

CB 7-2021

Sayers, Margery

From: Susan Garber <buzysusan23@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 7:56 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Testimony on CB7-2021 and CB8-2021
Attachments: HCCA_CB7-2021 testimonyF.docx; HCCA testimony CB8-2021F.docx

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Attached is my testimony on behalf of the Howard County Community Association on CB 7 and CB 8-2021.

Susan Garber,
Laurel

Susan Garber, Board member, speaking on behalf of the HCCA in opposition to CB 7-2021

We find the **timing of yet another change to the TOD zone extremely objectionable**. It's especially inappropriate to request this almost doubling of maximum height while the General Plan Revision process is underway. The HoCo by Design process would be undermined by locking in higher density at all TODs (along the Route 1 Corridor when many other changes --including those in CB 8-2021 are also being requested).

It's particularly problematic given the Route One Corridor still lacks a comprehensive plan, despite numerous false starts, and this change would further exasperate the lack of infrastructure (which is more than schools).

Another timing issue is whether future estimates of need are being overestimated. The State announced a reduction in commuter train routes due to a lack of ridership because of Covid. Now Covid may not last forever, *please God*, but you can't ignore the fact that the change to working from home rather than commuting to an urban center may be here to stay.

We ask: Why put the tallest buildings in Howard County at these TOD locations? Why a 180 foot maximum here when the tallest buildings in Columbia are by contrast 147 feet?

The TOD Zone was created to encourage the development of multi-story office centers near MARC stations. While at a site *nearby*, Anne Arundel County recently made a very lucrative office space deal with Microsoft, but Howard County continues to play around with *residential* development!

We urge you to reject this request at this time--**there is NO urgency**. The applicant simply wants another deal to lock down this potential bonus. The ZRA *application* actually requested a 200 foot maximum, boldly stating this didn't necessarily mean an increase in density. Just how dumb do they think elected officials and we, the public, are?!

The application also implies 'affordable housing' possibilities. Please do NOT be fooled by this disingenuous argument. I personally attended the public presentation for this entire project at its start (when the County was asked to fund the multistory parking lot needed to free up use of the street level parking lots for development.) At the time the presenters bragged they foresaw apartments here would be the most expensive in the metro area, "even greater than at Montgomery County's Symphony Hall project".

The term Transit Oriented Development was created and popularized by Peter Calthorpe and described in his book *The Next American Metropolis, Ecology, Community and the American Dream*. What the County envisions for TOD Districts is far from the original precept. Calthorpe focused on improving the suburbs of

metropolitan areas by incorporating the urbanism that makes communities socially vibrant and alive. By urbanism he did not mean downtown city densities with high-rise buildings. He meant the qualities of community design which establish diversity, pedestrian scale and public identity regardless of location or density.

Calthorpe saw the opportunity to develop such communities around existing transit stations. His plans and illustrations show 5 story office and apartment buildings with street level retail closest to the station and lower buildings, mostly residential, beyond.

It is shocking to see how an admirable original concept has been lost !!

Please vote NO on CB 7-2021.

On a personal note, my husband and I once lived in what is today still the tallest building in College Park. We chose the 7th floor of the 15 story building, specifically because this is the limit for a hook and ladder rescue. **That** building overlooked a national park. Residents of **this** would-be tallest building in Howard County can choose a view of the trash transfer station, mulch pile, salt dome, an auto graveyard **or** the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women. Keep in mind also this refers to any building within 750 feet of the train station--the length of 2 and a half football fields. Larger TOD sites could potentially have *several* such high-rises.

We suggest that before proceeding, DPZ research whether regulations regarding the height of buildings near NSA are still in effect, and whether any of the northern TOD locations have a restriction on building height due to proximity to BWI.

