



OFFICES OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

MEMORANDUM
September 7, 2021

To: Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board

From: County Executive Marc Elrich

Subject: Creekside at Cabin Branch Site Plan Review

It is my understanding that the Planning Board has already approved a preliminary plan of development called “Creekside at Cabin Branch” for 400 acres of land on the west side of Ten Mile Creek, and that you will be reviewing the site plan at your September 9, 2021 session. I am aware of correspondence you have received from many residents, as well as the Sierra Club, expressing their dismay at the proposed plan; I share their dismay and urge you to reject this plan.

The preliminary plan you approved concentrates development activity *entirely* within the LSTM 110 and LSTM 111 subwatersheds, which were identified in the Ten Mile Creek Limited Amendment as the two most sensitive, most critical subwatersheds on the west side of Ten Mile Creek. As a council member, I was actively engaged in the years-long review by environmental experts – including those from the Planning Department – that led to the adoption of the Limited Amendment and the Clarksburg West Environmental Overlay Zone. These documents, and the Council’s Resolution, were explicit about the “extraordinary protection” warranted for the LSTM 110 and 111 subwatersheds, providing ample evidence of the devastating impact that would result from increases in impervious levels exceeding 6%.

The Planning Board appears to have reached a conclusion that if development remains within the 6% cap averaged over the entire 400 acres, it is acceptable to increase imperviousness in LSTM 110 from 1.6% to 7.3% and LSTM from 1.2% to 12.7%. This is in direct contradiction of the extensive body of scientific evidence indicating that the limitation of impervious cover is key to preserving water quality. This plan will destroy the stream. It is shocking to realize that the very Planning Department that helped present that evidence and supported the adoption of strict impervious limits in the Ten Mile Creek documents is now willing to approve a plan that will destroy water quality in the two subwatersheds that were at the heart of our water-quality preservation efforts.

This is a sad turn of events. In my view, your actions seriously undermine the County Council’s ability to adopt master plans and zoning regulations capable of withstanding misinterpretation. We need to find a way to defend against that.