

From: City Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, May 03, 2017 7:42 AM
To: City-council
Cc: Wyatt Shields; Carly Aubrey
Subject: Citizne Comment Cottage Housing FW: Please pass to City Council Members

From: kristina new [mailto:kristina_new@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 02, 2017 9:57 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Please pass to City Council Members

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for serving on City Council. I appreciate your service. I was at the brief meeting to review the cottage development project on Railroad Ave last night and I had some additional questions regarding the project that I hope someone can answer:

1. What entity enforces the age restriction? Can the city or other entity legally restrict cottage residents from housing school aged children? Can the city or other entity legally restrict children living in the cottages from attending FCC schools without a legal battle?
2. The parcel currently includes 3 lots. Would a zoning/variance change be necessary to build more than 3 homes by right? If sub divided, what would be the number of homes? Would any be on sub standard lots?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

Kristina New
413 Lincoln Ave
Falls Church, VA 22046

NO to Railroad Cottages

Why we care, and why you should, too (as of 5-1-2017)

Traffic	The street is a dead-end, already gets congested with 4 families, what will it be like with 10 more families?
Parking	Parking proposed is woefully inadequate, 10 units need 20 cars plus 5-8 for guests, proposal is only for 13 instead of the necessary 25- 28 spots. This is in direct violation of the "Cottage Ordinance" which says that parking generated by the site must be hosted on the site. People will be forced to park a block away on Fowler.
Storm water drainage	Proposal is to drain through 2 neighbor yards on Ellison Street -- is this legal? Site is essentially a bathtub basin, which means it captures water and the water has nowhere to go.
Zoning change	Why would this be allowed? People bought in a residential R-1 area, now you want to put condos here? Is the only reason that a zoning change is being considered here because the investor/ developer stands to make a large profit (several million)? That is in HIS best interest, not the city's and not the current residents' around the site
Density	This site is 3 lots combined, which is zoned for 3 houses ... why would you change the zoning to squeeze in 11 houses and a carport? <i>Site is only 1.25 acre</i>
Too close together	Plan calls for the building to be just 6 feet apart. SIX FEET! Zoning is 30 feet in between structures
Wrong location	Site is shaped like a long triangle, which is challenging and dictates a poor design. Houses are NOT around a fountain or courtyard, but just in a long row.
SIDEBAR	If this project is intended for elderly people, isn't it a LOOOOOOOOONG walk to bring groceries in from the carports, and also to take their trash out?
School children	20% of the houses in an age-restricted community must be available to other ages, that means there will be families with kids, possibly up to 6 kids
Tax impact	This will bring in about \$150k yearly for the city, which will be offset dramatically if there are 6 kids (approx -\$120k, means a net of only 30k)
Impact to W&OD Trail	People who use the trail will surely notice a concrete jungle of 11 houses mere feet from the trail
Vegetation/ Trees	Almost all will be cut down, removed
Unrealistic drawings of the houses	All the renderings show the site with TEN YEARS projected growth of trees, which is cold comfort to those of living here in the next 1-3 years. Show us what it will look like NOW. Not so pretty, huh?

From: Theresa Twiford <tstwiford@mac.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 29, 2017 4:02 PM
To: Carly Aubrey
Subject: Fwd: Railroad Cottages Letter of Support

Carly, I sent this to Celeste also, but will you please see if this email can be included in the councils RR package for Monday?

From: Ross Chapin <ross@rosschapin.com>
Date: April 28, 2017 at 4:17:57 PM EDT
To: Theresa Twiford <tstwiford@mac.com>
Subject: Falls Church

Theresa,

Thank you for the update on your project in Falls Church. And congratulations for bringing it this far! Its a good project that others will look to for inspiration.

Your proposed plan appears to be designed sensitively in relation with neighboring properties. The layout of the shared spaces, the community commons building and the large porches will foster a close-knit neighborhood. If your household size is small, the parking allotment should be sufficient. In the pocket neighborhoods we've built with small houses, the actual use is around 1.25 spaces per household.

I wish you the best in moving this to reality!

