



May 29, 2007

TO: County Executive Isiah Leggett  
All County Councilmembers  
Planning Board members c/o Chairman Royce Hanson

FROM: Montgomery County Civic Federation  
Jim Humphrey, Chair, Planning and Land Use Committee  
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SUBJECT: Federation recommendation to model buildout under existing zoning

At their monthly meeting on May 14, MCCF delegates voted unanimously to recommend that the County model buildout under existing zoning, using a toolkit available on the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency website (which can be accessed online at the following URL: [http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/build\\_out.htm](http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/build_out.htm)). This exercise would be useful in helping determine the infrastructure that would be needed to accommodate that level of development should it occur--schools, roads, transit and public safety services. The costs of this infrastructure could then be estimated, giving County policy makers a clearer understanding of the overall needs when deciding who should bear those costs.

The County currently has a "residential capacity" of around 75,000 more dwelling units that could be created under existing zoning, including the 30,000 or so in the pipeline of projects approved but not yet built. The Research and Technology Center at M-NCPPC has indicated that "commercial capacity" is less definite, due to flexibility of the zoning in place on many properties (there is 32 million square feet of commercial space in the pipeline of approved unbuilt projects, though, which is estimated could result in creation of 110,000 new jobs). We do know from experience that not every property will be redeveloped to its maximum density allowed by the zone in place, due to environmental constraints on the site or for other reasons. Overall, however, this may be offset by the recent trend of the Planning Board approving a substantial percentage of projects that include 22% bonus density over that allowed by the zoning, in exchange for 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs).

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The Federation also believes that the understanding gained from modeling buildout that could occur under zoning in place on properties throughout the County will be of use when the Board and Council consider master plan and sector plan revisions that would increase residential and commercial capacity. A useful adjunct to modeling buildout under zoning in place would be an analysis of the carrying capacity for the existing transit systems in place in the County--the RideOn, MetroBus and Metro rail systems.

As they have since the founding of the Federation in 1925, MCCF volunteers stand ready to assist the County government in this or any other effort that might contribute to enhancing the quality of life for residents. Please feel free to contact me if you desire additional information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Jim Humphrey

cc: Gwen Wright, Acting Director, Planning Department, M-NCPPC  
Karl Moritz, Head of Research and Technology Center, M-NCPPC  
John Carter, Head of Community Based Planning, M-NCPPC  
Wayne Goldstein, MCCF President