properties ever redeveloped, the
15 access here, the control point before the
16 Purple Line turned North, would actually
17 connect back down into Garland, therefore
18 allowing you to bifurcate this larger block,
19 which is roughly 10 acres, twice as large as
20 our property, and create sort of that access.

21 This is effectively where the
22 Purple Line is going to turn on to Piney

1 Branch off of Arliss. This is going to be a
2 very difficult intersection to move through,
3 and looking for the secondary points where you
4 could actually allow the cars to move around
5 rather than having the train move through the
6 intersection, are the sort of next-round,
7 next-level thinking that needs to occur with
8 this site.

9 Parking is obviously another big
10 challenge. The plan discusses this notion,
11 the fact that we should be providing public
12 parking. At \$20,000 a space per above-grade
13 or \$40,000 per below-grade, this
14 disincentivizes public parking. It also
15 encourages people to continue using cars to
16 get to the station as opposed to actually
17 using other transit like walking, biking, or
18 what have you.

19 The MPDU requirement is obviously
20 higher than what you find in the county
21 typically. It's 12.5 today; the 15 percent
22 typically comes with some form of bonus

1 density.

2 And of course, LEED Gold -- LEED
3 Gold is a baseline that's extremely atypical.
4 Almost every jurisdiction in the area supports
5 certification as a baseline with Silver and
6 Gold for additional density.

7 The other thing to point out here
8 is that when we talk about Gold, LEED gold as
9 a construction methodology for stick-built
10 construction that is not plausible. The
11 problem with the systems that you use for that
12 are stand-alone, package-unit HVAC systems.
13 And LEED Gold requires heavy uses of energy.
14 And the problem is, only a central building
15 system realistically can achieve LEED Gold.
16 And if you're going to try to use that sort of
17 six-story and below cheaper construction
18 methodology, you're not going to be able to
19 achieve that with LEED Gold. So, in effect,
20 you're creating another encumbrance to the
21 overall plan.

22 With that in mind, we came up with

1 a plan that we thought achieved that, but we
2 wanted to show you what the idea was. You may
3 not agree with it, but it's stepped down from
4 15 to 10 to six stories. It actually comes --
5 at 95,000 feet of commercial space, we lose
6 23,000 feet of commercial space, 692 units,
7 and roughly 1,100 parking spaces, again using
8 the same ratios, whether or not those are
9 ultimately the ratios that would be utilized.

10 But this shows you one vision,
11 using the recommendations we proposed, of how
12 this could actually be a standalone, viable
13 development that we would be in a position to
14 do with the Purple Line.

15 So, again, we support the plan, we
16 support the Purple Line coming here, the
17 sector plan's vision. We'd encourage you to
18 be more progressive and more proactive in
19 thinking about that as a 2030 or 2050
20 solution.

21 We believe that the Superblock
22 should have higher density, such as a 4.0 FAR,

1 which is completely supported and allowed
2 under the CRT zoning; that you consider using
3 steps as high as 150 feet, stepping down in
4 30-foot increments; that we encourage the MTA
5 to move the right-of-way and not have parking
6 in its current proposed section, and we
7 relocate the connection off of our property so
8 that we can actually encourage the development
9 on a standalone basis and remove, obviously,
10 the public parking, the LEED, and the
11 affordable housing requirements and move them
12 back towards minimums, as would be expected
13 with the rest of the county.

14 Thank you for your time.

15 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you very
16 much. That completes our public hearing.
17 We're going to have a series of work sessions
18 which will also be public. Those are
19 typically the Board discussing the plan with
20 our staff.

21 We will focus a great deal on the
22 comments we have received from you this

1 evening and whatever comments we receive in
2 writing. Your input is extremely important to
3 the way that we go forward with this plan. So
4 I assure you that we will consider it all.
5 And you're welcome to attend the work sessions
6 or you can watch them online. It's really
7 fun; get some popcorn. Fascinating stuff.

8 I can't hear you, my dear.

9 (Off mic comments.)

10 MS. WILLIAMS: Once again, for the
11 record, Melissa Williams, the project manager
12 for the Long Branch Sector Plan. The work
13 sessions are scheduled on February 21 and
14 March 7.

15 They will take place here at 8787
16 Georgia Avenue in the auditorium. Here, in
17 this location.

18 (Pause.)

19 CHAIR CARRIER: These are normally
20 not meetings for public participation. The
21 public may watch. Normally it's just p

22 PARTICIPANT: Those are working

1 sessions for --

2 CHAIR CARRIER: -- for the Board
3 and our staff. Sometimes we a particular
4 property owner who wants to talk about one
5 property, and we will invite them to come up
6 to the table.

7 If you have a particular day that
8 you wish to come, we can try to schedule
9 something at a time that works for you. But
10 normally, it's during the day, and it's just
11 the Board and our staff talking.

12 PARTICIPANT: All right. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIR CARRIER: Thank you
15 everybody. Muchas gracias.

16 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
17 matter went off the record at 8:43 p.m.)

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ability 21:1 123:15	acre 53:21 54:9 92:8 95:7	adopted 4:2 17:12 72:1	Alba 51:11 100:11	Amharic 8:14
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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Long Branch Sector Plan

Before: Montgomery County Planning Board

Date: 01-31-13

Place: Silver Spring, MD

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Court Reporter

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