

Support Lower Density Housing in Our Community

This letter contains supplemental information that goes with the petition against the plans for the “Summerfield at Copper Creek” apartments that Prieb is proposing to build on S Aurora Street. Existing residents have concerns about what the addition of apartments in this community will mean in terms of traffic, school capacity, crime, property values, and noise. Below are requests from existing residents in the area who have concerns about the proposed apartments. The requests are listed on order of preference. Points #1 and #2 are directly related to the petition and the signatures on it. Points #3 and #4 are additional ideas that could be implemented to allow the residents of S Valley Circle to maintain some level of privacy.

1. Build Low Density

This community simply isn't built for an apartment complex of the proposed density, and it is surprising to concerned parties that the land in question was ever zoned multi-family residential back in 2003. All lots in the bordering subdivisions of Stone Creek Village, Leevue Estates, and Grayson Place were zoned single family residential. Fast-forward to 2019 and nearly every property between 119th and 127th, from K7 East to the railroad tracks is zoned single family residential except those owned by Prieb. Single family homes are not only what the existing residents desire to be developed in the community, it is also what the housing market demands. Single family starter homes are selling faster and at higher prices than ever before and there is a shortage of such homes in Olathe and the surrounding areas. Until Prieb started developing in this area, that is all there was, and that made sense. Under Prieb's proposed plan the apartments would add 353 new family dwellings. With those numbers the best case traffic scenario is an additional 300 - 400 cars through the stop light at Harold and K7 during rush hour times. Prieb has also already broke ground on an additional 51 townhomes at the corner of Harold and S Aurora Street which will add another 50 - 75 cars through the Harold and K7 stop light at rush hour times. Prieb also hasn't finished their original 100 townhomes yet, so more traffic will be added when those units are finished and rented out. Follow S Aurora Street North until it becomes W 124th Street and we see that there is yet more development happening. It is unknown what type of units will be built on W 124th Street, but it is unlikely that the total number of cars owned by the eventual occupants of those units will be zero. Judging by the types of buildings on W 124th Street now, planning on an additional 50 cars seems a conservative estimate. Add all of that up and we are looking at an additional 400 - 500 cars going through the stop light at Harold and K7 during rush hour times daily. This doesn't just affect people on the S Aurora/W 124th loop, it affects everyone who commutes through the intersection at Harold and K7. Anyone that drives K7 on a daily basis knows that the last thing it needs is more traffic, and unfortunately more housing means more traffic.

More traffic isn't the only concern with additional housing. The classroom size of local schools will increase dramatically from all of this development, affording each teacher less time to focus on individual students. Two of the three schools in this area already face crowding in their current facilities. According to Chris Gralap, Olathe Public School District's Manager of Planning, the school system uses the guideline of 27 students per classroom to determine a facility's maximum student capacity . Using those guidelines, Olathe Northwest High School has a capacity of 1965 students. During the 2016 - 2017 school year Olathe Northwest High School had an enrollment of 2,256 students⁽¹⁾ which put it over capacity by 291 students. Olathe West High School opened in 2017 which helped to lessen the crowding issue at Olathe Northwest High School, but Olathe Northwest High School is still at nearly 100% capacity with an enrollment of 1934 students for the 2018 - 2019 school year. Here are few Google reviews by students who have attended or currently attended Olathe Northwest High School which underline the crowding problem:

Lizzie Swartwood⁽²⁾

Good school overall, but in the two years I've been there, I have been thoroughly disappointed. The school expects too much academically of their students and does nothing to ease up the pressure. On top of that, it is way too crowded. There are rules in place to help with that like "go zones" but these rules are not held up by the staff. The 21st Century programs, while very helpful and good, are not thought out very well. The e-Comm program expects greatness from the students, yet does not provide them with adequate resources. For someone like me, who doesn't own a single Apple product, yet using them at school, provides difficulty when trying to work from home. While we are the best school in the district, think carefully before becoming a Raven.

Nathan Weiss⁽³⁾

I mean it's ok, but overall I'm disappointed. The environment of the school is very stressful for someone who gets anxious around large crowds of people. This school is RIDICULOUSLY CROWDED. Sometimes you can't even move in the hallways because of people who walk slow. I feel like the students here are treated more as numbers than as unique individuals. The lunch could be much improved, I would suggest having more options like sodas instead of all "healthy" options. I feel very flustered and anxious every day I come to this school. If you have the money, go to St. James or Thomas Aquinas. I'm transferring to St. James next semester, I feel like it will be a great decision.

Ben Blades⁽⁴⁾

ITS A GO ZONE YALL. Move!!!!

Using the same guidelines, Millbrooke Elementary has a capacity of 696 students and had 423 students enrolled during the 2016 - 2017 school year⁽⁵⁾. During the 2018 - 2019 school year enrollment has risen to 463. The only area school that isn't in danger of being over crowded by the proposed apartments is the Summit Trail Middle school which first opened for the 2018 - 2019 school year with a capacity of 885 students and an enrollment of 514 students.

Shopping at local businesses is already difficult due to congestion. The Walmart at 135th and K7 is always packed, and getting gas without waiting in line at QT or the Murphy Express is often unlikely.

Crime is another big concern with apartments. A 2010 study released by the U.S. Department of Justice⁽⁶⁾ show a clear correlation with increased density of units and number of burglaries.