Remember to keep in mind that approval would affect ALL of the TOD sites, not just this one striving to be seen from the BW Parkway while sitting 40 feet below Route 32. And let's keep in mind that our roads in the corridor are already overcrowded. And hiking and biking to the station by non-residents of this facility is NOT a reality. Nor does this TOD include amenities like a grocery store or pharmacy. Residents will still need to drive their vehicles to Savage and along Route One to acquire necessities.



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Susan Garber, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding **CB7-2021** to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Susan Garber

Signature: _____

Date: 14 Jan 2021

Organization: HCCA

Organization Address: HCCA

P.O. Box 89 Ellicott City MD 21041

Number of Members: 500

Name of Chair/President: Stu Kohn

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or delivered in person the night of the Public Hearing before testifying.

Written testimony on CB7-2021
Suggested Amendments

CB7 seeks to increase the maximum building height from 100 feet to 180 feet in the TOD zone within 750 foot radius of a Marc station.

This is a very large increase that will greatly benefit specific projects, and thus, should come with more County benefits. Although many agree that smart growth is indeed ideally located within Marc station ranges, the radius measurement is not something that guarantees accessibility. Putting some accessibility measure regarding walkability and bikeability would be more relevant to that goal.

Maybe requiring some assistance with creating or improving that accessibility from the project would be a nice trade-off for this highly profitable benefit. Also, with regard to schools and traffic issues, maybe longer waits and larger remediations should be required with such an enormous increase in allowable units in one location, or even an increase in what is required for affordable.

Thank you,
Lisa Markovitz,
President

Smarter Growth Alliance For Howard County

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: CB7-2021 – In TOD (Transit-Oriented Development) zone – increase building height maximum from 100' to 180'.

Dear Council Members:

The Smarter Growth Alliance for Howard County (SGAHC) is an alliance of local and state organizations working together to foster healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities through smarter development and transportation decisions and improved protections for the county's natural, historic and cultural resources.

While we believe that CB7 seeks to address the County's desire for transit-oriented development (TOD), the legislation as written raises a number of serious questions and concerns. As such, SGAHC opposes CB7 until those issues are addressed appropriately.

Is there adequate fire equipment to service this high structure that would exceed any current Howard County building height? If not, SGACC requests that the legislation include a provision that any such developments should be required to provide any new equipment or staffing needed for fire safety.

How will this affect the TOD zone criteria elsewhere?

Would the parking structure of any resulting building be located within the building space, or would it increase impervious surface outside?

How are residents in any resulting projects accessing the MARC? Are sidewalks or bike lanes going to be required to make MARC fully accessible? Proximity to transit does not necessarily make new development transit oriented. While higher residential density projects in areas near a MARC Station are a goal for smart growth, we would like to assure this is the actual case for every future project that would be subject to the new height limit and to verify that accessibility to the MARC is addressed. We would request that transit accessibility be a part of any development proposals resulting from this legislation.

*Audubon MD-DC • Audubon Society of Central Maryland • Bicycling Advocates of Howard County
Chesapeake Bay Foundation • Clean Water Action • Coalition for Smarter Growth • Community Ecology Institute
Earth Forum of Howard County • HARP • Howard County Citizens Association
Howard County Conservancy • Howard County Sierra Club • Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland League of Conservation Voters • Maryland Ornithological Society • Patapsco Heritage Greenway
Preservation Maryland • Safe Skies Maryland • Savage Community Association • The People's Voice • Transition Howard County*

Howard County is currently working diligently on an update to the General Plan. Is now the time to legislate an increase height allowances of this magnitude, an 80% change? Indeed, at the minimum, there is the need to address implications on the Route 32 traffic and work plans. Additionally, the effect that nearly doubling of density in a very localized area is going to have on school capacity needs to be taken into serious consideration since the notion that apartments do not produce students is unsound.

SGAHC believes that this legislation should not be rushed through and suggest that the proposed height restriction increase surrounding MARC stations be addressed and vetted in the upcoming General Plan and Complete Streets reviews, so there is an opportunity for more public input and to allow for concerns such as those we have enumerated to be addressed. Indeed, as it is written, this legislation would prevent usual public input processes by not requiring a pre-submission community meeting due to its source from a ZRA, despite clearly affecting a distinct, limited area and number of projects.

