

## One University Land Use

Douglas Stewart August 2019

**Issue** – The Sierra Club Great Falls Group is opposed to the One University development near George Mason University's Fairfax campus in the Braddock District. The proposal would build 580 housing units at a 10.84 acre property near Rte. 123 on University Drive. This is too much density in an area that is not designated by the county for high growth and lacks the infrastructure to support it.

**Details** – The developers are proposing to build 340 student units and 240 affordable housing units. Although the site is near George Mason, walking or bicycling to the campus requires crossing Route 123, a busy, wide road that is not designed for safe pedestrian access. The Planning Commission is scheduled to vote on the rezoning application on September 12. The Board of Supervisors' vote is scheduled for September 24.

While the Sierra Club strongly supports expanding housing choices for the full range of people and families who live and work in Fairfax, this benefit is outweighed by the negative impacts of such an increase in density in an area without the planning foundations or infrastructure to support it.

The Sierra Club supports compact development near transit and in activity centers. Fairfax County has many such designated growth areas that would benefit from much more mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development. The “One University” site is not one of these areas. It is nestled in a relatively low-density residential community, and is not well served by transit, pedestrian or bicycle facilities.

The Planning Commission discussed the project and held a public hearing at its meeting on July 25. Several Planning Commissioners voiced substantial concerns, especially about pedestrian safety and the proposed density. The applicant claims that they will make significant improvements to pedestrian safety at the Rte. 123 crossing. However, when Planning Commissioners questioned the applicant and staff about these pedestrian features, it quickly became clear that these improvements had not yet been approved by VDOT. In fact, VDOT has already categorically rejected the main proposed pedestrian improvement, to square off the intersections in order to reduce vehicle turning speeds and pedestrian crossing time.

**Your Participation is Requested -**

Contact the Planning Commission to express your views about One University. Email the Planning Commission at [plancom@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:plancom@fairfaxcounty.gov). Please contact [Douglas Stewart](#) and [Norbert Pink](#) for more information on the project.

More background information can be found at the [Braddock Land Use Committee website](#).