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16036 174th Drive SE  
Monroe, WA 98272

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Amy Bright  
Monroe Community Development Department  
806 W, Main St.  
Monroe, WA 98272

Feedback Re: Proposed Safe Harbor Trust 9-lot development

Dear Associate Planner Bright and the city planning department:

We have numerous concerns about the proposal for multiple housing units at 16096 174th Drive SE next to our home.

Outside of our opinion this project is incompatible with the surrounding area, we also have concerns on the landscape buffers, building placement, the proposed roadway improvements, and the developmental aim of the proposal to fill the allotted space with three multistory buildings on a private road which is otherwise populated by single-story, single-family homes.

#### **Site compatibility**

174th Drive SE is a private road with six homes on it.

One factor to why we bought our home in 2013 is the quiet peace of being tucked away from Main Street on a dead-end road. We bought here because the houses are spaced apart. Traffic is minimal, as is noise.

We understand the city's zoning goals to bring growth across a wide region of West Monroe. However, we contend that, at this parcel, the magnitude of this project is incompatible with the general atmosphere of this neighborhood.

We are comfortable with a multistory, multi-unit building next door, but object strongly to how this 9-unit project proposal places multiple buildings on the site with a "pack 'em in" method to developing it.

We can envision the site instead being developed as a single building that would be a four-plex or six-plex complex.

The potential height also poses a concern, but not as great as the proximity of the building nearest to our home.

### **Site lacks landscape buffer plan and sensible building placement**

The proposal, as mapped out, places the wall of the northernmost building within seven feet of our fenceline, which places the side of a multistory building less than 30 feet from our front door. (Our distance from door to fenceline is 18 feet; our home's front door faces toward the site.)

The proposal lacks a landscape buffer plan to mitigate the visual effect of these new buildings. We would like to see a landscape buffer that blocks out or breaks up the view using mid-height trees or other techniques to avoid having our home be overshadowed by a building-side.

We would prefer that the site plan is revised so the closest multi-story building is at least 75 feet away from our fenceline. We would prefer any one-story building to be sited at least 40 feet away from our fenceline, which is about how close the current house is.

Our front and side yard are the only sections of our property that receive daylight.

The allowable building heights for this project would interrupt our view and diminish our quality of life by limiting our daylight. We disagree with where the buildings are proposed as their closeness would block our view of the sky and nearby area, and collectively may impose a "canyon effect" of buildings next door.

A six-foot fence would not adequately shield the property from our vantage. Our front door stands 2 feet above ground level on a patio, giving us the ability to see over a fence.

### **Site parking overflow concerns**

The development proposes a 2-car garage for each unit and an additional two guest parking spaces on-site. We ask planning staff to require more on-site guest parking for the project.

We are concerned that two designated guest parking stalls is insufficient. We think when those fill up that additional guests would naturally park along the sidewalk at 174th. The impact is that guests parking along 174th reduces it a one-and-a-half-lane road plus the obstacle of a parked car.

174th Drive SE has a fence and a ditch along the other side of the road. Drivers do not park on that side because it's more hazardous.

The proposal enhances the roadway to be 20 feet wide and adds a sidewalk.

We would prefer that no sidewalk be built specifically because of the spillover concerns. While a sidewalk would be nice, eliminating the sidewalk would allow guests to park further off to the side of the road in the grass. It's how neighbors along 174th handle guests when their driveway is full.

If the sidewalk is mandatory, then we ask that it be set as a fire lane to legally prevent drivers from parking along the sidewalk.

Overall, we ask that parking be contained within the development as best as possible.

### **Traffic concerns**

174th Drive SE is a private road where each road section is owned and maintained by the property owner fronting the road.

We are unsure how the proposal to widen the road from the project site all the way to Main Street is realistic, and see no proof that it will be fulfilled.

The road improvement plan involves a separate landowner's road section, and would need their approval.

The landowner has put in three speed bumps to slow down traffic, and has makeshift barriers along the road edge to prevent traffic from going offroad to skip the speed bumps. This section of road with speed bumps is generally only able to have one car pass properly over the bumps at a time.

We perceive this landowner, Toni Walbrun, will not freely let the project applicant widen the segment of 174th Drive SE she owns. Without widening it, we think there will be traffic bottlenecks on our small street at Mrs. Walbrun's property.

This alone needs to be addressed. We ask that applicant shows evidence of a written contract between himself and Mrs. Walbrun (and any landowner thereafter) that 174th Drive SE **will** be widened here, beyond a concept to do so on the map, for the project to

even proceed. We contend that widening the road at this spot is vital for traffic flow created by the proposed project.

We agree on the project narrative's intent saying that by having "nine lots connecting to 174th Dr. SE through one access point the traffic will be reduced" by not having nine driveways, however we would like to point out the same traffic will exclusively use 174th Drive SE to access the property as it is a dead-end road.

### **Privacy concerns**

We have a 16-year-old foster daughter who has a bedroom window facing the adjoining property where the Safe Harbor Trust 9-lot development is proposed. Today this is no problem because the neighboring site is a single-family manufactured home — her side window faces that home's backyard. We are concerned about privacy based on what view the new neighbors in a multi-story building might get into our yard, specifically into her window, because of the proximity.

Our concern on construction dust is because our 16-year-old daughter is asthmatic and has allergy issues. Her asthma may be worsened by large-scale construction dust.

We also often entertain the four-year-old son of our friends as a visitor, and appreciate that as things stand today that he is secure and safe playing in our yard.

### **Code minutia concerns relating to error in application**

The application's project narrative dated January 16, 2020 states that the project meets all of the standards for setbacks, buffers, and lot footage standards for Monroe Municipal Code Title 17 and Title 18.

On a technical point, these code references are outdated and discontinued.

Title 17 and Title 18 were repealed by a city ordinance during 2019, preceding the application date, and the code that replaced it may be different.

We would like the certainty that the applicant's statement the project meets code remains true as the code framework changed. We ask that the citations in the project narrative are corrected and that this update is submitted for public review.

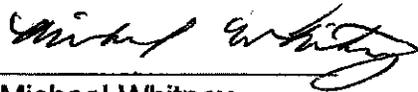
In summary, we ask that:

- \* The project is reduced in magnitude to be more compatible with the neighborhood it will be built in.
- \* The site buffer from our home to the nearest building is increased.
- \* A landscape plan is submitted with the proposal.
- \* Off-street parking requirements are increased to more than two guest parking stalls.
- \* No sidewalk is built. If there is a sidewalk, we ask to make it an enforceable fire lane.
- \* Formal evidence that 174th Drive SE will be widened all the way to Main Street to accommodate traffic generated by the development.

In reiteration, one factor to why we bought our home in 2013 is the quiet peace of being tucked away from Main Street on a dead-end road. We bought here because the houses are spaced apart. Traffic is minimal, as is noise. We foremost object to the magnitude of the proposed project with how it fits the neighborhood, and the proximity of its northernmost building in relation to our home.

In conclusion, we have numerous concerns, and appreciate that the city planning department will evaluate these concerns when considering whether to approve the Safe Harbor Trust 9-lot application as presented. We are prepared to defend these concerns and welcome any questions or requests for clarification.

Sincerely,



Michael Whitney  
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