

IN LIEU OF DIRECTORS' ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
Monday, April 25th, 2022

I. DIRECTORS CORRESPONDENCE

1. BPC220414-1 Revised PC Action – Shelli Reid
2. BP220418-1 Annexation Map 22002 – Shelli Reid

II. CONSTITUENT CORRESPONDENCE

1. Wilderness Crossing – Richard Piersol
2. Wilderness Park – Emily Herrick
3. Building Plans – Terry Lindstrom
4. Question about FOIA public records request – Thomas Stoecklein
5. Fwd: Wilderness Crossing/change of zone 21057 – Nick Steinke
6. Opposition to zone change #CZ21057 – Megan Mejstrik
7. STOP Wilderness Park Development – Nancy Johnson
8. CZ21057 – Robert Klein
9. CZ21075 Wilderness Crossing – Dale Brambila
10. Dan King - City Council 4.18.22 Meeting - Opposition to Resolutions 22R-131, 22-71, 22-72, & 22R-132 - Please see attached – Dan King
11. Wilderness Crossing – Richard Piersol
12. Opposition to proposed zone change CZ21057 – Tina Walton
13. Wilderness Park – Denise Jurgens
14. Wilderness Park – Thomas Lynch
15. Proposed Zone Change CZ21057 – Opposition – Sarah Knight
16. Water Protector Against Zone Change CZ21057 – Mechelle Sky Walker
17. against CZ21057 – Dana Rodriguez
18. City Council Meeting 4/18/2022 – Ann King
19. Wilderness Park, oppose zone change CZ21057 – Tricia King
20. Opposition - Zone Change CZ21057 – Darrell and Julie Knight
21. Woods Park – Janice Swanson
22. Public Hearing Comments on Item 6j 22R-131 – Gene Hanlon
23. Proposed zone change CZ21057 Wilderness Park Area – Luke Schnell
24. Zone Change Opposition - Preserve Ecological and Spiritual Integrity of area around Wilderness Park – Spencer Munson
25. Wilderness Park – proposed zone change CZ21057 – Janelle Stevenson
26. I oppose cz21057 – Natalie Dermann
27. Opposition to CZ21057 Wilderness Crossing PUD – Delan Lonowski
28. no on CZ21057 – Carrie Smith
29. Read everything including the links. – Robert Rieck Jr.
30. Comments entered into testimony of the Wilderness Crossing request for Action 4/18/2022 – Bruce Johnson
31. Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001, Change of Zone 21057 – Kristy Peterson
32. Development in wilderness park – Christopher Wiebke
33. Zoning change consideration CZ21057 – Terry Langan
34. Development adjacent to Wilderness Park – Maureen Ose

35. Wilderness Park – Richard Newberg
36. 1st & Pioneer proposed changes – Patte Newman
37. Pioneers and S. 1st Zoning Change – Michael Farrell
38. Kevin Abourezk comment on proposed zone change #CZ21057 – Kevin Abourezk
39. Opposition to zone change CZ21057 – Andrew Nelson
40. To members of the City Council, regarding Snell Hill – Wyatt Nelson
41. March 18, 2022, City Council Meeting: Change of Zone 21057, Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001, and Annexation 21013 – Kathleen Danker
42. for the official Public Hearing record for April 18th – Rebecca Seth
43. #CZ21057 Wilderness Crossing – April and Justin Fearing
44. Wilderness Crossing/CZ21057 – Steve Hutfless
45. Opposition to Wilderness Crossing Project – Diane Walkowiak
46. Opposition to CZ21057 – Vienna Kopischke
47. Wilderness Park Encroachment – Margaret Vrana
48. Letter on Proposed Zone Change CZ21057 (Annexation 21013) – Mark Brohman
49. CZ21057 Wilderness Park – Jodi Reese
50. Proposed Zone Change CZ21057 – Heather Klein
51. Agenda Items 6 k. - m.- Emily Levine
52. Opposition to Zone change cz21057 Wilderness Crossing – Rachel Ellis
53. CZ21057 – Robert Klein
54. Opposition to Zone Change #CZ21057 – Tanika Cooper
55. CZ 21057 Wilderness Crossing zone change – Linda Plock
56. Opposing Zone Change CZ 21057 – Clint Densberger
57. Comment - Proposed Zone Change CZ21057 – Anica Brown
58. Zone Change Opposition - Preserve Ecological and Spiritual Integrity of area around Wilderness Park – Erin Poor
59. Wilderness Park Project – Sam Gross
60. Opposition to Change of Zone 21057 – Bryan Seibel
61. CZ21057 – Carla Paulsen
62. Word of Opposition to the Proposed Zone Change CZ21057 – Carlye Kush
63. Opposition to rezoning – Stephanie Bondi
64. Letter to the City Council Re: CZ21057 – Renee Sans Souci
65. Protect Wilderness Park and Our Native Heritage – Nathan Duffy
66. Proposed Zoning Change #21057, near Wilderness Park – Bruce Mellberg
67. CZ21057 – Sann Johnston
68. Wilderness Park and Zone change CZ21057 – Jaz Schoeneck
69. Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001, Change of Zone 21057 – Charles Struble
70. Proposed Zone Change Of Wilderness Park – Joseph Sutton
71. Wilderness Park – Janette Robb
72. Flooding pictures: Wilderness Park, oppose zone change CZ21057 – Tricia King
73. Public Testimony : Opposition to proposed zone change CZ1057 (Protect Wilderness Park) – Kelly Seacrest
74. Public Testimony: Opposition to proposed zone change CZ1057 (Protect Wilderness Park) – Peter Stegen
75. CZ21057 – LeAnn Kern
76. #21057 – Rich Higgins

77. Opposing wilderness park zone change – Hannah Demma
78. Opposition to CPA22001, CZ21057 regarding the proposed Wilderness Crossing PUD – Laurie Brunner
79. Opposition to proposed development near Wilderness Park – Caitlynn Gillaspie
80. Wilderness Park Development proposal – Kay Hegler
81. development near Wilderness Park – Lorrie Benson
82. Opposition to proposed zone change CZ21057 – Karley Coday
83. Opposing zone change for purposed Wilderness Crossing sub division – Lucas Orth
84. Protect Wildnerness Park – Katie Slean
85. Wilderness Crossing Development (4/18/22 Agenda Items 6j, 6k, 6l, 6m) – River Sky
86. Wilderness Park Development – John Carlini
87. Wilderness Park and proposed new housing development – Kathie Starkweather
88. Wilderness Park, oppose zone change CZ21057, wilderness needs a buffer zone. The boundaries have become prime real estate. – Tricia King
89. Protect Wilderness Park – Elsa Forsberg
90. Proposed Wilderness Crossing Project – Rosina Paolini

****ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION****
REVISED

NOTICE: The Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. in Hearing Room 112 on the first floor of the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th St., Lincoln, Nebraska. For more information, call the Planning Department, (402) 441-7491.

****PLEASE NOTE:** The Planning Commission action is final action on any item with a notation of *FINAL ACTION*. Any aggrieved person may appeal Final Action of the Planning Commission to the City Council or County Board by filing a Notice of Appeal with the City Clerk or County Clerk within 14 days following the action of the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission action on all other items is a recommendation to the City Council or County Board.

The Planning Commission will be allowing testimony on agenda items by videoconferencing. For those who wish to testify by video, you must register with the Planning Department Office to participate by calling 402-441-7491 or emailing Plan@lincoln.ne.gov by 10:00 a.m. the day of the meeting. You will be asked to provide your name, address, phone number and the agenda item(s) you wish to speak on, and your position on this item. On the day of the hearing, you will receive a link via email, which will be needed to join the hearing to provide your testimony.

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2022

[Commissioners Cruz and Eddins absent]

Approval of minutes of the regular meeting held March 30, 2022. ****APPROVED: 7-0 (Cruz and Eddins absent) ****

1. CONSENT AGENDA
(Public Hearing and Administrative Action)

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONFORMANCE

- 1.1 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONFORMANCE 22004, to review as to conformance with the 2050 Lincoln-Lancaster Comprehensive Plan, for Bishop Heights Redevelopment Plan, a proposed guide for redevelopment activities within the Redevelopment Plan Area, including mixed use commercial and residential uses, on property generally located at the Bishop Heights Shopping Center at South 27th Street and Highway 2.
Staff recommendation: In Conformance with Comprehensive Plan
Staff Planner: Benjamin Callahan, 402-441-6360, bcallahan@lincoln.ne.gov
This application was removed from the Consent Agenda for public hearing.
The Planning Commission granted a request on behalf of staff to hold open and continue public hearing and action to the April 27, 2022, hearing.

ANNEXATION AND RELATED ITEMS:

- 1.2a ANNEXATION 22005, to annex approximately 2.65 acres, more or less, and adjacent rights-of-way, on property generally located at South 88th Street and Pioneers Boulevard.
Staff recommendation: Conditional Approval
Staff Planner: Brian Will, 402-441-6362, bwill@lincoln.ne.gov
Planning Commission recommendation: APPROVAL: 7-0 (Cruz and Eddins absent) as set forth in the conditions of the staff report dated March 30, 2022.
Public hearing before the City Council is currently pending.
- 1.2b CHANGE OF ZONE 22008, from AGR (Agricultural Residential District) to R-1 (Residential District), on property generally located at South 88th Street and Pioneers Boulevard.
Staff recommendation: Approval
Staff Planner: Brian Will, 402-441-6362, bwill@lincoln.ne.gov
Planning Commission recommendation: APPROVAL: 7-0 (Cruz and Eddins absent). Public hearing before the City Council is currently pending.
- 1.2c Special Permit 22007, to allow for a CUP (Community Unit Plan) over approximately 2.65 acres for up to 8 dwelling units with associated waivers to: sidewalks and sidewalk location; sanitary sewer flow opposite street grade, location, and depth; yard setbacks; local street standard; and storm water detention, on property generally located at South 88th Street and Pioneers Boulevard. *** **FINAL ACTION** ***
Staff recommendation: Conditional Approval
Staff Planner: Brian Will, 402-441-6362, bwill@lincoln.ne.gov
Planning Commission 'final action': CONDITIONAL APPROVAL, as set forth in the conditions of the staff report dated March 30, 2022: 7-0 (Cruz and Eddins absent). Resolution No. PC-01801.

2. **REQUESTS FOR DEFERRAL:** **See Item 5.1.**
3. **ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA:** **See Item 1.1**
4. **PUBLIC HEARING AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION:**
5. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

PRELIMINARY PLAT:

- 5.1 PRELIMINARY PLAT 04011A, for a preliminary plat amendment to show a revised street layout, with associated waiver, on property generally located at Waterford Estates Drive and Linwood Lane. *** **FINAL ACTION** ***
Staff recommendation: Approval
Staff Planner: George Wesselhoft, 402-441-6366, gwesselhoft@lincoln.ne.gov
The Planning Commission granted the applicant's request to place this application on pending until further notice.

AT THIS TIME, ANYONE WISHING TO SPEAK ON AN ITEM
NOT ON THE AGENDA, MAY DO SO.

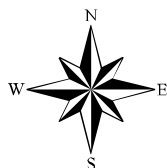
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
Adjournment: 1:12 p.m.

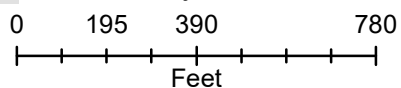
PENDING LIST: *CHANGE OF ZONE 21024, from B-1 (Local Business District) to H-2 (Highway Business District), on property generally located at 4615 Vine Street.*



**Annexation by Ordinance
S 94th St & Van Dorn St
Effective: April 26, 2022**



-  Area of Annexation
-  Tax Parcels
-  Current City Limits



From: [Richard Piersol](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Wilderness Crossing
Date: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 5:47:48 PM



Dear public servants: Please add my name to those objecting to the change of zone at First and Pioneers, for reasons made abundantly clear in detail by the Friends of Wilderness Park. No need to belabor those points here, but another perhaps as important, in my opinion, is that we as a community neglected to address this approaching conflict of land uses directly in the latest update of the Comprehensive Plan.

I'm sure somebody saw it coming and for reasons I can only imagine, neglected to draw attention, either on purpose or by neglect. We all bear some responsibility, then. In any case, please think seriously about delaying this action, at least, to give time to review whether 575 dwellings next door to what's left of our unbroken land is really in the public interest, or just the most lucrative way for the Diocese of Lincoln to dispose of that real estate.

--

Richard Piersol
402-525-8751

From: [Emily H](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park
Date: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 5:48:27 PM



I am writing in strong opposition to change of zone #cz21057. Wilderness Park is one of the gems of Lincoln. Its crucial role in flood control should not need any repetition and seems obvious, but what is not always obvious to people who may not have been to the park is its equally crucial role in recreation, conservation, ecology and providing Lincolniters with a great quality of life. Growing cities need green space, and Wilderness Park has over 17 miles of trails enjoyed by hikers, runners, equestrians and cyclists. Dozens of rare species of plants as well as deer, foxes, owls, and other animals too numerous to list make their homes in the park or visit as they migrate. The park provides education opportunities for kids and a mental health break for adults. It's hard to imagine many losses to Lincoln that would be worse than sacrificing a large portion of this park to another housing development. As Lincoln strives to attract and keep a young and vital workforce, it must provide people with unique amenities. Wilderness Park is one of the reasons Lincoln is such a good place to live. Please don't jeopardize it.

Emily Herrick
1309 Garfield
Lincoln, NE 68502

From: [Terry Lindstrom](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Building Plans
Date: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:52:21 AM
Attachments: [City Letter \(1\).pdf](#)
[Plans.pdf](#)



Please see attached

Thank you!

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Terry Lindstrom
EXIT Realty Professionals
5540 South Street
Suite 208
Lincoln NE 68506
Email: TLindstrom@EXITRealtyProfessionalsNE.com
Office: 402.466.8181
Mobile 402.730.6005

Dear Ben – George,

My name is Terry Lindstrom with EXIT Realty Professionals. My job description regarding 5540 South Street “Manager”. The owner has a goal to improving the income, safety and appearance on the corner of 5540 South Street. We are looking to make some of these changes. They would not happen all at once, just each project one at a time. Most likely over the next 2 – 3 years.

Exhibit #1 shows our future plans. A: add to the west of the building 2 story, 22x40 addition. This would be for Office and Retail space. Of course, an architect would be consulted for design and plans for construction. The building addition would have access both from the front of the building as well the back. Also recess the additional so as to allow 2 parking spaces just in front of the new construction.

We currently own the two homes on Saylor Street. Are wanting to replace them with a Tri-plex, with the overall foot print of 72’ wide, 36’ deep and 3 stories high. The design is to improve the street line and blend in, but also improve the appears of the neighborhood. The current homes seem to draw lower rents and junk cars. Our plan would be to not only improve the structure but also the landscaping. We would be adding underground sprinklers, landlord caring for the lawn and lawn care. We’ll be removing all the broken-down fencing, fill the area with bushes and trees. In other words, very pleasing landscaping.

Note: the parking area that can be entered from Saylor Street. One reason to entry from Saylor Street is if you’re going North on 56th street and need to enter from 56th at the current entrance, you have to pull into the turning lane of those traveling south posing a greater change of head on collision. Given the traffic at 5 o’clock it is almost impossible to turn off of 56th street to catch our current entrance when headed north. By going to Saylor Street, you have a natural turning lane set up.

Exhibits A-B-C are the floor plans to the tri-plex. This kind of construction makes it more affordable to build. As you can see, they have 3 bedrooms, open floor plan and two car garages. Given all the addition of employees to Madona, these could offer upgraded rentals for people working there.

Exhibit A is the elevation of the tri-plex of course this picture is 2 units and we would have 3 units.

Exhibit #2 shows our property we own- noted with current parking

Please review docs and maybe we can talk on the phone about your thoughts!

