

Tarra Jolly

Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Vote NO on W3529

From: Nelson & Connie <nelcon77@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 12:31 PM
To: Tiffany N. White <TIFFANYW@cityofws.org>; Tarra Jolly <tarraj@cityofws.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vote NO on W3529

Mon, May 9, 2022

TO:
City/County Planning Board
Chris Leak, *Chairman*
George M. Bryan, Jr.
Melynda Dunigan
Jason T. Grubbs
Tommy Hicks
Clarence R. Lambe, Jr.
Monike "Mo" McRae
Brenda J. Smith
Jack Steelman

From: Nelson J. Adams
Constance D. Cline

2626 Lockwood Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27103

We are writing to ask you to oppose the re-zoning request W3529 "Somerset Heights" for multi-family homes which will connect to Lockwood Drive and Somerset Road. Here's one reason why (faulty TIA):

We have studied the Davenport Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) in agonizing detail and have found quite a few outright errors of fact, a good deal of misleading/confusing information (some of it seemingly intentional, such as the use of schematic style diagrams to make the blind curve of Somerset Dr. appear as a straight line and the blind hill of Jonestown Rd. as it nears Lockwood Dr. become invisible!), and an enormous amount of useless boilerplate, especially the charts and graphs in the appendix. Of the 145 pages, approx. 120 pages are little more than padding. BTW, Nelson has a graduate degree in City Planning from UNC-Chapel Hill (1969), though he was never a transportation engineer or planner as such. Here's our list of items that we find problematic:

- Repetition of Executive Summary & Trip Generator sections (pg. i & pg. 9), repetition of Capacity Analysis section (pg. i & pg. 9) repetition of Conclusion (pg. ii & pg.10). This cut-and-paste approach makes the whole TIA confusing (Didn't I already read that?) Perhaps that was the intention!

- Re: Capacity Analysis (pg. 9). With the proposed development, the Level of Service (LOS) at Somerset Rd. and Stratford Rd. will be LOS E/F at PM Peak Hours, but the text skips over the fact that LOS E/F is unacceptably low by WSDOT standards.
- The TIA's guesses for LOS levels at various intersections are entirely too rosy if 1,931 new trips per day are added to the existing traffic load on Lockwood and Somerset. The worst intersection (Somerset/Stratford) is already LOS D (just barely acceptable) most of the time and LOS F some of the time.
- Lockwood/Jonestown is estimated to be LOS C (acceptable) -- How can this be true when Lockwood's half of 1,931 new trips pull up to that stop sign?
- There is no mention anywhere in the TIA of existing accident rates or accident totals at any of the 7 intersections studied, nor are there any estimates of any future accident rates at any of these intersections
- At least 3 of the 7 intersections "studied" in the TIA are currently considered dangerous and accident prone by those of us who use them. The 3 intersections are Lockwood/Jonestown, Somerset/Jonestown, Somerset/Ashford (Somerset blind curve).
- A fourth intersection (Somerset/Stratford) is also difficult and dangerous for left turners from Somerset onto Stratford heading toward downtown.
- The TIA never uses the term "blind curve" but does recommend "further study" of this "limited site line" area while insisting on allowing left turns into the blind curve from the new Somerset access intersection.
- The TIA doesn't say anything about the development's impact on AM Peak Hour left turns from Somerset Rd. onto Stratford Rd. It's already awful at that time of day! Davenport's only recommendation is for the City to re-time the traffic lights at two near-by intersections to create a gap for left turners to dash through!
- Table 1 errors -- Pavement width is wrong for Lockwood Drive. We took two measurements; results are 19' and 19.5', not 21'. Table also shows Lockwood Dr. as being 45 MPH when it's actually 25 MPH (posted about 20 yards from our driveway). Table shows Jonestown Rd. as being 30 MPH, the majority of Jonestown Rd. is 45 MPH until you get to congested areas at Hwy. 421, Hanes Mall Blvd, and Country Club Road.
- Table 2 -- Appears to blame everything on WSDOT, but contains nothing except unexplained terminology. For example, does this study really assume that all traffic in this area is only 2% trucks (there is an industrial part nearby generating many trips by large tractor trailers)? What do they mean by a "truck"? Table 2 also assumes that lane widths are 12 feet wide. How can this be when 2-lane Lockwood is only 19 feet wide (no room for two 12 foot lanes) and the proposed development's new road is 20-21 feet wide. So Table 2, "Assumptions and Parameters" contains assumptions that don't conform with the reality on the ground.
- Table 3 -- Indicates that AM & PM new Peak Hour Trips are each less than 10% of total new trips per day (24 hour period). If only 20% of the 1,931 new trips per day occur during peak hours, when do the other 80% occur? Or is Table 3 just wrong in claiming so few AM & PM Peak Hour Trips? And, how is it that more trips return in PM Peak than ever left in AM Peak?

