

Item 4 - Correspondence

From: [Anspacher, David](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: FW: Growth & Infrastructure Policy - Recommendation 3.11
Date: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 11:53:23 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

From: Matthew Gordon <mgordon@sgrwlaw.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 3:09 PM
To: Buckley, Darcy <Darcy.Buckley@montgomeryplanning.org>; Anspacher, David <david.anspacher@montgomeryplanning.org>; Govoni, Lisa <Lisa.Govoni@montgomeryplanning.org>
Cc: Jane Mahaffie <jane.mahaffie@mahaffie.net>
Subject: Growth & Infrastructure Policy - Recommendation 3.11

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Darcy, David and Lisa,

I hope you are doing well. Jane Mahaffie and I were discussing the staff report for the GIP worksession on Thursday and wanted to provide you with some additional context on projects with increased affordable housing.

Jane and I recently worked on a project that plans to provide 100% affordable units (a mix of MPDUs and LIHTC units) and can testify to the challenges with underwriting such a project. While exempting a project with 25/30% MPDUs from off-site mitigation may be too low of a bar, there should be some amount of regulated affordable housing that justifies exempting the market-rate units in a project. It is possible that the right number is 40% or 50% regulated affordable units (by way of example, the County provides a mandatory Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for projects with a minimum of 50% regulated affordable units). The public subsidies available for projects seeking to designate a significant proportion of its units as regulated affordable units are scarce and challenging to obtain. If you don't exempt those projects from off-site mitigation, you are requiring those affordable projects to obtain an additional public subsidy that decrease the likelihood of such a project being delivered (and the public funding may go to another project in a different jurisdiction that is more viable). I think this discussion merits more consideration (again, maybe the threshold is 40-50% regulated affordable units) if the goal is to reduce barriers to delivering affordable housing. The same thing goes for the deeply affordable units (50% AMI or below). If those units are treated the same as a standard MPDU (70% AMI in a high-rise building), there is no County incentive that would draw an applicant to considering reaching this deeper level of affordability.

Thanks,
Matt



Matthew Gordon | Partner | Attorney

mgordon@sgrwlaw.com

Direct: [301-634-3150](tel:301-634-3150) | Office: [301-986-9600](tel:301-986-9600) | Mobile: [301-455-5451](tel:301-455-5451)



Selzer Gurvitch Rabin Wertheimer & Polott, P.C.

4416 East West Highway, Suite 400, Bethesda, MD 20814



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From: [Tekle, Nahom T.](#)
To: [SSCAB](#)
Cc: [Newman, Jacob](#); [Tekle, Nahom T.](#)
Subject: SSCAB Letters of Support to CE, Council, and Montgomery Planning
Date: Wednesday, June 12, 2024 3:16:45 PM
Attachments: [SSCAB letter in support of GIP.pdf](#)
[SSCAB letter in support of Ellsworth Place housing .pdf](#)
Importance: High

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Dear Montgomery County Executive, Councilmembers, and Montgomery Planning Department,

I hope this email finds you well. Please see attached letters from the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board in support of the Ellsworth Place Residential Development project and the Growth & Infrastructure Policy (GIP) for the County Executive, Council, and Planning Department's consideration.

Let me know if you have any questions for the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board members about the contents of their letters.

All the best,

Nahom Tekle (*he/him*)

Community Projects Manager

Montgomery County Government

[Silver Spring Urban District](#) & [Regional Services](#)

1 Veterans Place, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

W: (240) 941-4995

P: (410) 205-0622

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June 11, 2024

TO: County Executive Marc Elrich
CC: Montgomery County Planning Board Members
Montgomery County Council Members

RE: Working draft of changes to the Growth and Infrastructure Plan (2024-28)

Dear County Executive Elrich, Planning Board members, and Council Members:

The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (SSCAB) is pleased to submit our feedback on the County Planning Department's working draft of recommendations for changes to the Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP) for 2024-28. This policy, under various names, has impacted housing development in the county for the past 50 years. It is intended to ensure that developments provide adequate public facilities, particularly with regard to schools and transportation. More recently it was known as the Subdivision Staging Policy and used school populations to impose a series of moratoria on housing starts in much of the county. In 2020, the planning department deeply revised the policy and gave it a new name. Under a County Code requirement, the GIP must be updated every four years and submitted to the County Council for approval.

SSCAB broadly supports these changes and, because of the importance of the GIP, are weighing in early, as the Planning Board reviews the staff's working draft. Our support is rooted in our engagement with Planning Department staff on related issues through our monthly meetings and committee meetings, as well as our meetings with other County agencies on these issues. We feel that the GIP is evolving in a positive direction that will support good growth in the county and, in particular, within our Silver Spring footprint.