Terry Lindstrom

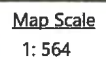
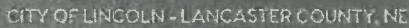
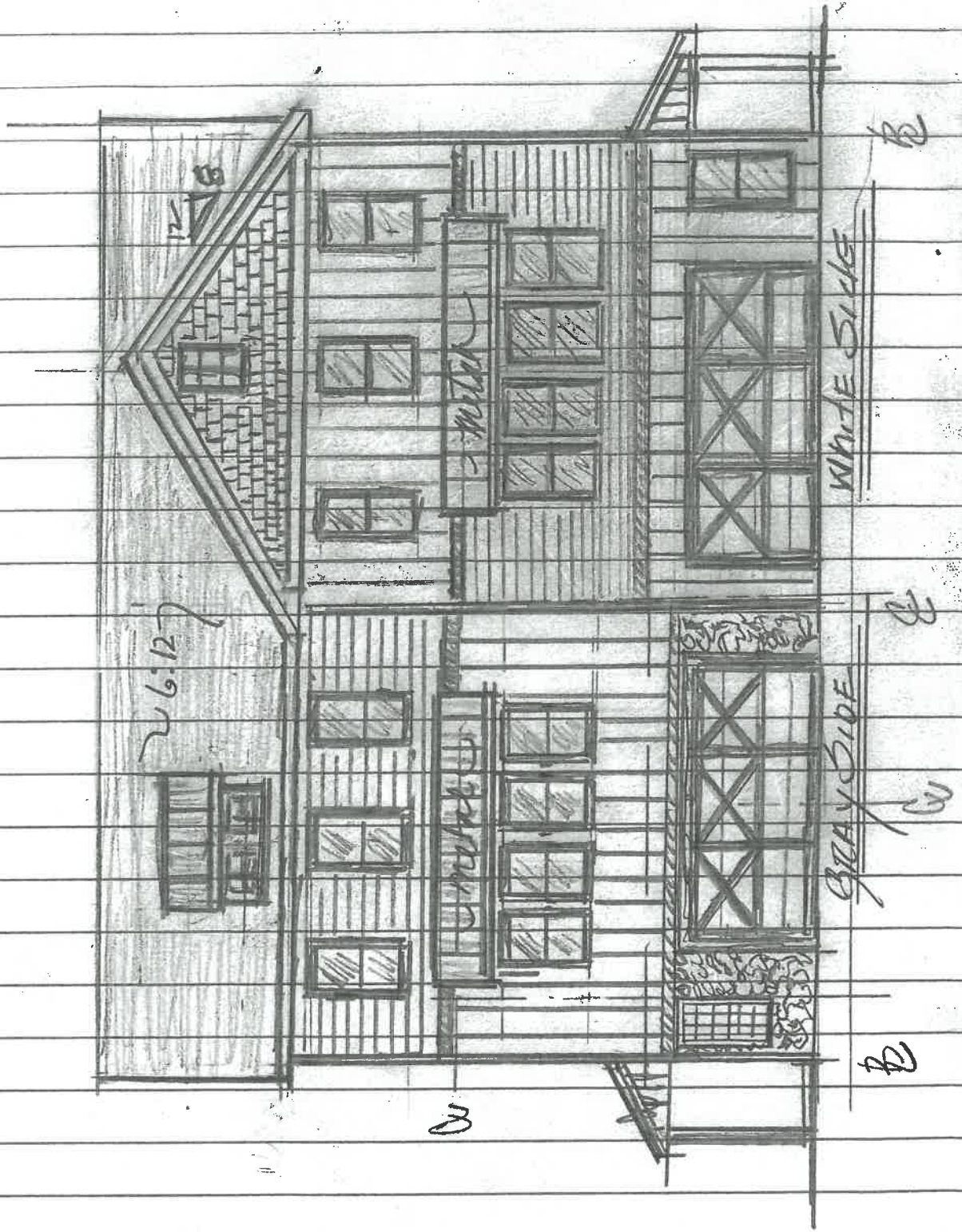
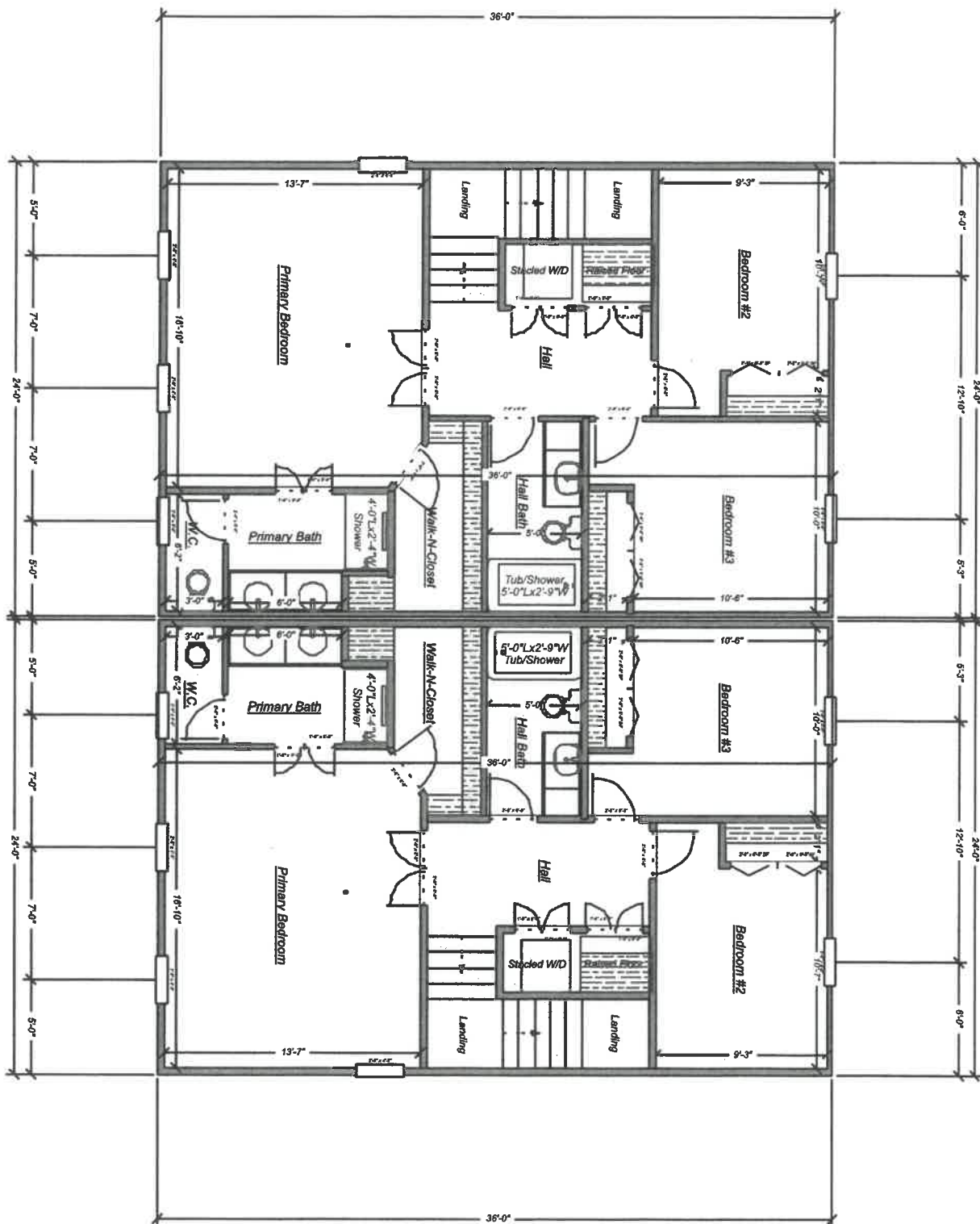
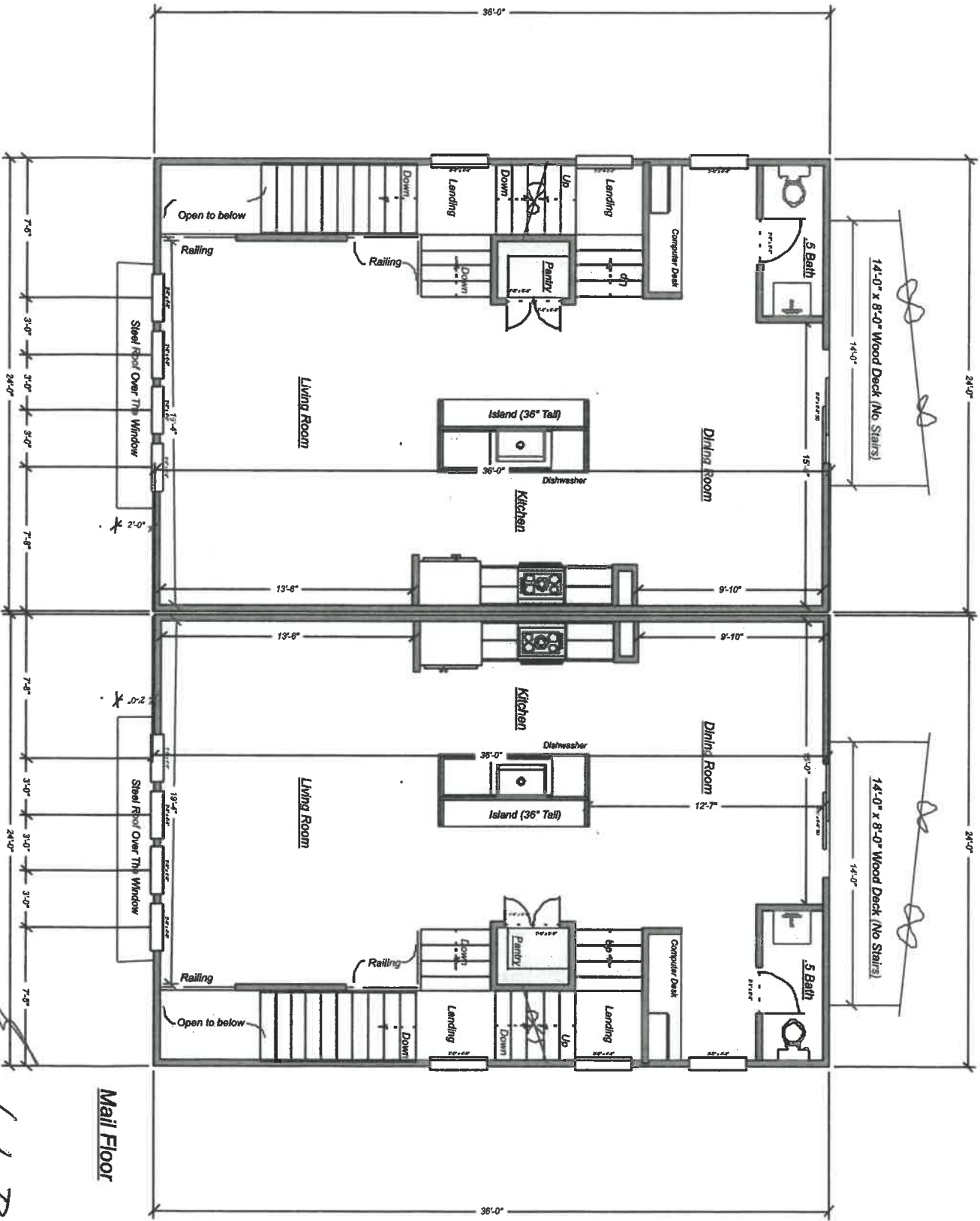


Exhibit D

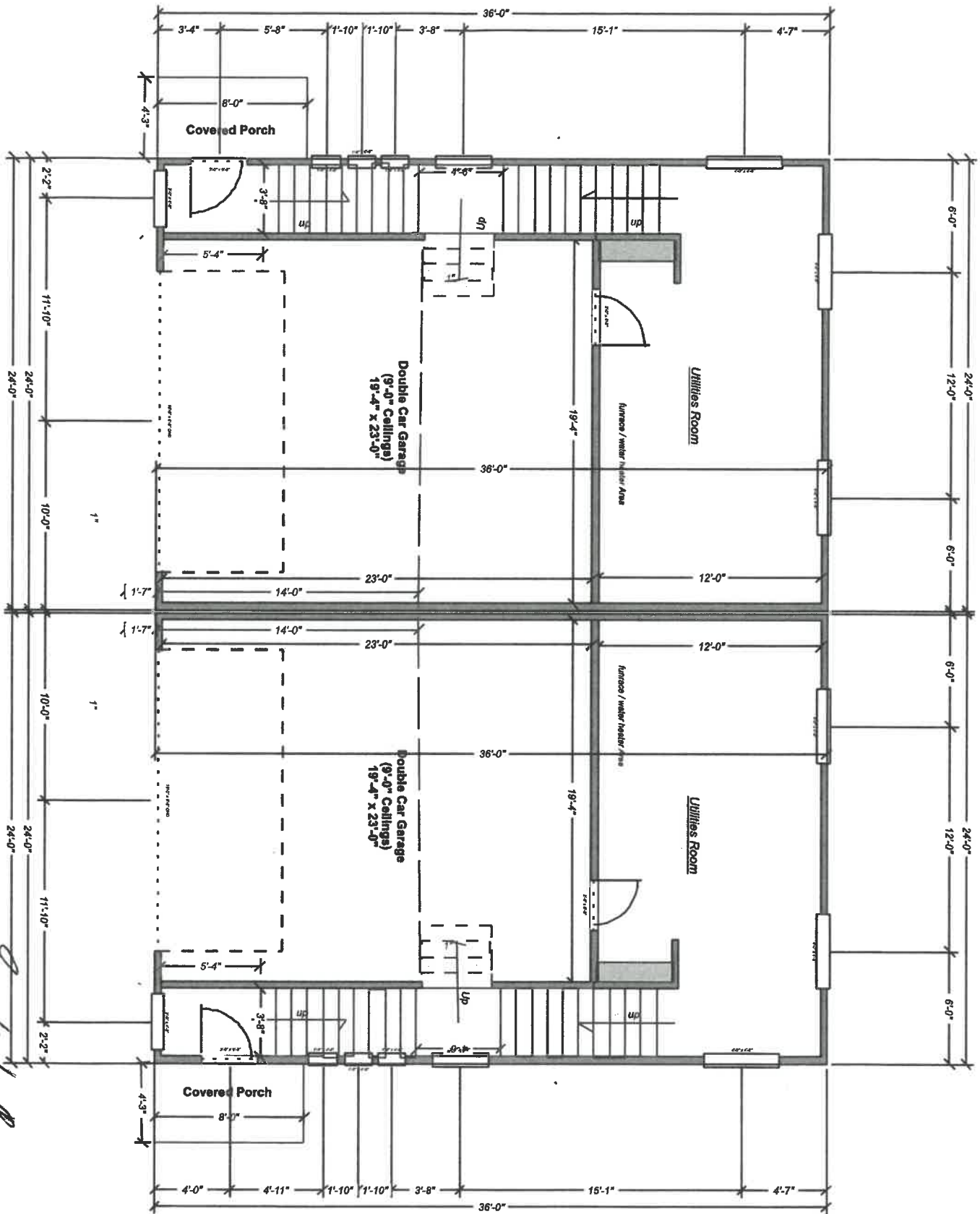




Robert A



Seabot 12



Robert C

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Terry

1 / 1

Dear Ben - George

My Name is Jerry Lundstrom with
Exit Realty professionals. My
part in 5540 South Street is
in the Manager of the building
and oversee.

The Owner has a large interest in
improving the corner of 5540
South Side.

We are looking to over the next
few years make 5540 South
Street a better place to office
or shop.

Exhibit #1 shows our future
plans. A add to the west of the
Building 2 story, 22x40 Addition.

To remove the 2 homes on Taylor
street and replace them with
a tri-plex. Over all dimensions
are 72' wide, 36' deep and
3 stories high.

Also to increase a better traffic
flow off of 50th Street. Note the
parking area that can be ~~enter~~
entered from Taylor Street. And
we will ~~add~~ add additional
park space.

One reason to entry from Saylor street is; if you're going North on 50th street and need to enter from 50th you have to pull into the turning lane that those traveling South would need for a left turn, on to South Street. When the traffic @ 500 it is almost impossible to turn off of 50th Street to catch entrance. By going to Saylor Street you have a natural turning lane set up.

Exhibits A-B-C are the floor plans to the tri-plex. This kind of construction makes it more affordable to build.

Exhibit D is the Elevation of the tri-plex of ~~normal~~ ~~coarse~~ coarse. This picture is ~~2~~ 4 ft high 3 units, and we would have 3 units wide.

Exhibit #2 shows our properties we own - noted with current parking

Please review doc. and maybe we can talk on the phone, your thoughts.

Denny

Exhibit #2



GIS Viewer

CITY OF LINCOLN - LANCASTER COUNTY, NE

City of Lincoln\Lancaster County GIS Map



DISCLAIMER: The information is presented on a best-efforts basis, and should not be relied upon for making financial, survey, legal or other commitments. If you have questions or comments regarding the data displayed on this map, please email assessor@lanaster.ne.gov and you will be directed to the appropriate department.

From: [Thomas Stoecklein](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Question about FOIA public records request
Date: Thursday, April 14, 2022 1:17:59 PM



Dear City Council,

Does the City of Lincoln adhere to the Nebraska Public Records Statutes (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-712 through 84-712.09) and other state laws when determining the public disclosure of documents?

