

TOWN OF RIVERDALE PARK

Office of the Mayor

July 25, 2022

The Honorable Angela D. Alsobrooks
Prince George's County Executive
1301 McCormick Drive, Suite 4000
Largo, Maryland 20774

The Honorable Members of the Prince George's County Council
1301 McCormick Drive, 2nd Floor
Largo, Maryland 20774

Re: Urgent Action Requested

Dear County Executive Alsobrooks and Members of the Prince George's County Council:

As I hope and trust you already know, the Town of Riverdale Park continues to have serious and urgent concerns about the condition and capacity of Prince George's County stormwater management infrastructure and the flooding that impacts Town residents and businesses when such infrastructure fails to protect our residents from stormwater. The Town has communicated these concerns formally and informally in the past and the respective conditions of the County's stormwater infrastructure remain, as of this writing, relatively stagnant.

The Town of Riverdale Park Mayor and Council, at the July 11th Legislative Meeting, adopted Resolution 2022-R-13, establishing a formal Town statement in reference to the urgent need for Prince George's County to design, fund, and construct new and improved infrastructure along the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River (including Wells Run and other tributaries), both within and upstream of the Town of Riverdale Park, as well as at scattered sites throughout the Town; and to more clearly establish the Town's position, that County's permitting systems and processes require modification for the successful use of the County's Municipal Storm Water Participation Agreement Program.

For background, the Town is situated along the banks of the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River and most of the Town's land mass sits at the low point surrounded by three municipalities, (College Park, University Park, and Hyattsville) and an unincorporated portion of the County commonly referred to as East Riverdale. Only the Town of Edmonston, which is situated on the southern border of Riverdale Park along the Anacostia River, sits at a lower elevation (19.69' above sea level). A concrete-lined channel (Wells Run) bisects Riverdale Park from west to east where it empties into the Anacostia River, and another unnamed tributary bisects the portion of Riverdale Park to the east of the river.

The real estate development over the last several decades, primarily west and north of the Town's corporate boundaries, has increased impervious surfaces resulting in higher volumes of water runoff. Climate change is also creating more severe storms and increased run-off, and these storms cause significant anxiety among Town residents, business owners, the residents of our neighboring municipalities, and commuters who rely on the arterial roadways and public transportation network through Riverdale Park. When flooding occurs, both public and private

property is impacted. This includes flooding on the arterial roadways and on pedestrian routes to public transportation.

Riverdale Park is part of a vital transportation network, and area flooding not only impacts Town residents and businesses but also those throughout the area. State Route 1 (Baltimore Avenue) is on the west side of potential project areas, State Route 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) is on the east side of potential project areas and State Route 410 (East-West Highway) runs parallel to Wells Run and other unnamed channels that bisect the Town. Additionally, the Purple Line, a light rail transit system that is currently under construction in Riverdale Park, will run through the floodplain of the Anacostia River.

Prince George's County is responsible for stormwater management including the maintenance of existing infrastructure, the design, funding, and construction of new and upgraded infrastructure, and the funding and acceptance of infrastructure improvements for the majority of that infrastructure that do not currently meet the County's own guidelines. The Town, through the Mayor and Council and staff, have repeatedly sought action on the part of the County to increase the frequency and extent of channel maintenance, to fund additional stormwater facility upgrades and new infrastructure, and to properly solve ongoing flooding problems. The Town has utilized the Municipal Storm Water Participation Agreement Program to assist the County in fulfilling the County's responsibilities and to bring much needed and long-awaited relief to Town residents. Overall, the County's response has lacked the sense of urgency that the Town's residents, Mayor and Council, and staff team believe is required, and the Prince George's County's Municipal Storm Water Participation Agreement Program is cumbersome and in need of an overhaul to ensure timely and effective infrastructure improvements.

Attached to this communication, please find a copy of Resolution 2022-R-13, along with a list of stormwater infrastructure projects that the Town has previously asked the County to consider for design, funding, and construction; and additional potential projects to improve existing and construct new stormwater management infrastructure.