The proposed 2024 revisions continue the effort at making the policy clearer and easier to understand and implement. It is also aimed at aligning the GIP with the County's new General Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, and other related County government priorities. We anticipate continuing to weigh in on GIP after the Planning Board review and when it reaches the County Council for review and approval.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective. We look forward to continuing to work with the County Executive, Planning Department staff, and Council Members as the revised GIP moves forward. If you have any questions for members of the SSCAB, please contact the County staff to the SSCAB, Nahom Tekle (nahom.tekle@montgomerycountymd.gov).

Sincerely,

Members of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

June 11, 2024

TO: County Executive Marc Elrich
CC: Montgomery County Planning Board Members
Montgomery County Council Members

RE: Support for proposed development of housing at Ellsworth Place

Dear County Executive Elrich, Planning Board members, and Council Members:

The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (SSCAB) is pleased to submit this letter of support for the proposed development of housing at Ellsworth Place by Avante Ellsworth Venture I, LLC, c/o GBT Realty Corporation (see [May 2024 update to Sketch Plan No. 320240060](#)). SSCAB met with representatives of GBT Realty in December 2023 to learn about the project and ask questions. The additional information now available from the Planning Board's staff report affirms our support for this much-needed housing in Downtown Silver Spring (DTSS).

The proposal calls for up to 450 residential apartments, 15 percent of which would be Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) per the County's Inclusionary Zoning policy. Reasons for our support include:

- **Silver Spring, especially the area within SSCAB's footprint, needs more rental housing in order to slow the growth of rents.** Montgomery County's renters are in a housing crisis, with fully half paying more for their housing than they can afford. This problem is especially acute in Silver Spring, where a higher than average proportion of our neighbors are renters.
- **Our area is desperately in need of more below-market rent options such as MPDUs** to serve our economically diverse population. We all value the diversity of Silver Spring, and that requires more housing that our neighbors can afford based on their incomes.
- **This project will contribute positively to the County's climate change mitigation goals through increased density, proximity to transit, and limited new parking spots.** SSCAB has long supported these goals and advocated for new housing development to play a bigger role in meeting our climate goals. We support the Planning Department staff's condition – laid out in the sketch plan report linked above – to incorporate Bird-Safe Design elements. We strongly support the inclusion of bicycle parking and encourage the developers to consider providing access to charging stations for e-bikes.

- **We are enthusiastic that construction will mostly not restrict people’s movement around the site or access to Ellsworth Place businesses.** DTSS has been under perpetual construction for more than 20 years now. That delivers immense benefits to those of us who live and work here, but it can be frustrating. This project’s unique ability to build atop an existing building is appealing. We support the Planning Department staff’s condition that the developer conduct a noise analysis.
- **This project would contribute to DTSS’s and the wider Silver Spring Urban District’s strength and vibrancy.** This area’s success as an economic engine for our area, as well as a jobs center, space for community events, and nightlife destination depends on a robust, growing population.

SSCAB members also expressed some reservations. We share these reservations not to undermine our support for the Ellsworth Place housing development, but to encourage the Planning Board and the firms developing the site to consider these issues as the process moves forward:

- **Accessibility.** We want to see this building go “above and beyond” on accessibility. As one of the older urban centers in Montgomery County, much of our housing is inaccessible to disabled people and older residents. We encourage the developers to implement universal design and accessibility best practices in every aspect of this construction, and urge them to consider using the development as an opportunity for model accessible housing. If Planning Department staff or members of the developer’s team would like to speak to SSCAB members with disabilities about our perspective, we would be happy to connect.
- **Parking.** Members of the CAB have different views. Some strongly prefer that few, if any, new parking spots be included, and be designated for disabled drivers or provide electric vehicle charging stations. Others are concerned that adding the maximum number of units will make parking harder for shoppers and workers.
- **Three-bedroom apartments.** We know that the plan does not yet include a specific number of apartments or their composition. We encourage the developers to include three-bedroom homes for families, something that very few of the newest multifamily developments here have provided.
- **Energy efficiency and green building practices.** We support the Planning Department staff’s provisions in the most recently approved sketch plan.

Finally, we ask that Planning Department staff share this feedback with the appropriate people on the developer’s team.

Thank you for your consideration of our overall support for this project and our limited concerns. We look forward to continuing to work with the Planning Department staff – as well as the County Executive, where relevant – as this development moves toward final approval in 2024 and 2025. If you have any questions for members of the SSCAB, or to speak to members with

disabilities about housing accessibility, please contact the County staff to the SSCAB, Nahom Tekle (nahom.tekle@montgomerycountymd.gov).

Sincerely,

Members of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board