Thank you

Thomas Stoecklein
tstoecklein@gmail.com
347-751-5396

From: [Nick Steinke](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Fwd: Wilderness Crossing/change of zone 21057
Date: Thursday, April 14, 2022 2:10:29 PM



Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Nick Steinke <steinke_nick@yahoo.com>
Date: April 12, 2022 at 1:06:54 PM CDT
To: jraybould@lincoln.ne.gov
Subject: Wilderness Crossing

Good afternoon, Ms. Raybould. I am writing to you to express concern and ask you to vote against the rezoning to accommodate the Wilderness Crossing proposed development. I think more study should be done prior to action. The impacts to Salt Valley Greenway and Wilderness Park need to be evaluated, as do the risk of Salt Creek flooding and the impact on transportation.

Thanks for considering,

Nick Steinke
3500 S 27th St
Lincoln, NE 68502
402-730-1660

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Megan Mejsrik](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposition to zone change #CZ21057
Date: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:07:47 PM



Hello,

I am emailing you to voice my opposition to the change of zone for the property west of Wilderness Park southeast of 1st and Pioneers.

I ask that the council delay their vote on zone change #CZ21057 until more research can be done on how to wisely develop the city while respecting the irreplaceable asset which is the Salt Valley Greenway. A Wilderness Park Environs Study is necessary before addressing this zone change. The plan goals give no heed to the sensitivity needed when building near a floodplain or biologically diverse area which shows that the zone change request was written without due diligence or a full understanding of the surrounding area.

Wilderness Park is a gem. We are so so lucky to have this park in our city. Please do not put it in danger.

Thank you,

Megan Mejsrik
meganmejsrik@gmail.com
402.615.2429

From: [Nancy Johnson](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: STOP Wilderness Park Development
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 5:42:51 AM

>

> As a retired Realtor I know the importance of new housing developments. But the location of this development is wrong for so many reasons.

>

> Please protect our beautiful Wilderness Park and vote against this development.

>

> I am a grandmother of 9. I want this beautiful park to be here for my grandchildren to enjoy.

>

> Sincerely

> Nancy Johnson

From: [Robert Klein](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: CZ21057
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 6:31:01 AM
Attachments: [Council 21057.pdf](#)



Dear Lincoln City Council,

I would like to start by providing some clarification regarding a misunderstanding of flood concerns, expressed by the Planning Commission, and may be relevant to Council members.

The property for the zoning change proposal 21057 might not be in the floodplain but it is right next to it and changes in land use affect floodplain areas. The concrete surfaces and rooftops of urban environments like what's proposed, cause storm water to enter waterways like Salt Creek much sooner than what occurs with agricultural land. The soil absorbs and retains some of the rainwater that falls on it, whereas concrete and conventional, non-green roofs don't. The proposal property is higher in elevation and is steeper than surrounding land so the speed of stormwater flows from it are faster than other properties adjacent to Wilderness Park that are at a similar elevation to the park land. Higher housing development density has more and quicker stormwater runoff than less dense housing interspersed with vegetated areas. Faster rainwater flows into creek channels drive streams toward flood stage more often.

So the concern is stormwater runoff from the proposed development shed into Salt Creek combined with faster storm water flows from other developments that have occurred over the past decades that also feed into Salt Creek (like Beal Slough), in concert with other urban developments underway on lands around Wilderness Park, all increase flood risk.

The Salt Creek stream has deepened more than 20 feet over the past decades, partially due to faster stormwater flows from city growth. The depth of the creek channel means unlike in the past, now it will take much larger stormwater volumes for the stream to spill out of it's banks to be slowed and retained within areas like Wilderness Park. The consequence of this is the stormwater volumes that had previously been slowed within the park, now instead stay in the creek channel and flow downstream to combine with stormwater surges that enter the creek from city areas.

As we saw in 2015, if the places where runoff enters Salt Creek are below the water level in the levee, stormwaters flood those areas because they cannot flow out. So the concern is the increased risks of flooding of areas, businesses, and people downstream. Particularly because as we have learned from the Salt Creek Flood Resiliency study report (page 103): "The study shows that actual flood risks and potential flood damages in Lincoln are greater than depicted in the current regulatory models, maps, and public information. And, as the climate models illustrate, the flood hazards on Salt Creek are expected to increase in the future."

One of the flood risk management options the NRD is advocating is increased

organic content of cropland since organic matter retains rainwater. Converting the proposal property to urban landscape loses the opportunity to address both flood risk and climate change (organic matter in the soil sequesters carbon) with a singular option.

It's possible a hydrologic modeling of the proposal property would lead to an assessment of negligible associated risk. But the important message is flood risk is comprehensive, involving all properties, their land uses and land use/zoning changes within the entire Salt Creek watershed. This is highlighted by Policy 21, action step 12 of the Comprehensive Plan. "In response to the findings of the Salt Creek Resiliency Study, assemble key partners and leaders in the City and County to develop comprehensive strategies that reduce flooding risks, improve soil health, sequester carbon, and maintain natural systems within the City and County, to include the Parks Foundation Land Trust initiative."

Comprehensive Plan Policy 55 on watershed planning includes excellent language to this point: "The City of Lincoln Watershed Management program combines previously separate floodplain and stormwater management initiatives. This approach recognizes that floodplains, tributaries, and upland areas are all part of a comprehensive, integrated watershed system. A comprehensive approach to watershed planning is crucial as development expands into new basins around the Lincoln city limits and as redevelopment occurs within the existing urban area. A comprehensive watershed management program needs to incorporate a range of strategies including land use planning, conservation design for new subdivisions, conservation efforts, appropriate standards for floodplains and stormwater, flood warning system development/expansion, stream stabilization, stormwater storage basins, and other structural flood control efforts."

Action step 1 of Policy 55 calls to: "[d]evelop and utilize watershed plans during the review and evaluation of proposed developments and as a guide in the preparation of future capital improvement projects." This clearly applies to both this proposed development and future water and other capital improvement projects as addressed below.

Comprehensive strategies require a comprehensive view of properties. An evaluation of the proposal as it relates to other urban developments that have occurred in the Wilderness Park subarea and with consideration of future recommended zoning/land use changes, will provide a more accurate assessment that isn't likely to be negligible. The importance of a comprehensive evaluation for the property is greater because of the immediate proximity to the 100 year floodplain and to Wilderness Park, and the higher elevation and greater slopes than surrounding areas.

The Salt Creek Flood Resiliency Study warns of the importance of updating comprehensive flood risk assessment in light of the Salt Creek levee system being inadequate in relation to 1% (100 year) annual flood event. Flooding that Lincoln experienced in 2015 wasn't categorized as 1% annual chance flood, and illustrate the reality of exacerbated risk from climate change highlighted by the Resiliency study. A comprehensive watershed plan involving this property cannot be undertaken when a grading plan for the proposal is waived. This prevents an understanding of how the

proposal will interact and affect the floodplain areas and park ecosystems right next to the proposal property. Grading which channels stormwater into specific areas like culverts will have different implications and considerations than scenarios where runoff flows spread out over the landscape across property boundaries. How and what impacts to which park ecosystems cannot be known so it's not possible for environmental impact assessments to be made. Not an acceptable scenario.

The expenses incurred to the property owner/developer could be considerably less than the damages caused to downstream businesses and properties from flood events influenced by proceeding blindly without heed to Policy. There is a greater imperative to not approve the zoning change and allow risk assessment and reduction strategies to be developed. There is time, as I will elaborate.

The 2050 Growth Tiers Map (pg 3 of Recommended Growth Scenario) designates much of the proposal area as Tier I, priority C which is not eyed for development until after 2036. The property in question is not in any of the areas identified as recommended growth nor is it delineated on page 12 of Recommended Growth Scenario as ideal for residential growth. It's unclear why this property proposal is being prioritized now and out of accord with Plan Forward.

The current Capital Improvement Program includes 7 water distribution main project areas. None, particularly area 7, designate budget allocations for water infrastructure improvements (installation of infrastructure) to the area. Page 5.8 of the Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan states: "The CIP should be utilized to provide a systematic and predictable forum for determining the timing of infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure improvements should continue to be implemented only in areas identified for development in the Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. One of the most important tools in financing is adherence to the physical plan for the community. Following the Plan for development and systematic improvements throughout Lincoln increases efficiency in construction and maximizes the community's investment."

Following the plan is precisely what Comprehensive Plan Policy 3 and 17 address. Action step 2 of the latter states: "Support timely and efficient implementation of the growth tiers framework through the Capitol Improvement Program and other coordinated infrastructure enhancements." Timing for this proposal is out of sequence with the Growth Tiers classification of Plan Forward. The fact that the conversation involves infrastructure installation rather than a capitalizing of existing infrastructure developed under policy driven planning, illustrates the lack of timeliness and efficiency of process as well as discord with numerous Comprehensive Plan policies.

How is this proposal considered following the Comprehensive Plan or maximizing community investment?

In further regard of infrastructure issues, page 20 of Recommended Growth Scenario states: "With edge growth new infrastructure must be extended, which can be a significant cost shared by both the city (taxpayers and ratepayers) and developer, and then

must be maintained in perpetuity, which is a cost to taxpayers and ratepayers. With infill projects, new development can occur while utilizing the existing investment in surrounding infrastructure, although in some cases infrastructure upgrades are necessary. More infill is ultimately a cost savings for taxpayers and ratepayers in Lincoln.”

Comprehensive Plan Policy 80 on Annexations states: “In most cases this also means that annexation must occur prior to a property receiving an urban zoning designation.” Further, action step 1 of Comprehensive Plan Policy 80 states: “Regularly evaluate for potential annexation all property along the city’s edge for which basic infrastructure is generally available or planned for in the near term. The City should annex land in Tier 1 Priorities A and B that is contiguous to city limits and generally urban in character.”

There are several concerns. Much of the property is priority C. Contrary to the Recommended Growth Scenario, the zoning proposal dictates installation, rather than utilization of existing, infrastructure. These infrastructure installation expenses would be outside the current CIP budget allocations which as the Council knows is a 6 year window. And a contrast to Comprehensive Plan Policy 3.

Comprehensive Plan Policy 49, action step 1 a states: “Consider prioritizing infrastructure investment based on projects that can show net energy reduction.” How does this proposal demonstrate net energy reduction? Business-as-usual approach to site layout and the greater grading dictated by road relocation and the topography of the property, isolation from city urban environments, resources, and employment opportunities doesn’t suggest Plan Forward level thinking. If this proposal cannot demonstrate net energy reduction and the proposal timing does not match the growth tier classification, why and how would this proposal remotely be a priority?

Because the proposal is premature to the Recommended Growth Tier C priority timeline it means a longer timeframe for maintenance costs which is more expense to the public than intended with Plan Forward or allocated in current CIP window.

Simultaneous annexation and change of zone requests suggest an abnormal circumstance. It’s reasonable to expect extraordinary rationale or benefit for something abnormal.

Page 23 of the Recommended Growth Scenario of the Comprehensive Plan brings up an important reason to question why now for this location and this proposal. “It’s important to note that there is currently a significant amount of housing units already approved in growth areas that have not yet been built. As of January 2020, there were approximately 16,000 approved unbuilt units in edge growth areas, which is roughly a 12-year supply. It’s unclear whether increasing the approved supply to 15 or even 20 years would have a significant impact on housing production or cost.”

If this is to suggest a 10 year supply now at this point, I don’t see that it conveys a supply driven priority for approval of this zoning change or annexation of the area. To me it doesn’t justify expediting growth here and now making significant changes to the area and

the property. As noted on page 22 of the Recommended Growth Scenario, once farmland is converted to urban use, it isn't likely to be returned to agricultural purposes, or natural areas. This is the moment to take heed for long-term consequences. Later I will provide an important development opportunity worth deliberating in regards to the timing for this proposal.

There are additional concerns about the edge growth aspects of the proposal that are in contrast with Policies of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as in comparison to alternate opportunities available to the Council for infill development. Like the Recommended Growth Scenarios points out, "[t]he manner of Lincoln's growth has significant financial and quality of life implications for the community."

"Edge growth can remove investment dollars from the existing city, contributing to the deterioration of existing areas. (Recommended Growth Scenario, pg 21)" How is this evaluated to mitigate such concerns and direct expenditure of public funds and guide zoning decisions in the best interest of the community as a whole to curtail edge growth driven urban blight? It is a metric whose use is warranted for proposals such as this.

Page 20 of Recommended Growth Scenario states: "Increased infill would allow the community to grow our population and tax base while focusing city funds on maintaining what we already have, rather than spending money constructing and maintaining new streets.

These upgrades for infill would typically be less expensive than for new construction in edge developments." This is probably particularly so for the PUD given the proposed realignment of 1st street and greater work that it, and as a result of the steep existing topography, would likely require.

An important connectivity concern is highlighted on page 21 of Recommended Growth Scenario: "[e]dge growth could contribute to the further separation of housing and jobs/services, creating longer commutes, more traffic, and all but requiring that more people use an automobile to navigate the city." Likewise noted in Recommended Growth Scenario (page 22), "[i]ncreased reliance on single-occupant automobiles would increase the city's impact on the environment and could contribute to lower air quality."

Relatedly: "[a] dispersed population makes it difficult to maintain an efficient and cost-effective transit system as buses need to travel longer distances to serve comparatively fewer people in each given area. (pg 22, Recommended Growth Scenario)"

The area in question is outside of the existing StarTran service network. The current StarTran Transportation Improvement Plan does not expand service to the proposal area. As such the proposed development would be isolated from other areas of the city physically, and in connectivity given the lack of public transportation access, sidewalk infrastructure in the area, or bike trail connectivity. This is against the will of Comprehensive Plan Policy 65 which stipulates: "Alternative modes of transportation will be integrated within all new growth and development decisions to provide travel choice and ensure that the value of existing infrastructure is maximized through system optimization." Note the use

of will, not should in policy language.

The dispersed aspect of the proposal location and lack of transit diversity is against Comprehensive Plan Policy 62 which directs “working to eliminate disparity in the quality of and access to transportation options for all community members.” This also is at odds with the actionable provisions of Comprehensive Plan Policy 1 (step 2) regarding Housing Affordability, and is contrary to Policy 3 which states: “[d]eveloping a pedestrian orientation of buildings and street networks that provides substantial connectivity is also a priority for developing areas.” It also doesn’t demonstrate heedance to Comprehensive Plan Policy 49: “Encourage carpooling, car/ bike sharing, and use of transit.”

The proposed PUD is mismatched with the intentions of Comprehensive Plan Policy 49 Action Step 1 c: “Encourage higher density housing in/near large commercial developments, redevelopment nodes, and corridors and employment centers.” The location is adjacent to a large, valued Regional park, and primarily other residential areas. Does this really fulfill the intentions behind this Policy to drive high density housing? High density traffic, as the proposal would involve, does not decrease the strain on street networks or capital resources for street maintenance, contribute positively to traffic congestion concerns, or decrease psychological stress levels of the community-at-large. The proposed high housing density would mean; higher numbers of people exclusively dependent on automobiles for their transportation needs, creation of another development that is discriminatory of the population/community that could have access to the proposed housing, and significantly increases the carbon footprint effects from residents of the proposed development.

The proposal is a model example of how urban development has occurred since the end of World War II. Not at all the approach that is in accordance with the vision of the 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

Lincoln illustrates forward thinking in many ways, like the plan for autonomous shuttle services (current Transportation Improvement Plan). A development opportunity on the horizon worth deliberating in relation to the Plan Forward (not private developer) timeline for this area is:

Uber, the rideshare company, has a goal of making private ownership of personal vehicles financially untenable compared to vehicle access or demand driven ridership (The Future is Faster Than You Think, Diamandis and Kotler, 2020). Adherence to the Priority C timetable of the Recommended Growth Scenario and not pre-maturely approving zoning, allows this innovation in transportation access to come to fruition and avoid retrospectively seeing development as poorly designed in relation to commonplace travel mobility in future years. Poorly designed in the sense akin to how the automobile is incompatible to many centuries old European village layouts. In future years where housing is designed and space is unnecessarily occupied with garages when the population doesn’t need to keep parked cars and there isn’t compatible neighborhood layout to facilitate aerial rideshare (flying car) access.

Aerial ridesharing pilot programs in the most congested cities in America was projected for next year. Poor design compatibility with coming future changes also means commercial areas won't have to entail land occupied and burdened with parking lots.

This is important to urban development considerations. There will be significant urban redevelopment opportunities that will be presented by parking lots and garages that no longer serve the needs of a population dependent upon rideshare transportation access. This will drive prioritization and investment of infill opportunities and reduce the need or push for edge growth.

Not approving this proposal will allow the city to save capital assets to instead be allocated for the coming redevelopment infrastructure expenses associated with transportation technology driven development opportunities. Just consider all of the lots around downtown alone over the past 20 years that have been turned into parking lots and garages. Those are precisely the opportunities to generate revenue with redevelopment enabled by the coming transportation revolution.

