

January 1, 2022

Re: Zoning Petition W-3505

To the Winston-Salem City Council,

At this time we would like to recommend that the city delay granting this zoning proposal for 500 Wachovia Street until the city conducts a traffic and livability feasibility study for the area encompassing Wachovia, Broad, Marshall, Academy, Poplar and Spring streets. There have been numerous changes that have occurred in this neighborhood since the construction in 2019 of Business-40 / US-421 Salem Parkway. Wachovia Street, between Broad and Marshall, has taken the major brunt of the problems as a result of the changes. Below is a bulleted list of the problems. We would be glad to elaborate on these at some point in the future.

- increased traffic as a result of our street becoming a cut-through, mostly due to US-421 changes
- excessive speeds by over 80% of the vehicles (40 to 60+ mph on a 25 mph, short, narrow street)
- most drivers drifting through or outright running the stop signs at Spring/Wachovia
- large trucks and tour buses unlawfully using the street, designated as a low weight limit street
- increased pollution and odors from auto, truck and bus emissions
- increased loud vehicle noise, 24/7
- wear and tear on residential structures due to emissions' soot and road vibration

Basically, all of this has created unsafe and unhealthy conditions for residents, pedestrians and bicyclists on Wachovia St.

In addition, there has been an exponential increase in traffic problems due to Salem Baptist Christian School. Their increased enrollment in the past year and a half (likely due to remaining as an in-person school while other schools went to remote learning) has caused a traffic burden that has affected all of these streets. Salem Baptist can give you the actual enrollment numbers, but I believe it was an increase from around 300 to nearly 500 students. Apparently, this has driven the need for more classrooms and parking, all of which will have a greater, negative impact on the neighborhood. Note: Construction has already begun and there are already questions about its impact.

The potential rezoning and possibility of 4 apartments at 500 Wachovia will exacerbate the problems as there will be a need for on-street parking on Wachovia and Poplar by the occupants of these units.

An overall neighborhood plan from the city, with the input from property owners in the affected area (including residents and the church), is needed before additional changes are approved. We have already had a few discussions with John Larson as well as the Baptist Church regarding possible changes that might alleviate or reduce many of the current problems we are now facing. What started with a few neighbors in discussion with the city in 2019 has now grown to multiple neighbors from all of the above streets. There is a desire for the neighbors and the city to join together in sharing ideas, making positive, safe and forward thinking changes to our neighborhood, as a whole neighborhood not just for one individual property. Perhaps this will become a model for long-term urban planning and livability as Winston-Salem continues to grow.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Suzi Moore
Deborah Harrell
507 Wachovia St.