



Testimony Before the County Council
2009 Draft Growth Policy
September 22, 1009

Hello, I'm Jim Smith, the Chair of the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee.

Our committee was established as a result of the Olney master plan process. The master plan called for a new mixed-use zone in 2005 to form a 90-acre town center district.

Our ongoing role is to advocate for a civic center/town commons and also to review development proposals representing the voice of the community on those proposals before the planning board.

I have three comments tonight on the proposed changes to the Growth Policy.

First—We support a study for changes to the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR)—We would like to see the Local Area Transportation Review brought to a more urban measurable standard as it is applied to Olney.

Under the Local Area Transportation Review substantial development proposals in Olney, the kind that would bring us closer to the master plan ideal of higher density, mixed-use development, would necessarily require widening the Georgia Avenue/Rt. 108 intersection that forms a crossroads at the heart of our community.

This conflicts with the goal of the master plan to make the Olney Town Center a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly district.

We understand and accept that the proposals in our master plan will require slower speeds and longer trips through Olney.

What we don't want is for Local Area Transportation Review to require more lanes at Georgia and 108. That will not bring about the kind of change we want for Olney.

As Olney becomes more urban so should the LATR standards applied to Olney. We'd support a study for changes to the LATR so Olney can develop down a path more in line with the Olney Master Plan.

Two—We support the proposed changes to Policy Area Mobility Review particularly the recalculation of trip generation rates for mixed-use areas to provide off-set alternatives.

Since we want the Olney Town Center to grow into a mixed-use style of development, we are interested in seeing the Policy Area Mobility Review be better adapted to Smart Growth development.

Lastly, we support funding of studies for public transit options toward increasing the transit services to Olney. We are aware of the concept for Bus Rapid Transit and are excited that Olney could possibly be part of a pilot project. The Olney Town Center Advisory Committee will actively support that and increased bus routes.

Thank you for your time.