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Sent on: Friday, January 6, 2023 8:17:01 PM
To: Planning Commissioners <Planning.Commissioners@nashville.gov>;
Rosenberg, Dave (Council Member) <Dave.Rosenberg@nashville.gov>;
Hausser, Gloria (Council Member) <Gloria.Hausser@nashville.gov>; Hurt,
Sharon (Council Member) <Sharon.Hurt@nashville.gov>
Subject: Opposition to Ariza Bellevue Development

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Hello-

I am writing to express my opposition of the rezoning for the Ariza development ahead of the January 12th planning commission meeting. Concerns over increased flooding risk is my family's greatest concern, although we also believe we will be negatively impacted by the traffic as well. In full transparency, I am a Bellevue resident, but I am also the Executive Producer of the investigative team at WSMV. We have been uncovering contributions to Middle Tennessee flooding for several years. Among our findings, data shows that not only has overall rain totals steadily increased for Middle Tennessee, but that the amount of rain per storm is also increasing. Current flood mitigation requirements for developers set by Metro are too low to deal with these increasingly intense storms. Established communities around the county, like Bellevue, are now seeing overwhelmed storm water management systems and increased flood risk. Combined with the fact that FEMA flood maps are created by looking backwards—not assessing flood risk based on future trends—they cannot be relied on to provide accurate flood risk assessments for rapidly growing areas like Davidson County. It is irresponsible to take the attitude that development “very close to” but technically “not in” in a current floodplain is not at risk for flooding or won't contribute to flood issues nearby. As it currently stands, there are several areas along the Harpeth River where preliminary FEMA map updates already increase the flood risk for some residents. To me, this says our area's flood risk is only increasing and the "current" flood maps remain inaccurate assessments. Development decisions made on backwards facing data, not forward thinking projections, will have Bellevue homeowners finding themselves in the same situation as the hundreds of homeowners around Percy Priest Lake, Richland Creek, and Seven Mile Creek who found out in 2022 that they were at an increased flood risk when FEMA finally got around re-evaluating their area and approving the data. Secondly, I question the developer's assessment that Coley Davis Rd can handle the extra traffic. The road services multiple businesses, a Metro Transit park-and-ride, and a very busy soccer complex. The soccer complex traffic causes serious back-ups multiple times a week, as well as during tournament play. The domino effect of increased traffic turning from Hwy 70 onto Coley Davis would inevitably impact those exiting I-40 and increase bottlenecks. The exit from I-40 WB already backs up to the highway during the evening commute, and I don't see how adding a high-density development near the exit residents would most likely use daily would improve that situation. I believe the increased traffic impacts more than just Coley Davis Road, and inevitably negatively impacts an already busy thoroughfare.

Finally, while we have been residents of Nashville for several years now, we last lived in Houston, TX. The city experiences flooding year after year due to the city's lack of zoning laws and unchecked development. Houston is not a model of flood mitigation standards. Any developer based out of that area who claims to "understand how to deal with flooding" is hoping you are unaware or will ignore the fact that there are very few requirements of developers in that area, and therefore the standard of "understanding" is very low. Removing greenspace, even when flood mitigation efforts are made, increases the speed of rainfall runoff and therefore increases the likelihood of overwhelming stormwater management systems and increases risks of flash flooding. According to the Greater Nashville Regional Council, the city has lost 600 thousand football fields worth of greenspace over 5 years. Cities cannot keep demolishing green space, especially greenspace in and adjacent to floodplains, and expect modern engineering to protect those living nearby from flooding. Council needs to be increasingly discerning over how they approve developments city-wide, especially with developments like Ariza that put a longstanding community at risk. I am asking you to vote NO on the Ariza development rezoning. Thank you so much for your consideration on this matter.

Meredith Whittemore
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