Ross

Ross Chapin, FAIA
RossChapinArchitects
195 Second Street • Langley, WA 98260-0230

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E: ross@rosschapin.com
W: www.rosschapin.com
W: www.pocket-neighborhoods.net
Fb: [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/rosschapinarchitects)

Author: **Pocket Neighborhoods: Creating Small Scale Community in a Large Scale World**

From: Maria Kanellias <marousk61@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 29, 2017 9:26 PM
To: Carly Aubrey
Subject: Railroad home

I think it is about time the city is allowing the building of 55+ homes for those who need to downsize, who can no longer afford the property tax burden. With all the development in the city the middle aged were always left out. This is good and the city needs more of it.

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

From: City Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, April 26, 2017 5:19 PM
To: Carly Aubrey
Subject: FW: Railroad Cottages project

Didn't know if you got this comment.

Celeste Heath, CMC
City Clerk
City of Falls Church
300 Park Avenue
Suite 303E
Falls Church, Virginia 22046

(703) 248-5014
(703) 248-5146 (fax)

From: Karen Oliver [<mailto:karen.oliver.for.fccc@gmail.com>]
Sent: Saturday, April 22, 2017 7:12 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Fwd: Railroad Cottages project

Public comment for the record

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Bethany Henderson <bethanyhenderson@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Apr 22, 2017 at 6:58 PM
Subject: Railroad Cottages project
To: Letty Hardi <lhardi@fallschurchva.gov>, "P. David Tarter" <dtarter@fallschurchva.gov>, "dsnyder@fallschurchva.gov" <dsnyder@fallschurchva.gov>, "dsze@fallschurchva.gov" <dsze@fallschurchva.gov>, "koliver@fallschurchva.gov" <koliver@fallschurchva.gov>, "mconnelly@fallschurchva.gov" <mconnelly@fallschurchva.gov>, "pduncan@fallschurchva.gov" <pduncan@fallschurchva.gov>
Cc: Daniel Henderson <threeputtdan@gmail.com>

Good evening city council members,

We write to share our thoughts on the proposed railroad cottages project. We live nearby the proposed site, and walk by it regularly. We are generally a fan of the concept of the cottages, and would like to see them at that location. We think it brings great diversity in value to our neighborhood.

However, like several of our neighbors who signed a petition that we understand was submitted to you recently, we have some concerns about the impact on the surrounding community. Specifically, if the project moves forward, we think it is essential to ensure that the current road condition and (lack of) maintenance, and flooding of the neighboring properties that happens as a result, is addressed. We also think it is crucial that any development designed for older people, who are more likely statistically to have emergency vehicle access needs, ensure

that there is sufficient emergency vehicle access. As we regularly walk and bike by that site, we cannot envision how an emergency vehicle could easily get down the road, turn around, and get back out. We know the Santa fire truck does not go down the road currently for example, because it is difficult to get back out.

Lastly, we do think it is unrealistic to assume that every cottage owner would only have one car, and that the vehicles would fit in the proposed number of spaces available. Not to mention, there is essentially no guest parking for their visitors. The road in its current condition cannot handle much vehicle parking, especially with increased road traffic. And there is no other walking from a vehicle entrance to the cottages except that road, as they are surrounded by private property and the W&OD trail.

Well we understand that this is a developer choice issue, we do doubt that the \$700,000 per cottage number we have heard bandied about really makes the cottages affordable, thus meeting the stated purpose. Certainly people able and willing to pay that much for a 1200 square-foot house are in an income bracket able to have more than one car.

We understand that you are walking the site soon, and hope you'll take a careful look at the road and the access issues when you do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bethany and Daniel Henderson

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- Bethany
[703-635-9637](tel:703-635-9637)

Sent on the go. Please excuse my clumsy thumbs

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Karen R. Oliver
Falls Church City Council
Mobile 571-421-6950

Railroad: Key Concerns April 17, 2017

VOICING OUR CONCERNS AGAINST THE PROPOSED RAILROAD COTTAGE DEVELOPMENT, AND SEEKING TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE OVERALL SCOPE

We do formally express our concerns related to the proposed development of the Railroad Cottages on 1006 Railroad Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22046. **As taxpayers, we are committed to maintaining the integrity of our neighborhood and our quality of life and environment – which is jeopardized by the scope/density of the proposed cottage development.** This proposed development will **negatively impact the following:**

