

In Real Estate, everyone knows the 3 things that create value; location, location, location. While there is elemental truth to that, it is an over-simplified version of what is a more complex formula through which property values are created, hold and rise over time. True, location is always important, but in the greater DC market, and more specifically Montgomery County is already in a great macro location, and intrinsically have sustainable and rising property values. Other factors to consider in property values are style of house (ie. Colonial, Rancher, Rambler, Split Level, Split Foyer, Dutch Colonial, etc.), lot size, lot shape and grade, interior updates / features and exterior fixed elements on or adjacent to the house. While we don't have control over some of these factors, we have input into the features in our home and certainly need to consider what's being proposed or currently exists in and around a home before buying.

As a Realtor, I have run the gamut of clients and equally, the types of properties I've shown, listed and sold to and for my clients; and it's amazing what I've seen inside and outside of homes. Common sense backed by experience has taught me that clean and cared for homes with little or nothing to do both inside and outside, great curb and a good neighborhood feel will sell quickly and for top dollar. So what does that mean? It means something different for everyone, but there is a wide band where the majority of people buying or selling will consider the same elements either desirable or undesirable. We all know the homes that have curb appeal and are desirable as we see them on the TV home shows time and time again and even driving around our area. We've seen homes being renovated from old, tired and ugly, to new, modern and attractive through fit and finish work and materials used. Though, it is harder to describe the formula for an ugly house or undesirable property until we see it. For instance, a property and house can look great, but the local water tower behind or adjacent to your property will detract from buyers falling in love with the house, and creates less demand, which ultimately devalues your house as it will sell below 'market value.' The same goes for county power lines running adjacent to your back yard, a dormant landfill behind your property or a highway or busy road behind your property. These are all immovable, undesirable external elements that realistically depress property values.

With the advent of technology and the wireless world we live in, there is an ever increasing demand for cell towers that relay wireless data. These towers are popping up everywhere and have become quite a hot topic of conversation as to their placement. While I'm not a wireless telecom expert and can't speak to their emissions or necessary placement, I can say, as a Realtor, placing these towers on or adjacent to homes will have a real and negative impact on home market value, much as a water tower or highway would. Simply put, they detract from homes' curb appeal, aesthetic value and overall enjoyment. This is even more of an issue in neighborhoods with underground utilities where there are no power poles, power lines or any above ground utilities. The addition of an above ground cell tower is certainly not congruent with the overall look of the neighborhood and would stick out as a obvious eye sore while negatively impacting home, property and neighborhood values. One might argue that it would only impact the immediate homes, but when homes sell around the towers, they will sell for less due to the towers unsightly and unfortunate appearance and placement; and those homes become the comps in the neighborhood or sub-division. This will drive home prices down and impact other homes in the community as well; regardless of whether there is a line of sight to the tower or not from the secondary property when using the subject property as a comparable. For the reason of maintaining the look and feel of our community and preserving and protecting property values, cell towers should not be placed in neighborhoods adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of homes.

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Best Regards,

Anton Vanas

Agent | c: 240-252-9111

Licensed | MD, DC & VA

Long and Foster Real Estate, Inc.
4650 East West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814
Office: 301-907-7600