

From: David Hauck

Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2010 10:40 AM

To: Floreen's Office, Councilmember; Knapp's Office, Councilmember; Leventhal's Office, Councilmember; Andrews' Office, Councilmember; Elrich's Office, Councilmember; Trachtenberg's Office, Councilmember; Navarro's Office, Councilmember; Berliner's Office, Councilmember; Ervin's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Sierra Club adds Gaithersburg West to its voting scorecard

Dear Council members:

The Montgomery County Group of the Sierra Club is developing a scorecard of Council votes over the last four years. This scorecard will be an important element as we decide on our endorsements for Council in the 2010 elections.

The scorecard is unfinished but we want to alert you to one issue that will weigh heavily on our endorsements. This issue, the Life Sciences Center within the Gaithersburg West master plan, will come to you for decisions within the next few months.

The County's development pattern and the associated transportation investments are the most environmentally consequential decisions that officials make. If balanced urban growth around our Metro stations reflects our hopes for a more sustainable future, then sprawl-inducing, car-demanding, unbalanced growth on our suburban fringes embodies the worst of our fears. The damage is compounded when the plan allows sprawl development at urban densities, proposes an uncertain and inadequate transit system to serve the development, and calls the result smart growth. Worst of all is creating de novo a large, dense center far from any Metro station, at the request of an ambitious land owner.

As we have said many times, our issue is not with a Life Sciences Center as such. There are proposals on the table to enhance the Life Sciences Center(s) without creating such havoc with sustainability.

We will watch closely the outcome of Council decisions on this plan. We expect the Council to agree on a plan that, to paraphrase the late Council member Betty Ann Krahnke, represents not a compromise but a solution, that promotes prosperity and sustainability.

Sincerely,

David Hauck

Chair
Sierra Club, Montgomery County Group