

## **Sierra Club Falls of the James Group Statement of Support for Richmond City Residents Against a Proposed 24-hour Sheetz Gas Station at the Stratford Hills Shopping Center**

**11/8/22**

The Sierra Club Falls of the James Group supports Stratford Hill residents in Richmond City who are against the proposed development of the 24-hour business operation of a Sheetz gas station and convenience store at Stratford Hills Shopping Center on the corner of Forest Hill Avenue and Hathaway Road. This proposed gas station goes against the Master Plan for Richmond City: "Richmond 300: Guide for Growth" for Stratford Hills, approved by City Council in 2020, which includes a mixed-use, walkable, pedestrian and cyclist-friendly community hub by 2037. (See attached plan for Stratford Hills below from Appendix C 4 of the Richmond 300: Guide for Growth [R300\\_Adopted\\_210331\\_0.pdf \(rva.gov\)](https://www.rva.gov/files/2020/12/R300_Adopted_210331_0.pdf) ). This plan specifically calls for rezoning "this node in alignment with the Future Land Use Plan to allow for a mix of uses and increased residential density by-right and discourages auto-related uses and suburban strip commercial development form." Improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure, implementation of high-frequency transit, and inclusion of more trees and open spaces within the Stratford Hills Shopping Center are also recommended.

There are already two existing gas stations and a future Exxon gas station and car wash within a mile of this site. Not only would this proposed Sheetz gas station increase noise, light, and air pollution, which would affect the health of nearby residents, business owners, and wildlife, but it would increase traffic at this entrance to the popular James River Park Systems Pony Pasture Rapids Park. Increased traffic would result in more hazards to drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians who frequent this area. The Richmond City Climate and Ecological Emergency Resolution, adopted in 2021, calls for more trees, as recommended for the Stratford Hills Shopping Center in the Richmond 300 Plan, as well as calls for cleaner fuel sources, such as more EV chargers and a city electric fleet, not more gas stations. With the advent of more clean, fuel-efficient cars and electric vehicle transportation in Virginia and the nation, the proposed Sheetz Gas Station is a backward step for climate action planning in Richmond City.