Not approving this prematurely timed proposed development and instead focusing on in the interrim, as page 22 of the Recommended Growth Scenario says, "Increased infill would help Lincoln become a more sustainable community due to variety of factors, some of which have already been discussed: less vehicle miles traveled would reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and improve local air quality, existing underutilized buildings or sites could be reused rather than using resources to construct new buildings, environmentally sensitive areas at the city fringe would be under less development pressure, and more infill would typically mean more multi-family housing, which in general has a smaller impact on the environment than detached single family housing." This is well put wording.

Wilderness Park is precisely one such environmentally sensitive area at the city fringe that would be spared development pressure referred to above, by not approving zoning change proposals which are out of conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and its policies, goals, and implementation. The generations that have to live with the consequences of such choices will thank you.

Sincerely,
Robert Klein

Dear Lincoln City Council,

I would like to start by providing some clarification regarding a misunderstanding of flood concerns, expressed by the Planning Commission, and may be relevant to Council members.

The property for the zoning change proposal 21057 might not be in the floodplain but it is right next to it and changes in land use affect floodplain areas. The concrete surfaces and rooftops of urban environments like what's proposed, cause storm water to enter waterways like Salt Creek much sooner than what occurs with agricultural land. The soil absorbs and retains some of the rainwater that falls on it, whereas concrete and conventional, non-green roofs don't. The proposal property is higher in elevation and is steeper than surrounding land so the speed of stormwater flows from it are faster than other properties adjacent to Wilderness Park that are at a similar elevation to the park land. Higher housing development density has more and quicker stormwater runoff than less dense housing interspersed with vegetated areas. Faster rainwater flows into creek channels drive streams toward flood stage more often.

So the concern is stormwater runoff from the proposed development shed into Salt Creek combined with faster storm water flows from other developments that have occurred over the past decades that also feed into Salt Creek (like Beal Slough), in concert with other urban developments underway on lands around Wilderness Park, all increase flood risk.

The Salt Creek stream has deepened more than 20 feet over the past decades, partially due to faster stormwater flows from city growth. The depth of the creek channel means unlike in the past, now it will take much larger stormwater volumes for the stream to spill out of it's banks to be slowed and retained within areas like Wilderness Park. The consequence of this is the stormwater volumes that had previously been slowed within the park, now instead stay in the creek channel and flow downstream to combine with stormwater surges that enter the creek from city areas.

As we saw in 2015, if the places where runoff enters Salt Creek are below the water level in the levee, stormwaters flood those areas because they cannot flow out. So the concern is the increased risks of flooding of areas, businesses, and people downstream. Particularly because as we have learned from the Salt Creek Flood Resiliency study report (page 103): "The study shows that actual flood risks and potential flood damages in Lincoln are greater than depicted in the current regulatory models, maps, and public information. And, as the climate models illustrate, the flood hazards on Salt Creek are expected to increase in the future."

One of the flood risk management options the NRD is advocating is increased organic content of cropland since organic matter retains rainwater. Converting the proposal property to urban landscape loses the opportunity to address both flood risk and climate change (organic matter in the soil sequesters carbon) with a singular option.

It's possible a hydrologic modeling of the proposal property would lead to an assessment of negligible associated risk. But the important message is flood risk is comprehensive, involving all properties, their land uses and land use/zoning changes within the entire Salt Creek watershed. This is highlighted by Policy 21, action step 12 of the Comprehensive Plan. "In response to the findings of the Salt Creek Resiliency Study, assemble key partners and leaders in the City and County to develop comprehensive strategies that reduce flooding risks, improve soil health, sequester carbon, and maintain natural systems within the City and County, to include the Parks Foundation Land Trust initiative."

Comprehensive Plan Policy 55 on watershed planning includes excellent language to this point: "The City of Lincoln Watershed Management program combines previously separate floodplain and stormwater management initiatives. This approach recognizes that floodplains, tributaries, and upland areas are all part of a comprehensive, integrated watershed system. A comprehensive approach to watershed planning is crucial as development expands into new basins around the Lincoln city limits and as redevelopment occurs within the existing urban area. A comprehensive watershed management program needs to incorporate a range of strategies including land use planning, conservation design for new subdivisions, conservation efforts, appropriate standards for floodplains and stormwater, flood warning system development/expansion, stream stabilization, stormwater storage basins, and other structural flood control efforts."

Action step 1 of Policy 55 calls to: "[d]evelop and utilize watershed plans during the review and evaluation of proposed developments and as a guide in the preparation of future capital improvement projects." This clearly applies to both this proposed development and future water and other capital improvement projects as addressed below.

Comprehensive strategies require a comprehensive view of properties. An evaluation of the proposal as it relates to other urban developments that have occurred in the Wilderness Park subarea and with consideration of future recommended zoning/land use changes, will provide a more accurate assessment that isn't likely to be negligible. The importance of a comprehensive evaluation for the property is greater because of the immediate proximity to the 100 year floodplain and to Wilderness Park, and the higher elevation and greater slopes than surrounding areas.

The Salt Creek Flood Resiliency Study warns of the importance of updating comprehensive flood risk assessment in light of the Salt Creek levee system being inadequate in relation to 1% (100 year) annual flood event. Flooding that Lincoln experienced in 2015 wasn't categorized as 1% annual chance flood, and illustrate the reality of exacerbated risk from climate change highlighted by the Resiliency study.

A comprehensive watershed plan involving this property cannot be undertaken when a grading plan for the proposal is waived. This prevents an understanding of how the proposal will interact and affect the floodplain areas and park ecosystems right next to the proposal property. Grading which channels stormwater into specific areas like culverts will have different implications and considerations than scenarios where runoff flows spread out over the landscape across property boundaries. How and what impacts to which park ecosystems cannot be known so it's not possible for environmental impact assessments to be made. Not an acceptable scenario.

The expenses incurred to the property owner/developer could be considerably less than the damages caused to downstream businesses and properties from flood events influenced by proceeding blindly without heed to Policy. There is a greater imperative to not approve the zoning change and allow risk assessment and reduction strategies to be developed. There is time, as I will elaborate.

The 2050 Growth Tiers Map (pg 3 of Recommended Growth Scenario) designates much of the proposal area as Tier I, priority C which is not eyed for development until after 2036. The

property in question is not in any of the areas identified as recommended growth nor is it delineated on page 12 of Recommended Growth Scenario as ideal for residential growth. It's unclear why this property proposal is being prioritized now and out of accord with Plan Forward.

The current Capital Improvement Program includes 7 water distribution main project areas. None, particularly area 7, designate budget allocations for water infrastructure improvements (installation of infrastructure) to the area. Page 5.8 of the Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan states: "The CIP should be utilized to provide a systematic and predictable forum for determining the timing of infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure improvements should continue to be implemented only in areas identified for development in the Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. One of the most important tools in financing is adherence to the physical plan for the community. Following the Plan for development and systematic improvements throughout Lincoln increases efficiency in construction and maximizes the community's investment."

Following the plan is precisely what Comprehensive Plan Policy 3 and 17 address. Action step 2 of the latter states: "Support timely and efficient implementation of the growth tiers framework through the Capitol Improvement Program and other coordinated infrastructure enhancements." Timing for this proposal is out of sequence with the Growth Tiers classification of Plan Forward. The fact that the conversation involves infrastructure installation rather than a capitalizing of existing infrastructure developed under policy driven planning, illustrates the lack of timeliness and efficiency of process as well as discord with numerous Comprehensive Plan policies.

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Not approving this proposal will allow the city to save capital assets to instead be allocated for the coming redevelopment infrastructure expenses associated with transportation technology driven development opportunities. Just consider all of the lots around downtown alone over the past 20 years that have been turned into parking lots and garages. Those are precisely the opportunities to generate revenue with redevelopment enabled by the coming transportation revolution.

Not approving this prematurely timed proposed development and instead focusing on in the interrim, as page 22 of the Recommended Growth Scenario says, "Increased infill would help Lincoln become a more sustainable community due to variety of factors, some of which have already been discussed: less vehicle miles traveled would reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and improve local air quality, existing underutilized buildings or sites could be reused rather than using resources to construct new buildings, environmentally sensitive areas at the city fringe would be under less development pressure, and more infill would typically mean more multi-family housing, which in general has a smaller impact on the environment than detached single family housing." This is well put wording.

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Sincerely,
Robert Klein

From: [Dale Brambila](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: CZ21075 Wilderness Crossing
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 8:31:36 AM



To the Lincoln City Council regarding CZ 21057 and associated proposals,
We the neighbors adjacent to the proposed developments, strongly oppose City Council's potential support.

Short sighted developments in this location on Pioneers Street, would be in sharp disregard from stated goals, objectives and policies of the Mayor and the City Council.

As outlined in the Comp Plan 2050, the Climate Action Plan and the Salt Creek Resiliency Study, multiple provisions refer to prudent, considered, and careful approach required when developing near the sensitive green space resources existing in this riparian corridor. At one location, the proposal would be bordering and effectively blocking the expansion of a rare Dakota Sandstone prairie restoration already underway. At another, backyards would come within less than 270 feet, one football field from the already eroded bank of the Salt Creek. And yet the developers made almost no acknowledgement of their affects on this sensitive area. Common sense asserts that if the development lies uphill from here, that downhill will be affected by rain events, noise and light pollution, not to mention the unspoken realities of unsupervised teenagers with fireworks, minibikes or bb guns or whatever, confident in their abilities to quickly escape to their homes and to safety before being caught. Climate Model recommendations in the above mentioned documents assert the need to widen these green spaces not shrink them.

Of particular concern for us and neighbors all around, is how any development can be considered prior to the DOT deciding how Highway 77 will be designed. And with outdated traffic models to boot, how can we be asked to support something whose design will drastically alter our daily transportation requirements?

The City's plans discuss a need for stakeholders to be part of the planning process before any developments are implemented.

We are stakeholders.

And we demand that the City Council defer any actions affecting this area until such time as the stakeholder committee may be created, with some of us a part of that committee, and until we can have current data regarding traffic patterns and the environmental and flood protections that will be put in place.

Vote no to any decisions that would advance these proposals until prudence can align our City values with actions. Thank you.

Sincerely,
The West Pioneer Neighborhood

From: [Dale Brambila](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: cz21057 Wilderness crossing
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 8:36:05 AM



To the Lincoln City Council regarding CZ 21057 and associated proposals,
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From: [Dan King](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Dan King - City Council 4.18.22 Meeting - Opposition to Resolutions 22R-131, 22-71, 22-72, & 22R-132 - Please see attached
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:49:14 AM
Attachments: [Dan King - Opposition Letter.pdf](#)



Dear Lincoln City Council -

Please find the attached pdf that details my sincere opposition to the following resolutions and the City of Lincoln's planning department's work that led to their conditional approval. I request that this document and comments therein be added to be part of the official Public Hearing record. Thank you.

I oppose the following resolutions being considered:

1. 22R-131 – Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001
2. 22-71 – Annexation 21013
3. 22-72 – Change of Zone 21057
4. 22R-132 – Approving the Annexation and Change of Zone Agreement

The resolutions and related-planning, while possibly well-intentioned, are off target and fail miserably in meeting core environmental and ecological elements of the 2050 Comprehensive Plan (PlanForward). The City of Lincoln must do better, our children and their children's children are depending on us. You don't know what you have until it's gone. Please, let's not go down that path. Lincoln is not Omaha.

I appreciate your time, assistance, and leadership on this important matter.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

All the best,

Dan N. King
402-802-7228

From: [Richard Piersol](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Wilderness Crossing
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:57:42 AM



Re: CZ21057

Dear council members and Mayor Gaylor-Baird:

On second thought, perhaps it's better to give my objections in detail, rather than defer passively to those from the Friends of Wilderness Park. Their conscientious and thoughtful review of this application has certainly informed my objection to this change of zone, annexation and planned unit development.

For example: I read the Planning Department's staff report and I find it odd, if not deliberately disingenuous and evasive, that references to the application's conformity to the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies are confined to housing, neighborhoods, the workforce and economic opportunity. It's as if the proposed development exists in a vacuum in the middle of town instead of next to Wilderness Park. How can a fair judgment of this application and its conformity to the Comprehensive Plan exclude any notice, much less application, of policies addressing Conservation Design, Native Prairie, Ecology and Habitat, Floodplains and Riparian Areas, Green Corridors, Environmental Resource Protection, Open Space and Development and Watershed Planning? The park is just across an unpaved road.

Seriously?

In another issue ignored by the department, and in fairness, perhaps unknown to their staff at the time they judged this application, Kevin Abourezk, a member of the board of the Lincoln Indian Center, has pointed out the proximity of a site in Wilderness Park, known and used for years by Native Americans for spiritual rituals. Some sensitive recognition by the city of Lincoln is in order.

Considering these and other unsettled issues, including the eventual traffic connections with U.S. 77, the aged Wilderness Park Sub Area

Plan, the unfinished floodplain mapping, it seems this application is moving too hastily and without the due diligence the people of this city and county expect.

Finally, I must add my opinion that if the Comprehensive Plan foresees that tract of land as higher-density residential, now, and if the process also allows commercial development, too, in that proximity to Wilderness Park, then we as a community failed in our attention to detail in the last update of the plan.

Please consider putting this project on hold for a more detailed and unbiased review of the issues it raises. Thank you.

--

Richard Piersol

402-525-8751

From: [Tina Walton](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposition to proposed zone change CZ21057
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 12:03:18 PM

Greetings -

As a resident of Lincoln, and someone who grew up here, I vehemently oppose these zoning changes which would enable threats to Wilderness Park, climate shifts and poor management of traffic and population flow.

As we grow into this new decade and century, we need to be carefully considering how projects such as this impact our community, our land and our vulnerable and marginalized populations. That has not been done at this time for this project, so the zoning changes need to not happen. It would be putting the cart before the horse, and introducing a great deal of risk and destruction with unknown consequences.

Thank you,
Tina Walton
721 Lakeside Dr (28)

From: [Denise Jurgens](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 12:53:01 PM

Hi, I'm Denise Jurgens. I'm writing about zoning change CZ21 057. Please stop this change from ag to high density residential. Stop it. I love our wild spaces and wildlife. If you are concerned about growing Lincoln and how to attract people to live here, then vote for keeping the park wild. It's a huge asset to our city and will grow in value as Lincoln grows. Sincerely, Denise Jurgens 6317 Tanglewood Circle 68516

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Thomas Lynch](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 1:26:13 PM



Dear members of the Lincoln city council

James Michael Bowers

Richard Meginnis

Jane Raybould

Tammy Ward

Sandra Washington

Bennie Shobe

Tom Beckius

I am a Lincoln resident who spends much time on the trails in Wilderness Park, often several times a week. I want to add my voice to the many who are expressing opposition to the proposed zone change, CZ21057, that will allow a housing development adjacent to the park. The perimeter of the park needs to be protected, and I urge you to oppose this zoning change.

Sincerely,
Tom Lynch
4119 Sheridan Blvd.
Lincoln, 68506

From: [Sarah Knight](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Proposed Zone Change CZ21057 – Opposition
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 1:34:20 PM



Good afternoon City Council members,

I am writing as a Wilderness Park user to express my opposition to proposed zoning change CZ21057, which would allow development backing up to Wilderness Park.

Wilderness Park is a unique place, a sanctuary where I can ride my bike 25 miles out and back in the trees along the edge of town. It is wild space, it is public space, and I do not believe that people's backyards should run right into it.

Please do not approve this zoning change – at *least* not without more extensive study into how this development would impact the park.

Thank you,

Sarah Knight
2901 A St #101
Lincoln, NE 68510

From: [Chandra Walker](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#); [Tammy J. Ward](#)
Subject: Water Protector Against Zone Change CZ21057
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 1:59:17 PM



Happy Good Friday!

As a Water Protector and a Native American Activist I am against the zone changing from farming to residential. There are many environmental reasons and flooding reasons but also there are strong Native American Cultural beliefs and practices against this proposal. We have two sweat lodges on this proposal site. Vandalism will go up on these sweat lodges as in Omaha city history, our sweat lodges have been vandalized before. With more humans out by these sweat lodges the risk of our spiritual practices being disrupted or destroyed.

2nd this sacred site may possibly be a historical site due to the Dakota Sandstone and the salt creek. I know a Tribal Land Surveyor who can determine if this area once was a ritual site for us Native American. He was contracted by many Tribes surveyor land sites along the KXL pipeline route. I want the City of Lincoln to conduct a Tribal Land Surveyor as well as environmental, flooding and traffic studies.

Please contact me with any questions,

Mechelle Sky Walker

From: [dj200201@aol.com](mailto:djr200201@aol.com)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: against CZ21057
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 2:19:10 PM



I am **opposed** to the planned development adjacent to Wilderness Park. Keep the park as is, the developers can find another location!

