

Item 10 - Correspondence

From: jpsmbs@aol.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Strathmore Square - Preliminary Plan No.12019018A
Date: Monday, October 12, 2020 10:13:55 AM
Attachments: [Planning Board.wpd](#)

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Comments attached

10400 Strathmore Park Ct. #303
Rockville, Maryland 20852
October 10, 2020

Chair Casey Anderson
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive
14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Strathmore Square, Preliminary Plan No. 120018A

Dear Chair Anderson:

We object to the deletion of the 400 age restricted units in the proposed Strathmore Square development. We believe this deletion is contradictory to the Montgomery County Age Friendly Mission which is, among other things, “To ensure that Montgomery County older adults will have choices of dwelling types to meet the changing needs and preferences of the aging adult population.” The County’s Age Friendly Progress Report 2015-2018 found that the older residential population grew four times faster than the overall increase in population. In that time period, there were 22,000 additional residents 60+ years old. This trend will only continue as more baby boomers reach this age and beyond and are looking for different housing opportunities in the County. The Strathmore Square project will be attractive to seniors because of its proximity to transit and to the cultural activities at Strathmore Hall. The proposed removal of age-restricted units, if approved by the Planning Board, is at the least a lost opportunity, if not a total disregard of the County policy toward providing alternative opportunities for seniors to age in our community.

We also believe the Board should postpone the increase in housing units based on the school census. As of 2021, the projected enrollment in the school cluster appears to allow the maximum number of units the developer has requested. For a project of this magnitude, and with a staged period of development, approval of the additional units should be contingent on a further review of the school census for 2023 or later, depending on the progress of the project, and the impact on the schools of development on other sites in the area, such as White Flint.

Sincerely yours,

James and Madeleine Schaller

cc: Council President Sidney Katz
Council Member Andrew Friedson

From: [Martha Pine](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Comments on October 15, 2020, Planning Board Agenda Item 10
Date: Thursday, October 8, 2020 1:31:37 PM

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Mr. Anderson:

I am writing to comment on the the Strathmore Square, Preliminary Plan No. 12019018A, a request from the developer to amend the existing approval for the development of the property adjoining the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station. As we understand the request, the developer wants to remove the age restriction from 400 dwelling units and also wants to add 909 dwelling units. In addition, they are seeking approval to change the “trigger” for beginning to build the first 300 units on the property and to modify how many parking places they would need to provide for the development. We are offering comments of concern about several parts of the staff’s recommendations and tables in the document posted on-line for this agenda item.

1. The newsletter that the Metro garage contractor shares with our Strathmore Park community each month states that the work to expand and enhance the existing Metro garage will be completed in December 2020, not in the late spring of 2021. Hence, granting an extension to the developer to begin constructing the first 300 units based on the assumption that the garage work will not be complete until May 2021 seems questionable. It is also difficult to see how the current covid-19 situation should be used as a reason to delay that start date as well.
2. Table 1 of the document mentions that fewer parking spaces than the minimum previously specified will now be required. This also seems to be a questionable recalculation of parking spaces needed. The 400 units for which the developer now is requesting no age restriction will no longer predominantly be older folks who have less need for one or multiple cars. In addition, with 909 more dwelling units potentially being approved, one would think that most of those residents would require cars. The county may want to believe that most residents of this developed property will choose to use the Metro, rather than owning a car, but we suspect that will not be the case. People still need cars to venture to places not readily served by rapid transit in the area or locations at a distance from the area served by Metrorail and bus systems.
3. We are concerned that some new formula is now governing how the Planning Board determines if school and other infrastructure capacity should impact decisions about development. In the original approval for this Strathmore Square development, some “magical” calculation suggested that the development would generate the exact number of additional elementary school students that Garrett Park elementary school could accommodate. Now, it seems, it is perfectly OK for the school threshold to reach 120% of capacity and some equally “magical” formula predicts that even the increased numbers of dwelling units, 400 of which would no longer be age-restricted, would not, together with the previously approved units, generate anywhere near the number of students to reach that threshold. Predicting all of this is about as accurate as rolling the dice. Furthermore, crowding schools to 120% of capacity is not wise from an educational point of view.
4. We object to the Planning Board’s practice of allowing the height of buildings to exceed 300 feet in order to accommodate the 15% MPDUs. Such high buildings on the hill above the eastern loop of Tuckerman will loom over the area and effectively block the western sun from reaching the buildings lower on the property and across the street. This practice should be reconsidered in this area where all but one of the existing buildings are 4 stories tall or less.

We would appreciate your sharing our comments with all of the members of the Planning Board.

Sincerely,

Richard and Martha Pine