

From: [Greg Smith](#)
To: [Clerk of the Council; Brown, Donna J.](#)
Cc: sustainhyattsville@gmail.com
Subject: Suffrage Point DSP 21001 - Supplemental Comments Regarding Climate Change and Floodplains
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 4:58:15 PM
Attachments: [Suffrage Point DSP 21001 - Supplemental Comments re. Density - Sustainable Hyattsville - 20240304.pdf](#)
Importance: High

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Dear Ms. Brown,

Please confirm receipt of the attached comments.

Sincerely,

Greg Smith
(240) 605-9238

March 4, 2024

Donna J. Brown
Clerk of the County Council
Wayne K. Curry Administration Building
1301 McCormick Drive
Largo, MD 20774

Via electronic delivery

Item: Suffrage Point – Detailed Site Plan 21001

Supplemental Comments Regarding Climate Change

Request that the District Council Reverse the Prince George's County Planning Board's Approval of Detailed Site Plan 21001 (PGCPB 2023-15A)

Dear Ms. Brown,

Save Our Sustainable Hyattsville (Sustainable Hyattsville) respectfully submits these supplemental comments regarding density and the efforts by Werrlein and Planning staff to rely on Density Calculations that conflict with relevant sections of the Zoning Ordinance. Please ensure that these supplemental comments on density are made part of the public record regarding DSP 21001.

We file these comments for protective and cautionary reasons, and this filing does not preclude the raising of these and any other issues before the District Council.

When the Council approved the Sector Plan in November 2004, it made the wise, forward-looking decision to rezone the lower parcel of this property from R-55 to Open Space, with the expressed goal of expanding public open space. The Council clearly contemplated that the entire lower parcel – not some tiny fraction of it – becoming open space. The Council also rezoned other Hyattsville properties from other zones to Open Space.

It did so at the request of the City of Hyattsville, which stated those properties should not be developed because they all lie within the 100-year floodplain. The City also stated its desire to see both parcels added to what was then Magruder Park and now Driskell Park.

That decision by the County Council was planning – considering the past, looking at the present, looking to the future then acting accordingly and in the public interest.

Since then, several important changes – local and global – have proven the wisdom of that decision. Three things locally. First, our population has grown significantly, placing greater demands on public facilities and services, including parks and open space. Second, climate change has brought more severe storms, more frequent severe storms, higher annual

precipitation, and higher temperatures. Third, the county has lost thousands of acres of forests, farmland, and open space, and has expanded and intensified the urban heat island.

Globally, the concentration of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere has skyrocketed to levels the planet hasn't seen in at least 800,000 years. Seemingly daily, comes yet more evidence that the impacts are coming sooner and with greater ferocity. Those impacts include extreme weather. The number billion-dollar, climate change-driven weather disasters has skyrocketed, often with devastating impacts on communities, ecosystems, and public resources.

In January 2000, the concentration was 369 parts per million. That's 37 percent above pre-industrial levels and just barely above the 350 parts per million threshold many scientists consider potentially low enough to avoid some of climate change's worst impacts.

By (In) November 2004, when the Council approved our Sector Plan, that concentration had risen to 376 parts per million.

Earlier this year, the concentration was 422 parts per million – 56 percent higher than pre-industrial levels, 21 percent higher than the 350 threshold, 14 percent higher the most recent month of data in Atlas 14, and 40 percent higher than any level the Earth has seen in the last 800,000 years.

According to NOAA: "The annual rate of increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide over the past 60 years is about 100 times faster than previous natural increases, such as those that occurred at the end of the last ice age 11,000-17,000 years ago."

Notably, the most recent rainfall data in NOAA's Atlas 14, the dominant source of precipitation data used in delineating floodplains and in developing stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and flood mitigation plans, are from December 2000. Seventy percent of those data are from 1980 or earlier, and 14 percent are from 1965 or earlier.

County and state design manuals require engineers to rely on Atlas 14, and there is no evidence in the record that Werrlein or agency reviewers relied on more recent data.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Greg Smith
Board Member
Sustainable Hyattsville
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Hyattsville, Maryland 20781
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