

# Ex-MoCo council leader laying siege to 'Science City' plans

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January 29, 2010

Former Montgomery County Council President Phil Andrews is marshaling last-minute opposition to Johns Hopkins University's ambitious plans for a massive biotech campus in the Shady Grove area. As president of the council last year, the soft-spoken Andrews, D-Gaithersburg/Rockville, said occasionally that the so-called "Science City" plans should be scaled back. But recent weeks have seen him furiously working the phones and bending the ears of his colleagues. In the past month, mayors of Rockville and Gaithersburg sounded off about their concerns. Andrews shepherded the letters to the council and made them public. "I was very, very busy last year as council president," Andrews said. "Now I have time to focus on this. It seems to me, this is a time to step up the effort." Johns Hopkins has been lobbying furiously for public support of an expanded biotech research and development campus, called the "Shady Grove Life Sciences Center." Supporters say the plan, which could bring up to 60,000 workers to the area, would make Montgomery a world center of lucrative scientific research.

"This council has to plan for the future," said Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce spokeswoman Lisa Fadden. "I think that jobs is the critical issue facing this council. And you need high-paying, future- and technology-oriented jobs."

But critics say the plan is too much development, too quickly, and would overwhelm the Gaithersburg-Rockville-Shady Grove area with traffic.

For Science City foes, the fastidious Andrews is an ideal spokesman.

"I think he has good personal relations in a council that's divided by personalities," said Ben Ross, leader of the Action Committee for Transit, a nonprofit group that advocates funding for mass transit. "When he does something like this, it's not a political calculation. He's doing it because he's convinced it's the right thing."

Time may be running out, though. In November, the council voted to widen Interstate 270 and to run light rail along it. It passes through the area, and many saw the vote as an endorsement of the high-density commuting necessary to support the project's scope.

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