Not included in this TIA:

- NO topographical maps or other kinds of graphics, only misleading schematics, where curves can appear as straight lines and hills don't exist. This may be considered "acceptable professional practice," but it is not helpful.
- NO Accident Reports for any of the impacted intersections.
- NO analysis of difficulty of left turns (for example, Somerset Dr. onto Jonestown Rd. or Somerset onto Stratford). Of the 7 intersections studied, only one has a left turn signal, yet no mention is made of this fact.

- NO differentiation is made among the 7 intersections to take into account their very different characteristics and degrees of difficulty and importance. These 7 are simply not all the same.
- NO analysis of the impact that 4 years of construction vehicles would have on Lockwood Drive (there is currently no access road on Somerset to the development).
- NO allowance is made for COVID-reduced current traffic loads (trip totals)
- NO mention of Lockwood in the Executive Summary, yet it will bear the brunt of construction traffic and probably bear more than half of 1,931 new trips per day (TIA asserts without evidence in the Figure 5 schematic that Lockwood will bear only 40% of new trips).

Observations

- If the RM-5 zoning is approved, what's to stop the developer from increasing density even further by building only townhomes? The TIA admits on page 4, "As previously mentioned, the land use intensity for the site is yet to be finalized."
- Only 55 buildable acres. The rest of the site's 88 acres are unbuildable flood plain. This increases the density level from 2.5 units per acre as stated in the Stimmel presentation to an actual density of 4.05 units per acre (max density allowed under RM-5 is 5 units per acre).
- Pages 36-109 of TIA are useless Synchro chart print-outs for the intersections studied -- all that gibberish seems intended to obscure the overload that will only get worse at two already dangerous intersections (Somerset blind curve and Lockwood/Jonestown).
- Then there are thirty more pages of useless "turning movement" charts also seemingly meant to bury the importance of the two most dangerous areas (Somerset blind curve and Lockwood/Jonestown) plus the no-signal intersection at Somerset/Stratford. Which way vehicles turn at an intersection is less important than how many new vehicles arrive at the intersection in the first place, which is why we call these charts useless.
- That makes over 100 pages of filler in a 145 page document, all to obscure the three most important intersections referenced above, with the dangers they already present BEFORE any new trips occur to overload them further.
- There seems to be a tacit admission of the importance of these two most dangerous intersections at the very end of the TIA document (the last two pages) where we find two charts of an entirely new kind, devoted to only these two intersections (Somerset blind curve/site access and Lockwood/ Jonestown). What these novel types of charts actually mean is unclear to us, but what is clear is that someone thinks these two intersections deserve special attention -- so do we!
- It should be noted that the 1,931 new trips generated per day is in ADDITION to the already heavy Stratford and Jonestown Rd. trip volumes, yet the TIA concludes that no more than a few minor adjustments need be made to accommodate these new trips being added to these heavily traveled roads (one of which, Jonestown, is almost entirely just two lanes). Then, paradoxically, the TIA also concludes that if any major adjustments (road improvements) might be needed, they are certainly not the concern of the developer but only the responsibility of WSDOT, the city, and its taxpayers. It seems the TIA is trying to have it both ways in its conclusion section.
- If Davenport has entered verifiably incorrect data on even one chart, perhaps they have entered incorrect data in other instances (such as in their use of Synchro software) in order to skew their findings to benefit their client.

