

April 9, 2019

RE: SUB-ADJ19-02 (Salem Heights proposed development)

City of Salem Planning Division:

We are writing in regards to the proposed development of 34 homes at 575 Salem Heights Avenue S. Our family lives on the corner of Salem Heights and Holiday Drive S, and we've been here since February 1994.

For the 25 years we've lived here, we've increasingly seen single-home lots subdivided. We have nothing against development, and we are well aware that lots in our neighborhood are large, especially by today's standards. Thoughtful, compatible development is something we in this neighborhood must get used to.

What we are vehemently opposed to, however, is wedging 34 homes into a parcel that has no viable transportation routes to support them. Salem Heights is nothing more than a steep country road, with no sidewalks; extremely narrow lanes; unsafe, blind hills; and drivers who speed by at over 40 miles per hour, if not more. Adding 300+ car trips per day to this primitive transportation system is sure to result in accidents – and likely some will involve children who walk to nearby Candalaria School on narrow roads, crossing blind hills to get there.

It is our understanding that the proposed development would only provide sidewalks and other collector street improvements adjacent to the development. This is unacceptable. Why should existing residents be subject to more than 300 car trips per day on our currently unsafe streets?

For the city to approve this development, the surrounding roads **must** be brought up to a standard that can support this number of homes, built to the “urban standards” for collector streets laid out in the city's Transportation System Plan.

We shudder to think of the traffic problems this development will unleash on our neighborhood. While mowing our lawn, which abuts Salem Heights at the top of the (blind) hill, we've had dozens of close calls from cars speeding over the hill, totally clueless that people might be in their yards. There is no buffer, as there are no sidewalks or bike lanes. (The street is literally touching our yard, as it does all of our neighbors' yards along Salem Heights.) When children walking to school are involved – as they will be, given the proximity of Candalaria – it's more than a shudder, it's a sick feeling.

There is one stoplight at the corner of Salem Heights and Liberty Road, which normally takes a minimum of two minutes to get through from Salem Heights. Imagine how backed up this intersection will be during work and school travel times with 70 cars trying to get to their destinations. Going west on Salem Heights is even more problematic: the street leads over two blind hills, and inexplicably (for a so-called collector) goes to a dead end at Sunridge, which is essentially a one-lane alley.

We are not planning experts, but it's clear that the City of Salem has the discretion to at a minimum require a Traffic Impact Analysis (Section 803.015 of the Unified Development Code) from the developers. We also request that you follow chapter 111 which states: “Single family and duplex access onto collector streets may be limited according to Public Works Design Standards.” Do the right thing and limit this development to a reasonable number of new homes.

Without significant upgrades to Salem Heights on the south, and all the streets to the north, this proposed development is simply too many houses. Please do not approve this application in its current state.

Julie and Dan Curtis
3285 Holiday Drive South