



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961... The Voice of the People of Howard County

Susan Garber, Board member, speaking on behalf of the HCCA in opposition to CB 8-2021.

While DPZ's proposal is superior to that of the petitioner's we ultimately believe it is inappropriate to consider such a wide reaching ZRA when the General Plan process is already underway. Therefore we urge you to vote NO on CB8-2021.

There's a lot of potential profit in the development industry precisely because there can also be a lot of risk. However in HoCo it appears a developer can simply reduce his or her risk through the use of ZRAs. Start a large project under a particular zone, and then, if conditions change, simply have that zoning regulation modified to protect you, to assure the profit level you desire. Some might say: "What's the harm in that? A man has a right to make a profit. That's business." What's wrong is the harm it does to an area—the way it can reduce resident's quality of life due to inadequate public facilities to accommodate the ever greater residential density requested to make that profit margin.

This scenario has been played one too many times for this Council to even consider it while the development of the next general plan is underway. CAC doesn't need another band-aid, it needs a comprehensive overhaul or elimination, as was considered in the Clarion study. There is a reason it is the most revised and reviled zone.

Sometimes one reaches too far, takes too many bites at the apple. Trying to justify the need for yet another change in the rules based on a self-commissioned market study IS that one bite too many.

Developers always say they need predictability. So does the County and its residents. HoCo anticipated certain funds to be generated from CAC, yet with each change those numbers decrease and tax payers are on the hook to provide facilities and services demanded by the new population. And then there is the loss from the decrease in 'fees' for reducing the ratio of commercial space to residential.

We urge you NOT to approve this request. It will in turn affect so many additional CAC properties—all once again in the Route One corridor--which still lacks its own comprehensive plan.

The public is still stinging from the manner in which the last ZRA affecting CAC was handled. CB2-2016, a substantially amended bill where without a PB hearing or DPZ analysis or public input--- the bill passed, was vetoed, and over-ridden. All at a cost of well over a million dollars in lost revenue to the County. Please, let's not play that game again. Vote NO. There is no urgency to do this while HoCo by Design is underway. The route one corridor should provide the benefit from an industrial, manufacturing, and commercial tax base, NOT a residential tax burden.

Thank you.