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Herriman City Council Members Oppose Proposed Olympia Hills Development at County Public Hearing

HERRIMAN, Utah—Members of the Herriman City Council together attended Tuesday’s public hearing held by the Salt Lake County Council regarding the “Olympia Hills” development application at Copper Mountain Middle School in Herriman. Herriman Council Members echoed their united message to the County that Herriman welcomes responsible development and growth but is opposed to the Olympia Hills development as proposed.

A joint letter from the Herriman City Council to the Salt Lake County Council is attached and details key concerns from Herriman council members and residents, including issues of density, exceeding established general plan limits, affordability, concerns with the master development agreement and the lack of a requirement for an employment center to grow the community with.

The City Council requests the County Council deny this request and reconsider a more responsible way to develop the area.

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01/28/2020

Herriman City Council
5355 W. Herriman Main St.
Herriman, UT 84096

RE: Olympia Hills application to

- 1) Amend the Southwest Community General Plan
- 2) Amend the Salt Lake County Zoning Ordinance to Rezone from A-2 (agricultural) and M-2 (industrial) to P-C (Planned Community)
- 3) PC Zone Plan/Master Development Agreement

Salt Lake County Council Members,

The “Olympia Hills” application – which greatly exceeds housing density and its effects on infrastructure planned for by the County and neighboring cities - is of great concern to the communities in the southwest portion of Salt Lake County. If approved, our communities will be directly impacted. Herriman City considers those impacts to be overwhelmingly negative in nature to our City and residents.

We acknowledge improvements made by the applicant to the “Olympia Hills” plan, since the first draft was approved and vetoed in 2018; however, this current application still falls well short of what is reasonable, responsible, and practical. We respectfully request that you vote no on this application for many reasons. Some of those reasons include the following:

Exceeds General Plan limits - Outpacing the limits of carefully crafted and collective plans of the County and neighboring cities in this area will have a negative and compounding effect on infrastructure, the ability to provide necessary services, and therefore the quality of life. The proposed 6,330 units is still 1,665 or 35% above the General Plan maximum for a Master Planned Community, creating an area with the population density of between 12,500 and 16,500 per square mile. Changing the General Plan in this way sets a very dangerous precedent that undermines the planning process and is simply unsustainable.

Density - This development represents the densest suburban development in the United States. With 30,000+ approved/entitled, unbuilt housing units in the 6 SW Cities and an estimated 20,000 acres of unentitled and developable land on the west side of Salt Lake County, there is no reason to rush to approve another 6,330 units deep in the southwest corner of the valley and detached from major infrastructure and services. No matter how density is calculated, the proposed project far exceeds even Daybreak, but without two highways running through it. Olympia Hills will consist of densely packed homes with little to no yard space.

Affordability - Preliminary results of the Southwest Visioning Study show that the south west portion of the SL County has a high cost of living due to inadequate infrastructure and higher service costs. This infrastructure will be heavily impacted by the new development, yet the cost will fall on the backs of the surrounding communities, driving the cost of living in this area to be the least affordable of any area in the County. Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District has stated that all new development in this area will be charged a higher rate due to the unplanned strain on water resources and accelerated building of infrastructure. Transportation costs alone would result in this self-proclaimed “affordable housing” to be the least affordable housing in the valley. The increased costs will increase mismatches between housing types and what income level is suggested to live there. In the event the project is funded using Public Infrastructure Districts (PID), Special Service Districts (SSD), etc., it may result in high taxes, adding to the burden of the residents.

Master Development Agreement (MDA) -. The MDA should be a mechanism to ensure that the details of the plan are taken care of. However, the MDA proposed appears ambiguous, offering excessive flexibility for the developer without providing a detailed plan, mitigating major unforeseen concerns, or ensuring that the developer’s promises materialize.

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The “Live, Work, Play” Concept - A key component of the “Live, Work Play” concept is Employment Centers. Though this concept sounds inviting, it is hollow when considering the absence of a requirement for an employment centers, a bind for land uses, and a lack of adequately defined, well planned open space. Without an actual plan and requirements for an equal number of jobs in the project as Housing Units = The “Work” element doesn’t happen which means the rest of the concept completely falls apart. The proposed MDA provides the opposite - a way for the promised Employment Centers to be turned into more housing, and rooftop gardens to be considered open space, thus compounding all of the problems. It would be disingenuous to claim that at least 20% of the project will be open space for the public, then allow large portions of it to be counted toward that number in ways that do not serve the intended purpose. Additionally, the developer claims that “Public Transit is a major part of the overall plan for making Olympia Hills a walkable, livable place where residents can both live and work without having to commute across Salt Lake Valley.” Yet there is no viable public transit - or even plans for it in the extreme southwest area of Salt Lake Valley as it is. Herriman City has about 60,000 residents and zero access to core bus routes or transit lines despite the City purchasing and preserving the land for it. To count on public transit as a “major part of the overall plan” without a plan or funding does not imply proper planning.

The application is proposing a development that is incompatible with the County’s General Plan, neighboring municipalities, services, and the location. The project lacks supporting infrastructure and a practical plan to mitigate these issues. We respectfully request that you **deny** or vote **no** to this request. If the intention is to approve the project, we ask that you ensure that it complies with the General Plan and that it has a Master Development Agreement that ensures the promises made are a requirement.

Respectfully,

Herriman City Council

Clint Smith

Sherrill