Conclusion

The TIA's analysis of existing conditions (which they call "base load") is very strange and choppy. Page 2 seems to say that traffic counts were only collected on ONE DAY (3/16/2022), measuring only AM and PM peak hours, and with no mention of weather conditions or COVID-related reduction in traffic volume. Then all kinds of fancy manipulations and software (Synchro) run-throughs on this limited data set are presented in excruciating detail, all to "prove" that no road improvements anywhere will be needed regardless of the addition of 1,931 new trips per day added to a couple of two-lane roads giving on to no-signal (stop sign only) intersections.

Here are the important numbers about current conditions re: traffic loads. We could not find these data anywhere in the TIA, at least not in plain language. There are 20 households on Lockwood Drive from dead-end to Jonestown Rd. plus 17 more households feeding their trips onto Lockwood (Caraway, Little Creek Circle, and Briar Lake Road). That makes a total of 37 households X 8.66 trips/household/day = 320 trips/day currently arriving at the Lockwood/Jonestown stop sign. The 8.66 average trips per household per day figure comes from the ITE Trip Generation Manual as referenced in the TIA, page 4, Table 3 (divide 1,931 new trips by 223 new households = 8.66). The 8.66 trips figure conforms also with USDOT/BTS averages of 5-10 trips/household/day.

So can anyone reasonably say that adding roughly half of 1,931 new trips per day to 320 existing trips will not overload the already difficult/dangerous intersection at Lockwood/Jonestown? Well, the Davenport TIA says exactly that, namely that this intersection can handle the new trips without any improvements or changes. We could not disagree more. Almost 1,000 new trips adds 3 times the current traffic load to that existing traffic load of 320 trips -- for a total of 1,300 plus trips at that already problematic intersection. What could possibly go wrong? How many new accidents can we expect?

We have focused on Lockwood/Jonestown intersection because that is the one that is most familiar to us and because it seems to us that it will be first and most impacted by the proposed development. We think similar overload conclusions would come from similar common-sense analyses of the other intersections likely to be impacted, especially the Somerset blind curve/site access intersection as proposed.

Sincerely,
Nelson Adams & Connie Cline

Tarra Jolly

Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Vote NO on W3529 -- Memo #2 from Adams & Cline

From: Nelson & Connie <nelcon77@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 12:38 PM

To: Tiffany N. White <TIFFANYW@cityofws.org>; Tarra Jolly <tarraj@cityofws.org>

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We are writing to ask you to oppose the re-zoning request W3529 "Somerset Heights" for multi-family homes which will connect to Lockwood Drive and Somerset Road. Here's another reason why (regarding Planning Staff's faulty reasoning):

Memo re: Draft Report of Planning Staff

Here are some points of contention re: this document and its surprising conclusion. We are also surprised by what seems like a rather slap-dash and lazy staff effort supposedly prepared by professionals. In our experience the WS Planning Staff usually performs to a higher standard than this.

Page 1

- Re-zoning Consideration - site is NOT located along a major thoroughfare! Elsewhere in the document they repeatedly refer to Somerset as a minor thoroughfare. This is not just a semantic quibble.

- Current land use is listed as "undeveloped." This is not an actual "land use" term. The "current land use" box should say flood plain, wetland, and woodland.

