

**The Civic League for New Castle County
Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred
The Kennett Pike Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 3592
Greenville, DE 19807**

August 20, 2008

The Honorable Christopher A. Coons
New Castle County Executive
New Castle County Government Center
87 Reads Way
New Castle, DE 19720

Re: Northern New Castle County Development Onslaught

Dear County Executive Coons:

As leaders of numerous civic organizations in Northern New Castle County representing thousands of residents, the undersigned are well aware of the many challenges facing our County and confronting your administration. However, nothing so ominously threatens the future of our communities as the wave of development proposals recently placed into motion by the Stoltz organization. The combined effect of these projects in terms of traffic and aesthetics will have an irreversible, devastating effect on the existing character of our nearby communities. We are writing to ask for your leadership and protection in light of the manner in which these proposals are being advanced.

1. Barley Mill Plaza/Greenville Center/Montchanin Road. The so-called "mixed-use" plan for Barley Mill Plaza would result in a development larger than the King of Prussia Mall, with a regionally oriented strip shopping center and surface parking lot facing Route 141, buildings of up to 11 stories towering over adjoining residential communities, and traffic intensive uses such as a high-rise hotel and theatre complex. Concurrently, the Stoltz organization has proposed to increase the Greenville Center with construction of additional office space, a 12 story condominium and a 7 story parking garage. And, at the former Columbia Gas headquarters on Montchanin Road, it proposes to construct a new multi-story office building at edge of the 40 foot wide right-of-way that conflicts with the deed restrictions created at the time when the Columbia Gas site was approved for development years ago.

Since these proposed increases in use are merely pending rather than approved and therefore are not deemed "committed" for traffic purposes, we are concerned that the Stoltz organization plans to seek their concurrent approval without the effect of each one being factored collectively into the impact that they will have on our community. And,

since the Delaware Department of Transportation can base its recommendations on traffic level "E" rather than "D" if requested by the County, we are concerned that the relaxed LOS will be sought by the Stoltz organization to facilitate imprinting its stamp of urban commercialism on this area. Our gratitude towards the Land Use Department and DelDOT for the careful manner in which they each have proceeded in evaluating these proposals to date is immense. The developer has chosen not to involve the community in shaping its response to the Department's initial expressions of disapproval. By carrying our concerns to your door, we hope to be assured that each agency under the purview of the County Executive will know of your expectation that all decisions be rendered with the utmost care and restraint, and that Level of Service D will continue to apply, so that the adverse impact on our communities will be as contained as lawfully possible.

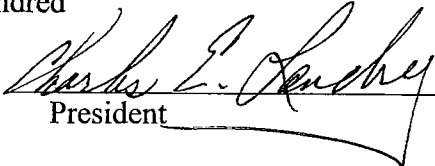
2. Concord Pike at Beaver Valley Road. This proposal originally envisioned a "mixed use" development half the size of the existing Concord Mall called "The Shops at Brandywine Valley." The community was informed that the Stoltz organization was confident of obtaining the required rezoning based on its promise to engage union labor to construct the project, reportedly because a majority of council members outside this area are beholden to the construction unions. Since the intersection of Route 202 at Naamans Road on the north and Beaver Valley Road on the south is already failing, the developer proposed a bizarre pattern of jughandles that the Land Use Department and DelDOT properly rejected, to the community's great relief. As a result, the matter has not yet proceeded to County Council for a vote and, for the first time, the Stoltz organization has begun to interface with the community to make adjustments that the community might find less objectionable. These adjustments include the possible availability of land for construction of a much needed medical facility, and increased residential housing to achieve more nearly the objectives of a mixed use development.

However, we are concerned that DelDOT's characterization of Thompson's Bridge Road as a collector road, as reflected on the record proposed plan for The Shops at Brandywine Valley, is the first step in eliminating the pastoral quality of the Brandywine Valley between Route 52 and Route 202 from Talleyville out to the State line. To assure that the combined effects of these changes will not destroy the Brandywine Valley and produce gridlock on Route 141, Route 52, The Tyler McConnell Bridge, Route 202 and interconnecting roads, we believe that the County should request and that DelDOT should undertake a regional traffic study of the sort already performed along Route 40 and for the Southern New Castle County central region. Here again, we are writing to implore you to press for a study of this sort and to emphasize meanwhile with all County agencies the continued need for a careful and conservative response to the Route 202/Beaver Valley Road proposal and other Stoltz organization proposals so that the developer will understand the importance of working with the community in the formulation of plans that will dramatically impact area residents and businesses.

Since a letter of this sort can only summarize concerns and thus omits many important details and strategies, we very much hope to meet with you at your soonest possible convenience in the next few days to address these matters. Please let us know as soon as possible what dates would be possible for you. Thank you for your anticipated leadership in addressing these matters which, if allowed to proceed unchecked under your administration, will forever change the character of Northern New Castle County.

Respectfully,

Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine
Hundred

By: 
President

Civic League For New Castle County

By: 
President

The Kennett Pike Association, Inc.

By: 
Acting President

cc: The Honorable John J. Cartier, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable William Tansey, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Robert S. Weiner, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Carolann P. Wicks, Secretary of Transportation
Mr. George Haggerty, Manager, Land Use Department
Mr. James Smith, Manager, Land Use Department