2. Extend Monticello Terrace

Extending Monticello Terrace to be the main entrance of the proposed development would be the most effective way keep traffic from getting worse on S Aurora Street and at the intersection of Harold and K7. Those traveling North on K7 can use the entrance ramp at 119th instead of going through the stop light at Harold and K7. Those living on the S Aurora/W 124th loop would not have to deal with traffic from the new development at all. That includes construction traffic which existing residents will likely have to endure for 3 more years on top of the 2 years that most have already experienced. Extending Monticello Terrace to be the main entrance of the proposed development will have a dramatic effect on those living on the cul-de-sac of S Valley Circle since the currently proposed entrance tees into S Valley Circle. Residents of S Valley Circle already deal with construction traffic and locals turning around in the circle. Most importantly, cul-de-sacs are a safety concern for children and result in 64 percent of all "non-traffic" vehicular fatalities for children under 15⁽⁷⁾. The steps we take now to reduce the amount of traffic in the S Valley Circle cul-de-sac could save a life.

If extending Monticello Terrace turns out not to be an option we would like Prieb to work with existing residents to develop an a new plan where the main entrance would be relocated to a more suitable location.

3. Plant Tall Privacy Trees

The fact is that any development on the proposed site will reduce home values for those living on S Valley Circle and Sagebrush. One simple thing that Prieb can do to mitigate reduced home values is to plant tall evergreen trees along S Aurora Street to block the view

and noise of the proposed development. Optimally these trees would be planted prior to the start of construction so existing residents could realize their benefit during construction.

4. Spilt S Aurora Street at Proposed Apartment Entrance

To reduce the the traffic turning around in the S Valley Circle cul-de-sac, the cul-de-sac could be broken off to be the end of W 124th Street. At that point S Aurora Street could feed directly into the proposed apartment entrance and there would be no way for those entering or exiting the apartment complex to turn around in the S Valley Circle cul-de-sac.

Additional Arguments Against Proposed Apartments

Plan for Proposed Apartments is Stale and Undesirable

The original plans for Prieb's proposed apartments were not even developed by Prieb. They were developed by Duggan Homes in 2008. As previously mentioned, the zoning for property that the proposed apartments will go on took place in 2003. A lot has happened in the 16 years since the zoning took place and in the 11 years since the original apartment plan was approved, including a lot of development in the area and new set of people living in the area's homes. The people who live in this area now need to be afforded the opportunity to vote down the proposed apartments. There must be some statute of limitations on plans of this nature so that a stale and undesirable plan is not implemented. Additionally and perhaps more importantly, the plan that was approved back in 2008 was done so with Duggan Homes being the applicant, not Prieb. Unified Development Ordinance 18.90.020 defines "applicant" as being synonymous with "developer" or "subdivider, which Prieb is⁽⁸⁾. The applicant performing the development matters and the people in the area have a right to have the plans go through the approval process again as it is defined by Unified Development Ordinance chapters 18.40⁽⁹⁾ and 18.94⁽¹⁰⁾, knowing who will actually be developing the property.

Plan for Proposed Apartments Conflicts with Olathe's Comprehensive Plan

Olathe's Comprehensive Plan speaks volumes on "Quality of Life". In 2009 Olathe performed a survey which showed that 54% of residents said Flow of Traffic/Congestion Management should be a top priority for the city⁽¹¹⁾. The proposed development runs contrary to what the citizens of Olathe since it will dramatically increase congestion in the area. In the Housing & Neighborhoods section of Olathe's Comprehensive Plan there exists the following list of benefits⁽¹²⁾:

- Neighborhood stability is maintained or enhanced.
- Residents experience an increase in neighborhood livability.
- An adequate supply of housing options is provided.

Prieb's proposed apartments not only don't provide the listed benefits, they detract from neighborhood stability and livability. There is an extreme shortage of single family starter homes in the area so Olathe should take steps to remedy that. With Prieb's help, the property slated for apartments could easily be used for single family homes instead. Olathe's Comprehensive Plan also speaks of "Mobility" listing the following benefits⁽¹³⁾:

- Transportation choices reduce the number of vehicle trips, overall miles traveled, and traffic congestion.
- Improves public health.
- Reduces air pollution.
- Provides travel options for residents and visitors.

Placing apartments which are much higher density than single family homes in an area where the tenants cannot walk to needed services such as groceries stores, restaurants, and entertainment venues will result in a dramatic increase of vehicle trips, miles traveled, and traffic congestion. Overall public health will be reduced not only by increased air pollution, but also by the increased traffic congestion which will increase the statistical likelihood of being in a car accident, or worse, being hit by a car as a pedestrian.

Appropriate Studies Have Not Been Performed

There is no evidence that a Traffic Study, Stormwater Study, or Sewage Study has been performed. Traffic congestion is one of the major concerns that existing residents in the community have with the proposed apartments. Since the quick math related to the traffic that will be introduced by the proposed apartments paints a bleak picture, it seems imperative to perform a traffic study.

Given the topology of the property the proposed apartments will be built on and that the property has a creek on the Northside, it also seems imperative to perform a Stormwater Study. The creek in question is on the Southside dozens of houses on W 122nd Street and the volume and velocity of extra runoff that will be created by the lack of green space in the proposed development could pose a serious risk to those homes in terms of flooding and erosion.

Due to the density of the proposed apartments, there is also a concern about sewage infrastructure. What size is the primary line, and is it large enough to accommodate the proposed apartments and all the other townhouses already being developed?

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