Page 2

- Re-zoning Consideration -- staff's conclusion is entirely subjective based on the uncertain premise (it is admitted that site design is not yet finalized) that townhomes will be crammed together in the middle of the site.
- Storm water drainage is undetermined and staff says a study will be required, yet they recommend approval of the petition before the Storm Water Study is done!
- A Storm Water Management Study is a minimal version of an Environmental Impact Study, but it should be considered important enough environmentally to hold up approval until the study is completed.
- Analysis of General Site Information is insufficient and incomplete. It should also mention other development constraints such as no roads within the site, no road access to the site, no other other infrastructure on the site, and site is not along a major thoroughfare. If site is entirely surrounded by RS-9 Single Family residential land use, shouldn't the site remain RS-9 also as it currently is?
- Site Access and Transportation Information - Identification of primary and secondary access to site is entirely guesswork and probably wrong. There is no reason to believe that Lockwood will be "secondary" access.

crazy,
 especially considering the blind curve near the site access.
 business - Planned Road Improvements --Unfunded projects and other wish-list items have no
 being listed under Planned Road Improvements. They aren't planned -- just hoped for.

Page 3

- Sidewalks -- Why no sidewalks for Lockwood Drive (no mention of at all of Lockwood in this section, only Somerset).
- The version of the TIA used by the staff has a different total of units than the one that we've seen although it has the same number of new trips per day (216 new households here vs. 223 in TIA study document). This section seems to accept without question the TIA AM & PM peak hour total for new trips. It simply copies in cut and paste fashion the questionable info from the TIA document.
- Only two cars worth (25') of left turn lane from Somerset into the site! That's a traffic jam for sure.
- Staff asserts that "minor thoroughfare" Somerset has ample capacity. We completely disagree. Somerset's half of 1,931 new trips will surely overload an already dangerous 2-lane road even with the addition of a puny 2 cars' worth of left turn lane.
- Unit Density -- Wrong again, based on all 88 acres, much of which is unbuildable floodplain. Density is not 2.5 units per acre because not all 88 acres are buildable. True density is 4 units per acre (55 acres are buildable).

Page 4

- South West Suburban Area Plan Update (2015) "recommends single family residential use at this location." So why doesn't the planning staff abide by their own document?

- In addition the staff says the site is not along a planned growth corridor. So why are they saying O.K. to dense growth on this site?
- Conformance with Legacy 2030 -- Staff said yes, but not really in conformance with the South West Suburban Update (2015) to Legacy 2030 so this box should read **NO**, not yes.

Page 5

- Analysis of Conformity to Plans and Planning Issues -- Planning staff asserts that scale of townhomes is compatible. This is a subjective assertion without any evidence.

-the distinction between primary and secondary access into the site is also entirely subjective.

- All "Positive Aspects" as asserted by the staff are entirely subjective and subject to disagreement and we disagree with all of them.

when - #1 makes no sense and is based on an incorrect density figure of 2.5 units per acre
the figure as explained above is actually 4 units per acre.

- "Negative Aspects" -- We agree with SW suburban Update (2015) which says to keep this site RS-9.

Page 6

- Conditions of Approval contains same problems as above, such as accepting a 2 car length left turn lane on Somerset and requiring a sidewalk (payment in lieu) for Somerset but no mention of Lockwood.
- Staff does recommend as we did above in this memo Storm Water Management Study be completed. The difference is we think the study should be required before zoning petition is decided and staff thinks it should be done after re-zoning is approved and before grading permits are issued. Does anyone think this will really happen?

Site map at end of staff document reflects 223 new units total while text of staff document says 216 new units. Such discrepancies and errors do not breed confidence in the professionalism or accuracy of the overall document.

Our Conclusion

Nothing in staff document about dangerous intersections, blind curves, hills, sight lines, accident rates -- are these not planning/zoning concerns?

It seems to us that most of this staff document points toward recommending against approval of the re-zoning petition, yet staff ends document by recommending approval of petition. This is baffling to say the least. Petition should be denied. Zoning should remain RS-9.

Sincerely,
Nelson Adams
Connie Cline

