

Nov. 22, 2016

To: Alpharetta Planning Commission
Re: Opposition to Perling/13 S Main St DT-MU rezoning

When I learned of the new downtown high density zoning and how far it extended on the comprehensive master plan, I worried that high density rezoning would get even more out of control. And when I learned of the Perling S Main St development application, my concerns reached their peak. High density has already arrived in Alpharetta in full force, and now the high-density mixed-use conglomeration is attempting to creep down Highway 9.

We have Avalon, the Old Milton Holdings development, Downtown City Center, and Peridot – all approved high-density mixed-use developments within a two-mile radius of each other. Why do we possibly need another one within a mile of these developments, especially when we can consider that:

- Just within the above mentioned high density mixed-use developments, we already have approved approximately 1,395,571 sq ft of office space and 763,335 sq ft of retail.¹
- Within the above mentioned high density mixed-use developments, we have approved about 1,479 residential units (single family housing, townhomes, condos, apartments).¹
- Our approved townhomes already exceed the 5-year estimate.¹
- Our rental units are at 36% of the housing inventory, which is already at the high end of the rental study's suggestion of 28%-36% and is higher than the city's goal of 32%.²

Below are some points from the application as to why the developer thinks this type of development is appropriate and my comments to these:

- “Neighborhood feel that the downtown core needs.”
The downtown core now has plenty of neighborhoods underway within Avalon, the Old Milton Holdings development, and Downtown City Center, along with Peridot, as mentioned above, plus several more developments that may not be included in the above: 15 townhomes along Old Milton/Beecham Group (medium density), 24 condos on Thompson St/Kairos (high density), 30 residential units at Canton St Commons (high density), 12 homes on Canton/Twelve on Canton (low density), and 28 single family homes at Wills Rd and Rucker/Enclave at Wills Park (medium density).
- The development is “within master plan downtown corridor area; in downtown area where high density belongs.”
The developer is seeking a variance to the DT-MU zoning to more than double the density – as if 10 units/acre isn't enough, he is seeking 24 units/acre! I don't agree with the master plan SUGGESTION of extending the downtown zoning to this area, let alone doubling the density. Besides, we already have enough high density in all the above mentioned approved developments within a one-mile radius of this application.
- “Property is not good for current C-2 zoning due to site shape, downtown vision, surrounding use and visibility.”
Again, we have enough already-approved developments that meet the “downtown vision” close to this area. Commercial is definitely workable along Main St where the current strip center is now. If commercial doesn't work for the area behind the current strip center and existing residential building, wouldn't a low density single family housing development work to complement the single family neighborhoods on the opposite side of Devore St.?

- “Peculiar upscale urban architecture – new precedent the area will need. A new standard and above the level of standard of the current DT-MU.”
Didn’t we recently establish the downtown standard – now there is already a need to change/“improve” that standard by doubling the density and changing the look?
- “Meets vision of redeveloping poor properties.”
Changing a “poor property” for a super high-density, multi-use monstrosity that is overkill is not the answer. This property can be improved in a less invasive manner.

City Council member Jim Gilvin conducted a survey among 1,100 residents, and of the 150+ responses, 87% of the respondents said that the level of development in Alpharetta is too much. 84% of the respondents said they envisioned the downtown area to be similar to Canton St in Roswell as opposed to Buckhead or Decatur. We are choking Alpharetta with the current level of development, and the goal of maintaining a hometown feel that residents want is disappearing in the name of high-density development.

Please do not approve the Perling/S Main St rezoning application.

Thank you for your consideration,
Christine Kujawski
Alpharetta resident

¹ Information compiled from development summary documents received from Alpharetta city staff and on city website.

² From “Alpharetta Rent Study – Updated 10-27-2016” posted on Alpharetta city website.