

**May 1, 2004**

**To: Charles County Commissioners and the Charles County Planning Commission**

The Honorable Murray D. Levy  
President, Charles County Commissioners

The Honorable Wayne Cooper  
Charles County Commissioner

The Honorable Robert J. Fuller  
Charles County Commissioner

The Honorable Wm. Daniel Mayer  
Charles County Commissioner

The Honorable Allan (Al) R. Smith  
Charles County Commissioner k

The Honorable Zak Krebeck  
Acting Director of Planning, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management

We, the undersigned, being residents either in, or in the vicinity of the Constitution Hills neighborhood in Waldorf, Maryland wish to express our strong opposition to the connection of the proposed Autumn Hills neighborhood to Constitution Hills via Consitution Hills Drive. Our concerns described below:

- Number of vehicle trips and lack of safety considerations

The proposed Autumn Hills neighborhood will include 384 homes, all of which will have direct access to Maryland Route 228 via Stavors Road, via Constitution Hills Drive. Such an increase in the volume of vehicle trips will greatly increase traffic on Constitution Hills Drive and Stavors Road without adding benefit to existing homeowners. Constitution Hills Drive is currently 28 feet in width. The approved plans for Autumn Hills call for Constitution Hills Drive, a minor collector, to have a right of way of 60 feet, though the actual roadway will not be widened. However, Stavors Road, the collector to which ALL traffic from Constitution Hills Drive must travel is currently 22 feet wide and does not feature sidewalks. Stavors Road has been determined to be so narrow and dangerous that school children living in the area are prohibited to walk to nearby Jenifer Elementary School, and must instead ride buses. The proposed plans for Autumn Hills feature no improvements to Stavors Road.

Route 228, the major route to which Stavors Road connects, is already overwhelmed. Specifically, the intersection of Stavors, Route 228, and Springhaven Woods is the scene of frequent accidents. These incidents will only increase both in volume and severity as vehicle traffic increases upon construction of Autumn Hills. To our knowledge, the County has not developed any plans for adding a traffic light to this intersection, the necessity of which is currently evident and will become even more so in the foreseeable future.

- Impacts of connecting the two neighborhoods

Mr. Krebeck has offered that, "Interconnecting neighborhoods is a part of the County's strategy to provide a better road network in the greater Waldorf area and thus relieve some of the congestion by providing more choice in selecting a travel route." This is grossly inconsistent with existing roads and communities.

Constitution Hills is adjacently located to two major neighborhoods and yet it is connected to neither. Sun Valley (166 homes) is located due north and the Westlake community (Dorchester, Lancaster, Hampshire neighborhoods containing more than 500 homes) is located due south. If connecting neighborhoods to provide more potential travel routes were truly an objective of the County's strategy, then it reasons that these three neighborhoods would have been connected. Given the County's "strategy to provide a better road network," it would have been logical to connect these neighborhoods to facilitate convenient access to the retail district. Yet, current plans call for this critical connection to occur several miles to the west at McDaniel Road, therefore requiring travelers to head west, then south, before heading east to the retail district.

The preliminary plans for Autumn Hills call for 384 lots to be built on a minimum lot size of 7,000 square feet. Constitution Hills contains 140 homes lots on a minimum lot size of 14,777, more than twice the size of the minimum lots in Autumn Hills. These neighborhoods are fundamentally different in design and function. We are opposed to any connection.

- Privacy fence

Should the construction of Autumn Hills proceed, we respectfully request that a wooden privacy fence, a minimum of eight feet in height, be erected along the entire boundary between Autumn Hills and Constitution Hills. This burden should be absorbed by the County or the developer given the vast revenue that will be realized through the construction and sale of 384 new homes.

- Increase buffer

The preliminary plans call for a buffer of 50 feet between Autumn Hills and Constitution Hills. We request that this buffer be increased to be no less than 100 feet.

- Water pressure

The preliminary plans call for the homes Autumn Hills to tie into the water main used by residents of Constitution Hills. We request assurance, with appropriate documentation and in writing, from the Charles County Commissioners and or the Planning Commission, that the current water pressure enjoyed by residents in Constitution Hills will not be compromised by the construction of Autumn Hills.

We wholeheartedly support the County Commissioners, but believe that any connection of Constitution Hills and the proposed Autumn Hills neighborhood via Constitution Hills Drive will have a deleterious affect on traffic conditions, the safety of area school children, and the overall way of life currently enjoyed by existing residents.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned