

I am writing to express strong reservations about the proposed Westlyn housing development currently under consideration in our community. While I understand the need for increased housing options, I urge you to consider the unintended consequences this type of development can have on land affordability—particularly for local families who wish to purchase undeveloped land to build single-family homes.

When large corporations or developers purchase significant amounts of land for high-density housing, the effects extend far beyond the immediate project site. These purchases tend to increase speculation in the surrounding area, leading to a noticeable rise in the price of nearby undeveloped land. Land that was once affordable and attainable for individual families suddenly becomes priced according to its future development potential—not its current use.

This pattern has been observed in many growing communities across the country. Once a high-density project is approved, nearby landowners often raise prices in anticipation of zoning changes or infrastructure improvements. As a result, the average resident is priced out of the opportunity to own land and build a home. In some areas, land values have increased by 30% to 50% within a few years of corporate-driven high-density developments.

This shift doesn't just affect land buyers. It also drives up property taxes, skews local development patterns toward large-scale investors, and diminishes the diversity and autonomy of our community. Local families should not be forced to compete with corporate developers for access to land—nor should they bear the long-term financial burden that speculative development often brings.

I respectfully ask the council to pause and reconsider the current proposal. At a minimum, I urge the town to conduct an independent land value impact study and explore strategies—such as zoning protections, inclusionary housing policies, or land trusts—to ensure that undeveloped land remains accessible to individual homeowners and future generations of residents.

Let's support housing solutions that reflect the needs and voices of this community—not just those of developers seeking to maximize profits.

Sincerely,

Cole Smith

