

# Carolyn Wooster

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Dear County Commissioners,

Thank you for your careful consideration of the implications of the Bryans Road Subarea Plan. As a resident of the area and a mother of a Matthew Henson Middle School student I appreciate the thoughtful analysis you are giving to the future of my community.

I look at this Bryans Road Subarea Plan and I wonder: What is the vision that my elected officials have for my community?

A short drive down Rt. 301 makes clear the vision for the Eastern side of the county; one need not look far to find bulldozers razing forests for subdivisions. High-density housing, clearly, is the plan for Waldorf, St. Charles, and La Plata.

One would imagine the plan for Western Charles County, then, would be for something different. That it would be for a place where county residents could play and relax. That it would be for a place that provides our citizens with access to the public health and recreation opportunities that are a human right: clean water, accessible treescapes, and lead-free air.

In the proposed plan, however, it seems your vision does not take the view of capitalizing on Western Charles County's rich natural assets and instead works to replicate the suburban sprawl that has served as the playbook for Waldorf and St. Charles. So I ask: How will you enact this plan in ways that work to capitalize upon, rather than destroy, our community's assets? With rich forests, beautiful streams, easements for outdoor nature centers in the Pomonkey Forest, connectivity to the popular Rail Trail and more, Bryans Road is rich in natural assets that would benefit residents and tourists alike.

In particular, there are two areas of proposed for development that I urge you to consider thoughtfully before accepting this plan:

1. The four residential units/acre proposed in the Billingsley-Livingston area of Mattawoman Creek, and

2. The 24 acres of Pomonkey Forest proposed to be destroyed for senior housing in the South End.

The impermeable surfaces that would replace the current forest in these two areas would exceed the 10% threshold that the Department of Natural Resources notes will push such sediment runoff into Mattawoman Creek to tip it past the point of sustaining its fisheries and aquatic resources. The subarea plan could make good on its claims to prioritize development within the existing footprint of Bryans Road while preserving natural resources beyond the core if it were to reduce these two areas of proposed impermeable surface development.

A physically healthy community will attract the economic development of a fiscally healthy community, and for this one final recommendation must be decidedly clear: It is critical that you do not promote the included rezoning for Airport Employment & Industrial. The consultants hired to develop this plan made clear that their study did not include any analysis of the proposed 550 acre expansion of the Maryland Airport. Increased daily flights at the airport would pose significant public health threats that warrant due study. The planes utilizing the airport drop pollutants on the Bryans Road community of carcinogenic jet fuel exhaust and lead particles from piston engine aircraft. The leaded Avgas utilized by piston engine aircraft is the largest source of airborne lead in the country and has resulted in commissioners of other counties like [Santa Clara, California](#) working to *close* their small airports. The study of cognitive and behavioral impacts of lead poisoning must be included if increased piston engine aircraft in Bryans Road's skies are to be considered in its future.

To spend thousands of taxpayer dollars on a plan for Bryans Road that does not take into account the addition of a 550 acre industrial airport facility outside our community's schoolhouse would be reckless and irresponsible. As a mother of a Matthew Henson Middle Schooler who will be learning at the airport's edge next year, I thank you.

Thank you for reducing the impervious surfaces outlined for the Billingsley-Livingston and senior housing South End areas in the proposed plan. Thank you for pausing Bryans Road rezoning until such planning is considered in light of smart growth comprehensive county-wide planning. And thank you for unequivocally demanding that plans for the future of Bryans Road put community health at its center.

Most sincerely,  
Carolyn Wooster