Dana Rodriguez
1110 Claremont St.
Lincoln, NE 68508

From: [Ann Bauer](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: City Council Meeting 4/18/2022
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 3:09:52 PM



Dear City Council,

As a lifetime citizen of Lincoln, Nebraska I'm very concerned about the development of Wilderness Crossing. I ask that you delay the vote of the following so that more research can be made.

I oppose the following resolutions being considered:

1. 22R-131 – Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001
2. 22-71 – Annexation 21013
3. 22-72 – Change of Zone 21057
4. 22R-132 – Approving the Annexation and Change of Zone Agreement

Thank you for your time,

Ann King
402-890-5385
Annkingbauer@gmail.com

From: [Tricia King](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park, oppose zone change CZ21057
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 3:22:24 PM



Please see below link and quote from the mayor on keeping wilderness park wild. The mayor cares about wilderness park, it's Lincoln's park for everyone to enjoy.

\$2.1 Million dollar campaign that the city of Lincoln has invested in to make improvements to the park. SEE BELOW FOR THE FULL ARTICLE.

https://journalstar.com/niche/l-magazine/features/parks-advocates-city-of-lincoln-campaign-to-keep-wilderness-wild/article_da6148c9-9ad8-57fb-a3d8-3e15f62f867c.html

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter,

Tricia King



Wilderness Park has been
protecting the city of Lincoln from
flood for years, now it is our turn to
protect Wilderness Park.

—LINCOLN MAYOR LEIRION GAYLOR BAIRD

EDITOR'S PICK ALERT TOP STORY

Parks advocates, city of Lincoln campaign to keep Wilderness wild

BY SUSAN LARSON RODENBURG AND MAGGIE STUCKEY-ROSS

Sep 1, 2021



(From left) Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird; Adam Hintz, Friends of Wilderness Park president; and Bradley Brand bridge located south of the Old Cheney Trailhead at Wilderness Park.

PHOTO BY GWYNETH ROBERTS, Journal Star

BY SUSAN LARSON RODENBURG AND MAGGIE STUCKEY-ROSS

Imagine strolling on what may have been trails forged by Native Americans, experiencing the golden light from a Nebraska sunrise through the treetops of massive bur oaks and cottonwoods bordering the rushing waters of Salt Creek. You

hear the call of a red-tailed hawk, the splashing of beavers, and see the flash of a red fox or a fawn chasing its mother.

This is the beauty of Wilderness Park, Lincoln's largest public park. The seven-mile, linear, 1,472-acre woodland is nestled just west of the Jamaica North Trail along Salt Creek from Van Dorn Street to Saltillo Road. The park features 31 miles of hiking, cycling and horse trails within its naturally wooded landscape. The hiking trail was designated part of the National Recreation Trails Program in 1977.

Lincoln's wildest park does not fit neatly into conventional definitions of parks and wilderness areas, but its uniqueness is what makes it special. For years, Wilderness Park's dense forest, meadows and creek beds have protected Lincoln from serious flooding. Hikers, cyclists, bird watchers, horseback riders and other park visitors find solace and peace among the big bluestem, Dutchman's breeches, trout lilies and a wide variety of flora, fauna, insects, birds and critters.

People are also reading...

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 - 3 Husker AD Alberts talks multimedia rights deal setback, Ireland, new 'N-vest' program and more**
 - 4 Lincoln man sexually assaulted disabled daughter, sheriff says**
-

Lincolnites are fortunate to have such a unique opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a natural area so close to home.

“Wilderness Park has a very interesting history — it was the land of the Otoe-Missouria and the Pawnee,” said Adam Hintz, president of Friends of Wilderness Park. “The trails are actually on top of the same hunting trails the Pawnee used. You

see a lot of remnants of the past here, all part of a lowland forest that has been intact and undisturbed for many years.”

 **City keeps its promise to honor Van Dorn Park donor, 100 years later**

The parks of Lincoln's early days

From the founding of Lincoln (1856) through the mid-20th century, the Wilderness Park area was home to multiple attractions and parks. For many, memories of Epworth Lake Park, Lincoln Park and Electric Park are scrambled. But each location plays a part in the history of this area.

Lincoln Park was a private recreational enterprise established by local businessmen in 1894. Lincoln Park was bound by Van Dorn Street on the north, Calvert Street on the south, First Street on the east, and what would be Southwest Sixth Street on the west. An article in the Nebraska State Journal on Nov. 22, 1895 stated: “(Lincoln Park) is throughout a picturesque landscape of wooded hills, winding streams and grassy meadows that has from time to time been provided with magnificent drives, football and baseball fields, tennis courts, bathing and boating pavilions, swings, etc. Then there is the zoological department ... and last, but not least, a race track.”

By 1915, Lincoln Park had a new owner and billed itself as Lincoln's newest amusement resort, ***Electric Park***. Attractions included operetta, acrobatics, live comedy, motion pictures, concerts, boating, vaudeville and cabarets. Admission was 10 cents per person. In 1916, 450 incandescent lights and 12 arc lights were added at the corner of First and Van Dorn streets, making it truly an “Electric Park.” The attraction was closed by 1927.

In the early 1900s, the portion of the park southeast of First and Calvert streets became known as ***Epworth Lake Park***. This was a popular gathering spot and summer resort for the Methodist Church, featuring an open-air auditorium, campground, hotel, grocery store and Epworth Lake, the site of the park's “Venetian Nights,” in which families could rent ornately decorated rafts and rowboats. Epworth

Lake Park attracted thousands of visitors by train, street cars and trolley. The park also featured animal shows, musical acts, magicians and hosted popular speakers such as Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, Howard Taft, Booker T. Washington and Billy Sunday – reminiscent of those held in Chautauqua, New York.

City Hall: Feeding the city's critters; using TIF to rehab old rentals and the mayor's different take on tax rates

In 1935, 14 inches of rain fell over the course of one week, causing flooding that destroyed most of the buildings in the park. Unsuccessful efforts were made to reopen the park, but American culture had changed with the advent of cars and mass communication. Families no longer needed to physically attend major speeches or concerts because they could now listen to them on the radio. Similarly, automobiles meant that families could quickly drive wherever they pleased for relatively low cost, and they no longer relied on the trains and streetcars that helped to make Epworth Lake Park thrive.

That same year, the Cornhusker Council of Boy Scouts began leasing the former Electric Park land and converted the park into its permanent camp. The council and volunteers built a swimming pool and longhouse while the Lion's Club built a dining hall. The new facility was dubbed Camp Minis-Kuya, which some sources say can be translated from the Sioux as “salt water.” The camp closed in 1966.

In 1972, Camp Minis-Kuya, the former Epworth Lake Park, and other parcels were combined into what we know today as Wilderness Park.

Improvements needed

For many years, the City of Lincoln has acknowledged the need to make improvements to Wilderness Park to ease accessibility and support the primary purpose of the park, which is to provide protection from major floods. In 2020, more than 250 people responded to community surveys conducted by the Lincoln Parks

and Recreation Department regarding the improvements and priorities of Wilderness Park. A committee representing nine user groups worked through suggestions and ideas to update the park's master plan.

“This beautiful refuge in the heart of our city is in need of repairs,” said Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird. “It has suffered its own damage from weather and severe storms. Bridges are in need of upgrading. We need to invest in this beautiful place that gives us such an incredible quality of life. Whether you are a cyclist, a hiker, a runner or a family member who likes to come here seeking refuge and moments of contemplation and peace, away from the hubbub of the city, this park is here, for all of us.”

This summer, Lincoln Parks Foundation is partnering with the City and the Friends of Wilderness Park to lead a \$2.1 million campaign to enhance the public's access, usage, enjoyment and appreciation of Wilderness Park, now and in the future.

'The hardest thing' – Lincoln kayaker spending summer on 2,321-mile Missouri River

“Few cities have an accessible wilderness expanse that provides opportunities for recreation and flood control,” said Bradley Brandt, president of Lincoln Parks Foundation, the nonprofit organization that provides private funds for the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department. “Wilderness Park is also an added attraction for families seeking to live and work in Lincoln, providing year-around activities. Lincoln Parks Foundation is excited to lead this effort.”

The project will fund improvements at seven of the park's trailheads, including kiosks (with maps, trail etiquette, history and descriptions of each area), wayfinding signage, seasonal portable restrooms where possible, additional picnic tables, programmable solar lighting, parking lot grading, parking bollards and concrete pads for ADA parking. Also included are improved or replaced bridges and channel crossings, a new fitness loop, and restoration of the historic Epworth Lake Park arches.

“We want to make sure that people have a comfortable and safe experience in the park, and part of that means having understandable signage, safe bridges, and kiosks at the trailheads that will have information you’ll need to visit the park,” Hintz said. “We want people to discover Wilderness Park and fall in love with this place so they keep coming back. It’s that natural legacy that we are responsible for now so future generations can enjoy it and keep the fabric of the community together.”

“Wilderness Park has been protecting the City of Lincoln from floods for years,” said Gaylor Baird. “Now it’s our turn to protect Wilderness Park.”

For more information about the “It’s Your Wilderness” campaign, contact Lincoln Parks Foundation at 402-441-8258 or see **LincolnParks.org**.

 'Go big or go home' — longtime family autism advocate and young mom work for all-inclusive playground

30 spectacular Nebraska vistas

Platte River perfect

From: [Darrell and Julie Knight](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposition - Zone Change CZ21057
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 1:52:19 PM



Dear City Council members,

We are writing to express our opposition to proposed zone change CZ21057, which would allow development adjacent to Wilderness Park.

We are now retirees who enjoy hiking and riding our bikes through Wilderness Park for fitness and recreation. We enjoy the serenity, the animals, the ability to escape the city. My first job was with Lincoln Parks and Recreation, maintaining Wilderness Park and mowing trails. We love the park and want to see it protected.

The proposed housing development would destroy what makes Wilderness Park special. Please do not approve this zoning change.

Thank you,

Julie Knight
o.b.o. Darrell and Julie Knight
4500 Van Dorn St.
Lincoln, NE 68506

From: [Janice Swanson](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Woods Park
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 3:40:56 PM



Good afternoon,

I am writing to voice my concerns regarding plans for expanding the tennis center at Woods Park.

We have lived on Woods Avenue for over 20 years. We use the walking path, the basketball hoop, the playground, the green fields for a variety of activities. The baseball field already took a large chunk of the public free space away from the everyday citizen. The tennis center would take even more away.

I am asking that you do not take the park away from the average citizen to be used by a very small and elite group who play tennis. There are plenty of areas that can be used for tennis on the outskirts of Lincoln... places that do not pave and destroy an inner city park!

I have kids who have moved back to Lincoln for its recreational green spaces. It really is a commodity that shouldn't be messed with!

Thank you for your time,
Janice Swanson
3353 Woods Ave
Lincoln, NE. 68510

From: [Gene Hanlon](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Public Hearing Comments on Item 6j 22R-131
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 9:02:10 PM



Dear City Council Members:

I am writing to ask you to delay action on item 6j. 22R-131 and ask that this become part of the official record for the public hearing scheduled for Monday, April 18th. I support new housing development in the City and I believe that there will be strong demand for housing near Wilderness Park. However, I also believe it is essential that as policy makers you must make sure that this development does not pose any adverse impacts on Lincoln's environmental gem, Wilderness Park. My rationale for asking for the delay is:

1. The Nebraska Department of Transportation needs time to develop a plan for modifying the interchange at West Pioneers and Hwy 77 due to increased traffic from the development.
2. I understand why the developers desire to save money by not conducting an engineering plan on stormwater run-off with a waiver on developing a grading and drainage plan. However, given the topography of the site, it is important that the city have a full understanding and the best available data on how grading will lead to stormwater run-off, taking into account the impact of increased precipitation and frequency of heavy rain storms in the future.
3. It is important that, as policy makers, you fully understand the impact residential and commercial development might have on the environmental integrity of Wilderness Park as well as to the users of the park. For example, will the development cause: noise or light pollution in the park; impact birds and other wildlife, create pesticide drift and other environmental considerations?
4. Although the Planning Department and City have done a good job of protecting Wilderness Park, at times development seems to override environmental issues. As an example:

In conversations with Parks and Recreation staff with knowledge on Wilderness Park history I learned that the 1999 Wilderness Park Subarea Plan identified 725 acres near Wilderness Park that were a priority for preservation and protection. Of those acres, 460 have been successfully protected through city ownership, designation as a permanent easement or floodplain regulations. However, approximately 200 acres were allowed to be developed by City officials. There are 50 acres that still could be protected. The remaining 15 acres are in right of way areas.

I am confident that residential and commercial development will occur on this property,

however I ask that as Council members you delay action and allow time to analyze how this development affects the environmental integrity of the Park. I believe such an analysis could be done relatively quickly and not significantly delay the developers timeline.

I also want to take this opportunity to encourage you to allocate funds in the FY22-23 budget to update the 1999 Wilderness Park Subarea Plan by developing a Master Plan for Wilderness Park Environs that would not only consider Wilderness Park but all the adjacent properties to it. Such an effort will update the Comprehensive Plan and help guide future development near Wilderness Park.

Respectfully,

Gene Hanlon
2710 Ryons St
Lincoln, Ne 68502

From: [Luke Schnell](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Proposed zone change CZ21057 Wilderness Park Area
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:22:56 PM



Hello,

I am a citizen of Lincoln Nebraska and recently learned of the proposed plan to change the zoning of the area near wilderness park into residential zoning. I am writing to express my concern with this plan and to ask the city council to decide against this plan.

Wilderness park and its surrounding areas are incredibly valuable to this community. They provide a much needed space for the public to interact with nature and also serve as a refuge for lots of native wildlife. The environmental impact of the proposed development if the zoning near wilderness park is changed could be incredibly detrimental to the park and its inhabitants. Not to mention, increased traffic around the area from this new development would disturb both wildlife and park goers and create a potential risk to both of the above mentioned groups.

I sincerely hope the city council will consider all this when they make a decision regarding this proposition and will put the environmental wellbeing of the area and the mental and physical wellbeing of those who rely on the park, above the desires of residential developers.

Thank you

From: [Spencer Munson](#)
To: [James M. Bowers](#); [Bennie R. Shobe](#); [Sandra J. Washington](#); [Tammy J. Ward](#); [Jane Raybould](#); [Tom J. Beckius](#); [Richard W. Meginnis](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Zone Change Opposition - Preserve Ecological and Spiritual Integrity of area around Wilderness Park
Date: Saturday, April 16, 2022 8:30:09 AM



Dear Council Members,

I hope you're all doing well!

I'm reaching out to sincerely ask you to OPPOSE the proposed zone change #CZ21057 for the property west of Wilderness Park southeast of 1st & Pioneers.

This area has ecological and spiritual significance and those things MUST be taken into consideration before the zone change is approved. Not to mention there are numerous other places within the city limits that could be developed. Instead of devastating our parks I believe time and money could be better spent on West O, the south haymarket, and/or North 56th st.

The Friends of Wilderness Park have done extensive work to research all of the possible ramifications of residential & commercial development in this area and they've concluded that there are too many components that need further investigation to move forward with development at the present moment. It is irresponsible urban development to green light the zone change at this stage. Please read more about their research and concerns here: <https://www.friendsofwildernesspark.org/learn/blog.html/article/2022/04/10/wilderness-park-needs-your-voice>

Friends of Wilderness Park are already in conversation with the developers and have offered to support funding for the needed report.

Essentially, there are unique environmental traits of that area, and as leaders of this city, we need you to advocate on behalf of the land and it's integrity. The path towards responsible, ethical urban development is possible, but it involves community collaboration. Please support this path by opposing the zone change outright.

Additionally, and something that I implore you to consider deeply, is that this zone contains an active Lakota ceremonial site. This area is the spiritual home for many of Lincoln's Indigenous People and allies, including many people who are Lakota, Dakota, Umonhon, and Ponca--this land's original, Indigenous stewards. The current zoning of the area allows for the Urban Indian population and allies to have a site to pray together, to be in deep relationship with Mother Earth, and for the privacy needed to facilitate their ceremonies. The Inipi ceremonies that happen in this area occur multiple times a week. And these opportunities to be in ceremony are extremely rare and hard to come by outside of this particular site. They are also absolutely vital to the mental, physical, and spiritual well being of folks who pray in this way.

The city of Lincoln is on Indigenous Land. We have a responsibility to acknowledge the long-standing history and on-going reality of harm done to Indigenous Peoples. Lincoln citizens and especially its city leaders must honor our responsibility to heal the wounds of past generations that live on in today's Native Peoples. One significant way to do that, is to respect the Spiritual rights and needs of Lincoln's Native community. **Please, be in solidarity with**

Lincoln's Native Peoples and oppose this zone change.

