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July 20, 2025

Planning Commission
City of Rockville
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Mandatory Referral, SP 2025-00512
1307 Seven Locks Road, Montgomery County Diversion Center
Montgomery County, MD

Dear Planning Commission:

I received notice of a Mandatory Referral (STP2025-00512) to the Planning Commission respecting the proposed Montgomery County Diversion Center at 1307 Seven Locks Road (the “Property”).

I am a longtime resident of Rockville who has lived for about 30 years in the Potomac Springs neighborhood near the Property.

The applicant’s Site Plan Level 2 STP Submission states that the Diversion Center “will be a 24/7/365 facility that provides voluntary, short-term stabilization services to individuals experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis.” (Emphasis added.)

I am writing to urge the Commission to ensure that steps are taken to avoid the release of mentally-ill or substance-abusing patients onto Seven Locks Road, where they might wander throughout nearby residential areas and pose a danger to the public or to property.

This is necessary to ensure compatibility with the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Planning Area 13, where the proposed Center would be located.

Policy Recommendation 3 includes working with Montgomery County to “reduce . . . inmate release directly to Seven Locks Road.” (Comprehensive Plan, 374) (emphasis added.) This policy applied to the Detention facility on the same Property, but it logically applies equally to the proposed Diversion Center which did not exist when the Comprehensive Plan was published in 2021.

I am asking the Commission to not approve the pending application unless you ensure that patients are not released onto Seven Locks Road.

I suggest that you address with the Montgomery County government the following questions:

1. What steps will be in place to ensure that patients do not depart or escape from the facility without authorization?
2. How will security operations at the Diversion Center compare to those at the County Detention Center? If security operations will be less robust, what are the implications for the nearby residential community?
3. Will patients be able to sign themselves out and leave the “voluntary” Center whenever they wish?
4. Will patients be released on their own recognizance after treatment?
5. Will every patient be provided transportation out of the area upon release?
6. Will patients be released during nighttime hours?
7. If management of the Diversion Center is contracted out to a DHS contractor, what oversight will be provided for ensuring that patients are not released onto Seven Locks Road?

On security at the Diversion Center, Montgomery County’s website states the following:

What happens to Diversion Center clients once they are discharged?

Diversion Center services will include discharge planning, navigation to appropriate community-based resources, and robust follow-up to ensure that each client connects with the longer-term services and support they need. Upon discharge, all clients will be provided with a variety of transportation options to their next destination.

Diversion Center staff will discharge a client as soon as it is clinically appropriate. However, if clinical staff determine that a client is a danger to themselves or others, they can authorize an emergency petition and transfer the client to the nearest hospital.

How will the Diversion Center impact community safety and security?

The Diversion Center will benefit the safety and security of the Seven Locks community, where thousands of individuals who have interacted with the criminal justice system are released around the clock every year. The Diversion Center’s proximity to Montgomery County’s Central Processing Unit and Detention Center will enable these individuals to easily access stabilization services upon release, instead of being released directly into the community without any support.

As for the Diversion Center’s own security, DHHS will contract with an external vendor through a competitive bidding process to provide 24/7 onsite security services. **The County will solicit community input into security plans throughout the design phase of the project.**

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/DiversionCenter.html> (emphasis added).

The Planning Commission should probe into details, to make sure that these assurances are not just empty platitudes. The website does not answer most of my questions.

Also, the Planning Commission should require information about whether the County has in fact solicited “community input into security plans throughout the design phase of the project;” what input was provided; and how the County has responded.

These requested steps are consistent with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Planning Area 13.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Daniel I. Prywes

cc: Mayor Monique Ashton
Mr. Nelson Ortiz

Nelson Ortiz

From: Nelson Ortiz <nortiz@rockvillemd.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 28, 2025 3:02 PM
To: Nelson Ortiz
Subject: RE: 1307 Seven Locks Road -- Diversion Center

From: Stoddard, Earl P. <Earl.Stoddard@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 6, 2025 11:36 AM
To: Daniel Prywes <dprywes@verizon.net>
Cc: Mariana Cordier <maccordier@gmail.com>; steven.polinger <steven.polinger@gmail.com>; sarawalzak <sarawalzak@yahoo.com>; hrmfisher601@yahoo.com; Martin, Monica <Monica.Martin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Khanjani, Monir <Monir.Khanjani@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: Re: 1307 Seven Locks Road -- Diversion Center

Good Morning Mr. Prywes,

Thank you for your feedback regarding the proposed Diversion Center project currently under review on Seven Locks Rd.

I want to address your specific concern about release of individuals from the Center onto Seven Locks Rd. This concern is one we are keenly aware of and spending considerable planning effort to address, because we fully concur that releasing individuals without a discharge transportation plan serves neither the interests of the community or the clients being served at the Center.

Over the last couple of years, the County and several representatives of your local community have been meeting to discuss this and other issues associated with the Diversion Center. I have taken the liberty of copying several members of the Seven Locks Alliance who have been routinely participating in these meetings, so you don't have to simply take my word for it.

