

# STRATHMORE

**DATE:** July 28, 2020  
**TO:** Council President, Sidney Katz and members of the County Council  
**FROM:** Monica Jeffries Hazangeles, President and CEO – Strathmore  
**RE:** Written Testimony for Montgomery County Council Work Session  
Bill 29-20, Taxation - Payment in Lieu of Taxes - WMATA Property - Established

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More than 20 years ago, before the Music Center at Strathmore was built, Strathmore Founder and CEO Emeritus Eliot Pfanstiehl, the Strathmore Board of Directors, Montgomery County Government, and WMATA collaborated to create one of, if not the, most fully utilized stations in the entire Metro system at Grosvenor-Strathmore. Through imaginative and joint planning, the partners adjusted architectural designs to relocate the parking garage closer to the Music Center and shared the cost of constructing the Carlton R. Sickles Pedestrian Bridge, which gently curves from the garage towards the Center to reveal the delights of a building alive with the arts and delivers patrons protected from the elements.

Following the design collaboration, Strathmore and WMATA further cooperated to implement a precedent-setting agreement that provides complimentary parking for patrons of the Music Center paid for by Strathmore and the producers of concert programs. Commuters park in the garage by day, Concert Hall patrons utilize the garage at night. Currently, about 5% of audiences arrive by Metro. It is only fitting that the Grosvenor-Strathmore station and future site of Strathmore Square further develop as a model for transit-oriented smart growth.

Strathmore is a fully engaged creative partner with Fivesquares and WMATA and proud to help bring this new arts-infused residential community to the area surrounding the Metro Station. Strathmore Square represents an important opportunity to expand Strathmore's relevance and deepen its relationship with its community. We can extend our signature customer service all the way to the Metro platform and deliver programming to residents where they live.

We envision a community fully immersed in creative pursuit. We are working with Fivesquares to design a suite of flexible spaces for art and music classes and exhibitions. We are

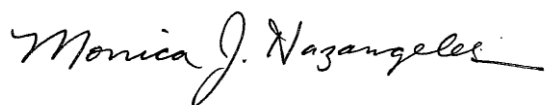
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exploring a technology-inspired portal, which would enable real-time collaboration with artists around the world. The ground-floor space includes observation corridors where residents can see live rehearsals and recording sessions, in progress. We will animate public spaces as pop-up performance venues and employ artful wayfinding. And, this might be the first Metro stop that has its own soundtrack!

Strathmore and the leaders of Fivesquares have a long, respected, and productive relationship that has resulted in the award-winning Symphony Park, where homeowners are members of Strathmore and five acres of green space between the community and Strathmore were donated to the County by the developer. Bill 29-20 offers an innovative solution to facilitate full utilization of the Metro site and build a large community of potential patrons for the Mansion and Music Center – two venues in which the County has generously invested. Given current challenges caused by the pandemic, we know having the support of a devoted base of arts enthusiasts adjacent to our campus will be vitally important to the long-term health of Strathmore. We encourage your support of the proposed legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,



Monica Jeffries Hazangeles  
President and CEO