



Loudoun County, Virginia

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Dear Residents,

As originally proposed, the Silver District West proposal fell far short of my expectations for a development of that size. It contained no limits on specific unit types, and the proffer commitments for transportation were under \$10 million—completely insufficient for the size and scope of the project.

As a former resident of Loudoun Valley Estates, I know firsthand how bad traffic congestion is in the Loudoun County Parkway corridor. I have pushed for improvements to the Waxpool Road intersection and the construction of Gloucester Parkway to provide relief for residents. I also made a top priority of completing the unfinished section of Loudoun County Parkway in the Loudoun Valley Estates area.

However, with the knowledge that previous Boards have approved thousands of yet-unbuilt homes at Moorefield Station, it is clear that more must be done to address congestion in this area. The Silver District West application presented an opportunity to address these concerns.

Over the course of the last year and a half, the County has conducted a thorough fiscal and transportation analysis which helped to guide our evaluation of this project. Utilizing the results of those studies, Supervisor Meyer and I were able to negotiate far more favorable terms than what were originally proposed. As a result of these negotiations, the applicant is now providing the County over \$84 million in infrastructure in the first phase of development, which has a value of over \$130 million in our budget due to financing costs and project escalation over time. Further, the applicant has placed limits on unit types, so that the majority of the project over the long term will be higher density, Metro-appropriate construction which generates far fewer school students and is revenue positive for the County.

As of now, the County does not have the ability to fund needed road improvements like the widening of Loudoun County Parkway and the construction of Barrister and Shellhorn to relieve congestion in the LCP and Waxpool corridors. These projects exist on paper, but we are competing for regional money to fund them, and the General Assembly has reduced the available pot. Furthermore, government road projects move much slower than privately built projects because there are significantly more regulatory hurdles to clear. The Silver District West application will speed these projects up by many years, by requiring them to be built privately within 24-36 months of the first permits being issued.

Furthermore, the concept of the development will help direct growth into an area that does have planned infrastructure, as opposed to the current sprawl that continues west.

The negotiations with the developer on this project were difficult and nearly unprecedented in their scope. However, following the developer's most recent concessions to provide strong backstop language which would halt homes from being built if the road network is not in place, I decided to support the application. Ultimately, the application was approved by the Board of Supervisors on a bipartisan, 8-1 vote.

I understand that the community has expressed concerns, but many of these concerns are based on the older versions of this application. Below, I have addressed the specific issues raised in the online petition that was circulated. I am happy to answer additional questions as well.

Below is a copy of several concerns included in a petition that has been circulated about the Silver District West application, along with my response to each concern.

Excessive and poorly phased residential development

- The change in use from business park and commercial development to residential creates conflicts with the master plan.

The current zoning for the southern portion of the application is PD-OP (Planned Development-Office Park). This is a commercial zoning category with many by-right uses including offices, data centers, and conference centers. However, the County's Comprehensive Plan has identified areas up to one mile from Metro as being transit oriented, which encompasses the majority of this property. The application is consistent with the mixed use employment, housing, and multi-modal transit concepts anticipated within planned Metro Station communities. The application still maintains nearly 1 million square feet of commercial development, with office uses being specifically phased at specific points in the overall development plan.

The current zoning of the northern portion of the application is PD-TRC (Planned Development-Transit Related Center). This district is established to provide for a compatible mixture of commercial and high density housing uses in compact, pedestrian oriented, and transit oriented developments. This zoning district allows for up to 50 residential units per acre.

The market reality is that the existing zoning of the project will never be built, and would be impossible to finance in today's market. Furthermore, today's employers are requiring mixed use environments—the days of the suburban office park are no longer. While it reduces the overall amount of commercial approved, the Silver District West application makes it far more likely that jobs and business will locate to this parcel.

- The mix of housing and number of homes of larger square footage in SDW will have a net negative impact on the county's budget in the long run due to the need for new schools and related ongoing expenses.

Single family attached (townhomes) and multi-family stacked housing units with a larger square footage do attract more family residents than traditional multi-family units. However, with the proffered limit on the number of those larger units (713 total, 381 townhouses and 332 multifamily stacked) the financial analysis conducted by the County has determined that the total proffers in this

application provide a net positive revenue level to the County even factoring increased operating costs attributed to those units. County staff confirmed repeatedly that the Silver District West application as approved by the Board is a net fiscally positive application.