- **Public safety/fire emergency response risk**
- **Parking**
- **Traffic**
- **Storm water drainage**
- **W&OD trail**
- **Neighborhood noise levels**
- **Vegetation and existing trees**
- **Property values**

Our intention is to make the following entities aware of the situation so they can reevaluate what a suitable alternative plan might be: Falls Church City government officials and other involved parties – including but not limited to – the Falls Church City Council, Falls Church City Mayor, Planning Committee, Fire Marshal, Public Works Committee, and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

We are not opposed to the development of this property per se (it is currently zoned for 3 houses on 3 lots, with the combined area being 1.25 acres). The developer is proposing building a total of 11 units, including a community house, and a carport to cover 10 cars, with extra guest parking for 3 cars. Each house will be 1500 square feet overall with 2-bedroom plus den. Each house will have a footprint of 1000 sq ft and be ONLY 6 FEET APART. The scope and density of this proposed development as written will negatively impact the neighborhood in the following ways:

1. **Public Safety/ Fire Emergency Response Risk**. The width of Railroad Avenue – approximately 11 feet – allows for one-way traffic only. Residents must back out of the way to accommodate a car going the opposite direction. This narrow road is almost too small to allow a standard fire truck. Currently, the turnaround at the end of the dead-end road is not wide enough to support a fire truck turning itself around. Also, people frequently park here illegally to use the trail. With the proposed development, there will be a minimum of 12 new structures spaced no more than 6 feet apart. Should one of these structures catch fire, it could spread quickly from one structure to the next (even with sprinkler systems) and therefore poses a significant risk to adjacent houses in the neighborhood – especially when the road cannot adequately accommodate a fire truck, police cruisers, and ambulances. Furthermore, if blocked by overflow parking from the new cottage development (a very realistic scenario), the turnaround will not be able to accommodate enough space for emergency vehicles' egress. Meanwhile, it remains unclear how any changes to the width of Railroad Avenue will impact the location of the fire hydrant near the intersection of Railroad and Fowler Avenues.

- Parking.** The developer has only included 10 covered parking spots, two (2) temporary spaces for loading/unloading (spots that block fire truck access), and three (3) “extra” spots on the side of the carport. If the residents of each unit have at a minimum two (2) cars, this would total 20 cars, with only 13 permanent available parking spaces – leaving the question unanswered about where the remaining 7 cars will park, let alone those belonging to any visitors or guests. (The development team believes that each owner will prefer to walk everywhere and therefore only have one car, which is unrealistic. Most families in this area have 2 cars or even 3.)



(Google image is of 30 cars, projecting if future residents own 2 cars and host a guest. The above photo parking lot luckily can accommodate that, but what if there were only 13 spots? *photo credit to Cory Lum of Civil Beat) Railroad Avenue is a “No Parking” zone, as it is a one-lane paved road with no space for street parking. Translation: visitors and residents would be forced to park a block away on Fowler Street, which impacts those residents (and making it a long walk for homeowners, especially if laden down with grocery bags, packages, or sports equipment, etc).

- Traffic.** Statisticians devote entire careers studying metrics of how many car trips per day people make to school, work, etc. Suffice it to say that the number of people living on Railroad Avenue would double (from 20 to 40+) and therefore it is reasonable to project that traffic would also double (potentially triple). Current traffic levels are already maxed out for the type of road. (The developer has submitted his own independent study that reveals the new plan to cause between 37 and 57 new “trips” per day ... this is a huge impact to people that use the trail, as well as to the existing homeowners.)
- Storm water drainage.** Railroad Avenue does not have adequate stormwater drainage, curbs, nor sidewalks. During a storm, water escapes down the pavement of Railroad Avenue and floods the north side of the street, where there is no sufficient permanent drainage. Once the road is heavily traveled by countless construction vehicles and significantly increased residential traffic,

the resulting damage to the road will cause additional flooding and drainage issues, and which could potentially flood current homeowners' basements and yards. It is our understanding that Falls Church Public Works does not consider Railroad Avenue to be an official Falls Church City street (as it is owned by the Northern Regional Park Authority - NVRPA) and therefore will not make the proper investments to upgrade and repair the road as warranted to accommodate storm water drainage. This is unacceptable to existing residents and should be unacceptable to any future potential investors or buyers of the Railroad Cottages. If the road is widened, the sloped terrain – at a minimum – will need to be re-graded, re-landscaped, and could result in additional runoff and erosion that will need to be addressed to prevent further damage to property. And rerouting the water to cut through properties to Ellison Street is not an acceptable solution to residents of Ellison Street.