The Town recognizes the size and scope of the tasks fronting the of the County, county-wide, and the time needed to design, fund, and construct new or improved stormwater infrastructure. However, from discussions with County staff, it seems that only a tiny portion of the County's \$176 Million American Rescue Plan Act funding is allocated for stormwater improvements throughout the County.

In addition to designing, funding, and constructing stormwater infrastructure, the Town strongly urges the County Executive and the County Council to implement short-term programs to mitigate flooding impacts for Town residents and businesses. Potential short-term mitigation efforts could include (1) sizeable grants to assist homeowners in floodproofing their homes and (2) the installation of sensor networks to provide early warning to residents in flood prone areas that a flood is likely to happen.

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The Town of Riverdale Park is seeking urgent and decisive action from Prince George's County to provide relief to residents and businesses that have been continuously impacted by flooding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alan K. Thompson", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alan K. Thompson
Mayor

CC:
District 22 Delegation
City of College Park Mayor and Council
Town of Edmonston Mayor and Council
City of Hyattsville Mayor and Council
Town of University Park Mayor and Council

COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF RIVERDALE PARK, MARYLAND
Resolution 2022-R-13

Introduced by: CM David Lingua

Date Introduced: July 11, 2022

Date Adopted: July 11, 2022

Date Effective: July 11, 2022

FOR THE PURPOSE OF establishing a formal Town statement to Prince George's County in reference to the urgent need for the County to design, fund, and construct new and improved infrastructure along the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River (including Wells Run and other tributaries), both within and upstream of the Town of Riverdale Park, as well as at scattered sites throughout the Town; and to more clearly establish the Town's position, that County permitting systems and processes require modification for successful use of the County's Municipal Storm Water Participation Agreement Program.

WHEREAS, the Town is situated along the banks of the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River and most of the Town's land mass sits at the low point surrounded by three municipalities, (College Park, University Park, and Hyattsville) and an unincorporated portion of the County commonly referred to as East Riverdale; and

WHEREAS, only the Town of Edmonston, which is situated on the southern border of Riverdale Park along the Anacostia River, sits at a lower elevation (19.69' above sea level). A concrete channel (Wells Run) bisects Riverdale Park from west to east where it empties into the Anacostia River; and

WHEREAS, the Town has provided to the County thirteen (13) potential improvement projects and two (2) more fully developed projects only to have the concepts rejected; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Riverdale Park has more frequently experienced extreme flooding events, including most recently the floods of September 2020 and July 2022, that will likely only become more commonplace as a result of climate change; and

WHEREAS, Prince George's County is primarily responsible for public stormwater management infrastructure that includes the maintenance of existing infrastructure, the design, funding, and construction of new infrastructure, and the funding and acceptance of infrastructure improvements that do not currently meet the County's guidelines; and

WHEREAS, Prince George's County's Municipal Storm Water Participation Agreement Program is necessary for municipalities to assist the County in fulfilling the County's responsibilities, but that the program is cumbersome, not timely, and needs to be amended to ensure timely infrastructure improvements;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Town of Riverdale Park hereby officially call upon Prince George's County to design, fund, and construct new and improved stormwater infrastructure along Wells Run and the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia

River, both within and upstream of the Town of Riverdale Park, as well as at scattered sites throughout the Town, and to modify the Storm Water Infrastructure Municipal Participation Agreement Program to match the urgency at which such project completion is required; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Mayor and Council of the Town of Riverdale Park call upon Prince George's County to immediately implement substantial programs that at a minimum assist residents in flood-proofing their homes, and for the County to install sensor networks to alert residents of likely flood conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Mayor and Council of the Town of Riverdale Park call upon Prince George's County to provide written status updates and/or progress reports to the Town at not less than quarterly intervals, in particular for the long-delayed Nine Pond project, until such time that the threat of stormwater damage to the residences, businesses, and public areas of the Town has been greatly reduced.