- Homes on the site north of Loudoun County Parkway, the “Metro-Accessible site”, which is accessible by pedestrians will be delayed until well after the development of larger townhomes & “two-over-two”-style homes in the Metro-Inaccessible site,” located south of the parkway.

Development patterns of the property are dictated by market demands. We expect that demand for the traditional multi-family units closer to Metro will pick up with the opening of Metro in late 2020. That would mean that the more dense multi-family units would likely come online in the northern portion of the property prior to those multi-family units planned for the southern portion of the property. Of the 3700 units planned for the total application, 1700 (the maximum currently allowed within the Zoning Ordinance) will be located within the northern portion of the application and closest to the Ashburn Metro Station. The balance of those units are on the southern portion of the application. The development of the townhomes and “two over two” style homes on the southern side of the property will fund the road improvements needed for this area.

Extreme traffic and congestion

- Residential development sited too far from Metro will create more traffic in the area than originally expected.

The majority of the application is located within one mile of a Metro station. Transit oriented development does not only include walking to the stations, it also includes biking and using the bus. The application includes a shuttle service to Metro for residents of Silver District West and Westwind Crossing. This service would be made available until LC Transit begins regular service to the area. That service would be expected to come online sooner with the expected development of the Silver District West property than it may have otherwise due to the expected increased population. I will be continuing to work to provide LC Transit bus service to the communities in this corridor.

The applicant is proffering to widen Loudoun County Parkway to six lanes and construct Barrister Street and Shellhorn Road early in the development of the project. These transportation improvements alone will save the County \$131 million in construction and financing costs associated with these projects.

- The proposed changes in use do not adequately address the need for better pedestrian and biking opportunities to get to Metro safely. Intersection choke-points and lack of pedestrian bridges over a widened Loudoun County Parkway could forebode more accidents and possible fatalities that better planning could help to avoid.

As part of the Loudoun County Parkway widening project, there will be additional turn lane improvements made at intersections along the corridor. Traffic signals will be installed at intersections that meet VDOT warrants. These signals will include pedestrian crossing capabilities.

The applicant is also proffering to complete missing segments of pedestrian/bike access paths near the development. The roads being constructed will include multi-modal trails, including the Barrister Bridge over the Greenway, and the applicant is also proffered to pursue by all means necessary a trail under the Greenway to provide a direct connection to the Loudoun Gateway Metro station. This is also a top County priority, so I anticipate our staff being involved in the process.

- The series of new traffic signals at Loudoun County Parkway, Exit 7 ramps to get off Greenway, and several adjacent intersections will become a congested nightmare of traffic back-ups that will cause a ripple effect on drivers farther away.

The County completed a thorough traffic analysis of the road network in the area and, when factoring the proffered road network, intersection improvements and signals, along with the CTP planned road network, found that the intersections will function at acceptable levels of service. The County would also work with VDOT to ensure that the timing in the corridor is optimized for maximum throughput. The traffic signals will be determined by warrant studies done at each intersection. Given the thousands of unbuilt units already approved at Moorefield Station, it is likely that these signals will be needed eventually with or without this application. Furthermore, the acceleration of Loudoun County Parkway widening will significantly improve congestion for existing residents. The Greenway ramps are the responsibility of the Greenway, per the programmatic agreement between VDOT and the Greenway. I have had discussion with VDOT about these issues and they are prepared to enforce the agreement language should issues arise.

- The private shuttle service to the Metro for SDW and Westwind Crossing residents is a patch, not a permanent solution. There is no plan in place for hand-off to County-run bus service. In the interim, unknowns include the frequency and cost of the shuttle service, its hours of operation, the capacity of the shuttle, pick up and drop off locations, and the timing of the end to the shuttle service.

The applicant is proffering to provide a shuttle bus service for residents and employees of Silver District West and Westwind Crossing to and from either the Ashburn Metro Station or the Loudoun Gateway Metro Station.

At a minimum, the shuttle bus service will run twice per hour between the hours of 6:30 am and 9 am and between 4:30 pm and 7 pm Monday through Friday, or shall be available as needed within 15 minutes of request.