I have had the honor and privilege to get to know several of you on a personal level. And I know that you have good, caring hearts. I know that you care about the well-being of the Native community. Please, vote with your minds and hearts aligned. Resist the urge to develop the city at all costs. Some costs are far too high.

Thank you for reading this letter. Please vote to oppose the zone change #CZ21057 for the property west of Wilderness Park southeast of 1st & Pioneers. .

Sincerely,
Spencer Munson
1628 E St.
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-429-2642

--

Spencer Munson
Assistant Director of Student Engagement - [Doane University](#)
[Lincoln Calling](#)
[Spindle Records](#)
#LNK
402-429-2642

From: [Michael Farrell](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Council Packet](#); sr.kathryn-maney@lincolndiocese.org
Cc: dbundy@journalstar.com
Subject: Pioneers and S. 1st Zoning Change
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 2:58:18 PM



The City Council is being asked to rule on the proposed housing development of a parcel of land bordering Wilderness Park and to the southwest of Pioneers Blvd and South First Streets. In order for the development to proceed the land has to be rezoned from ag to residential and commercial with up to 575 residential units to be constructed. Aside from the arguments about rainwater runoff and flooding, urban sprawl, and wildlife habitat there has risen another point of contention.

Nearby are places that many of Lincoln's Native people have been using for several decades as sites for spiritual and cultural practices and renewal. I know that the late Lakota spiritual leader Leonard Crow Dog conducted Inipi ceremonies nearby in the 1970s. And many respected community Native leaders have expressed concern about how the proposed development will impact these places.

At issue here, once again, is the conflict between two world views: one that sees land as an inanimate commodity and another that sees land as a living thing worthy of its own selfhood.

However there is an elegant solution which stands outside the question before the City Council.

The parcel of land in question is owned by the Catholic Diocese of Lincoln. The Diocese bought the land in 2000 for \$800,000. It is currently valued as agricultural land by the county assessor at \$290,300 and the property tax paid this year was \$4603. No doubt if the land is transformed into that many housing parcels its value increases both in term of the initial sale by the Diocese to the developer but also in terms of its potential to generate tax revenue for the city and county. So, there are no disinterested parties in this dispute.

Recently Walter Echo Hawk, a legal expert and member of the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma spoke at the E.N. Thompson forum with a talk entitled: "Reckoning and Reconciliation on the Great Plains: Healing Historical Harm Caused by Conquest and Colonialism." In it he asked that we here in Lincoln and Nebraska consider what could be done to begin a healing process with the Native peoples who are still here among us but who have suffered greatly by our common history.

One way that healing could begin is if the Catholic Diocese of Lincoln would recognize the entreaties of Lincoln's Native community about this parcel of land. The Diocese could set an important example of "charity" by setting this land aside for the express purpose of encouraging its continued use as a place of spiritual importance to the Native community and others of like minds.

There are a few ways this could be done: the land could be deeded to the Lincoln Indian Center; it could be given to the city as an expansion of Wilderness Park; the Church could retain it but place it in a conservation easement precluding future development, etc.

That would take the issue off the table for the City Council, the proposed developer and all the others involved in this dispute. And it would be a good thing too in the long run for the City and Wilderness Park.

Michael Farrell

mfarrell.1st@gmail.com

<https://michaelfarrell.com/>

<https://linktr.ee/mfarrell47>

APRIL 10, 2022

Wilderness Park Needs Your Voice

by Friends of Wilderness Park Board



Wilderness Park Needs Your Voice

Dearest Supporter of Wilderness Park,

Friends of Wilderness Park is reaching out to all our supporters to ask them to consider sending a message to the Lincoln City Council and Mayor opposing the change of zone for the property west of Wilderness Park southeast of 1st and Pioneers.

The planning department's staff report can be found at the link below.

<https://app.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/boards/pc/staffreports/2022/033022/AN21013%20CZ21057%20staff%20report.pdf>

The planning commission's hearing on the zone change can be seen on YouTube at the link below. Staff Comments are from 0:10:00 to 1:03:31 and 2:59:07 to 3:43:43.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5UMBaa-xhg>

This land will share a property line with a rare sandstone prairie not found anywhere else in Wilderness Park or Lincoln's park system and the proposed zone change would threaten the health of the flora in this area.

After a brief call from the developer last October, Friends of Wilderness Park has been in direct contact with the developer and planning department since early March expressing our concerns with the development's proximity to the sandstone prairie, stormwater management, light pollution, and grading.

Unfortunately, most of these concerns with protecting the community downstream and ensuring the ecological health of Wilderness Park were not given enough heed in the staff reports of the planning commission, the developers Planned Unit Development (PUD), or the amended motion approved by the planning commission.

The fact that two planning commissioners voted against the zone change with sizable public opposition shows why now is the time to ask City Council to delay their vote on zone change #CZ21057 until more research can be done on how to wisely develop the city while respecting the irreplaceable asset which is the Salt Valley Greenway. A strong Wilderness

Park Environs Study would achieve this goal. Friends of Wilderness Park is prepared to help with funds to complete this study.

Other reasons to delay the vote until more data can be collected is as follows.

The future of the Highway 77 and Pioneers Boulevard intersection has not been decided by the Nebraska Department of Transportation. This will heavily impact traffic and development in the area especially since Old Cheney to the south will be closed. A sufficient traffic study with the possible impacts of this intersection's future has not been made.

The comprehensive plan's policies of Conservation Design, Native Prairie, Ecology and Habitat, Floodplains and Riparian Areas, Green Corridors, Environmental Resource Protection, Open Space and Development, and Watershed Planning are not addressed in the planning department's staff report or sufficiently addressed during the planning commission's hearing. These policies must be addressed sufficiently before a vote is made and a Wilderness Park Environs Study would provide the data needed to move forward. The action steps for these policies from the comprehensive plan can be found at the bottom of this document.

The PUD does not provide any information regarding grading, drainage, and stormwater detention. In fact, these requirements are shockingly waived in the zone change proposal. Being so close to Salt Creek and the floodplain, the public must be able to view these plans

in a transparent manner. Those who live downstream are at risk when a 100-500 year flood occurs and these residents must be able to give input to mitigate property damage.

This zone change request appears to have been created through a business-as-usual process. The fact that the goals mainly mentioned in the staff reports sight goals that would be attractive for development far away from the Salt Valley Greenway but give no heed to the sensitivity needed when building near a floodplain or biologically diverse area does lead us to believe this zone change request was written without due diligence or a full understanding of the surrounding area.

The Wilderness Park Sub Area Plan is a 22+ year old plan and much has changed in those 22 years. We now understand the necessity to plan with extreme discretion in a floodplain and to mitigate climate change.

One item that needs to be clarified is if trails funded by the National Parks Service need to be refunded if a development damages the trails. Wilderness Park's trail system is a part of the National Trails System.

The City of Lincoln Transportation and Utilities Department is working with FEMA for approval of their mapping schedule through FEMA's Cooperating Technical Partnership

program. The schedule laid out begins in the 4th quarter of 2022.

Below are city documents supporting a Wilderness Park Environs Study.

The Salt Creek Resiliency Study cites:

1. The existing conditions hydrologic models do not use up-to-date precipitation frequency estimates.
2. The existing conditions flood hazard data on Salt Creek underestimates the updated conditions flood hazards.
3. In the “business-as-usual” global greenhouse gas emissions scenario, precipitation events causing flooding are forecasted to increase by nearly 10 percent by the year 2100 in the Salt Creek watershed.
4. In the “business-as-usual” global greenhouse gas emissions scenario, flood hazards will increase significantly in magnitude in the Salt Creek watershed by the year 2100, compared to existing conditions flood hazards.
5. There is a high degree of uncertainty in future conditions flood hazard analysis. When planning for future resiliency, it is critical to account for this uncertainty.

The City of Lincoln Climate Action Plan has many initiatives which cite improving protections for and with Lincoln residents, maximizing natural climate solutions and engaging residents in co-creating a climate smart future.

Initiatives include:

1. Continue to encourage installation of green infrastructure strategies where appropriate, to include grants and incentives. Examples of green infrastructure strategies include rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavement to reduce stormwater runoff. Expand guidance/resources, incentives, and implementation.
2. Continue working with Lower Platte South Natural Resources District to identify and implement flood risk mitigation strategies.
3. Review and assess increasing minimum stream corridor requirements along creeks and rivers providing additional flood damage prevention, preserving riparian/other critical habitat, and contributing to improved water quality
4. Develop updated modeling of stormwater runoff based on updated precipitation data (NOAA Atlas 14) and engage in a public discussion of proper management on the basis of updated models.
5. Invite impacted stakeholders to serve on a Drainage Criteria/Salt Creek Resiliency working group to review and assess the recommendations prior to implementation.
6. Conduct a benefit/cost analysis of implementing structural measures to address stormwater runoff modeled upon updated precipitation data (NOAA Atlas 14).
7. As floodplain maps are updated, identify specific vulnerabilities related to Salt Creek levees and include prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery strategies in the Lancaster County Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP), the county's Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Lower Platte South's Hazard Mitigation Plan.
8. Continue and enhance current outreach and education efforts with landowners and business owners located in the revised floodplain about their flood risk. Develop a

comprehensive outreach and education strategy with residents in the revised floodplain about their flood risk.

9. Re-charter the Mayor's Environmental Task Force to align with the Climate Action Plan Vision.

10. Continue to support prairie restoration and protection of natural resources.

11. Continue to support the Lincoln Parks Foundation and Parks and Recreation Department Land Trust initiative, working in partnership with landowners to preserve native prairie, wetland areas, and other natural resources.

12. In response to the findings of the Salt Creek Resiliency Study, assemble key partners and leaders in the City and County to develop comprehensive strategies that reduce flooding risks, improve soil health, sequester carbon, and maintain natural systems within the City and County, to include the Parks Foundation Land Trust initiative.

Action steps from the comprehensive plan relating to Wilderness Park and Salt Creek Watershed:

Conservation Design

1. Encourage conservation design principles as part of the development process.

Developments that

incorporate conservation design principles should be eligible for greater densities, height, lot, and

area adjustments. Examples of conservation design best practices include:

a. Development setbacks beyond the minimum floodplain corridor in order to help preserve riparian habitat.

b. Land area within new developments that is designated specifically for trees and/or prairie.

c. Sustainable landscape design that includes native and drought-tolerant plantings, limited use of turf grass, rain gardens, bioswales, infiltration beds, and constructed wetlands.

d. Cluster subdivision design that protects flood-prone areas by grouping new development in

less-sensitive areas within a subdivision while maintaining a high overall building density.

e. Dedication of a portion or all of a building's roof space as a green roof.

f. Minimizing disturbance of the natural topography on a development site.

2. Incorporate conservation design principles into public projects and development projects utilizing public funds (such as TIF) as appropriate.

3. Incorporate conservation design into new subdivisions with the initial steps of completing an inventory of existing and future land uses, natural resource evaluation, and a build out map. Utilize goals of the Lincoln Climate Plan as a guide for developing conservation design recommendations.

4. Promote development of conservation design standards of new subdivisions that maximize open space conservation and interconnected network of such open spaces while being sensitive to overall building density.

5. Develop project approaches which view stormwater as an asset, by working with the natural topography and using wetlands, floodplains, and natural drainage corridors as natural ways to manage flood flows and stormwater runoff.

Native Prairie

1. Develop planning guidelines, management techniques and supporting policies for preserving native prairies and grassland. Include carbon sequestration measurements in all cost-benefit and environmental impact studies.
2. Coordinate prescribed burn plans among public agencies and review impacts on new urban areas when evaluating development proposals.
3. Identify opportunities to work with property owners, both public and private, to acquire land or conservation easements that can serve as buffer areas around prairies and other natural areas for management and resource protection as well as support use of federal, state, or local conservation programs.
4. Investigate means for encouraging native prairie restoration by private and public entities.
5. Utilize the University of Nebraska Center for Grassland Studies in assessing alternatives for grassland preservation and restoration. For signature landscapes, utilize the Greenpoint Challenge of 2001 and the UNL Nine Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan of 2020 as guiding documents. Resurvey and update the County's prairie and grassland inventory for inclusion in the Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems (NRGIS).
6. Resurvey and update the County's prairie and grassland inventory for inclusion in the Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems (NRGIS).
7. Include prairie owners and managers in review of any Growth Tier Changes that may directly impact a designated prairie.

8. Expand native prairie plantings through strategies such as requiring the addition of native prairie plantings to detention ponds and runoff areas, as well as residential or commercial development. Continue to support or expand the Prairie in the Parks program.
9. Continue to support the Lincoln Parks Foundation and Parks and Recreation Department Land Trust initiative, working in partnership with landowners to preserve native prairie, wetland areas, and other natural resources.
10. Create a Carbon Sequestration Plan. This plan would involve an analysis of Lincoln's tree canopy, parks and greenways, open lands, composting activity, open water areas, impervious surfaces, grasslands, and native prairie.
11. Work with homeowner associations, partner organizations, and agencies to increase use of native plants and prairie in landscaping.
12. Educate citizens, increasing their appreciation for the aesthetics of native plantings and raising awareness of the benefits of increasing such plantings that would foster pollinator habitat, sensible water use, flood control, and carbon sequestration.
13. Lincoln is committed to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, which is a program through the National Wildlife Federation. As such, Lincoln is committed to the preservation of precious ecosystems and native habitats that protect the monarch butterfly and other pollinators

Ecology and Habitat

1. Research continues into the conservation of Nebraska's eastern saline wetlands, which will enhance Salt Creek tiger beetle habitat. This will continue to include authorizing or soliciting funding for hydrology or hydrogeology research of the habitat area, determining basin-wide impacts of land use and human activities on the wetlands, characterizing the

tiger beetle's biology and habitat, and assessing the economic impacts of potential management efforts.

2. Continue cooperation between public and private entities to protect habitat for threatened and endangered species. Current efforts include those of the Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Nature Conservancy, Nebraska Audubon, and others.
3. Landowners with saline wetlands and within the 500-foot buffer zones should be offered assistance concerning programs to preserve and protect wetlands and transition lands occurring on private property.
4. Continue to investigate incentives allowing land owners to pursue voluntary purchases, conservation easements, transfer of development right (TDR) or other similar preservation options.
5. Continue to explore grant opportunities for saline wetland preservation and enhancement.
6. Continue the public education effort to raise awareness of the Salt Creek tiger beetle and its unique habitat.
7. Review and revise regulations as appropriate for requiring buffer areas around critical natural areas.
8. Continue support of native plantings, creation of community gardens, expansion of pollinator habitat by the Parks and Recreation Department.
9. Create a Carbon Sequestration Plan. This plan would involve an analysis of Lincoln's tree canopy, parks and greenways, open lands, composting activity, open water areas, impervious surfaces, grasslands, and native prairie.

Floodplains and Riparian Areas

1. Designate areas for future urban development outside of the floodplain and floodway to reduce flood risks and to preserve or create floodplain areas.
2. Develop and utilize watershed plans during the review and evaluation of proposed developments and as a guide in the preparation of future capital improvement projects.
3. Utilize stormwater as an asset, by directing it through natural waterways, wetlands, and drainage corridors to minimize flood damage and prevent Non-Point Source Pollution (NPS) from occurring when storm waters flow through impervious surfaces in urban areas and cultivated and grazing land in rural areas.
4. Implement a Rain to Recreation watershed approach that reduces storm water damage, aids in maintaining water quality and provides additional natural areas that can be used by the public for recreation and educational purposes.
5. Continue to expand and enhance the following stormwater run-off mitigation measures including:
 - a. Vegetative buffers along stream corridors.
 - b. Preservation of natural areas, actively preserving the natural functions of floodplains.
 - c. Developing and implementing a floodplain buyout program while minimizing impacts on existing neighborhoods, citizen needs, and historic districts.
 - d. Making comprehensive, watershed-based approaches to floodplain management a high priority with accurate mapping and public involvement.
 - e. Retain City or County property in the floodplain in public ownership whenever possible,

including conservation easements to protect floodplain functions.

6. Continue to implement education efforts to promote environmental stewardship and to notify floodplain property owners and prospective buyers of flood risks.

7. Consider maintaining no net fill conditions for properties in the floodplain being developed or redeveloped. Maintain no net fill conditions for those properties seeking Special Permits through Planning, Tax Increment Financing, or on former City property.

8. Engage in a public engagement process to review and assess implementation of recommendations of the Salt Creek Resiliency Study, per the City of Lincoln Climate Action Plan.

9. Maintain the Community Rating System (CRS) rating that allows for a 25% reduction in flood insurance premiums for property owners in floodplains.

10. Prepare for federal adoption and make publicly available an updated floodplain map for Lincoln that reflects increased precipitation and streamflow projections based on precipitation data from NOAA Atlas 14 data.

