



Dear Chair and Councilmembers.

Thank you for accepting my appeal to Project # DSP-22015 (9113 Baltimore Avenue).

As I have testified before, the proposed RST Development at 9113 Baltimore Avenue has serious issues for the City of College Park, especially in North College Park.

I am asking that the safety and welfare of the residents of North College Park supersede allowances in the Sector Plan (dated 2010 with a website posting date of January 12, 2023) and that you deny the proposed construction. The attempt at social justice programs does not make the plan work.

My serious concerns are in line with:

Councilmember Blegay, who expresses concern about traffic safety;

Councilmember Olson, who emphasizes a “neighborhood’s quality of life;

Councilmember Fisher’s statement (this is an excerpt) “the key to strong neighborhoods addressing public safety”;

Councilmember Ivey’s statement that she is “passionate about ensuring that Prince George’s County seniors have a chance”;

Councilmember Oriadha’s statement, “We must all take responsibility and share the burden of building a community we can be proud of”;

Councilmember Harrison’s statement, "Community First, Your Voice Matters!";

Councilmember Franklin’s statement to reinvest in the environment – I interpret this to mean maintaining a healthy environment to keep your residents and seniors safe and out of harm’s way.

And Councilmember Dernoga’s unrelenting efforts to enhance the quality of life of his residents and to keep them out of harm’s way.

Furthermore, the County’s “Comprehensive Housing Strategy” supports my case by its statement, “Housing Opportunity for All will achieve three primary goals: Support existing residents, including long-time residents, seniors, residents with

disabilities.” In addition, The County’s 2014, “Plan Prince George’s 2035 Approved General Plan (Plan 2035)” further supports my case by its statement to have “a community of strong neighborhoods and ...a place where residents are healthy” and let me add, safe.

To reiterate my earlier testimonies, affordable housing and Meals on Wheels are not in question. All of us want these social justice programs.

Though these programs are laudable, as I have testified before, this appeal is about the safety, welfare, and the quality of life of your residents who live in the surrounding neighborhood of 9113 Baltimore Avenue.

Currently, the infrastructure at this location already puts your residents in harm’s way. The two streets that will border the development - Delaware Street and Cherokee Street - are already congested with parking and traffic. (Pictures of each street are attached.)

This congestion prevents emergency response vehicles from reaching their destination in an appropriate and timely manner. Furthermore, drivers from Route One turn down these streets looking for short cuts, driving above the speed limit, sometimes running the stop sign. If drivers do stop, rarely is it a full stop.

If the development goes forward, it will create **un**intended consequences, such as reduced public safety, significant increase in traffic, reduced quality of life for those who live in the neighborhood, and social conflict; the latter resulting in mutual harm (Lind 1997).

Mutual harm, according to Mayhew and Fernández (2007), would be social **in**justice. Mutual harm gives the appearance that our neighborhood is “expendable or undeserving” and that “harming them appears acceptable, appropriate, or just” Van Soest (1994).

To revisit the Sector Plan – it has been overtaken by environmental trends and permanent changes. The proposed construction of a six-seven story building, with 317 multifamily dwelling units, will negatively impact the safety and welfare of the surrounding neighborhoods and residents and weaken community and public safety.

In support of this, it is stated in the Maryland Court Case regarding Brandywine Senior Living, that development be:

“harmonious with and will not alter the character of the surrounding neighborhood”; requires that any proposed structure “be compatible with the character of the residential neighborhood,” and questions “whether a proposed use would cause “undue harm to the neighborhood.”

Further support for my position is found in The Court of Special Appeals of Maryland regarding The City of Rockville, where it is stated, “parking on residential streets can be intrusive for the neighborhood,” and crucially important, “in a residential neighborhood, care needs to be taken to ensure that the [development] is not disruptive to the adjoining property owners,” and that “[m]ethods to handle any increased traffic also must be addressed.”

Information below will further address your authority to deny the proposed construction, especially the height; setbacks; parking; and area requirements such as gas lines, power grids, water and sewer.

Utilities Systems

As evident by the recent gas line problems on Route One and in the residential streets in North College Park, and previous electrical grid problems plus water and sewer (WSSC) problems, the RST proposal will overload the utilities systems. Specifically:

Washington Gas:

The proposed development will overload the already weakened gas lines.

