

January 13, 2015

Jenny Ngo, ACIP
Senior Planner
City of Woodinville
17301 133rd Avenue NE
Woodinville, WA 98072

RE: 19400 136th Ave. NE Proposed Plat

To whom it may concern:

We are writing to voice our concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the proposed subdivision of the parcel located at 19400 136th Ave NE in Woodinville. As the City of Woodinville ("City") is aware, there are both a wetlands located on-site and Little Bear Creek runs centrally on the site. The project proponent is proposing to reduce the buffers for both the wetlands and Little Bear Creek to a minimum through mitigation measures. Yet, the proposed mitigation measures are insufficient to reduce the environmental harms associated with the reduced buffer. Merely replacing the surrounding vegetation, constructing a fence and asking future homeowners to keep dogs out of the area (proposed best management practices) will not make up for the damage caused by the project.

We have serious concerns that even with mitigation this project will result in too much pressure on these hydrological features. The slope of the lot bordering on 136th Ave NE is extremely steep and despite use of a silt fence will result in significant erosion and run-off during construction. The loss of the natural vegetation on this slope will cause on-going polluting run-off that will damage the wetlands and Little Bear Creek, which is habitat for salmonids and other species. We note that these impacts are minimized in the SEPA Checklist prepared by the project proponent; the City of Woodinville should carefully review actual erosion and runoff impacts of the project instead of relying on the SEPA Checklist.

The project is proposed to comprise two duplexes and a single family home. This will be extremely high density housing for such a sensitive area and is simply untenable. The SEPA Checklist indicates that the high-density housing as proposed is in keeping with the surrounding area, but in fact the parcels immediately to the north and south and our neighborhood to the west are all much lower density than the proposed project.

The City is required under SEPA to consider all reasonable alternatives. Here, the only reasonable use is a single family home. This would be in congruity with the two lots to the north and south, each of which has a single family home on-site and would be the only alternative that would adequately protect the wetland on-site, Little Bear Creek, and nearby habitat.

We are residents around a small lake on the west side of 136th Ave NE, immediately across from the proposed project. The lake supports a diverse array of wildlife, which includes rabbits, raccoons, opossum, squirrels, river otters, muskrats and occasionally deer. Birds on the property include hawks, eagles, osprey, crows, flickers, woodpeckers and various songbirds, ducks, geese, grebes, great blue heron, green heron, kingfishers, cormorants, and red-winged blackbirds. The lake contains rainbow trout as well as self-sustaining population of frogs. The lake also has a healthy population of insects, including chironomids, caddis, backswimmers,

and mayflies, which maintain the trout. Many of these species are likely found on the proposed site and there is likely a large amount of migration between the lake and the site. In particular, species such as eagles, osprey, etc. require a number of large trees for nesting, some of which likely include the existing trees on the proposed project site. The biodiversity at this nearby lake will thus also be affected by the proposed project.

Furthermore, the project proponent has entirely neglected to discuss the wildlife that reside on the property in the SEPA Checklist. This neglect must be carefully reviewed and corrected, especially with regard to the salmon that migrate in Little Bear Creek (see item 5 in the SEPA Checklist).

The area surrounding the proposed project has recently been ecologically compromised by the still-in-progress Woodland development nearing completion on the corner of 136th Ave NE and NE 195th St. For instance, we have noticed fewer rabbits, squirrels and several species of birds. Prior to the development of Woodland, one resident put out 2 of the suet bird seed blocks every other day (sometimes everyday) now they last a week or more. Due to the development of Woodland, there has been a significant drop in numbers of red wing blackbirds.

After living here for 18 years, another resident noticed a disruption in the number of waterfowl who either stay year round on our small lake, or those who migrate through the area since the Woodland project began, and have noticed an increase in sightings of coyotes on our property. This is a concern, as their natural habitat has been destroyed and they have nowhere else to go.

In addition, we used to have birds that flew from the wetland adjacent to the UW Bothell/Cascadia area to visit our lake. In particular, there was a snag tree that has been cut down where an osprey perched. We spent many hours watching the bird, who now does not have a place to perch. We have noticed a decline in the number of blue and green heron and hawks, as well as the smaller songbirds who used to frequent the lake. We strongly suspect that they do not fly here anymore because of the noise and disruption caused by development of the Woodland project. Thus, it is undeniable that the cumulative impact to wildlife of the loss of both the habitat at the Woodland subdivision and the proposed project at 19400 136th Ave NE will be significant and irreversible.

We feel strongly about the maintenance of the natural habitat in this area. Little Bear Creek is too important a waterway for salmon to allow the encroachment proposed by the project proponent. The City of Woodinville has protected the section of Little Bear Creek immediately to the north of NE 195th St at Rotary Park. The City should continue this stewardship by prohibiting the project proponent from reducing the buffer width for the wetland below 50 feet and the buffer for Little Bear Creek below 150 feet. The City has established these buffers based on strong science and should not accept the minimal mitigation measures proposed by the project proponent.

In conclusion, we have serious concerns about the density of the proposed project. As proposed, this will cause irreversible harm to the on-site wetland and Little Bear Creek. It will also constitute an untenable cumulative impact on local wildlife by reducing much-needed habitat for local wildlife, for example through the loss of large trees.

Sincerely,

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