

NEWS RELEASE

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Preservation Maryland Supports Reasonable Amendments to Howard County's Historic District Demolition Plan

Ellicott City, MD – [October 1, 2018] In advance of this evening's meeting of the Howard County Council, during which funding for demolition of historic structures will be considered, Preservation Maryland issued the following statement:

Tonight's vote of the Howard County Council will resonate for decades to come. According to Howard County's own data, demolishing historic structures in Ellicott City will not make the community safer and will still leave 4'-to-6' of dangerous, swift water on lower Main Street during a flood event. Preservation Maryland joins with 74 percent of Howard County voters in calling on the county to pursue alternatives to this costly and rushed plan.

"Faster is not always better – and in the case of Ellicott City, it's certainly not safer. Rushed legislation for the sake of passing something is not good governance, and we implore the members of the Howard County Council to move forward with funding for proven stormwater mitigation strategies, while tabling the divisive and unproven demolition component of this plan," explained Preservation Maryland Executive Director Nicholas Redding.

Support for Amendments 2, 3, 4 & 5 to TAO1-FY2019

Preservation Maryland supports the reasonable amendments introduced that address critical gaps in the existing legislation and would prevent the wholesale destruction of the Ellicott City historic district. The amendments would, among other necessary corrections, require the county to abide by applicable federal historic preservation law, establish a robust and transparent public engagement process for any future demolition of historic structures, and require a professional review of alternatives to demolition, including tunnel boring which could eliminate all floodwater on Main Street. An additional amendment would protect the taxpayer's interest by ensuring that the purchase price paid by the County does not exceed the pre-flood value of the property and requires that any flood insurance proceeds are considered when purchasing properties

Engineering Third-Party Review Forthcoming

In addition to support for these reasonable amendments, Preservation Maryland is also pleased to announce it will soon release a professional third-party review of Howard County's

demolition proposal. The review, funded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and conducted by the nationally recognized firm of Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc., is an unbiased and professional review of Howard County's proposal that provides recommendations for additional study and opportunities for substantive reduction of floodwaters on Main Street.

Common Sense Compromise is Still Possible

Preservation Maryland stands prepared to work in partnership with Howard County to improve life safety *and* save the character defining features of Ellicott City. Demolition is irreversible and threatens the future economic recovery of this important place. The organization remains committed to the future of this community and is considering all options moving forward to protect this crown jewel of Maryland.

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Since 1931, Preservation Maryland has worked to protect the places, stories, and communities in Maryland that matter. As a non-profit organization, it works with partners across the state to accomplish this important mission and protect the Best of Maryland. Find out more at presmd.org.