We greatly appreciate your attention to these concerns, and we look forward to working with the County to address these issues in any way we can. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bicycling Advocates of Howard County
Jack Guarneri
President

Clean Water Action
Emily Ranson
Maryland Director

Howard County Citizen's Association
Stu Kohn
President

Howard County Sierra Club
Carolyn Parsa
Chair

Preservation Maryland
Elly Cowan
Director of Advocacy

Savage Community Association
Susan Garber
Board Chair

The People's Voice
Lisa M. Markovitz
President

cc: The Honorable Calvin Ball, County Executive



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Kevin Burke, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

the Savage Community Association to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding CB7-2021 & CB8-2021 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Kevin Burke (in opposition to)

Signature: _____

Date: 1/17/2021

Organization: Savage Community Association

Organization Address: P.O. Box 222 Savage 20763

P.O. Box 222 Savage 20763

Number of Members: 410

Name of Chair/President: Susan Garber

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Sayers, Margery

From: LISA MARKOVITZ <lmarkovitz@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, January 24, 2021 2:25 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: CB7 work session issues

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Here is a written list of noted issues presented on CB7 at the work session.

Thank you,
Lisa Markovitz
President, The People's Voice

1. Fire equipment issue was fleshed out to note that higher-reaching equipment is borrowed by other jurisdictions. As we add these high buildings it will become a responsibility for risk management to obtain this expensive equipment. A fund should be established for projects to contribute to this coming need.
2. DPZ defined walkability as a radius. It might be more accurate to use a linear notation, so as not to cross topographical areas that are not easily traversed, or add a notation that the radius doesn't apply to areas that are not able to be reached on foot/bike, if that's the goal.
3. The larger the parcel, the more likely the availability to have multiple max height buildings, not just one. Maybe limit this height increase to smaller parcels. Density near transit is certainly a goal, but at some point, seeing if the goal can be reached by extreme localization has to be checked, regarding train capacities (regardless of the reason for the factual state of that capacity). It isn't true that there is NO density limit in TOD, as the density is limited by the building size limits. Thus, changing those, increases density, and it should be defined just what can be accommodated to keep the transit benefit and reasoning "smart".
4. **Amenities** required are based on acreage. Going so higher up, more amenities internal to the building should be required, otherwise there is an 80% increase in parcel benefit, 0% increase in required amenities for these many added occupants. Maybe a community center, or some examples that Indivisible suggested.
5. REQUIRE higher percentage of **affordable** given the huge increased benefit to the developer of this height increase. REQUIRE that it be provided 100% on-site, no fee, no alternative compliance.
6. Not having a donut parking feature takes up more impervious surface not less, due to accommodating parking outside the building more.
7. Require the actual data of student enrollment (in total, with each year since units created. Have the total number from that parcel tallied, currently in the HCPSS, and not just the number added in a snapshot year). It is very hard to believe that over 400 apartments have 10 students. Later in the session, it was stated that 20 are expected (still hard to believe) from 200+ more, so which is it? To get better forecasts, numbers of bedrooms should be part of the data analysis.

Sayers, Margery

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Sayers, Margery

From: David Kovacs <kovacs878@live.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 9:03 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: CB 7-2021

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Council Members,

The claim that increasing the height on these buildings will not 'increase density' or negatively impact the quality of schools and general welfare in the Route 1 Corridor area is blatantly false. Please consider the impact of these plans on the residents in this area before deciding in favor of a plan with unintended consequences. Thank you,

Dave and Laurel Kovacs
Savage residents

Sent from my iPad

Sayers, Margery

From: Sue Davis <suzie6080@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 10:57 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: CB 7-2021

