

February 6, 2020

City of Ramsey Planning Commission and City Council,

As we presented at the January 2, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting, we live in the neighborhood directly abutting and across the street from the proposed Odyssey Townhome development being considered for build on Nowthen Blvd and 146th Avenue. At that January meeting, we presented several concerns we have regarding this development, and have since realized important additional issues that need to be addressed. We respectfully request careful consideration and planning before any further action is taken on moving this plan forward.

Tree Preservation and Density Transition:

- A. There are significant mature trees along 146th Avenue and the property line that abuts the single-family homes surrounding this proposed development on all sides.
 - a. What will the Commission and Council do to ensure we have proper transitioning that is acceptable to all affected residents?
 - b. Will the Planning Commission push for existing trees to remain in place and for additional significant landscaping to ensure a proper transition between the current homes and new development?
 - c. If trees need to be removed, can we be assured that those will be replaced one for one with other significant growth greenery that will buffer the impact of the view and transition between the existing single-family homes and this new higher density development?
 - i. Twenty-five open view feet and a standard city street width is not considered proper density transition from a neighboring single-family homeowner perspective. Aesthetics matter to home values and positive acceptance of the addition of higher density housing in this single-family home neighborhood.
 - ii. As trees are removed for construction it can cause stress to the remaining trees intended to be a buffer to the existing neighborhood. What steps can be taken to maintain the integrity of those remaining trees? What plans can be made to replace any that expire with same or similar size trees to maintain the existing buffer?

Traffic Mitigation, Traffic Safety and Emergency Vehicle Access:

- A. What is the plan for significant traffic mitigation with these additional 52 vehicles added to the already congested and difficult to access Nowthen Blvd? There is no significant traffic mitigation between Hwy 47 and Alpine Drive.
- a. There have been several accidents on Nowthen and Sunwood drive over the years.
 - b. There is an elementary school along this stretch, adding to the heavy traffic.
 - c. Residents from northern communities such as St. Francis and Nowthen drive this stretch to avoid Hwy 47 and 10 congestion.
 - d. The double turn lanes off Hwy 47 onto Nowthen, along with the merge and turn lanes on Nowthen near Stoney River Senior Housing, were very poorly planned and executed, and the area is ripe for a significant accident.
 - e. Vehicles are JUST starting to get up to the 50 mph speed by the time they reach 146th Avenue, after having to slow for the merge and turn lanes near Stoney River. With additional cars turning left onto 146th Ave, this will slow traffic further and cause potential accidents.
 - i. When there are cars turning left onto 146th, many people go around that car on the right, and there are often near collisions, again because people are accelerating to get up to the speed limit.
 - f. If Anoka County has concerns about another access onto Nowthen in that area, this reduces access to only one entrance and exit into this development. As understood, the current plan, if allowed, would be for this second access to be an exit only road. These two issues raise concerns:
 - i. **WITH a second, exit only access** - If the single road within the development proposed remains as designed, all vehicles must turn left onto 146th avenue for access INTO the development. Concerns remain as described earlier about safety at this intersection.
 - ii. **With NO second/exit only access allowed** - This pushes all traffic to this development onto 146th avenue to enter AND exit this development. Concern again about the intersection safety and additional impact on the condition of the newly constructed 146th avenue, as well as added wait time in an already difficult situation morning and night to enter and exit Nowthen Blvd.
 1. **A LARGE concern** in this “ONE ROAD” access scenario is emergency vehicle access. With one entrance and exit from 146th Avenue, the development will need a turn-around or cl-de-sac created for a fire truck to access the properties. And can a full size fire truck even make

the sharp left turn off 146th onto another sharp left turn road (as shown on the current sketch plan)? This also then requires different road widths than currently proposed. Much of this added road adjustment affects the required green space and density buffer. This then affects the concerns of proper density transition.

2. In addition to the issues created with one road access, does the density of this development need to be reduced to accommodate fewer access roads?
 - g. Adding additional cars to a heavily traveled road with no serious, significant and immediate traffic mitigation to protect the safety of Ramsey residents can lead to a significant and possibly fatal accident.
 - i. Can we add a 4-way stop or full stop light on Nowthen and Sunwood or 146th to slow traffic for better access on and off to Nowthen Blvd at 146th?
 - ii. If no light, is there room for a left turn lane at 146th and Nowthen?
- B. 146th Avenue was just reconstructed in 2019. With the increase in construction traffic along 146th Avenue, what plans are in place to repair damage created by heavy construction equipment? Who will be responsible to pay for the proper repairs needed to 146th to restore it to its current new condition?

Drainage for Low Property:

- A. The property perimeter is higher ground than the proposed location of the townhomes. Those will sit in a low spot on the property so drainage is a concern. What are the plans to mitigate flooding or drainage issues? Do they need a holding pond? Will there be impact to surrounding properties or roadways to create proper drainage?

City Trail Incomplete:

- A. **See image below.** There is a walking trail (indicated in green) on the south side of Nowthen that ends just before the proposed development (indicated in blue). There is one on the north side of Nowthen as well. The current walking trails do not connect as you can see on the image. Will the city or the developer extend that trail to at least 146th avenue, or all the way up to Sunwood drive? The trail needs to be extended to allow for a safe walking

trail between Hwy 47 up to Ramsey Elementary school and beyond. Trying to get across to the trail north of Nowthen Blvd is unsafe given the speed limit and traffic on Nowthen. If extended on the south side the safety risk is reduced significantly for children, walkers, bicyclists, etc. OR again.... Traffic control at Nowthen and 146th would help, that is if the trail is at least extended along this development up to 146th.



Property Value:

A. Are these market value owner occupied units or county subsidized townhomes? All this matters to the integrity of the surrounding neighborhood and property values.

Developer Experience:

- A. What is the developer's experience and history, what do we know about this company? Do you have references and previously built construction projects for the developer that you are reviewing to ensure they are a quality, reliable builder with a positive, unblemished record of accomplishment in high quality development?

Construction Timeline:

- A. What is the time line of construction, start to finish?

We hope you can appreciate our concerns, and thank you for your attention and time. We look forward to your support in this matter.

Alena and David Hunter
14628 Helium St. NW
Ramsey, MN 55303

Chad and Lisa Lindgren
5561 145th Circle NW
Ramsey, MN 55303

