

June 13, 2022

Department of Metropolitan Development
City of Indianapolis
Metropolitan Development Commission
c/o Keith Holdsworth, Senior Planner
200 East Washington Street, Suite 1842
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: 2021-ZON-149 6729 Westfield Blvd.

Dear Commissioners,

Please let this letter serve as our letter of support for the above-referenced petition for rezoning of the property located at 6729 Westfield Blvd., currently operated as The Willows Event Center, to the DP zoning classification to permit a multifamily and townhome development.

My husband, Aaron Hale, and I and our two kids have lived at 75th and Westfield for 12 years. We love our community and we want to offer support for the proposal to redevelop the Willows Event Center. We respect the concerns voiced by those who live immediately adjacent to the site and appreciate the role they have played in improving the overall design of the project. The public feedback process has culminated in a thoughtful, optimal design that will result in hundreds of new families calling our quiet nook between Nora and Broad Ripple “home” for decades to come.

This development addresses two key needs for our community: more housing and improvements to pedestrian infrastructure.

I. Meeting the demand for housing

New housing developments slowed significantly following the subprime mortgage crisis in 2008. Multifamily housing developments, single family homes and mixed-use developments were slow to rebound and we are experiencing a record shortage of housing across the country. Indianapolis needs more housing options at all price points and the Willows plan provides a valuable mix of options.

More People = More Revenue. An unavoidable reality is that costs to maintain infrastructure, including streets, schools, public safety, utilities, parks - anything that receives support from tax payers - only go up. These costs *do not go down*. We cannot maintain current levels of quality of life with stagnant population levels. Without more people, we can not keep up with the rising costs to run, let alone improve, a city. Whether they rent or own, the people who move into the Willows will spend money in the area. Local businesses will benefit and the tax revenue collected will increase, benefiting everyone.

If not here, where? Developers will find opportunities to invest elsewhere, likely at a greater toll to the environment. This has a double-negative effect on our local economy, because:

- It means we did not receive the planned \$53 million investment in our community.
- People are siphoned away from our area to live, work, spend, and be taxed elsewhere.

Non-growth means the status quo is not being met. It means our community is slowly dying.

II. Improving pedestrian infrastructure

In the last five years, 148 pedestrians were killed by vehicles in Indianapolis. Some of these deaths could have been prevented if Indianapolis had more sidewalks, bike lanes, traffic signals and signage. Unfortunately, the city simply does not have adequate resources to make all the infrastructure improvements we want to see, but we do have private-public partnership that can help move us forward.

In the past, I served on the board of the Nora Alliance, a community organization focused on improving the walkability of the Nora community. During my participation with that group, I learned the term 'traffic calming' and how there are features a city can add to existing streets to help increase visibility of pedestrian crossings and slow the speed of drivers.

The Willows' plan includes adding sidewalks from E. 71st Street to The Reserve, the northernmost residential development south of the White River in Broad Ripple. The plan also includes an easement to the Monon Trail and a pedestrian crossing light to help pedestrians safely cross Westfield Blvd. Adding sidewalks in the vicinity of the Willows, increasing pedestrian crossing visibility, and more built infrastructure will have a traffic calming effect and will actually make this area safer for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

While I hope to one day see sidewalks stretch from Broad Ripple to 96th St. on Westfield Blvd, this plan will result in more people living in the area who value walkability and the expectations and demand for safer pedestrian infrastructure will increase. I think it's important to mention the plans to merge the Indiana School for the Deaf with the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, located at 75th between College Ave and Westfield Blvd. This means more families and children with different abilities sharing our community. I support any efforts to make this area welcoming and safe for all.

While I do not live next door to the Willows, the venue has been part of our family for years. My niece attended Prom there and we took pictures on the deck. I know to slow for geese and watch for turtles. I know the empty parking lot is a great place to look for rainbows and a fresh snowfall makes the parking lot ideal for doing doughnuts. I also know many cars drive way too fast from 86th Street to Broad Ripple daily and I remember when the stop light at 75th St. was installed and car accidents declined.

I think a lot about the individuals who will one day occupy these homes - either as renters or homeowners. I know they will have considered nearby options such as downtown Carmel or downtown Indy. When they choose to live at the Willows, it means we share many of the same values, including walkable and bikeable access to nature, jobs, shops, restaurants, and recreation in Broad Ripple and Nora, and we welcome their presence and contributions in our neighborhood.

For these reasons, we offer support for the project. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Molly and Aaron Hale

mollybutters@gmail.com

aaron@aaronhale.net

From: [Whitaker, Nancy G.](#)
To: [Greg Bright](#)
Cc: [Whitaker, Nancy G.](#); [Holdsworth, Keith L.](#)
Subject: Re: Support for 2021-ZON-149
Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 1:43:07 PM
Importance: High

Good afternoon again, Mr. Bright.

Thank you for your correspondence below. I have copied the planner assigned to this petition. Your email will be provided to the Commission prior to the MDC hearing.

