



TO: Mayor Buckley and City Council
FROM: Annapolis Environmental Commission
DATE: April 15, 2025
RE: Annapolis Environmental Commission Demonstration Program to Build Green Roofs on City Bus Shelters Considerations

Dear Mayor Buckley and Members of City Council:

The City of Annapolis Environmental Commission (AEC) reviewed and discussed the R-2-25 Demonstration Program to Build Green Roofs on City Bus Shelters at our February 26, 2025, meeting. We understand the Environmental Matters Committee, as of their March 13 meeting, have postponed consideration of this project until additional financial estimates and other data points are received from city staff.

While the AEC acknowledges green roofs have potential environmental benefits, we believe there are additional considerations the City Council needs to consider before any future decision.

- Bus stops may not be the most suitable candidates for green roofs, given their small size and distance between each other. Green roofs are generally more effective when applied to larger structures that can offer a more significant environmental return on investment. Cities worldwide have adopted minimum thresholds for green roof installations because research shows the environmental benefit is insignificant when a green roof is less than 100m^2 ($1,076\text{ft}^2$)¹. A bus stop, by comparison, is too small to generate a meaningful environmental impact relative to the fixed costs of initial installation and ongoing maintenance. For green roofs to be sustainable, there needs to be a balance between environmental benefit and the economic costs associated. Green roofs require indefinite maintenance. It is also important to consider the environmental emissions generated from the maintenance of these green roofs when evaluating the cost benefit ratio.
- Foremost, the AEC discussed the fact that the public transportation in the City of Annapolis is, as the July 2024 Comprehensive Plan states “an available but underinvested tool that could be far better leveraged to improve mobility in Annapolis.” We ask the City Council to consider that instead of funding small (worthy) demonstration projects, that funds may be better spent addressing systemic public transportation issues. While there are several excellent public transportation options within the historical downtown area and a great deal of focus on improving bike routes throughout the entire city, public bus transportation options are limited and, when utilized, very slow to move passengers to their destinations making them unattractive for many potential users.

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2949736125000053>



In conclusion, the AEC thanks the City Council for its consideration of the Commission's views. We look forward to working collaboratively with City staff and the community on innovative initiatives that improve both the environment and quality of life in Annapolis.

Sincerely,

Cathy Welker

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AEC Chair

Alycia Roberson

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AEC Vice Chair