

“My concern is the growing disrespect for private property, the basis for our American freedom.

My name is Rosalind Lacy MacLennan and I am in favor of the CCT. I represent myself as a resident, living at 9718 Athletic Way, Gaithersburg, Maryland, in the Courtyards at Rio, an 87-townhome community, located on Winners Drive, between the Crown Farm on Fields Road and the Washingtonian Center on Washingtonian Blvd.

The last time I spoke at a public hearing like this was on September 15, 2009, in regard to the *Gaithersburg West Master Plan*. Tonight I repeat my question raised then: ***Isn't there a way a Belward Farm and a Crown Farm can be developed into productive, viable commercial-friendly locales, connected to the world at large by a Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), without destroying our already established residential communities?***

The placement of a transit station (S-1 alignment) is the source of our concern. We would prefer the Crown Farm S-2 alignment that would **better** service the Life Sciences Center, a medical research center in a commercially developed area.

In contrast, the S-1 alignment once again brings up the ugly specter of positioning a transit station within a densely-populated residential area, where such a station would invite unwelcome trespass, and possibly increased vandalism. We are concerned about the Washingtonian Tower condominium, and the Courtyards boundary line (an extremely sensitive environmental area), and the private sidewalks on Winners Drive.

Furthermore, ***why direct pedestrian traffic to the Washingtonian Center through a fume-filled public parking garage and to the back door of a movie theater? It doesn't make sense.***

Our 5.6 acres are private property. We are 5.6 acres not designed for public trespass, based on an Agreement, dated July 29, 1993. We are backed by Montgomery County code law that explicitly prohibits the use of the Courtyards at Rio's private sidewalks and community property for public pedestrian traffic. (Once again, I place within the record, the letter, dated March 13, 2007, from our attorney, Jason Fisher, in 2007. Another updated letter from our board is in the making.)

“...the access easements were granted solely for the benefit of the owners and users of Avalon Bay Apartments and the Courtyards....and it's clearly stated that the easements, rights and privileges...shall not extend to the public, nor to any governmental agency....”

Yet, once again, even after a bankruptcy and reorganization, the Gaithersburg site plan shows an arrow across our private property. The City of Gaithersburg that promotes itself with the slogan: “We're a character counts city,” has no respect for the rule of law and private property.

As much as we want to applaud the risks the new Crown Farm developers are taking, we at the Courtyards have deep concerns about the increased density, 4X the commercial square footage than before, and 900 homes, in a land parcel equivalent to the 5.6 acre size of our 87 unit townhouse community directly across the street. (Multifamily units can now be placed in buildings 20 stories high, according to revisions, but the total number of homes in the approximate 190 acres cannot exceed 2,250.) These increases in density are gargantuan and outrageous. Is this a political ploy to justify the need for the CCT to handle the traffic volume? These amounts of density and outgoing traffic would certainly put extreme stresses on our community across the street.

Why not situate a transit station at the intersection of Fields Road and Rio Blvd, the official entranceway to the Washingtonian Center? This intersection could be developed as a retail center, in the center of things, as development is in The Kentlands. The Rio Blvd entry is far more inviting into this now popular entertainment, restaurant and retail shopping center than the crossover point through our community to an indoor parking lot.

My mantra remains the same as from 2006 to 2009. ***“Walk around, not through our townhouse community. Don't tread on us.”*** We are not designed for volumes of walkers. We are not P Street on Dupont Circle. Place a transit station within the Life Sciences research center or at a retail/commercial intersection at

Rio Blvd. If residents are willing to walk to the Washingtonian Center across our property; then they can walk to a train station within Crown Farm.

In closing, I again raise a common sense question voiced by one of our residents: ***Why direct pedestrian traffic to the Washingtonian Center through a fume-filled public parking garage and to the back door of a movie theater?***

Respectfully submitted,
Rosalind Lacy MacLennan
Rosalind Lacy MacLennan
Paralegal graduate with honors from Montgomery College
Certified teacher of English and Literature
Free-lance Writer and Theater Reviewer for www.dctheatrescene.com
9718 Athletic Way in the Courtyards at Rio
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878