THIS IS A KEY CONCERN AND MUST BE RESOLVED BEFORE MOVING FORWARD.

5. **W&OD Trail impact.** The big question that remains unanswered is who really “owns” Railroad Avenue – is it the City of Falls Church, or the NVRPA? The developer has proposed widening Railroad Avenue by six (6) feet and using “green” pavers, which requires cutting down the small trees and shrubs planted between the road and the gravel trail that runs parallel to the paved W&OD trail. The widening of the road will reduce the size of the strip of land between the paved road and the gravel trail immediately adjacent to the W&OD trail, – causing elimination of trees, shrubs, landscaping, and natural beauty that provide a degree of privacy to current homeowners.
6. **Neighborhood noise levels.** Increasing the number of residential structures on Railroad Avenue – currently four (4) houses with approximately 20 residents – by adding ten (10) cottages with potentially 2-4 residents each, could potentially increase the population density by over 100%. In addition to the doubled population, noise from up to 10 barking dogs, a vast increase in traffic, numerous delivery/contractor vehicles, and construction/moving related activities would create noise disturbances that do not currently exist, and turn a quiet single lane road into a thoroughfare. Frequent (daily?) noise disturbances decrease the quality of life of neighbors.
7. **Vegetation and existing trees.** Current plans call to remove almost all vegetation on the building site and replant the area when the construction is complete (in about a year or year and a half). All drawings show the development with renderings of trees after 10 years' growth ... a long time to wait, especially when the land has mature trees and plants now.
8. **Property values and other concerns.** Falls Church residents enjoy high and increasing property values due to many factors, including but not limited to a stellar public school system. The owners of land on Railroad Avenue, Fowler Street, and Ellison Street currently maintain solid home values in part because of the secluded and private nature of their streets. All of the above issues numbers 1-7 could negatively affect that. Additionally, another concern is that a community trash/ dumpster and recycle area have not been identified – if placed by the carport, this would create a stench during summer, as well as attract vermin, unwanted wildlife, and insects, which will negatively impact the adjacent neighbors' property and reduce enjoyment of their outdoor space.

WHAT ABOUT RENTALS??? The developer claims that the property can only be sold to “seniors” age 55 and older, and that there will be zero impact to the school system because there will be no kids. Even if this were true (which we doubt, many people age 55+ have small kids or teenagers), what is to prevent someone age 55 from buying a unit and then renting it out to a family with kids? Maybe the owner took a job transfer abroad, but has no plans to sell, so in that case he would need to rent it out. This is a realistic scenario and should be addressed.

Currently, the “by rights” legal amount of houses that could be built on the 3 combined lots is ... 3. We believe that 3 “normal” size houses might be more suitable for the land than 11 buildings with inadequate parking. **(Why would City Council go against the ordinance passed a few years ago stating that lots can no longer be subdivided?)**

The idea of age-restricted “affordable” housing for seniors is admirable and attractive, but not at the expense and disregard for current residents and neighbors of adjacent properties. We ask that elected City officials and other related parties take into consideration these concerns as outlined above when voting on any ordinances or zoning issues related to this proposed development. **We seek to maintain the integrity of our neighborhood and quality of life/environment; these are jeopardized by the scope/density of the proposed development.**

