



KFNV Comments on Proposal to increase access to the Rockville Senior Center

1 message

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The Board of Directors for King Farm Neighbors Village (KFNV) would like to thank the Mayor and City Council for recent developments related to the *Rockville Senior Center Entrance Project (Project)* and the informative presentation at the public hearing on November 19, 2024. Many of our Board members and King Farm residents attended the hearing. We would like to follow up by submitting these comments on the *Project's* proposal to construct an entryway to the Rockville Senior Center from the intersection at Gude & Piccard.

KFNV is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization with about 200 members dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for seniors and our community. Many KFNV members are also members of the Senior Center. We strongly support Rockville's *Project* to increase access as detailed below but also have concerns about whether the proposed parking spaces will be sufficient and equally accessible to all Senior Center members.

Improved Public Safety: Making the Rockville Senior Center more accessible for all Rockville residents will improve safety for all Senior Center users as well as the residents in Woodley Park and College Park because it will provide easier access for emergency vehicles. Currently fire trucks and ambulances must navigate narrow residential streets to get to and from the Senior Center. The Gude entrance shortens the distance to medical facilities such as Shady Grove Hospital.

Decreased Traffic Through Residential Neighborhoods: Opening access through Gude Drive will only decrease traffic to the residential neighborhoods—not increase it. Opening access to Rockville residents who live west of Gude Drive will make it easier for more people to use the Senior Center. This will increase the membership and revenue generated for the Senior Center. Many King Farm residents have noted that they do not use the Senior Center as much as they would like because of the long and perilous drive through the narrow residential streets. With Rockville's continuing growth west of Gude Drive, it is not just the residents of King Farm who will benefit from easier access.

Need to Increase Parking and Accessibility: Parking at the Senior Center should be increased and equally accessible to all users. The proposed 48 parking spaces (37% of total) do not seem sufficient to accommodate those entering from Gude Drive. In addition, all Senior Center members pay the same fees and taxes and should have equal access to park anywhere in the parking lot. Dividing the parking lot with a barrier limits access, reduces the number of parking spaces, and hinders flexibility to accommodate changes from current estimates. It is not clear if the estimates include projected growth west of Gude Drive over the next 10, 20, 30 years? With greater convenience, more people may want to enter from the Gude Drive entrance. Where will people park if the lot is full on that side?

A possible compromise for the parking lot is to construct the parking lot without a barrier and then after a time period survey the traffic flow to gauge if there is more or less through traffic in the Woodley Gardens

neighborhood. In addition, a survey would also inform the Department about the numbers of people using the Senior Center after the improvements. This is especially important because there is scant future demographic information about possible Senior Center participants from communities now being built west of Gude Drive, who would benefit most from the new access road. Finally, waiting to build the parking lot barrier and then surveying the results of the improvements would also be less costly. In short, creating a solution to a problem that might not develop--i.e. more traffic through Woodley Gardens—is short-sighted and not cost-efficient.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments and will closely follow further developments related to this project.

Regards,
The Board of Directors
King Farm Neighbors Village