

Important Thoughts On Proposed Lutherville Station Redevelopment

The Board of the Greater Timonium Community Council, in support of its affiliate-member, The Lutherville Community Association, asks that you reject the current plans for a Transit-Oriented Development(TOD) at Lutherville Station, at the terminus of West Ridgely Road.

The developer of this project proposes to build 200,000 sq. feet of office space, 25,000 sq. feet of retail space and 450 units of apartments. (The developer has, at times , stated 400 units and 460 units) We wonder why the County would review this TOD application when it did not meet all the prerequisites, i.e., having the appropriate zoning to allow the development.

The opposition to this proposal is a grass roots reaction by the immediate neighborhood, Lutherville C.A., and the greater Timonium area. In a survey of Lutherville C.A. members, 71% of respondents felt that future development of Lutherville Station should only be done within the context of its current Business Local zoning designation, which does not allow apartments in the designation. In an even more diverse outreach, in less than a month 1,760 persons have signed a Change.org petition supporting no apartments at the Lutherville Station site.

To be very clear, we are not against redeveloping the site with offices, retail and/or institutional uses, but consider the concerns below as to why we have rejected 450 apartment units:

- **The Census Tract** that Lutherville Station is in contains a total of 958 households; to add 450 apartment units would represent a 47% increase. The existing apartment complexes in Lutherville, each of which is less than .75 miles from Lutherville Station, contain 152 units on 9.9 acres and 90 units on 7.5 acres.
- **Our schools** are already overcrowded. Nearby Hampton Elementary School has five trailers as a result of the added housing development in the Towson area, and Ridgely Middle School, which would serve this site, is near its state-rated capacity before the introduction of these apartment units.
- **The automobile traffic** generated by 450 apartments is another major concern from many survey respondents. According to the 2023 Basic Services Transportation Map adopted by the Baltimore County Council, the entire York Road corridor, from Warren Road to south of Seminary Avenue, is rated at a level of service “D zone”, and that map rates the York and Ridgely intersection as level of service “F”. W. Ridgely Road and the small northern access road that runs to Aylesbury Road are not capable of carrying the existing traffic and the additional traffic generated by the apartments.
- **Adequate Public Facility:** Residents have seen many examples in the past where Baltimore County does not require sufficient remediation to address the impacts of new development. The surrounding communities are concerned that there would be similar deficiencies regarding water, sewer capacity, and storm drains.

- **Open Space:** An often-overlooked factor in new residential development is the need for open space for recreation and leisure activities. County regulations require 1,000 square feet of open space for each newly created residential density unit. Depending on the exact mix of 1,2- and 3-bedroom units that are proposed for Lutherville Station, the developer would need to set aside anywhere from 275,000 to 375,000 sq. feet of open space on this property. The current proposal shows the developer providing less than 125,000 sq. ft. of open space, with a request to pay a fee in lieu of providing the remainder on site. Given the shortage of playing fields in the area's recreation council, people expect more than a mere two acres of open space.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION: Will these apartment dwellers really use mass transit?

- When the Light Rail system opened in 1992, the Mass Transit Administration made ridership projections that have never materialized. In fact, for the overall system, ridership has plummeted from over 676,000 in November of 2016 to 254,000 (rounded) in November of 2022. We hold a similar skepticism for the Lutherville Station TOD project's prospects, as currently envisioned.
- There are rarely more than 21 cars parked in the Light Rail parking lot each day. Why? Well one of the major reasons is that the Light Rail cannot take you to Catonsville, or Perry Hall or many employment centers in the metropolitan area. The automobile is still the vehicle of choice in navigating the metropolitan area.

FINALLY, if residential use is so appropriate for this site, why did the former owner of the Lutherville Station site and the current owners of the Yorkridge Shopping Center, next door, have a reciprocal covenant that forbid residential use of the properties? That covenant was removed once the current partnership, led by Mark Renbaum, purchased the site.

Many local residents and business owners question if people will really want to live right next to a light rail station and in the close vicinity of a Marijuana plant that gives off unpleasant odors. We fear a residential development could end up being unsuccessful.

We hope you will join us in calling for a revised plan for Lutherville Station.

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The Greater Timonium Community Council