

September 3, 2019

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I am writing to comment on the draft scope summary that was presented to the planning board in determination of an Environmental Impact Statement for the Rapp Rd. Development Project.

What is of particular concern to me is the traffic study and analysis portion of the scope. Outlined are the streets that have been determined as focal points for analysis. Along the Westmere corridor are the intersections of Western Ave. and Crossgates Mall Driveway, Crossgates Mall Rd./Johnston Rd. and Gabriel Terrace. Glaring in it's omission is Westmere Terrace.

Westmere Terrace holds the unenviable position of being nearest in proximity to egress with Crossgates Mall Rd. while additionally having to contend with the steady flow of east/west traffic on our major thoroughfare.

In our meetings as a neighborhood with Mr. Soos of Pyramid, Mr. Kovalchik and Mr. Barber, the plight of a 3-5 minute routine waiting period to enter or exit our street has been discussed and noted. To see a traffic analysis being considered, that will be evaluating not only the impact of the development currently under proposal but also the plausible future of additional retail, residential and office development on Western Ave. within a mile of Westmere Terrace and no intent to examine the exponential adverse traffic impact to us, is astounding.

There are 30 houses on Westmere Terrace, it is a neighborhood of long standing ownership. By contrast, Gabriel Terrace is inhabited, per land use maps, by one home owner, all else is Pyramid owned. If you are looking to make a case for lack of impact by increased traffic, Gabriel Terrace would certainly be the optimum baseline. If you are trying to conduct an objectively informed analysis for what these proposed and back-burner proposals are going to wreak on the immediate community, Westmere Terrace needs to be scrutinized.

To the point of the as of yet future considerations for development by Pyramid on Site #2, 160,000 sq. feet of retail space, and Site #3, 115,000 sq. feet for retail/residential/office development the Environmental Impact Study needs to objectively evaluate community purpose.

To Pyramid's own justification in making the foray from retail into real estate, the rationale was the declining viability of brick and mortar retail and the need as a profit making entity to establish a different revenue stream. To now be looking at additional retail development is head scratching. It is incumbent upon the study to gather specifics regarding how this proposed retail expansion controverts the former claims.

Development for office space. In the project narrative by The Great Oaks office park in establishing justification for conversion of their land use to residential development, they stated 'nationwide, office vacancies have doubled in the last decade in spite of strong job growth due to shifting needs of the modern workforce. Great Oaks has already experienced both attrition and longer vacancies, which are typically 9 to 24 months and in some cases longer. A noteworthy recent example is General Electric, which in 2016 opted not to renew longtime leases at Great Oaks totaling over 25,000

square feet (approximately 12% of the total square footage in the park). Over 11,000 square feet of this space remains vacant nearly two years later.'

Additional residential development. Great Oaks' proposed development is currently active as are a myriad of other proposals, outside and alongside of Pyramid, throughout our community. The preponderance of these and other applications are targeting the same demographic.

These current but not fully actualized proposals must be more definitively clarified for the purpose of this study which is seeking to analyze the overall impact that they will have in aggregate with the Site #1 Rapp Rd. proposal which is in active consideration. Should this be broad brushed away as unable to give an accurate accounting at present, we are beholden to whatever unfettered ramifications there will be. As the planning board has taken the rightful step to be fully informed of how development of this overall magnitude will impact the community it is imperative that we demand the most detailed and comprehensive data for review.

Thank you,
Iris Brojde
9 Westmere Terrace