Comments from Online Petition RE: Railroad Cottages

Name	City	Date	Comment
Alixandria Lapp	Arlington	Apr 16, 2017	11 homes in a space designed for 3 is simply too many! Thank you for listening.
Carol Abel	Washington	Apr 15, 2017	I am very familiar with both the location and the neighborhood. I can't imagine the impact of so much density in such a tight space with limited access. I don't think this is the right thing for this space.
Alex dorsey		Apr 15, 2017	This plan to 11 buildings in the area that is given isn't possible and not fair to those who already live on Railroad avenue.
Amy	Falls Church	Apr 12, 2017	Wondering how 11 houses, and the vehicles belonging to the households, can fit onto 3 lots - 1.25 acres. Not sure that \$700K is affordable housing for seniors.
Dean Miller	Falls Church	Apr 11, 2017	This is is poorly planned and makes little sense
Dave Hagigh	Arlington	Apr 09, 2017	Unless this housing is "only" for seniors (and not just 55+), let's not let the builder claim it's for seniors when anyone can live there. The City has enough residents already and this is just overkill.
Bethia Sherman	Falls Church	Apr 08, 2017	I don't call senior housing affordable at \$700,000 per house.
Bradford Karony	McLean	Apr 08, 2017	Don't build
Karson Claussen	White Lake	Apr 08, 2017	People bought there for a reason. That such a variance is even being considered is farcical.
Daniel Horowitz	Hayward	Apr 08, 2017	Curious how the developer got the "exception" without citizen input. Perhaps it's time to have new Members of the Commissions that approve the exceptions.
Teresa Schauer	Hampton	Apr 08, 2017	Besides being bad for nearby property owners, this is also bad for people who use the W&OD trail.
Mary Ellen Miller	Falls Church	Apr 08, 2017	Shortsighted plan, this does not have adequate ingress/egress - does not fit Too many houses.

Scott Pierce	Arlington	Apr 08, 2017	Totally opposed. If every property owner in town can't double and triple the number of dwellings on their property, why should this developer?
Anthony P Scardino	Alexandria	Apr 08, 2017	No to Railroad Cottages!
Anonymous		Apr 08, 2017	The cottage houses are too dense for such a small piece of land.
Meg Klekner	Falls Church	Apr 07, 2017	not designed to fit the style of the neighborhood Roads not designed to handle traffic Yes to senior living no to density
Stephanie Petras Dorsey	Falls Church	Apr 07, 2017	We firmly oppose this development, which is literally next to our house!
Julie Felgar	Falls Church	Apr 07, 2017	Too many houses, too small a place.
Andrew Clark	Falls Church	Apr 07, 2017	We don't need more congestion, this a poorly thought out plan
Julie Harrison	Falls Church	Apr 07, 2017	The project is much too dense! Thank you for doing the petition.

From: City Clerk
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2017 4:05 PM
To: City-council
Cc: Carly Aubrey; Carol McCoskrie; Wyatt Shields
Subject: FW: 11 houses in my backyard, right next to the bike path

From: Letty Hardi [<mailto:lettyhardi@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2017 3:47 PM
To: City Clerk; Wyatt Shields
Subject: Fwd: 11 houses in my backyard, right next to the bike path

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Julie Harrison <1julieharrison@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 17, 2017 at 12:11 PM
Subject: 11 houses in my backyard, right next to the bike path
To: 1timothyharrison@gmail.com

Thanks to all who have signed the petition.

