

Re: CB-52

I'm happy to be supportive of tax incentives for revitalization of commercial or industrial land (that includes no residential component) adjacent to U.S. Route 1. As Mr. Thompson (EDA) testified, this is the ONLY dedicated funding for Route 1 revitalization.

However, this bill could be so much more effective at achieving the desired revitalization with some changes. I will enumerate several ideas here and would welcome an opportunity to discuss these further.

First and foremost I would recommend an amendment that eliminates the clause allowing the credit 'to run with the property'. It is critical to keep in mind that the intent of this bill is to revitalize Route 1. It should not be used as a means of increasing the profit of the land owner when he sells the improved property. In addition to having the county provide 125% of the cost of improvements increasing the resale value, if they can then advertise the new owner will continue to receive the credit (for the remaining period) affords the land owner more profit. Without 'running with the property' any uncollected credits become available to support the revitalization of additional properties. Given that the funding in CB-52 is only half that of the previous bill it is extending (and the ONLY funding for Rt.1 revitalization) the credit should cease upon sale of the property.

2.) With only \$250,000 per year available, I would recommend reducing the maximum credit awarded to \$75-- \$80,000 to allow more participation which equates to more visual improvement. It was painful to see a recent \$100,000 credit go to a marijuana dispensary.

3.) For maximum visual improvement, emphasis/priority should be given to parcels directly on Rt 1 with substantial frontage on Rt.1 rather than ones which may barely touch it or have minimal frontage compared with lot depth (i.e. narrow and very deep rectangular lot or triangular lot with just a point on Rt. 1).

4.) If a totally new structure is built (either where no structure existed previously or where the existing building has fallen into disrepair and is being completely replaced) in an area with no sub-area plan, then the surrounding community should have an opportunity to be informed and comment with a pre-submission meeting. North Laurel-Savage continues to have NO sub-area plan despite several abortive attempts by DPZ and continues to face the ill effect of having 'whatever is proposed' being approved without regard to a comprehensive plan for the area. I believe Elkridge may be the only third of the Rt 1 corridor which has a sub-area plan. It is disturbing that as a result Elkridge has the separate MAP20.129D which qualifies properties not adjacent to or

even visible from Rt 1, further watering down the desired reduction of visual blight on US 1.

5.) Aggregation of extremely narrow lots has long been considered a prescription for reducing a “hodge-podge” appearance south of Whiskey Bottom Road. Many of these are automotive-oriented multigenerational family businesses. Rather than continuing to pressure out these businesses, they should be encouraged to work with surrounding business neighbors to achieve a more unified appearance through use of this tax credit. Adopting a coordinated painting scheme, uniformity of signage or fencing styles, etc. could go a long way to providing an attractive ‘auto park’ appearance.

6.) I would encourage development of a means to spread the funds or number of projects equally among all three sections of US 1 (Rt 32 and South; Rt 32 to Rt 100; Rt 100 and North).

7.) Market, market, market the availability of this credit to ALL qualifying property owners, not just those most familiar to the EDA. Small and minority businesses should be provided an equitable opportunity to participate.

Thank you for considering these ideas. I would welcome discussing them with you further.

Please pass my thanks along to the Finance Department/DPZ/ETA for providing the support data on previous use of the grants and maps of the available properties. I would just suggest that in the future the maps be in a format which can be enlarged on the computer screen. For anyone with visual limitations like myself, much of the extremely valuable information was inaccessible.

Best regards,

Susan Garber

Savage/North Laurel