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ITEM: 6.2.1 IP2022-1146

Distrib Letter 4

CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

January 14, 2023

Re: Westbrook Local Area Plan

My name is Mike Bracko. I am a 27-year resident of Wildwood and the current Traffic Committee for the Wildwood Community Association.

I am writing in opposition of the proposed Westbrook Local Area Plan (LAP) which could approve rowhouse/townhouse style housing being built, it appears, everywhere there is a green space in Wildwood. This is according to the final edition of the LAP which identifies areas of new density and growth. Myself and other Wildwood residents respectfully request alternative solutions and ask for amendments to the plan.

I have the following concerns about densification:

- With building heights possibly being as high as 4 stories, this would reduce the size of yards and tree canopy, there would be a loss of sunlight, and a loss of privacy in backyards of adjacent houses. Please reconsider to having buildings no higher than 2-stories.
- Parking will be a problem because with more homes comes more vehicles which would increase on-street parking and parking in front of houses that do not want "strange" vehicles parked in front of where they live.
- Wildwood would experience an increase in traffic which is the exact opposite of what we are trying to achieve through the traffic committee.
- As it is now, there is a high volume of traffic on Bow Trail and access to Bow Trail to and from Wildwood; with densification, this would put more traffic on Bow Trail and make intersections such as Bow Trail and 45th Street and Bow Trail and 37th Street even more challenging and/or dangerous.
- With more traffic comes a probability of unsafe driving and vehicles driving above the speed limit, especially in playground zones, which is a concern now.
- With more traffic, there are concerns for pedestrians, especially children walking, biking, scootering, and skate boarding to and from school and crossing streets. We have a documented issue with vehicles not stopping for pedestrians at crosswalks near Wildwood School. As such, the last thing we want as a community is more traffic which would possibly aggravate vehicle-pedestrian encounters.
- One of the many reasons myself, and most of Wildwood residents like living in Wildwood, is because of the many greens spaces which are used for exercise/fitness, dog walking, children playing, and aesthetics. Based on maps I have seen of the proposed Westbrook Local Area Plan, almost every green space would be gone and replaced by buildings. This is the reverse of what cities and countries want relating to climate change as it would reduce trees and vegetation that absorb carbon dioxide. Everywhere in the World, cities and countries are planting more trees (vegetation) to help reduce or reverse climate change. The LAP is disregarding the trend of increasing vegetation. As such, please consider an alternative by leaving all green spaces on Spruce Dr and Wildwood Dr undeveloped.
- The proposed Westbrook Local Area Plan is not in the best interest of Wildwood residents therefore, we ask City Planners to show more respect to our concerns and listen to what we are saying in opposition of "The Plan."

Wildwood is different than other communities with its many winding and "D shaped" crescent streets, limited access points that are already congested at peak times, sewer system from the 1950s already at capacity, traffic and safety concerns around the school, many daily visitors due to the recreational opportunities Wildwood offers such as: off leash dog park, outdoor hockey/skating rink, safe biking, and access to Edworthy Park.

Rezoning or land use changes according to the LAP would be made simpler, and therefore attract builders/investors, as it is a blanket rezoning - including allowing even more than infills, which is row houses and 4 stories in some areas in Wildwood without a requirement to provide for parking, contributing to further congested and unsafe streets and potentially changing the face and quality of living in Wildwood. This is a worst-case scenario and would happen only if a homeowner chooses to develop or sell but the changes can also be a lot more invasive than many are aware of, hence the urgent suggestion to reevaluate the LAP.

We respectfully request alternative solutions and ask for amendments to the plan. We also ask for a delay in proceeding with the LAP. There has been a lack of information and transparency of this plan and a tight timeline. We ask the city to engage with Wildwood residents (a townhall/forum discussion), to review traffic concerns and previous studies, discuss the lack of infrastructure to accommodate the plan in this proposal. We respectfully request more time to review, and more engagement from and with Wildwood residents, many of whom are not aware of this plan and how this would impact them.

Despite advocacy efforts over the past three years and City Planners assurance they would listen to residents who voiced their opposition to increasing density community-wide, they have done the opposite. I am writing to encourage City Planners to listen to the concerns of the people who live in Wildwood, and who would be directly and inappropriately affected by "The Plan," and re-consider the Westbrook Local Area Plan.

Yours truly,

Mike Bracko, Ed.D., FACSM