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**ezStorage in Sandy Spring**  
Case Number 120080410  
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### **Preserve Rural Sandy Spring**

*I have lived in Ashton for 20 years and reside about 2 1/2 miles from the proposed ezStorage facility. I am a member of the Sandy Spring-Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium Steering Committee, but these comments are my own, made only as a citizen of the Sandy Spring-Ashton community.*

Here are the reasons why I oppose the Preliminary Plan for the proposed ezStorage facility in rural Sandy Spring.

#### **Staff Report: The Master Plan and Rural Overlay Zone**

*Staff Report, Page 5: “The applicant has designed the storage facility with a brick façade, peaked roofs, columns and window treatments, all of which contribute to the look of an ‘active front’ ...”*

I agree that the design does, at first glance, look like an active front. The Master Plan (page 31) calls for actual active fronts, not fake “active” fronts. One won’t see people going about their activities when looking into the windows, but will see a storage facility.

The ezStorage Preliminary Plan does NOT meet the Master Plan’s requirement for active fronts.

*Staff Report, Page 5: “By their nature, self-storage facilities rely on visits from renters who use vehicles to deliver or retrieve items.”*

The report recognizes that the facility is a “vehicle-oriented” service, failing to note that the Rural Overlay Zone aims to exclude “new auto-oriented” services (Page 81). The Master Plan has strong examples of pedestrian usage: Page 8 says land use should “offer ample opportunities for social interaction and promote a strong sense of community”; and Page 32, “Creat[ing] pedestrian ‘traffic’ with uses and designs that invite frequent visits by all members of the community.”

The ezStorage Preliminary Plan does NOT relate to the Master Plan’s concept of places for citizens to walk and interact.

*Staff Report, Page 6: “Staff believes that the applicant’s proposal is in substantial compliance with the Master Plan.”*

The previous examples show how major aspects of the Preliminary Plan are contradictory to the guidance provided in the Master Plan and the Rural Village Overlay Zone. Specifically, the ezStorage facility does not fit into a rural community; the design does not support active fronts; the emphasis is on automobiles and not pedestrian traffic; and the development would be a place where community members would only rarely want to go.

I believe that the applicant’s proposal is NOT in substantial compliance with the Master Plan.

### **Environment**

*Staff Report, Page 7: “There is no forest on the property. .... Any afforestation requirement that remains after all allowable credit for landscape trees has been exhausted will be satisfied off-site.*

Once again, as with many other plans proposed for Sandy Spring and Ashton, this Preliminary Plan calls for all trees to be cleared and to be replaced by trees planted off-site, as we have seen too many times. Only three trees are in good condition, but it’s time to leave some trees in our rural community.

Page 8 of the Master Plan sets two priorities: “This Plan makes the preservation and enhancement of the area’s rural character its top priority, closely balanced with another high priority goal, which is environment protection.”

The top priority (rural character) is not compatible with a storage facility. And, the removal of trees, even with off-site planting is directly contrary to environmental protection for Sandy Spring and Ashton.

The Master Plan does NOT mean that the Sandy Spring-Ashton environment can be moved somewhere else.

### **Conclusion**

The Preliminary Plan for ezStorage in Sandy Spring should be denied, based on the non-conformance to the Master Plan and the Rural Village Overlay Zone. Please vote for denial.