



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

February 16, 2024

Emma Martin
Associate Planner
Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Use Permit Amendment for Open Air Market at Metropolitan Park UPER24-00002

Dear Ms. Martin,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the use permit amendment for the Farmer's Market at MetPark. We welcome the Farmer's Market at Metropolitan Park, but we would like to state our concerns regarding traffic congestion in this area, especially with the requested new hours and extra day for the Farmer's Market.

Due to the location, which is adjacent to the Costco along Fern St., this is an area of the neighborhood that currently experiences a significant traffic bottleneck, most notably on weekends but also on weekdays, coinciding with the timing of the market. The closure of these additional streets and expansion of the Farmer's Market will add to the stress placed on Fern St., Eads St., 15th St S, 12th St S., and other surrounding roads.

This traffic congestion has been an ongoing dilemma for the neighborhood and we are concerned that the approval of this amendment, which only references parking provisions for market patrons, will worsen the existing situation. The transportation assessment included in the amendment does not make reference to any of the roads outside of Metropolitan Park and does not take into account the current road use, crowding, or potential safety issues that may arise given the increased traffic to this location.

As stated in the amendment, the assumption is that "the majority of patrons will walk or bike to the market from the surrounding apartment buildings or utilize widely available nearby public transportation options." However, we feel it is neglectful not to consider the surrounding area and the impact the road closures will have on it, especially considering existing congestion and the draw that Costco has on the local and extended community, bringing a wide range of people to the area from across the DMV.

Sincerely yours,

Rachel Hicks, AHCA President, & AHCA Executive Board