Recent Washington Gas attention to serious leaks in the City of College Park occurred in February and December of 2022; the latter caused Baltimore Avenue (Route One) to be closed in both directions for several days.

In 2021 “within a 45-day period, Washington Gas responded to (8) gas leak/odor calls in the College Park area and made (25) leak repairs.”

PEPCO:

Power grids cannot be maintained in our current environment. For example, the severe storm of July 2022 resulted in “more than 27,000 Pepco customers in Prince George’s County experienced power outages. Prince George’s County Fire and EMS received more than 350 calls for its

Service... with the worst of the damage in College Park, Berwyn Heights and Greenbelt."

WSSC:

Water Mains are old and "nearing the end of their useful life," as reported for College Park in 2013. It is further stated, "after more than 90 years of service, WSSC is facing ... decaying pipes and valves. The water mains within the [College Park] project area were originally installed in the 1920s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s."

Traffic:

Another serious impact is the increase in traffic. As it now stands, emergency vehicles have difficulty reaching their destination promptly, plus there is no safe evacuation route if necessary. New development will even worsen this current dilemma.

Furthermore, the proposed development will not have ingress from Baltimore Avenue. As you can see by the attached photos, there is no room for traffic on the two streets that border the proposed development (Cherokee Street and Delaware Street). As stated, there will be no safe evacuation of the surrounding neighborhoods if necessary.

Also, let us be reminded that the new housing development exactly on the other side of Cherokee Street has yet to be completed. When this happens soon, and if DSP-22015 is approved, there will be unimaginable safety problems of epic proportions.

Parking:

Parking, of course, will overwhelm North College Park. For example, the current traffic problems on Delaware Street will become even more unmanageable and less safe, and Cherokee Street will be more of a fire trap.

The proposed construction allows for 1.5 cars per unit. But this does not reflect the current state of affairs regarding the number of occupants per unit. Specifically, the proposal does not adjust for multigenerational family households, cohabitation, nor leasing and renting out rooms.

"According to an analysis of census data from 1971-2021, the number of people living in multigenerational family households quadrupled during that time period, reaching 59.7 million in March 2021. "In March 2021, there were 59.7 million U.S. residents who lived with multiple generations under one roof, compared with 58.4 million in 2019, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of census data. The share of the U.S. population living in multigenerational households in 2021 was 18%. [Mar 24, 2022]."

Furthermore, "this generation is investing in home ownership ... they're co-buying houses with friends".... "The number of homes bought by people with different last names has increased by nearly 772 percent from 2010 (the date of our Sector Plan) to last July [2021]."

Additionally, leasing and renting out rooms are common behaviors in a college town, especially in the City of College Park.

Therefore, with the current trend of multifamily units, cohabitation, leasing and renting, a conservative estimate of necessary parking should be no less than three vehicles per unit.

In summary:

The proposed RST Development at 9113 Baltimore Avenue has serious issues for the City of College Park, especially in North College Park.

The Sector Plan has been overtaken by environmental trends and permanent changes. The proposed construction of a six-seven story building with 317 multifamily dwelling units, will negatively impact the safety and welfare of the surrounding neighborhoods and residents, community and public safety.

We need fairness in this social dilemma. This could be established by "satisfy[ing] the concerns that are inherent in the problems" (Lind 1997), as described.

There are far more appropriate locations for affordable housing, an important social program. One location is the Greenbelt metro where land is available if the FBI does move in. If they do move in, there are many sections of land in beautiful College Park and in our lovely County that are more suitable for 360 dwellings plus commercial use. I will be glad to lead a task force on finding a more suitable location.

Regarding Meals on Wheels, I will be glad to lead a task force to find a facility close to its former location. I had volunteered at the Meals on Wheels when it was located in North College Park and certainly support that this life sustaining program return to its location.

To review, a social justice and appealing development plan does not make an unworkable plan good. An unworkable plan does not become workable because it includes admirable social goals.

In your authority to serve the public interest for all persons, to protect the integrity of the natural and current environment, and to pay attention to long-range consequences -

I ask that you exercise your authority to deny the proposed construction at 9113 Baltimore Avenue.

Thank you for your consideration on this serious matter.

Sincerely,

Judy Blumenthal, Ph.D.
9205 49th Avenue
College Park, MD 20740
Cell: 202-368-6159
judyblumenthal@[earthlink.net](mailto:judyblumenthal@earthlink.net)



