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Below is a copy of my testimony from the Council's May 9th hearing.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Bryan Weinstein, and I've been a concerned resident of Ellicott City for 4 years.

According to the CDC, about a quarter of adults in the US have some sort of disability, and that number is going to keep growing as our population ages. It's also the only minority group that any one of us can, and probably will, eventually be part of.

The Americans with disabilities act is a civil rights law that makes it illegal to discriminate against a person based on their ability. Currently, the County has elements within newly built as well as older county-owned buildings, parking lots, parks, sidewalks, and bus stops that are not accessible based on the required federal, State, and County standards. By having non-compliant infrastructure in our county, some of which creates barriers to accessibility which prevents people with disabilities from safely accessing these facilities, we are unintentionally discriminating against a large and growing subset of our residents, and potentially setting ourselves up for costly problems, either from the Department of Justice or from residents who are discriminated against.

When the ADA was enacted in 1990, it required municipalities to develop an ADA Transition plan where they would assess their programs, policies, and infrastructure for compliance with the ADA and develop a plan to remove these barriers to accessibility. It is my understanding that the County developed one decades ago but it is extremely out of date and is therefore no longer viable.

I propose that the county dedicate funds in the FY25 budget to re-assess all their current infrastructure to determine what accessibility and general safety issues exist and develop the required ADA Transition Plan to help us mitigate these barriers to accessibility so people of all abilities can fully and safely enjoy all that Howard County has to offer.

Thank you,
Bryan Weinstein