11. Continue and enhance current outreach and education efforts with landowners and business owners located in the revised floodplain about their flood risk. Develop a comprehensive outreach and education strategy with residents in the revised floodplain about their flood risk.

12. In response to the findings of the Salt Creek Resiliency Study, assemble key partners and leaders in the City and County to develop comprehensive strategies that reduce flooding risks, improve soil health, sequester carbon, and maintain natural systems within the City and County, to include the Parks Foundation Land Trust initiative.

Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Green Corridors Concept Implementation

1. Develop a strategic plan for acquiring and conserving lands within the Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Corridors through cooperative efforts of public agencies, private organizations, and individuals.
2. Encourage the development of a public-private partnership that will concentrate efforts on further planning, funding, land acquisition, and development of the Salt Valley Greenway and its connecting corridors. This should be viewed as a local natural resource as well as a major economic development program.
3. Identify and pursue funding sources for the acquisition of significant properties forming the Greenway.
4. Continue to use conservation easements to protect greenway areas where it may be desirable to allow compatible land uses such as row crop farming or pasturing.
5. Use of fee simple title may be more appropriate for areas that are best maintained in a natural state due to particularly sensitive features such as rare or sensitive areas, or that have value for resource-based recreation like hiking, interpretive activities, and wildlife viewing. Develop criteria and priorities to determine land areas that are most appropriately acquired and managed by a public agency.
6. The City should work with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (NRD) to provide recreation facilities around the Salt Valley Lakes and other natural resource sites.
7. Provide trail access over time to the Salt Valley Lakes and other natural resources via connections to the Salt Valley Greenway and associated tributary stream corridors.

8. Prepare and distribute information to community residents regarding the functions and value of the Salt Valley Greenway, and of the plans for its creation.

9. Utilize greenway linkages for commuter/ recreation trails.

10. Apply implementation tools specific to each of the Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Corridor segments:

a. Continue to develop the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch to connect Pioneers Park Nature Center with Conestoga Lake and then continue south through the Village of Denton and on to Corridors Concept Implementation Use the Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting

Corridors concept to embody the PlanForward Vision and environmental resource principles. Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. This project includes preservation and restoration of over 7,000 acres of tallgrass prairie, wetlands, and wooded riparian corridor wound through by an extension of the City's trail network. Use the Salt Valley Greenway and Prairie Corridor Master Plan and partners to identify unique areas of the County and promote private lands stewardship on land in or adjacent to Prairie Corridor.

b. Seek the early acquisition (or the application of other management techniques) of land along Stevens Creek and within the Stevens Creek Basin for future greenways, open space and park uses. Examine possible park and open space potential around Walton where the MoPac and future Stevens Creek Trails will connect. Use the Stevens Creek Watershed Master Plan as a guide for identification of areas of opportunity. Use the UNL Nine Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan as a guide for open space, education, research, carbon sequestration, and trail opportunities.

c. Continue development of the "Crescent Green" concept to provide a continuous

greenway and open space corridor around the west and northern part of Lincoln.

d. Explore alternatives for creating a greenway corridor along the South and East Beltways.

The corridor could range from park-like areas like those along Highway 2, to more riparian settings as are found in Wilderness Park. Planning for these corridors should be coordinated with planning for the trail network.

e. Continue the advancement of the greenway corridor along Interstate 80, between North 27th Street and the City of Waverly. This corridor already includes a number of wetland areas (both saline and fresh water) that are under public ownership – City of Lincoln and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District in particular. The corridor contains the Warner Wetlands and the City’s wetlands mitigation bank. The area is a major entryway into the City of Lincoln and provides associated trail and open space opportunities.

f. Extend the protected greenspace along Salt Creek extending south of Saltillo Road to the South Beltway, in conjunction with enhanced floodplain mapping for this area. This extension may be accomplished through a combination of land purchases, conservation easements, donations, and other options. Work with other incorporated communities within the county — notably Roca and Hickman – to coordinate the Greenway’s extension.

g. Continue the efforts along the Rock Creek and Little Salt Creek stream corridors to conserve and enhance Nebraska's most limited and endangered wetland type, which provides habitat for a variety of native plant and animal species, including two endangered species. Link these important natural resource corridors to the Salt Valley Greenway via future county trails.

11. Lincoln is committed to the Mayors’ Monarch Pledge, which is a program through the

National Wildlife Federation. As such, Lincoln is committed to the preservation of precious ecosystems and native habitats that protect the monarch butterfly and other pollinators.

Respectfully,

The Friends of Wilderness Park Board

[Return To List](#)

To sign up to receive our emails, fill in the following fields and hit submit. Thanks, and welcome!



Friends of Wilderness Park

Po Box 81171
Lincoln, NE 68501
*Phone*402-413-9765
Contact

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From: [Janelle Stevenson](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park - proposed zone change CZ21057
Date: Saturday, April 16, 2022 11:05:14 AM



Lincoln City Council,

I am emailing about the proposed zone change to Wilderness Park, CZ21057. If I understand this correctly it would change the zone from agricultural to a residential area. I **oppose** this change to our largest natural park in Lincoln.

It's easy to plow down and flatten nature to the ground, but it is not easy to add nature back. I know we need housing (affordable housing!) but why do we need to take over parts of the largest natural park in Lincoln? Did you know that a land area that has polyculture biologically diverse plant vegetation on it can sequester more carbon from the atmosphere to store in the ground than a monoculture grass lawn with a house on top of it?

Please, do not allow this zone change to happen. Preserve our natural parks.

--

Janelle M. Stevenson
545 C Street

From: [Natalie Dermann](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: I oppose cz21057
Date: Saturday, April 16, 2022 11:25:00 AM



Dear City council and Mayor Lerion,

I used to want to move away from Lincoln like my life depended on it. And I have...but I always come back. Not until this year have I actually grown to love Lincoln and the landscape. And it's all because of my job and my boss. Now, I promote Lincoln and Nebraska as a whole. I tell everyone how amazing it is, and brag about our praries and native plants and animals.

I work for parks and rec as a seasonal for the the Greenways division on 1st and pioneers. Everyday I drive down pioneers listening to my music and drinking my coffee.....I take a right after I see wilderness start to appear...and drive up the hill to our shop. I watch the sun rise over the trees, and to my right there's a giant chunk of Dakota sandstone that has been sitting there for centuries. Ever since I began working for parks and rec a year ago...the property across sandstone prairie had been deemed and I've heard called 'special and ecologically important'. My boss has had many people who have studied history or geology or ecology come visit sandstone prairie and say that it is unique and special. I understand that isn't where the development is happening...but it is near and would affect it. And if sandstone is precious...then the hill across the road must be too right? Since I've began this job, it is known among us that the property is to be protected and taken care of. Until we heard of this development happening...

I guess I'm a little confused how the city that I work for, and the city that supports a greener way of living has decided that building a large development butting up to a seriously unique ecosystem is an okay thing. I could understand a couple houses....but dense housing that is directly next to the park? I understand the level of people your dealing with on both sides. And I understand that building will occur regardless. I am confused how 'parks and rec is on board with this development' but I am not. My co workers are not. I am speaking out and writing to you now:

Please I urge you...please delay the development. And reconsider moving the housing further west....at least a little further from wilderness, our work shop and a friend's house that sits next to our shop.

A little about me...I have personally struggled through my life and in the last year have regained many many things in my that have been pivitol for me and my journey in healing. Working for parks and rec is the biggest one of them. My boss is the best boss I've ever had. He is so knowledgeable about every possible thing ecological and creates a positive and supportive work environment for all of us. The work environment is the best I've ever had. Working for the city is a privilege and I am immensely grateful. That being said....I am so so sad to learn that city council may vote for the area to be completely changed. I love wilderness park. It has helped so many people. The people I have met through parks and rec have changed my life and they also deeply care about this development being built.

Please consider the animals that live there. deer, opossums, raccoons, bobcats, the herons and moles...groundhogs and rabbits etc. I understand these are all things you visit for a couple

hours and then go to your home in the city. But wilderness and it's history And animals stay.

Please understand that to you this is just a deal...but to the park and the people of Lincoln...we count on you to make the right choices and to many people this is about the principal of your care. I am immensely grateful for the city and my job, all of the opportunities and everything I've learned. Please consider and thank you for reading my letter!! I appreciate you all.

Thank you for your time...

Best,

Natalie Dermann

From: [D. Nowak](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposition to CZ21057 Wilderness Crossing PUD
Date: Saturday, April 16, 2022 2:44:57 PM
Attachments: [Oppose - CZ21057 Wilderness Crossing.pdf](#)



Please submit my attached comments to the city council member for their review.

Thanks,
Delan Lonowski

Delan Lonowski
4700 S. 1st St.
Lincoln, Ne 68512

April 15, 2022

Dear Council members,

I'm writing to express my opposition to the Wilderness Crossing PUD and rezoning action CZ21057. The city planners and the developers have not taken into account many of the Plan Forward policies and I would ask that the vote be delayed until further steps be taken to implement fully the Comprehensive Plan. It is imperative in this instance, as there is so much at stake. I implore all parties in these decisions to have a much broader understanding of this place and its unique and sensitive nature.

To put aside the lack of communication with the local residents, including native tribes, a greater injustice will be done to the residents of Wilderness Park if these plans move forward as documented. The 4 legged, six legged and winged relatives that call the park and the land in question HOME deserve a voice. This is not just 'not in my back yard' I understand that we need housing but here, no.

To this end, the 1st and Pioneers ag land, if not in its entirety, at least a good portion of the eastern side need to remain a buffer zone and green space; an agricultural zone that allows for the goals and actions outlined in Plan Forward 2050 to be put in practice. Just across highway 77 you already have hundreds of acres slated for High Density Residential. Leave 1st and Pioneers agricultural! I will point to Policy 18 *Conservation Design* as well as policies 19,22,23,24,25 in Plan Forward. Several action steps in these policies are very pertinent to this situation.

Further studies need to be initiated such as a new Wilderness Park environs study, including updates to the Wilderness Park master plan and recommendations from FEMA is needed to understand the effects on this important ecological area that may be sensitive to dense residential abutment that may contribute to flooding. The waiver that allows the project to move forward without a grading plan, drainage and stormwater detention is an egregious action that is *rubberstamping* based on outdated flood information. We need to wait until new data is in hand. Review of flooding issues as well as a new transportation study that takes into account the proposed interchange at highway 77 and Pioneers is also a major component. Planners anticipate that there will be a '13,000 vehicle trip count' upon completion of this development, citing a similarity with current Old Cheney flow. If you have driven on Old Cheney most times of the day it is a nightmare. Pioneers will be a bottleneck too. These studies are paramount to a property that adjoins a flood prone area and an area that abuts two current native prairie restorations along the park's west edge.

The developers have situated a row of houses at most 50 feet from these restorations on the east edge. This is a lack of respect and is exactly what I'm talking about – complete disregard for the surroundings! Though I realize this is private property, the deer, turkeys, fox, coyotes, owls, hawks, frogs and many songbirds don't know that. This is where they forage daily. Take for example the wild turkey group that roost in the oak trees along Salt Creek at night in Wilderness Park. In the morning they leave these roosts and travel west across first street and up on the hill where they search for food and perform mating rituals. I would argue that this entire hillside on the east (Snell Hill, orange on attached map) be preserved; a.) to maintain the natural watershed and b.) to preserve a beautiful 360° vista that includes the capitol to the North and Wilderness Park to the East and South. It really is a gem, something else that is outlined in the Plan Forward initiatives.

The agricultural buffer zone would allow the city to be in alignment with goals outlined in the Salt Creek Resiliency Study by retaining and sequestering carbon. Why can't the developer of this land (and other developers) be required to adhere to these goals? With the amounts of roofs and concrete proposed, I see no way all that run off will not adversely affect the watershed and the ecology of the area. I assume all these residences will have manicured lawns and that means chemicals as well. This is a sensitive area! We need to require stronger water retention and native planting areas. Beyond this there will be severe problems with light pollution that will affect the lives of our nocturnal friends as well as noise, traffic and *fireworks*! The developer's solutions to these problems, such as a privacy fence and a 10' buffer, is laughable. All this is too close to the park and the creek.

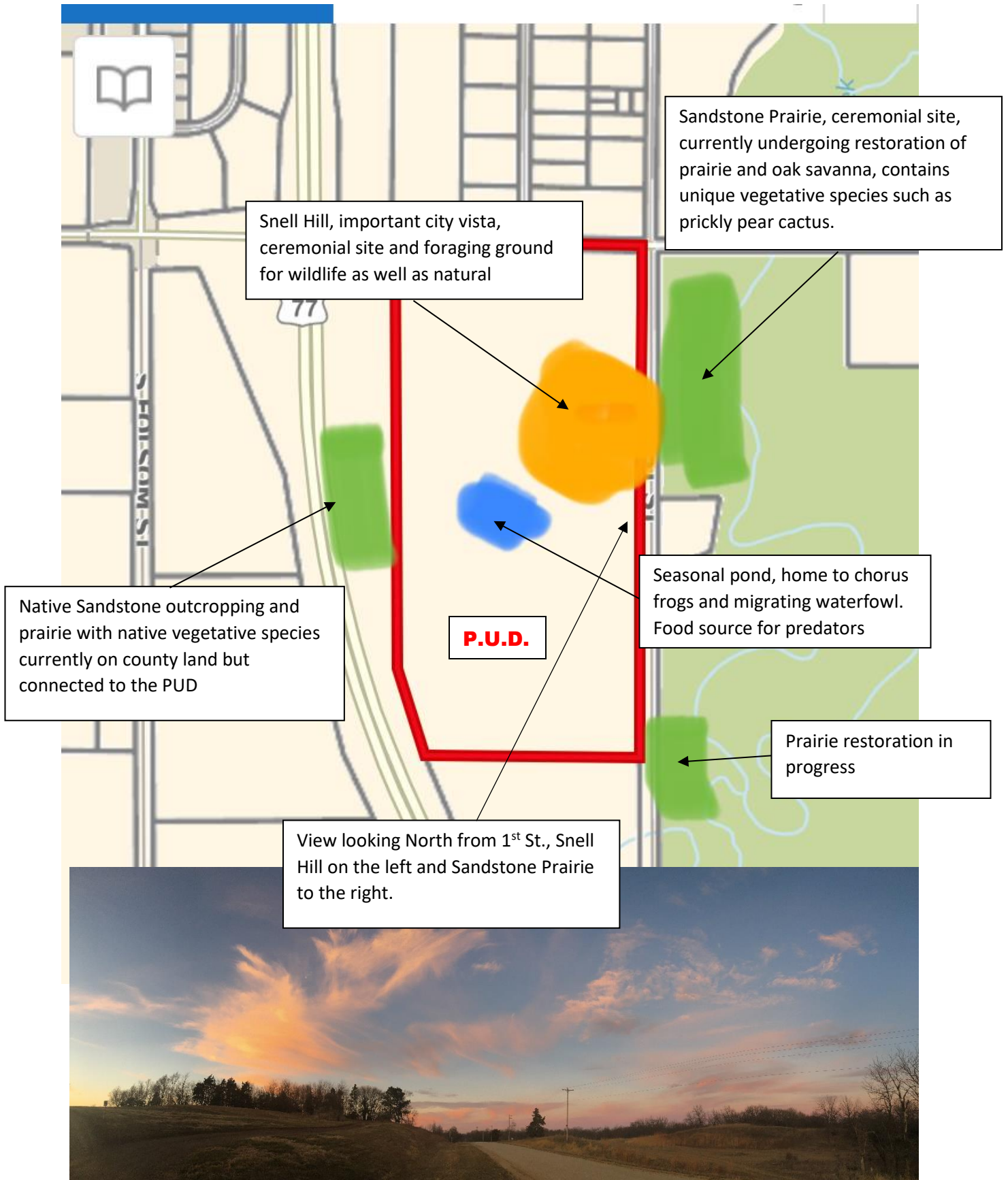
In conclusion, this land is special in its characteristics and location and ought to be treated as such. There is a movement in Native America called Land Back that asserts that Land and Water should have rights as they give us life. If corporations can be people surely our environment should also be a 'person' with rights. Respect and reciprocity in movement on the land should be the focus. All land is sacred and any designs should be well vetted and harmonious.

It seems to me that creating a development that preserves and protects these features could only add to the value and incentive to anyone interested in living there. Let's do something different, plan something that is harmonious with the place. This cannot be done with High Density Residential. Make this a model for the Plan Forward goals.

