

Testimony in Opposition to CR-111-2017

Good evening. I'm doing double duty this evening, speaking on behalf of the Savage Community Association, Post Office Box 222, Savage 20763 as well as the Howard County Citizen's Association. I'm Susan Garber.

It struck me as ironic that this particular resolution and APFO are both under consideration on the same evening. You see for decades our general plan has been pushing high-density development in the East because that's where the public facilities are. Well that may have been true in the 1970s, but it hasn't been true for decades. It has become the land that time-- and Howard County-- forgot for decades.

With no plan in place for the area, it's not surprising that even Baltimore City's Housing Commission will no longer move residents from their projects into North Laurel, saying that the area doesn't present an opportunity for their clients. It's not surprising; but it **is** embarrassing.

So now here's our next surprise..... a thousand unit development proposed as a transit-oriented development when there isn't really even a transit station there. There's a platform and there's a flag. You can wave it and the train will stop. That to me is the definition of a second class facility.

Although these council members, the current planning director, and the current County Executive were not the ones who pushed for this transit-oriented development initially, never the less, here we are. What are we going to do with another thousand units whose residents will be second-class citizens in this part of the County?

The transit stop is described as a Limited Service Stop: three stops in the morning, three stops in the evening. Golly Gee, if you park your car there in the morning and you return at a time there is not a scheduled Laurel Park evening stop, you are now 2500 yards from the station and have to get back to your car. Does this mean in addition to funding the station and the parking lot, Howard County will also need to fund a pathway to connect the two stations-- including a bridge across the Little Patuxent?

There are a lot of things that need to be looked at here. The parking lot we would be buying through this special financing is only used 5 days a week because the train only runs 5 days a week. That seems like two-sevenths of the money is just going to waste or are we subsidizing race track patrons?

I think what I found most disturbing in my conversations with the developer is the fact that they admitted to me that they *don't really care* if they get this special financing and TIF or not. They already got the zoning, a transit-oriented development, without the T in the TOD. If you don't provide them with special financing and the station isn't built they're still going to get a thousand additional units in North Laurel. And I'll point out that these units are to the **east** of Route 1 which traditionally has been preserved for commercial and manufacturing development. Who

really wants to live in a 2-over-2 stacked townhouse? Isn't that actually just a three or four floor walk-up? Is this the best that Howard County can do? Is this the image we want to project?

Do we really, really need to be adding insult to injury in the Southeast without giving this matter a very full consideration? I don't know, as the Developer said, that there's anything you can do at this point because the zoning has been given and furthermore our Department of Planning and Zoning has passed their development plan for these thousand units. The residential units come first; and if and ever, the train station comes much later.

Thank you for your time and attention.