

1. INTRODUCTION

Good evening Chairman Silverman and Council Members Andrews, Denis, Floreen, Knapp, Leventhal, Perez, Praisner, and Subin. I am Nancy Wendt, President of the Olney Coalition, a newly formed alliance of 1,500 households dedicated to preserving the natural resources and quality of life we enjoy living in the Upper Rock Creek watershed.

The decisions you are about to make on the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan will profoundly impact our quality of life.

When we survey our members, we find three growth related issues at the top of their list: school over-crowding, traffic congestion and environmental degradation.

2. WHAT WE EXPECT FROM A MASTER PLAN

As homeowners we look to the Master Plan as ***THE*** most important document for preserving and enhancing our quality of life. It is the document we reference to compare our community to other areas and to understand how development may change that comparison.

In order to show how growth will be managed a good master plan will:

- ◆ Review existing quality of life conditions.
- ◆ Set forth the criteria that must be met to preserve these conditions.
- ◆ Present reasonable scenarios for growth.
- ◆ Analyze the specific quality of life impacts of each scenario.
- ◆ Explain why the recommended growth scenario (land use plan) achieves the best result.

While the draft plan contains much useful information and good recommendations, it fails to provide our members with a clear understanding of how these recommendations will affect them.

Let me illustrate this concern with a few examples.

3. SCHOOLS:

Of the 102-page draft master plan, slightly less than a single page is devoted to how growth in the Upper Rock Creek area will affect our schools.

- ◆ No projections are provided of future enrollment and capacity.
- ◆ Instead, the draft plan refers to the Annual Growth Policy process and assessments based on five-year projections.
- ◆ Though mention is made of two possible school sites within the master plan area, no analysis is provided as to the need to build schools on these sites.
- ◆ Instead, the draft plan recommends converting one of the sites to other uses.

- ◆ Without an analysis of enrollment and capacity how does the master plan ensure that if new schools are needed, sufficient vacant land will be available for them?

The 1980 Olney Master Plan provides an example of what we are looking for.

- ◆ Table 9, on page 82, shows current and projected enrollment and capacity for every school in Olney.

The Olney Coalition would like to see a similar table in the Upper Rock Creek plan along with an analysis demonstrating that sufficient vacant sites have been reserved for schools in the event of a worst-case enrollment scenario.

4. TRAFFIC

We have similar difficulties understanding how the Upper Rock Creek plan will impact service levels on the roads and intersections we use every day.

The draft Olney Master Plan projects that with full build-out according to the land use changes recommended in the plan the number of households will increase from 12,000 to 14,800, a significant increase of 23%.

We believe population growth is an issue in Upper Rock Creek. But the plan lacks the projections we need to evaluate this issue. In fact, the only reference to population changes appears to be that on page 5, which states that population will decrease between 1997 and 2005 despite aggressive development.

It is unclear to us how this plan can proceed without an accurate estimate of the population changes that accompany full build out of the remaining land according to the recommended zoning changes.

For example lets compare the scenarios for the Freeman Property. Park & Planning's maximum build-out indicates 130 new households. Pulte / Del Webb's build-out shows 716 new households.

Scenarios for this 332-acre site	Housing Units	Impervious Area		Vehicle Trips/Day (10/unit/day)	Students (0.667/unit)
		%	Acres		
Existing zoning	173	10	33	1,735	116
	758	19	63	7,576	505
Master Plan Recommendations					
	66	6	20	664	44
0.33 units/acre on sewer	106	7	23	1,063	71

	129	8	27		86
Pulte Proposal	716	18	60	7,160	478

The proposal for the Freeman property is alarming in several ways.

- ♦ It bypassed the approved process for zoning changes. For this reason we ask the Council to send it back to Park and Planning for a full staff review including public hearings.
- ♦ It illustrates the large gap between Park and Planning's interpretation of the maximum density that is possible under RNC zoning (130 dwelling units) and the developer's interpretation (716 or more dwelling units).
- ♦ The range of interpretations possible under RNC combined with developers' enthusiasm to push densities to the absolute limit underscores why we believe the remaining land in Upper Rock Creek should **only be developed on septic**. The lower densities associated with septic will protect the area's unique environmental role in water quality and flood control and place lower demands on overcrowded roads and schools.

The Olney Coalition would like to see a similar table and analysis for each of the properties in the Upper Rock Creek plan.

Many members of this Council were elected on a promise to End Gridlock. We are asking you to honor that promise. At a minimum, please do not make Gridlock and overcrowded classrooms worse by allowing development to get further out of balance with the capacity of our roads and schools.

5. ENVIRONMENT

We have similar concerns regarding the environment.

Richard Klein, our environmental consultant, will cover the environmental issue in detail in his testimony.

6. SUMMARY

In closing we urge you to send the draft master plan back to the Planning Board so these deficiencies can be corrected.

The Olney Coalition thanks you for this opportunity to provide input to the process.

Sincerely,
Nancy Wendt
President, The Olney Coalition