

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for the Council meeting on THRIVE 2050.

It is quite clear that these planning processes, as currently envisaged, would fundamentally alter the unique character of the Town of Somerset. We shouldn't be under any illusion that densification will not change our quality of life:

- Visualize the homes next door and across from you as duplexes, triplexes or quads.
- Imagine the Town with 100-200 per cent more cars owned by residents, associated delivery trucks, and traffic on Dorset becoming more like Bradley Lane.
- Think of the pool serving 800 or 1000+ households, instead of 400-odd.
- Consider the pressure on Somerset Elementary, Westland Middle and Bethesda Chevy Chase High Schools.

One can debate the merits of the planning proposals to achieve policy objectives; but the potential adverse impacts on the Town as we know it are not disputable. Whether one has deep roots in the Town or is looking to raise a young family here (as we did), one should be concerned about the changes that might be coming.

Many decades ago the Town had the strategic foresight to take on a similarly grave threat when it decided to de-annex Somerset House and set aside Vinton Park as our green buffer. How will our generation respond?

It is our view that urban densification can and should be pursued while retaining historic, cohesive single-family communities in the urban landscape. That means coming to terms with more development in urban Bethesda, Friendship Heights and along River Road (and mitigating their impacts), but resolutely opposing any zoning amendments that would permit multi-family structures in the Town of Somerset.

From our perspective, we would expect to hear where every elected official at the Town and County level stands on the issue. We would remind the Mayor and Town Council members that their election platforms have consistently stated their commitment to retaining the special qualities of our Town. We will only support candidates for Town and County office who would balance urban densification with the retention of long-standing single-family communities. We ask the Mayor and Town Council members to publicly and clearly state their positions on the future of Somerset. We call on the Town Council to convene a series of public meetings for residents to provide inputs to the Town's letter to the County. We hope that all our neighbors who are concerned about these developments will participate in the democratic process, eventually sending a clear signal at election time. And we hope that we will not ultimately have to vote with our wallets and moving vans out of the Town.

Best regards,

Sherry and Rohit Khanna
Falstone