ATTEST:

COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF
RIVERDALE PARK


Jessica E. Barnes, Town Clerk


Alan K. Thompson, Mayor

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Attachment 2

The Town has asked the County staff to design, construct, and fund projects such as the following:

1. Wells Run Culvert along East-West Highway

Requested action: Upgrade the culvert to increase flow and create strategically placed retention areas.

2. M-NCPPC Riverdale Community Park on 51st Avenue

Requested action: Create a dry channel retention area for flood waters.

3. 54th Avenue and Jefferson Street

Requested action: Analyze existing inlets and related piping, upgrade as appropriate

4. 5305 Riverdale Road – Riverwood Apts., 5309 Riverdale Road – Park Tanglewood Apts., and 5600 54th Avenue – The Swift Riverdale Park Apts.

Requested action: In collaboration with private property owners, upgrade infrastructure as current facilities terminate at grade.

5. Riverdale Neighborhood Park, bounded by Tuckerman Street, Sheridan Street, and 46th Avenue

Requested action: On M-NCPPC park property create a surge stormwater retention area and redesign Wells Run culvert into a more natural waterway.

6. 4700 Block of Oglethorpe Street (between Lafayette and 48th Avenues) and 5910 48th Avenue

Requested action: Design, fund, and construct upgraded infrastructure as the existing backyard drain system floods area homes; and the lack of inlets leads to stormwater breaching the curb and additional properties.

7. Taylor Road near pumping station in Edmonston

Requested action: Area study to develop projects to mitigate frequent flooding and ensure appropriate maintenance and operation of the pumping station.

8. Wells Run under Maryland Avenue (aka Rhode Island Avenue)

Requested action: This culvert pinch point leads to water backing up and flooding upstream in the area of #5 above. Address pinch point in conjunction with water retention area.

9. 48th Avenue – dead ends at the bridge

Requested action: Obsolete 48th Avenue bridge dead ends over Wells Run creating a choke point at this location in the culvert. Remove the bridge.

10. 6601 Baltimore Avenue, former Army Reserve Center site (between Tuckerman and Underwood Streets)

Requested action: The overall volume of water is an issue for Wells Run. A portion of this property could be used as a retention area. Any project at this location should be developed in coordination with the Town of University Park as the backup floods Baltimore Avenue and west of the site.

11. Residential Properties in the Floodplain north of East West Highway between 51st and Baltimore Avenues experience routine flooding in this area with repetitive losses.

Requested action: Identify possible solutions and implement design, fund, and construct necessary improvements.

12. East West Highway at Beale Circle - water pools and does not drain from the roadway; during heavy rainfall, water flows like a stream through residential parcels; additionally, there are sink holes in the public open space at Beale Circle potentially due to failed or substandard stormwater infrastructure beneath that space.

Requested action: Fix drainpipe beneath public open space and design, fund, and construct possible long-term solutions, including a potential water retention infrastructure on Town property.

13. Scattered locations of inlets below County standards

Requested action: Per the County's map of Riverdale Park Drainage Systems, there are several inlets that do not meet County standards and need to be upgraded – the County's Municipal Participation Program helps to fund upgrades, but the program needs to be modified to be efficient and effective.

Additionally, the Town packaged two large projects for the County to consider for grant funding. These projects included a flood mitigation/infrastructure retrofit along the Wells Run culvert and in an area with localized but severe flooding due to substandard infrastructure. The Town was advised the projects would *not* be included in the grant application, and no other consideration for funding was offered.

Other potential projects include addressing large impervious surfaces, mostly commercial parking lots, that exist between Queensbury Road and East-West Highway to the west of Baltimore Avenue. These areas, constructed years to decades before the County's current high-quality stormwater requirements were in effect, almost certainly contribute to the excess of water flowing into Wells Run. The County should document the impact that these and similar areas

have had on recent flooding events and work in Public-Private Partnership to bring these areas into closer compliance with current regulations.