



STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE
Mayor

THOMAS J. STOSUR
Director, Department of Planning

BETH STROMMEN
Director, Office of Sustainability

Commission on Sustainability
Baltimore City Department of Planning
417 East Fayette Street, Eighth Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: Baltimore Racing Development Memorandum of Understanding and Tree Plan

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

August 9, 2011

Dear Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake :

The Baltimore City Commission on Sustainability has been charged with the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the Sustainability Plan which promotes the environmental, social and economic well-being of the city so that it may continue to thrive for generations to come. Because of this responsibility, we believe that it is our duty to provide advice and direction regarding any actions that may impact the goal of creating a more sustainable Baltimore City for all. As the City continues to prepare for the upcoming Grand Prix events, we at the Sustainability Commission would like to publicly announce our opinion on the impact of the Baltimore Grand Prix on Baltimore's tree canopy.

The City of Baltimore and Baltimore Racing Development (BRD) have worked hard to develop a sustainable plan for the 5-year Baltimore Grand Prix events, which are expected to bring nearly \$250 million more dollars to the City's economy as well as generate an additional \$11 million in tax revenue. In order to prepare for the racing events, the City entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BRD regarding the races' impact on the City's tree canopy. As part of that plan, 31 trees will be removed from along the race route and 55 trees will be planted to replace them. In addition, 139 new trees will be added throughout the downtown area, for a total of 194 trees being replaced or added to the tree canopy.

The Commission stands behind the City's efforts to bolster the local economy and improve the tree canopy and green infrastructure. As it is currently laid out, we believe that the MOU with Baltimore Racing Development is in line with the Commission's objectives for sustainability and restoring our natural urban environment. We feel strongly that all efforts must be taken to ensure that the MOU is carried out as agreed, and that the mitigation of environmental impacts felt by the people of Baltimore City and its landscape are priority for BRD organizers and the Mayor's Office of Economic Development.

We support the City posting the Memorandum of Understanding on both the Office of Sustainability's and Baltimore Racing Development's websites, so that the public may be better informed of the City's efforts to promote sustainable growth. We feel that it is in the best interest of the City to continue to be as transparent as possible with City residents, who are commendably and understandably concerned about the landscape of their City.

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

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We also ask that the MOU not be conditional on the financial success of the Baltimore Grand Prix events and Baltimore Racing Development. In the event that Baltimore Racing Development dissolves as a legal entity, it is important that the conditions of the MOU be fully completed by the City of Baltimore as a guarantee to improve Baltimore's tree canopy. It is essential that the 194 new trees continue to be replaced or added to the downtown area

The Commission pledges to monitor the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, and ensure that it is followed accordingly. We are eager to take advantage of the significant economic and environmental opportunities that await us during this multi-year process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl Casciani".

Cheryl Casciani
Chair, Commission on Sustainability

Cc: Kalliope Parthemos, Deputy Mayor, Economic Development
Colin Tarbert, Deputy Director, Mayor's Office of Economic and Neighborhood Development
Tom Stosur, Director, Baltimore City Department of Planning
Beth Strommen, Director, Baltimore City Office of Sustainability
Erik Dihle, Baltimore City Arborist
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