Now, to the specific issue. The County Executive has already made the commitment to the City of Rockville and community that the facility will not open or operate without addressing the transportation issue. To that end, the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) is developing a multi-modal strategy to transport clients that complete services at the facility. While we are still working through the details over the next 18 months before this facility will ever be opened; here is a summary of what we know so far. Discharge planning begins with admission of any client. As a reminder, this will not be a walk-up facility. Clients will be coming in from a limited number of sources. Either they are being arrest diverted or transferred from a hospital or other care facility. If they are facing arrest, they have pending charges that are being held in abeyance subject to their successful completion of treatment, which would include safe transportation at discharge directly to the location indicated in their medically approved discharge plan. If they choose not to continue/complete the services, the originally suspended charges will be reinstated, and they will be escorted to the Correctional facility for processing. Alternatively, clients are being diverted away from Emergency Rooms or transported to the facility by first responders and other DHHS programs based on admissions criteria and acceptance. Those criteria will include escorted transportation requirements to enter the facility; and again, discharges will only occur with safe transportation directly to the location indicated in a discharge plan.

To develop the multi-model transport I alluded to above, there are several tracks being pursued, including the development of County-operated or contracted transportation services to address the 24/7 nature of the facility in tandem with other County 24/7 operations, and perhaps also support with transportation needs for the Correctional facility at Seven Locks Rd. While these modes are being investigated and I cannot say affirmatively at this time exactly how that service will be operated, I want to restate the County's pledge that the facility WILL NOT OPEN absent the development of a transportation strategy that avoids clients being released onto the streets of the community. I am keenly aware of situations where individuals have knocked on doors seeking money for bus fare after release from the Corrections facility. That is not a situation that will be replicated at the Diversion Center.

I am happy to discuss this further. We will also be looking to do another large, hybrid in-person community update in October.

Best,

Earl Stoddard, PhD, MPH, CEM
Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Office of the County Executive
Montgomery County, MD
101 Monroe Street | 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD | 20850
(office) 240-777-2469
(cell) 240-994-0144
earl.stoddard@montgomerycountymd.gov

From: Daniel Prywes <dprywes@verizon.net>
Sent: Saturday, August 2, 2025 4:00 PM
To: Stoddard, Earl P. <Earl.Stoddard@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: 1307 Seven Locks Road -- Diversion Center

You don't often get email from dprywes@verizon.net. [Learn why this is important](#)
[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

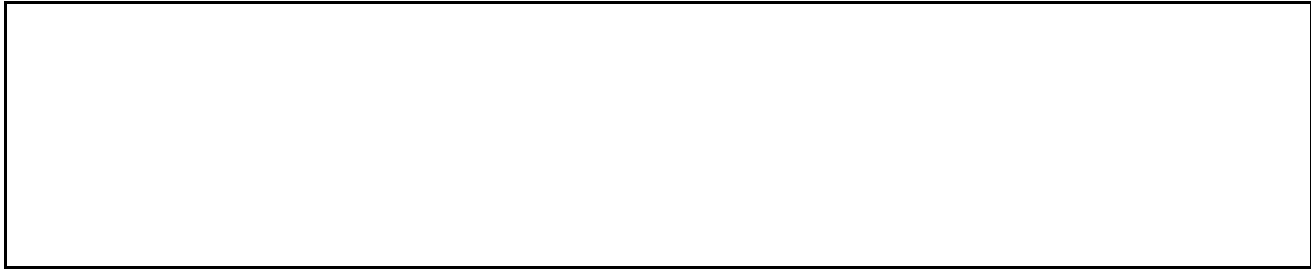
Mr. Stoddard:

I live in a neighborhood near the planned Diversion Center.

Please see my attached letter of concern about the release of patients from the planned Diversion Center.

If you have time, I would be interested in discussing my concerns with you.

Dan Prywes
301 706 4232
dprywes@verizon.net



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

Before The Planning Commission
City of Rockville

Testimony of
Mark Wetterhahn
Related to the Mandatory Referral STP2025-00512
Diversion Center facility

Montgomery County is proposing to renovate an existing County building located at 1307 Seven Locks Road for a new Diversion Center facility and for related site features. I resides less than a mile from the proposed facility at 2 Don Mills Court , Rockville. I take no position on the need or siting of the proposed facility.

Nevertheless, in reviewing the material posted on the Rockville and Montgomery County websites, one issue appears to demand attention should the project be approved. I believe that the Planning Commission should pursue this subject to the extent of its authority over the matter. I believe that the latest fire and safety codes should be applied to this structure, as a minimum, and that contingency plans for fire and physical safety be developed and thoroughly tested. The potential altered states of the individual clients and the physical limitations on egress must be factored in such design and planning. For example, each resting area ("recliner") should be considered a "bed" for implementation of fire protection codes and standards. The safety of clients and staff must be a fundamental concern. .