

Concern Regarding Notice of Request to Rezone

To: Woodside East Home Owners

From: Woodside East Homeowners Association (WEHA) Executive Board (EB)

Regarding: Request for Rezone Current R-1 & R-2 property to R-3 (Case No. 2025-0019)

Location: South of East 24th Avenue, West of Lake Otis Parkway (LOPky), north of Sorbus Way and east of Maplewood Street (4.93 acres in total).

The Woodside East Homeowners Association Executive Board (WEHA_EB) is sending out this notice to provide owners with an understanding of our position regarding the above-mentioned rezoning request currently before the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission.

Our primary concern is that the rezone will affect Woodside East since we share a common property boundary with the petitioning parcel owned by Mr. Hugh Ashlock.

A steep wooded slope behind homes to the north of Sorbus Way drops down sharply to a common property line that, for the most part, shares the existing toe of the slope.

Along the toe of the slope, high groundwater pools are visible from season to season. The presence of groundwater has required the installation of at least one groundwater monitoring well to provide baseline study. The well is located at the top of the slope between WSE Sorbus Way units 2151 & 2203.

To manage the high groundwater, a stretch of storm drain (SD) and storm drain manholes (SDMH's) was constructed years previous using drainage rock to intercept and convey away groundwater. However, the effectiveness of this SD system is questionable given the continued presence of pooled surface water along the toe and an abundance of large cottonwood trees enjoying groundwater.

The Chester Creek aquifer has documented artesian springs (e.g., Russian Jack "SPRINGS") wells and seeps along the Chester Creek Valley.

Our concern is that R-3 excavation work and development may expose and accelerate water to the surface via seeps along the toe of the slope, causing potential destabilization to slope and home foundations.

Further concerns include the likely increase in foot, bike, and e-bike traffic coming out of the R-3 property into WSE for the purpose of “short-cutting” to Northern Lights Blvd. and midtown beyond. To redirect traffic to use the existing Chester Creek trail and trailhead exit points, a secure fence will likely be needed to deter users from entering WSE.

Additionally, the R-3 density requested will bring many vehicles, leading to ingress and egress problems to LOPky.

The stretch of LOPky from NL to 15th Avenue is the last and most expensive section left to be upgraded. There is currently no funding or timeline in the foreseeable future for this stretch of roadway to be improved.

There will be no curbed or striped center lane turn pockets into the R-3 development. Constructing a standalone turn-out lane along the west side of LOPky for entrance onto E. 24th will require the existing Chester Creek culvert to be extended west. Any extension will trigger a FEMA floodplain study upstream and downstream of LOPky.

People Mover buses will likely only allow a stop on the west side of LOPky. Anything on the east side will require a stoplight to safely walk across LOPky at 24th Avenue.

The sidewalk along LOPky between NL and E. 24th on the west side is unusable in winter. Students walking to Wendler Middle School will not be able to use this sidewalk. Currently, the sidewalk is used as snow storage during winter.

School buses will be needed, and they will need to circulate properly within the R-3 development. This applies to police, fire, and emergency equipment as well.

R-3 parking will be an issue. Low-rise three-story buildings above partially-underground garages can help, but a long-term de-watering solution will likely be required to keep garages and elevator pits dry from any groundwater intrusion.

The concerns listed above bring the WEHA_EB to request and caution P&Z to only allow R-1 & R-2 zoning for this petition request. Doing so will help reduce community impacts and require needed safety along Lake Otis Parkway.

P&Z will be holding a public hearing on Monday, August 11th, at 6:30 pm at the Loussac Library Assembly Chambers for those wishing to attend and voice their concerns regarding the rezone request. We encourage your participation in the process