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

I am writing to express my views on this proposal. I have lived in Laurel for almost 50 years and spent most of those years in our house just off Route 1 and Whiskey Bottom Rd. We moved here to have a nice home with a big backyard. I do not want my neighborhood to turn into an area with high density housing and high rises. What I liked most about Laurel was its small-town appearance. There have already been a few high-rise apartment buildings that have been built in recent years along the route one Corridor. However to have buildings that are 180 feet high it's not what I think most of the people I know in this area want. Therefore you need to have hearings about this before you go making any plans and find out what the residents want. This is a suburban area and let's keep it that way. If people want to live in high-rises then they can go move into places like that in the city. Most people want to move to the suburbs to have a house of their own in a yard to raise a family and not have a very crowded dense neighborhood around them. Thank you for listening to me.

Sent from my iPhone

Sayers, Margery

From: Kate Craft <lovenstars@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 10:45 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: CB 7-2021

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Hello,

I'm writing to express my concerns with the CB 7-2021 bill that is requesting approval to build higher buildings (up to 180ft) in the TOD zone at Savage Station. I am a resident on Savage Guilford Rd. in Savage and have kids that attend Bollman Bridge ES and Patuxent Valley MS. I worry about approving CB 7-2021 for several reasons. 1) Will the increased population at these high rises increase the school populations in a manageable way and one that we can afford? 2) Are the high rises going to include enough units as affordable housing so we can continue to support a range of people and keep our community diverse and supportive of all? 3) Are the units going to be highly energy efficient so that we can continue to reach towards protecting our planet and slow climate change? 4) Is there enough community infrastructure (in addition to the schools) such as fire stations, etc. or are we taxpayers going to have to pay for more? 5) will the trains actually be able to support the higher population or will the people end up adding to the already high traffic on Rt. 1?

It seems to me that a more reasonable growth would be to keep our building heights in line with communities around us like Columbia which has buildings less than 150ft max.

Additionally, why is this bill being considered before the County's general plan "HoCo by Design" goes through its public consideration process? Shouldn't that happen first and then we consider bills like this?

Please consider the impacts this bill would have on our community, schools, and traffic density. Now is not the time to allow taller buildings when we need to first hear the HoCo by Design plan.

Thanks for considering my concerns.

Take care,
Kate Craft
Savage Guilford Rd., Savage, MD

--

"Looking at the stars always makes me dream"
-Vincent VanGogh

Sayers, Margery

From: Hameeda.hameed <hameeda.hameed@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2021 10:46 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Re: CR 7-2021

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

To whom it may concern,

As a tax paying citizen of Howard county I would like to share some of my concern regarding CR 7 (to extend maximum height to 180 feet in TOD zones

- TOD zoning has already been adjusted numerous times; it no longer resembles the original intent of the zone
- The TOD zone has NO MAXIMUM DENSITY and hence could vary widely
- Since this will apply to all of the TOD sites it isn't even possible to predict the number of units which can be built over time
- There isn't sufficient land remaining to build services which occupants would need, so they would still need a car to get groceries, etc., adding more traffic to the corridor
- Public facilities in the Corridor are far from adequate now; this will make the situation worse
- MARC train ridership is down significantly as more people work from home. This trend may not change.
- Pre-pandemic, the train often filled before reaching the Savage Station. There are no plans to increase commuter service on the MARC line until 2034, so there is no urgency to make the requested change now
- The owner's original intent at Annapolis Junction was to build the most expensive units in the Metro Area, but now they throw in the prospect of providing affordable housing in the mix. This appears to be a falsehood to garner favor since they didn't even meet their obligation for Moderate Income Units on site with the existing pricey apartment complex.
- The County taxpayers would bear the expense of additional firefighting equipment necessary for so tall a building
- Very few people are even aware of this request at this time since there is no mechanism for any widespread publicity. Bill summaries in newspapers (to which few people subscribe) don't provide the details necessary for the public to understand the impact. This feels like it is being snuck in to lock down additional benefits for the owner/developer.

Hameeda

Sent from my iPhone