Prior to starting the shuttle bus service, the applicant will coordinate with the County to determine the most appropriate route and to discuss the collection of passengers. They will meet annually with the County to provide an update on aspects of the shuttle bus service such as, ridership details, frequency of shuttle services, and whether any adjustment to the hours of operation are needed. This will continue until either LC Transit begins providing bus service to the area or January 1, 2030; whichever comes first. As I noted, it is anticipated that this area will be served by an LC Transit route in the future.

- Additional traffic congestion on Loudoun County Parkway and adjacent roads would be caused not only by new residents' commuting to work but also taking children to schools.

The Silver District West application includes a proffered site for a future elementary school. LCPS estimates that the fully built out development would generate approximately 532 elementary students over the buildout period of 20-30 years. The estimated 284 middle school students and 366 high school students are expected to be served by existing or planned capacity in the vicinity of the development. The School Board will handle any school boundary needs. Loudoun County Public Schools has been consulted on this application and does not have concerns about meeting future needs from this project.

A potential shortage of schools

- The need for more schools than the original plan will require the County to acquire more land.

LCPS estimates that the fully built out development would generate approximately 532 elementary students, 284 middle school students and 366 high school students. The development includes a proffered elementary school site and LCPS expects the middle and high school students to be served by existing or planned capacity in the vicinity of the development. Keep in mind that the full buildout of the project will take decades, which will spread out the impact of the additional students.

- The county will bear the cost to build new schools to accommodate a huge new residential development on a location that it is not zoned for, and is unnecessary as well as ill-conceived in its design.

The County's CIP includes funding for an elementary school that is expected to be located on the proffered site within the development. The proffered site will accommodate a 950 student school while the development is expected to generate 532 elementary school students at full build out. Middle and high school students are expected to be served by existing or planned capacity in the vicinity of the development.

Excessive noise from overflights & inequity

- Future boards will be on the receiving end of complaints from SDW's residents regarding overflights from Dulles International Airport. MWAA has conducted a noise impact study from future overflights, and has recommended against new housing near the airport to avoid nuisance noise levels for those residents. These same residents will be paying higher taxes due to their location in the Silver Line Tax District despite those negative impacts.

The applicant has proffered to meet the updated noise contour lines within their site. There will be no residential development within the LDN 65 as required by our Zoning Ordinance whether or not Loudoun has adopted the updated contours by the time they seek site plan approval. The applicant has also agreed to notify all future residents of Silver District West that they are within the LDN 60 noise contour as part of the purchase process.

Clear and enforceable proffer commitments

- Residents need assurance that proffers will truly address their needs during and after construction.

Following further involvement of members of the Board of Supervisors, the final proffers were reviewed by the County Attorney's Office and have been approved to legal form. These amendments addressed any prior staff issues regarding enforceability and administration of the proffers. This application contains commitments and backstops that are typically not present in land use applications. Loudoun County Parkway must be widened within 24 months of the actual beginning of construction, and if it is not, the applicant cannot allow for more than 350 units to be occupied. Barrister and Shellhorn must be constructed within 36 months, and if they are not, no more than 600 units can be occupied. These backstops will ensure that infrastructure is actually constructed during the first phases of development. These backstops were a key factor in my decision to support the project. Also, I carefully reviewed language in the VDOT-Greenway agreement with the County Attorney, and we are in agreement that the language clearly states that when construction starts on Barrister Street on both sides of the Greenway, the Greenway must build the bridge across the Greenway, and sync its construction with completion of the road. As additional protection, I negotiated additional language in the proffers which require the developer to pursue legal action with the Greenway at their cost should there be any delays.

Impacts to existing residents

- New Flood Risk: West Wind Crossing ("WWC") residents could be impacted by changes in flood zones due to the new development. Studies of changes to the 100-year FEMA flood plain attributable to this proposed development ought to be shared with impacted residents. Currently, WWC residents are not in a flood zone.

There is no development occurring within or changing the floodplains or required buffers located along the Broad Run. In fact, the flood plain area is being proffered as part of the Stream Valley Park, so it cannot be disturbed. County and State regulations require storm water management to be handled within the development and the County will ensure those requirements are met during the site plan and construction plan approval process.

- The need for tax funding to pay loans for Metro appears to be driving the rush to expand the tax base but reckless residential development will saddle residents and supervisors with big issues in the long run.