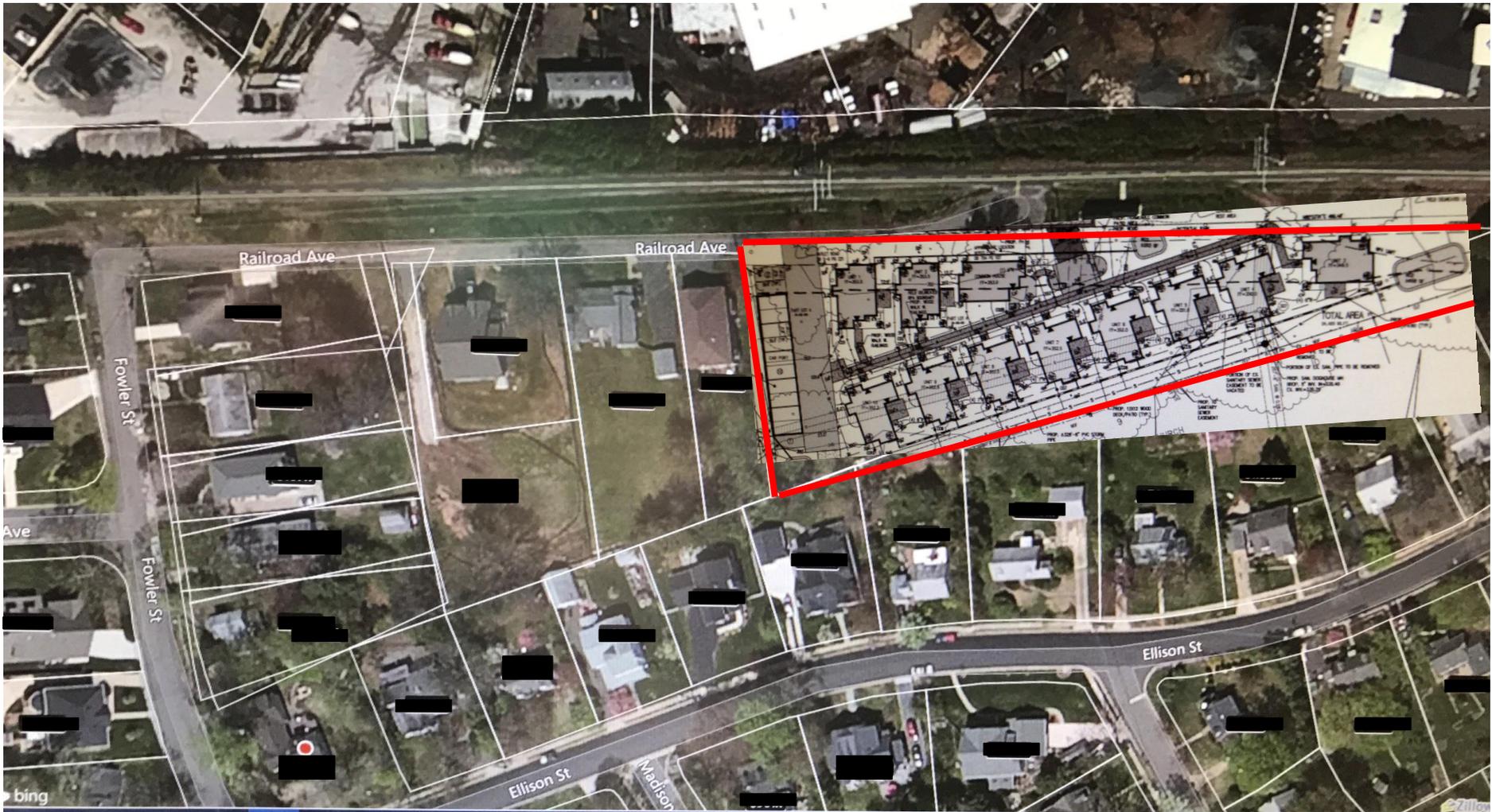
If you have not, please take a quick moment to look it over.

<https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/no-to-railroad-avenue-cottages>

Basically a developer wants to build 11 houses with carport parking for only 10 cars on property adjacent to us (right next to the W&OD trail). It's zoned for just three houses. I'm attaching a photo image to show you what this is.

The Planning Board meeting is tonight at City Hall at 7:30. Thank you. Julie Harrison





NEIGHBORHOOD PETITION as of March 28, 2017

AGAINST RAILROAD COTTAGES DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

What the heck am I signing here?? We are simply asking our elected officials and other relevant parties (City Council, Mayor, Planning Committee, Fire Marshal, NoVa Park Authority, etc) to rethink the Railroad Cottages Development Proposal. There must be a better alternative, such as building it elsewhere.

This is the first I've heard about Railroad Cottages, what is it?

Next to the bike path (W&OD Trail), the developer Bob Young and his team (they built the Flower Building that houses the Post Office) have purchased a tract of land at the end of a narrow one-lane dead-end road. The land is equivalent to 3 lots, spanning about one and a half acres. It is acceptably zoned to build 3 houses, BUT they are seeking a special exception to instead build 11 structures and a carport to cover 10 cars. Each house is designed as a two-story, 1500 sq ft home, with a lay-out of 2-bedrooms plus a den (that could potentially serve as a 3rd bedroom). The intent of the overall project is admirable: sell the "affordable" (affordable being a relative term, they are planning to sell them for in the \$700,000 price range) cottages to people age 55 and up; however the details and significant impact to neighbors has not been thought through. (See illustration map on the back of this page)