Best regards,

Nancy Whitaker | Hearing Specialist

Current Planning | Department of Metropolitan Development | City of Indianapolis
nancy.whitaker@indy.gov | indy.gov/DMD

Petition submittals: planningapplications@indy.gov

Talk to a planner: planneroncall@indy.gov

Remote work: Mondays and Tuesdays

In Office: Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays

From: Greg Bright <gregory32389@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 1:31 PM
To: Whitaker, Nancy G. <Nancy.Whitaker@Indy.Gov>
Subject: Support for 2021-ZON-149

Good afternoon,

I live south of Broad Ripple between 49th and 50th street on Guilford and I am writing to recommend you approve the petition 2021-ZON-149. The Broad Ripple area is in grave danger of becoming completely unaffordable and displacing the residents who made it great to live in the first place. If we do not create more market rate and affordable housing we will make this area completely unaffordable for the majority of potential residents. Please approve this project and help keep Broad Ripple an open and welcoming community.

Thanks,
Greg Bright

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Greg Bright](#)
To: [Holdsworth, Keith L.](#)
Subject: In Favor of Willows Development
Date: Sunday, March 6, 2022 12:15:58 PM

Mr Holdsworth,

I am writing as a community member and resident of the greater Broad Ripple area to say that I am enthusiastically in favor of the Willows Development. The Nora-Northside Community Council does not represent me or my values. I want Broad Ripple to continue to be a vibrant and welcoming community and the way to do that is to build greater housing supply. Please support this project for a greater Broad Ripple!

Thanks,
Greg Bright

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Sean Hirschten](#)
To: [Potts, Keith](#); [Pleasant, Matt](#); [Holdsworth, Keith L.](#); scarlet.martin@indy.gov; [Osili, Vop](#); [Van Dongen, Natalie](#); [Zach Adamson](#)
Subject: The Willows Project
Date: Monday, March 7, 2022 9:16:09 AM

Hello all, I write in support of the Willows Event Center's proposal to develop 255 homes near Broad Ripple. While I now live on the Near Eastside, I lived in the Broad Ripple area for many years, and that is an area where more housing should absolutely be allowed.

Indianapolis is starting to experience a serious housing shortage, and needs to build as much housing as possible.

I see that some people in the neighborhood are opposed to the building of more housing. I would implore you, as the elected representatives and employees of ALL Indianapolis citizens, to reject the narrow, parochial interests of a few busy-body neighbors and do what is right - allow the development of more housing. That is the only way to stave off the kind of unaffordability crisis and homelessness places like California are now experiencing. You may think that can't happen here - it can and it will if we give in to people who want to restrict housing.

Also, more neighbors are great! More neighbors are also a great way to make sure local businesses are able to stay in business.

I see that some of the opponents of the project complain that Westfield Boulevard is dangerous for pedestrians there. They are right. Westfield Boulevard IS dangerous - DUE TO CARS

Thank you for your time.



**THE COUNCIL
CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS
MARION COUNTY**

KEITH POTTS
Councillor, District 2

28 February 2022

Department of Metropolitan Development
City of Indianapolis
Metropolitan Development Commission
c/o Keith Holdsworth, Senior Planner
200 East Washington Street, Suite 1842
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: 2021-ZON-149 6729 Westfield Blvd.

Dear Commissioners,

Please let this letter serve as my letter of support for the above-referenced petition for rezoning of the property located at 6729 Westfield Blvd., currently operated as The Willows Event Center, to the DP zoning classification to permit a multifamily and townhome development.

Over the past several months, I have spent considerable time studying the site and the surrounding area and reviewing the site plan, elevations, renderings, traffic studies, and other information filed with this Petition and have watched those plans evolve as the Petitioners met with and listened to neighbors. I personally helped organize a meeting between the developers and the community, where I was joined by nearly a hundred nearby residents. In addition, I met with representatives of the surrounding neighborhood to walk the site and learn more about concerns they have expressed regarding the project, which I understand to be primarily related to density, traffic generated by the development, environmental and ecological concerns, and safety on Westfield Blvd. I have also reviewed information that has been submitted in opposition to the Petition, which includes dozens (if not hundreds) of letters, emails, and messages.

I have heard from so many members of our community, and I have expressed their biggest concerns clearly and often to the Petitioners. The Petitioners have responded to these concerns by breaking down the massing of the building and eliminating access from Westfield Rd. They have communicated with the Department of Public Works to consider traffic safety and infrastructure options, and they have performed a traffic study demonstrating that there will be no reduction in levels of service at intersections at or near the development. The Petitioners have also expressed a commitment to address the environmental and ecological concerns presented by the community.

I am sure that these concessions and compromises will not be enough to prevent some neighbors from strongly opposing this project. This does not mean that the Petitioners did not negotiate in good faith or that I did not advocate on behalf of my constituents. I believe the multifamily and townhome development, as proposed, is an appropriate and positive reuse of the property. The project architecture and overall project plan is thoughtfully developed, with great attention to detail, particularly as it relates to design, building materials, treatment of the elevation along Westfield Blvd., transition to townhomes to the south, and the ecology of Spirit Lake and the White River. I also appreciate that there is an affordable housing component to this development, which is greatly needed in District 2.

For these reasons, I am offering my support for the project. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Potts".

Keith Potts
Councillor, District 2