



Chair Ann Wheeler
 Supervisor Victor S. Angry
 Supervisor Jeanine Lawson
 Supervisor Yesli Vega
 Supervisor Pete Candland
 Supervisor Kenny A. Boddye
 Supervisor Andrea O. Bailey
 Supervisor Margaret Angela Franklin

January 13, 2022

Dear Chair Wheeler, and Supervisors Angry, Lawson, Vega, Candland, Boddye, Bailey, and Franklin:

We, the below signers, write to you today to urge you to delay the planned in-person and the remote option community meetings on the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District Comprehensive Review and Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) currently planned for Thursday, January 20 and Thursday, January 27, 2022.

These community meetings have not been adequately advertised to the public. Nine days is wholly inadequate, and even more so amid the uncertainty with the latest surge in the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of clarity about safety procedures and the county's arrangements for virtual engagement. The current meeting arrangements do not offer equal access to all your constituents. At the same time, the process for accepting and publishing public comments and concerns is unclear and of concern.

For good reason, Prince William County residents are deeply concerned about contracting COVID. Many people are currently recovering, many others are helping family members recover, and many more are supporting co-workers who are recovering. On January 10, 2022, Governor Ralph Northam issued a 30-day state of emergency due to the extreme surge in COVID cases statewide. In her January 7 email newsletter, Chair Ann Wheeler says, "Our COVID-19 community transmission rate and positivity rate are staggering..."

County residents should not feel like they must choose between contracting COVID or engaging in the public process on an issue with direct and long-lasting impacts. Furthermore, holding a public meeting at a time when so many people cannot participate undermines the democratic process and public confidence.

At this time, details on how you will keep staff and constituents safe for those who are able to attend are uncertain and the remote opportunities are unclear. Limiting attendance to in-person meetings does not offset these concerns. County officials must do better to both protect residents from COVID-19 and ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate safely in public comment processes.

We are also very concerned about the lack of clarity in the process for how comments at in-person and online public meeting will be collected and published. Currently members of the public feels like their concerns are going unheard. To rectify this problem, county officials should clarify the comment collection process and fully explain how these comments will be published, considered and incorporated into the final plan.

For these reasons, we urge the Board of Supervisors to delay in-person and virtual community meetings on the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District Comprehensive Review and Digital Gateway CPA until a time when the public can be adequately engaged, ample notice can be given, in-person gatherings are safe, meeting options are clearly established, and the process for accepting and publishing comments is clarified.

Sincerely,

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