*****The proposed Railroad Cottages Development is too dense and the scope is too large, therefore it is jeopardizing the integrity of our neighborhood and our quality of life and environment, as well as negatively impacting property values. The issues at hand are below:*

- **Public safety/fire risk-** With the proposed development, there will be a minimum of 12 new structures spaced no more than 6 feet apart. Should one of these structures catch fire, it could spread quickly from one structure to the next (even with sprinkler systems) and therefore poses a significant risk to adjacent houses in the neighborhood because A FIRE-TRUCK CANNOT TURN AROUND IN THIS AREA BECAUSE IT IS NOT BIG ENOUGH. Also, the furthest cottage would require a 160 foot fire hose to reach.
- **Parking-** The developer has only included 10 carport, 3 guest, and 2 unloading spots for a total of 15 spots. Homeowners will probably have a combined total of 20 cars (minimum) which makes for an interesting game of musical chairs every single day. 20 cars cannot fit in 15 spots, and this does not include guests and delivery people. Where will the extra cars park? There is zero street parking because the street cannot accommodate it due to the proximity of the bike path, and it is marked "No Parking" as it serves as an emergency fire lane. The closest street parking is a block away. If the homes are designed for elderly people, this is a design flaw as they will probably not want to walk that distance with groceries, etc.
- **Traffic-** Traffic will double or triple on a tiny one-lane street, from 20 residents to 40+ residents.
- **Storm water drainage-** Railroad Avenue does not have adequate stormwater drainage, curbs, nor sidewalks. During storms, water escapes down the pavement of Railroad Avenue and floods the north side of the street, where there is no sufficient permanent drainage. The road is not owned by Falls Church City. Recurrent flooding can damage houses and yards, as well as cause insurance rates to go up.
- **W&OD trail-** The developer has proposed widening Railroad Avenue by six (6) feet and using "green" pavers, which requires cutting down the small trees and shrubs planted between the road and the gravel trail that runs parallel to the paved W&OD trail. The widening of the road will reduce the size of the strip of land between the paved road and the gravel trail immediately adjacent to the W&OD trail.
- **Neighborhood noise levels-** In addition to the doubled population, noise from up to 10 barking dogs, a vast increase in traffic, numerous delivery/contractor vehicles, and construction/moving related activities would create noise disturbances that currently do not exist.
- **Vegetation and existing trees-** The developer's plans call to remove almost all vegetation on the building site and replant the area, which would take literally decades to grow back.

← GWH5

Giant Brewery car dealer

← GLEWY

Commercial Property
(Already Developed)
Recycle center, etc

↑ (N)

→ Rita Aid

Fenced Fenced Fenced Fenced Fenced Fenced Fenced

← Fowler Street

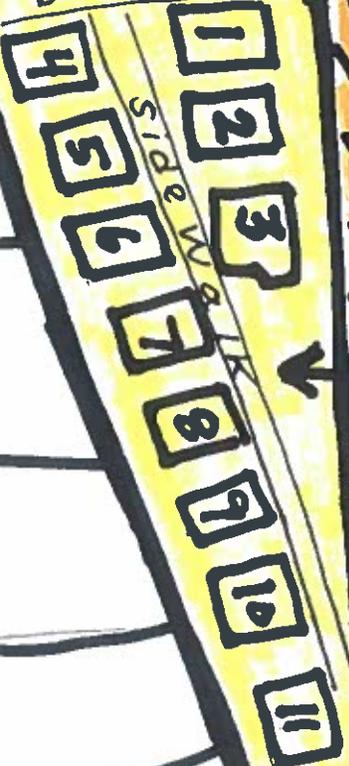
Bike Path W/O D Trail

Proposed Development

← W/O D Trail Maintenance Building

Railroad Ave

Carport
Driveway



Ellison Street
Parker



From: Victor Koo <victor.koo@k3-solutions.com>
Sent: Monday, March 06, 2017 7:59 AM
To: Carly Aubrey
Cc: tracy.adcox@k3-solutions.com
Subject: Railroad cottages

I read about the project summary. Are there plans to increase the road size considering you will triple the population currently residing on the street?