The Board of Supervisors specifically set up service districts to collect revenue from properties that will directly benefit from the extension of Metro to Loudoun County. This revenue is dedicated to cover the operating costs and capital costs that Loudoun incurs as part of the project. Many existing residential communities, like Westwind Crossing, were specifically excluded. The Silver District West property is fully within the tax district. Our Comprehensive Plan envisions mixed use developments along the rail line in areas that are outside the highest airport noise contour areas.

While revenue from the service districts will help offset some of the costs of Metro, the net positive revenue from this development when factoring in the level of transportation proffers makes the proposal a much better position for the County and area residents than if the property were to develop as currently zoned and transportation improvements are delayed until the County could fund them on our own. That said, the County's existing Metro tax districts are performing well and meeting or exceeded projections. There is no financial pressure to approve development we don't want within the tax districts, because the districts are performing so well.

Before any approval, we ask that the County:

- Require phasing that puts development in "Metro-accessible" (walkable) northside areas first with a complete network of alternative modes of travel available and in-place. Ensure that more and smaller residential units are built in this area and reduce density in the "Metro-inaccessible" areas south of Loudoun County Parkway to maintain the overall proposed residential units.

The 1700 units planned for the northern portion of the property is the maximum allowable by the current Zoning Ordinance. Proffers for major roadway improvements are directly tied to development on the southern portion of the application, for which there is more immediate market demand. In order for the developer to provide the over \$130 million of value in proffers, this part of the project must be built.

- Develop necessary road and transit infrastructure first since Loudoun County Parkway will become extremely choked.

The applicant is proffered to widen Loudoun County Parkway to six lanes between Ryan Road and Shellhorn Road within 24 months of plan approval or occupancy of the 350th unit on the southern portion of the application. The applicant is proffered to construct Barrister and Loudoun County Parkway within 36 months of plan approval or occupancy of the 600th unit on the southern portion of the property. There is a strong demand for the type of product that we expect to be constructed first on the southern portion of the property, bringing these improvements online within the first expected phase of development.

- Utilize roundabouts on collector streets

When performing warrant studies for traffic signals, there is a requirement for consideration of a traffic circle. This would be the case in all warrant studies performed as part of the application. If warranted, a traffic circle would be considered dependent on right of way needs and impact on traffic operations.

- Ensure that turn lanes are in place and adequate on major roadways- right turns at Greenway, two lefts to Barrister, two lanes from Barrister to Loudoun County Parkway.

The County's traffic study made specific intersection improvement recommendations which are included in the project:

- 1. Loudoun County Parkway / Ryan Road – Add an additional eastbound left-turn lane on Ryan Road, resulting in dual left-turn lanes and a shared left/right turn lane.

- 2. Loudoun County Parkway / Westwind Drive – On Westwind Drive, add an additional north-bound left-turn lane, which will result in dual left-turn lanes, a through lane, and a shared through/right turn lane, and on Loudoun County Parkway add additional east-bound and westbound left-turn lanes, resulting in dual left-turn lanes in both directions.
- 3. Loudoun County Parkway / Centergate Drive / Barrister Street – On Centergate Drive, add southbound left-turn lane which will result in dual left-turn lanes, one through lane and a right-turn lane, and on Barrister Street, add an additional north-bound left-turn lane which will result in dual left-turn lanes, a through lane, and a right-turn lane.
- 4. Loudoun County Parkway / Dulles Greenway Westbound off-ramp – On the off-ramp, add additional left-turn lane and convert the shared left/through/right-turn lane to a shared through/left-turn lane and provide right-turn lane.
- 5. Loudoun County Parkway / Shellhorn Road – On Shellhorn Road, add eastbound left-turn lane and convert existing lane striping to provide second left-turn lane, through lane, and right-turn lane.
- 6. State Street / Barrister Street / Landmark Court – On eastbound Landmark Court, provide left-turn lane and shared through/right-turn lane.

Again, I fully appreciate the concerns of residents, and I thank them for the input provided during this process, which helped give me leverage when negotiating these many improvements with the developer. I am always available for discussion and dialogue, and I look forward to continuing to work with the community on our many shared issues.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Matthew F. Letourneau
 Dulles District
 Chairman, Finance, Government Operations and Economic Development Committee
 Chairman, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission