Sustainability Commission Resolution on Activity Centers and High-Capacity Transit in Relation to Sustainability and Resilience Goals

WHEREAS, Prince William County has adopted goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and become a Climate Ready Region; and

WHEREAS, the County's Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan (CESMP) encourages transit-oriented development (TOD), improved public transportation, and reduced vehicle travel as a major method to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs); and

WHEREAS, although Prince William County and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) use similar terminology regarding activity centers and transit, there are key differences that potentially affect land-use, transportation planning, and achievement of the CESMP goals; and

WHEREAS, MWCOG uses the terms “high-capacity transit” and “regional activity center” in relation to their recommendation that 75% of new residential development be within ¼ mile of High-Capacity Transit and/or Regional Activity Centers to encourage transit ridership and reduce GHGs;

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Comprehensive Plan has twenty-four “Activity Centers” in various areas around the county, some far from transit, while MWCOG has identified thirteen “Regional Activity Centers” in Prince William County centered mostly around high-capacity transit nodes; and

WHEREAS, consistent definitions and common terminology are important for making informed development decisions and achieving the County and region’s sustainability goals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sustainability Commission recommends that the Board of County Supervisors direct County staff to coordinate with MWCOG and other regional groups to:

1. Incorporate MWCOG terminology and intent for Regional Activity Centers and High-Capacity Transit into the Prince William County Comprehensive Plan.

2. Distinguish between Regional Activity Centers and Activity Centers as the term is currently used by PWC, and between Transit and High-Capacity Transit in order to reduce confusion between the terms and make it clear that the goal is to move toward concentrating larger percentages of future residential development closer to High-Capacity Transit and Regional Activity Centers and not to PWC designated Activity Centers all around the county.

3. Measure results to determine whether development and transportation decisions are advancing the County's sustainability and resilience goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission recommends that county staff produce a report on findings and recommended actions for consideration by the Board.