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Parklands and Train Noise

Parklands residents are upset by the train whistles as trains pass through the local station and want the city council to silence them.

We feel that this is little different from moving to the seashore and then complaining about the roar of the waves.

First: One appeal of the Parklands location is the proximity of the train station and an easy commute. There are safety requirements for trains to sound their horns at certain crossings.

Second: You get used to the sound of the horn. Those who have returned to Gaithersburg and those who have been guests of residents acknowledge that trains sound different in Gaithersburg—there is a mellowness and an ethereal quality about them, perhaps because of anomalies in the terrain.

Third: Thunder is far more disruptive than train whistles. Should the city council legislate against thunder?



Fourth: Trains have a long history in Gaithersburg. When it was a small agricultural town, it depended on trains to receive supplies and send produce to markets. During World War II when gasoline was unavailable, scientists living in Gaithersburg commuted by train to their jobs in Washington. Trains and their whistles have such a psychic connection to anyone who has lived here for long that the charrette planning for improvements to Olde Towne

Gaithersburg incorporated the train as a central theme. The community museum is in a restored 1918 locomotive.

When Cowpainters LLC, a fiberglass sculpture company, provided white fiberglass sculptures to cities nationwide to capture the unique culture and promote public art, Baltimore's was a blue crab, New York's was an apple, Buffalo's was—you guessed it—a buffalo. Gaithersburg chose the train for the "All Aboard the Art

Train” program in 2007.

We feel that when someone moves to a new community, they should spend some time learning about the area before becoming self-appointed “activists.” Additionally, if you move to a large metropolis, expect horns and sirens; if you move to the shore, expect loud waves; if you move near an airport, expect roaring planes; if you move into farmland, expect to smell



manure. We don't understand the determination of a few people to spontaneously lobby against something they were well aware of when they moved in—and something that other nearby residents have lived with for years and not only adapted to, but grown to love.

We also feel that before someone speaks for a community, they should get representative opinions from that community. The good news for the light sleepers is that when the urban center is built, it will buffer a great deal of the sound.

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