

March 2, 2018

To: Prince William Board of County Supervisors

From: Mid County Civic Association of Prince William

Subject: Mid County Park and Estate Homes Comprehensive Plan Amendment Initiation

This applicant's argument for amending the Comprehensive Plan is based in large part on one recommendation from a study on the Rural Crescent done by a consultant in 2014 (the Rural Preservation Study) that has never been adopted by the county. The study made a number of recommendations and clearly cautioned against piecemeal implementation of those recommendations. From page 58 of the study: "Incorporate the Study recommendations into the Comprehensive Plan. Care needs to be taken in selecting which recommendations, if any, to not pursue. The recommendations taken together comprise an integrated plan strategy. Many of the recommendations are key to the strategy and if eliminated would affect the entire strategy." In other words, the study goals would be compromised if specific items were singled out for implementation. The study clearly does not support the applicant's strategy of implementing individual recommendations through amendments and re-zonings.

One idea the study explored was a band of higher housing density with public water and sewer inside the Rural Crescent boundary line that was and is quite controversial. This is the key study recommendation that the applicant uses in his proposal. As stated above, the study recommendations were never meant to be individually implemented, and this one in particular is problematic. The semi-rural area *outside* the Rural Crescent boundary is currently the transition area between the rural area and the development area. What would be the reason for another transition area *inside* the rural boundary line? How would this affect the housing density of the semi-rural areas outside the rural boundary? Would this just lead to more density on both sides of the line and "density creep" into the rural area? These and many other questions need to be aired and discussed in open meetings and all the recommendations considered before any action is taken on this particular proposed idea in the study. We believe that nibbling away at the edges of the Rural Crescent won't "fix" anything- it will just make the Rural Crescent smaller.

The application also advocates for returning to pre-1998 Comprehensive Plan land use designations, but on page 25 the study specifically states: "Rolling back the Comprehensive Plan mapping to pre-1998 conditions (thereby allowing increases in density through up-zonings)

would be a major policy reversal and would be very unpopular among supporters of the Rural Area.” The study clearly does not support returning to pre-1998 land use conditions and again undermines the applicant’s arguments.

At this time we urge you to avoid devoting precious staff time to any partial implementation, particularly on a case-by-case basis, of a study that has not been formally vetted by the public. Before any major changes to land-use policy in Prince William County are enacted the citizens should be fully engaged, as the Rural Preservation Study clearly states.

Sincerely,
Martin Jeter
President, MIDCO