DELAY THIS VOTE

Regards,

Delan Lonowski



From: [smith.smith](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: no on CZ21057
Date: Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:35:04 PM



Vote to protect "The Fish Farm" and Wilderness Park, two treasures in Lincoln. No zoning change!
Thank you,
Carrie

--

Carrie Smith
volunteer, Lincoln Citizens' Climate Lobby
402-904-8065
1721 Prospect Street
Lincoln, NE 68502

From: [ROBERT RIECK](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Read everything including the links.
Date: Saturday, April 16, 2022 5:50:30 PM



Here I am writing the Lincoln City Council in an effort to protect Wilderness Park from a 75 acre housing and commercial development. This public forum is a fabricated joke sideshow to make it look like the Lincoln City Council is really open-minded to concrete objections against such a development, when after all, the only thing weighing the decisions on their minds are choices to bring in more money.

"It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it."~Upton Sinclair

Humans are at war with animals and wildlife. Whether it is by means of development or selfishly raising inefficient food systems. Please read my latest LTE in the Omaha World Herald on April 14th entitled 'Protect Wild Animals.' Click on the link and scroll down a bit.

https://omaha.com/opinion/letters/the-public-pulse-blood-fits-the-bill-judge-jacksons-confirmation-wildlife-services/article_42cc66b0-b699-11ec-b2bb-dbf7fc9b9f6e.html

Robert Allen Rieck Jr
105 North 8th Street apartment 508
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
402-802-1806

The Public Pulse: Blood fits the bill; Judge Jackson's confirmation; Wildlife services

Apr 14, 2022

Blood support

Jon Nelson (**Pulse, April 5**) calls out the Republican governor candidates' "negative ads" attacking each other and targeting immigrants, transgender and the marginalized people in our state. He seeks a governor with "fresh perspectives, a true leader with sound ideas and strong ethical and moral values."

Well, we are fortunate to have such a person already in the running: Carol Blood, a Democrat from Bellevue. Not only does she fit the bill ethically and morally, but she comes with extensive political and government experience. She served on the Bellevue City council for over eight years. She was a fair and forward-looking voice in this position and worked with Green Bellevue to start the farmers market in Washington Park, which is still going strong on Saturday mornings during the summer.

On the state level, Carol Blood has been a progressive voice in the Legislature representing District 3 for the past six years, elected two times. She has always been a strong voice for nursing in our state and has received several citations regarding her work. This in itself is quite significant during these times when we are facing such a crisis in nursing and other health care professions

People are also reading...

- 1 **McKewon: Jim Harbaugh says Michigan could be 'scary good' in 2022**
 - 2 **Report on Herbster groping allegations sparks firestorm of bipartisan condemnation**
 - 3 **OPS board weighs in on Cheryl Logan's withdrawal from Virginia job search**
 - 4 **Sarpy County Sheriff's Office encourages people to lock up at 9 p.m.**
-

So Carol Blood is the candidate to lead our state forward and competitively on the national stage. No longer does Nebraska need to “follow the party line.” This year vote for Carol Blood, the progressive candidate who will work for all our citizens, both urban and rural; Black, White and Indigenous; and all gender identities and religious affiliations.

Carole Lainof, *Papillion*

Know your history

Conservative senators who opposed Justice Jackson’s confirmation on the basis of her assignment as a public defender for Guantanamo prisoners show their limited knowledge of our history and Constitution. On our territory, including Gitmo, everyone gets a defense lawyer. The British soldiers involved in the Boston Massacre were represented by John Adams, our second president.

Jeff Johnston, *Elmwood, Neb.*

Protect wild animals

In 2019, Wildlife Services (arm of U.S. Department of Agriculture) killed 1.3 million native wild animals. This may read as something questionable because, to the average person, why are these animals being killed?

A study at the Weizmann Institute of Science reports, in the last 50 years, Earth has lost half of its wildlife as habitat is being destroyed, making grazing land for free-range cattle or to grow mono crops of corn or soy to feed to the livestock. It continues

by listing sentient life on earth in the following percentages: humans' makeup about 36%, livestock is 60% and wild animals are a dwindling 4%.

On April 23, 2022, there is going to be a Nationwide Wild Horse Freedom Project protest happening at state capitals at 3 p.m. CST to provide public awareness of how taxpayer money of more than \$1.4 billion is being given to the Bureau of Land Management to manage (unfairly in my opinion) the population of wild horses and burros while allowing livestock such as cows and sheep to increasingly grow on public lands. It wasn't until most recently I learned about these wild horses and burros — who earned their rightful freedom as equal contributors building America — being robbed of their freedom by being aggressively rounded up and, many times, sold as meat overseas.

“People cannot be free unless they are willing to sacrifice some of their interests to guarantee the freedom of others.” — Saul Alinsky

I believe the cost of doing nothing is turning the world into one big feedlot and then the only places to see once wild animals will be zoos.

Robert Rieck Jr., *Omaha*

Enough is enough

With the relentless and unprovoked attack on the sovereign country of Ukraine by President Putin and the Russian army, one has to question, “When will the United States and democratic nations put an end to this tragic deadly madness?”

The United States and NATO allies continue to funnel critically needed weapons and humanitarian supplies into Ukraine resulting in catastrophic results against the Russian army. To the point where Putin is threatening Ukraine and NATO with the possible use of tactical (small) nuclear weapons and chemical warfare.

As reported by the press, in response to Putin's threats, it appears President Biden's response is to announce, “what the United States won't do?”

During the Civil War, General Ulysses S. Grant was fighting a most disastrous and bloody campaign called “The Wilderness” against Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Many of Grant’s generals were apprehensive and nervous about the outcome of the battle and voiced their frustrations and apprehension directly to Grant. He replied;

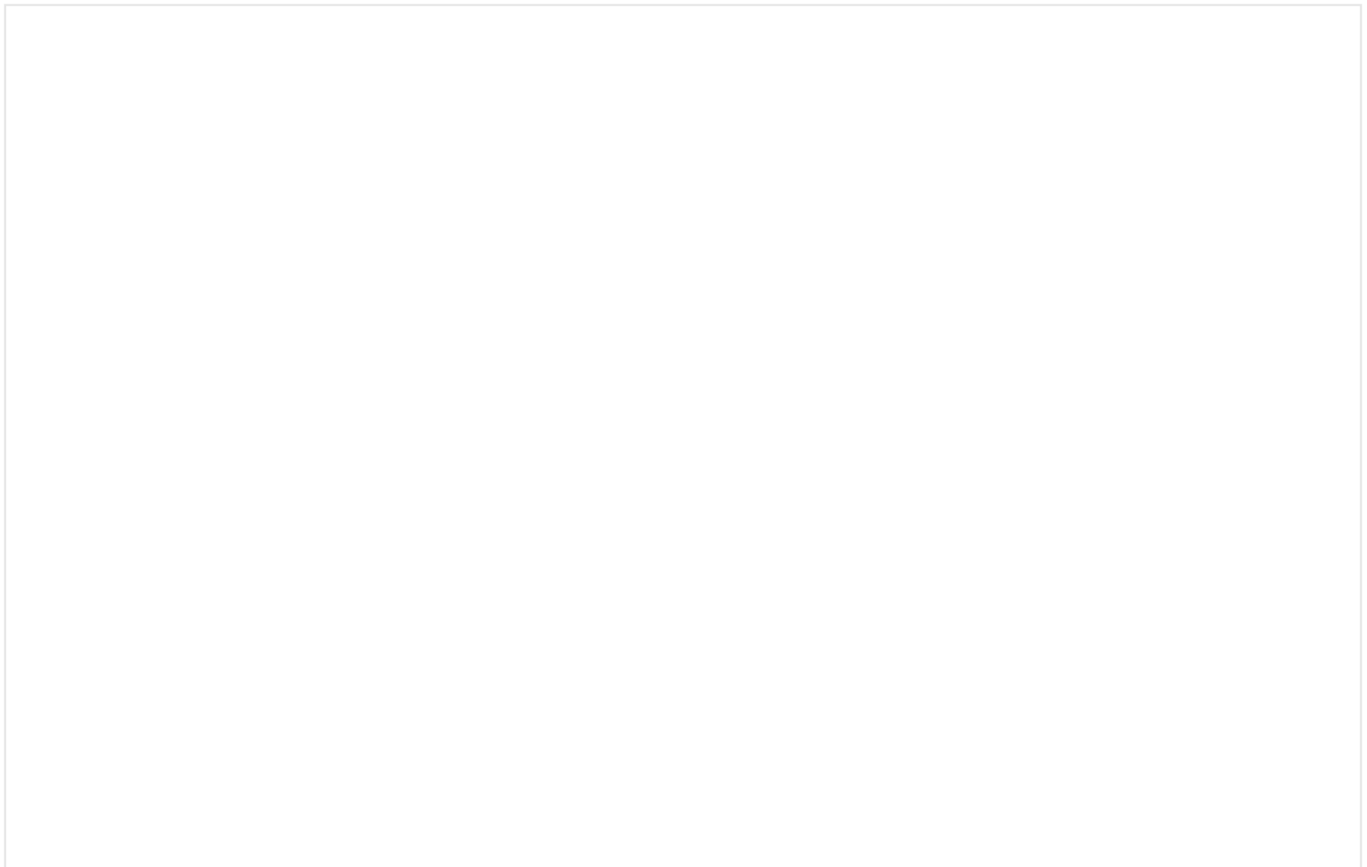
“Oh, I am heartily tired of hearing about what Lee is going to do,” Grant replied, “Go back to your command and try to think what you are going to do to him, instead of what Lee is going to do.”

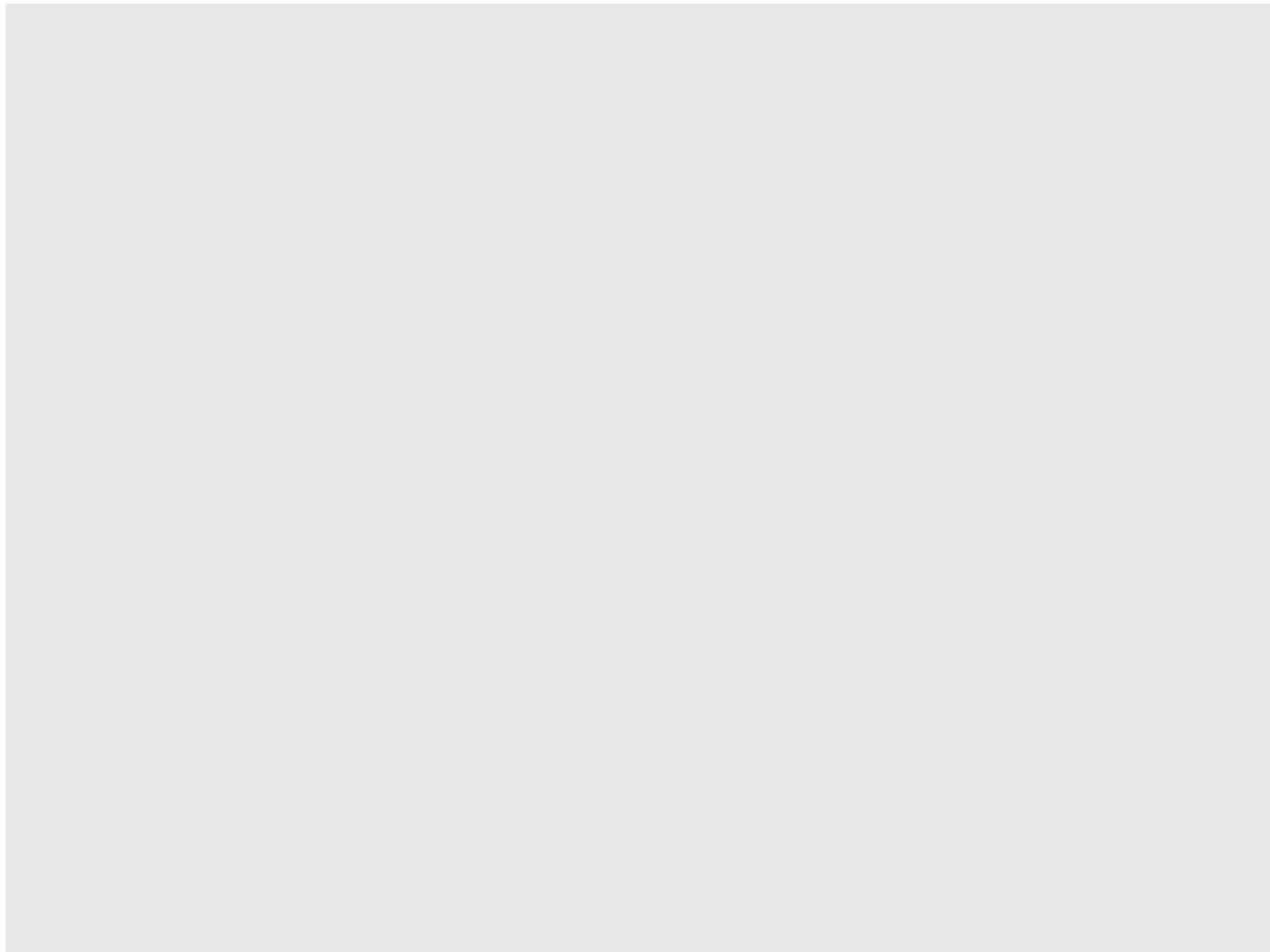
It is time for President Biden and our nation’s leadership to use General Grant’s example and instead of telling Putin “What we are not going to do,” telling this ruthless dictator, “What we are going to do ... and stick to it.”

John Witzel, *Papillion*

Lt. Col., USAF (retired)

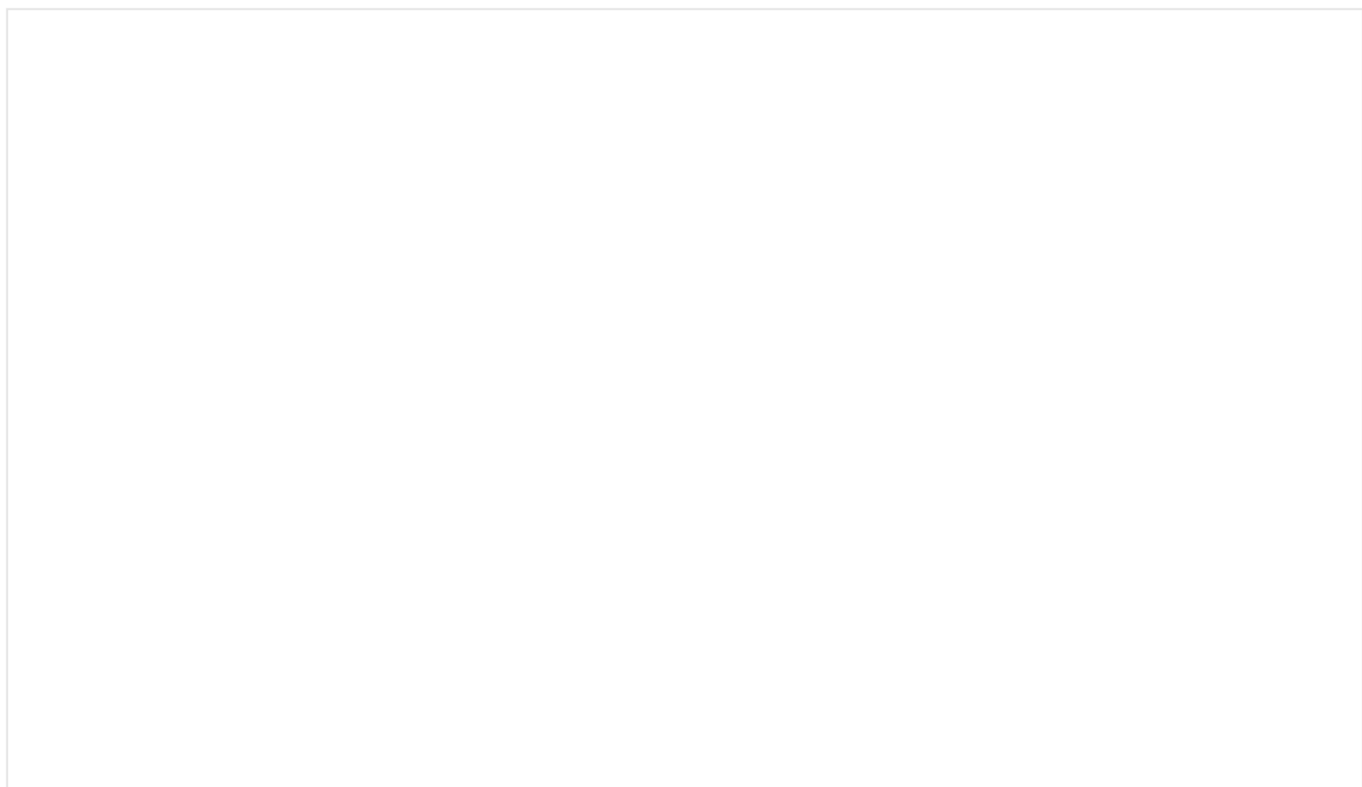
OWH Public Pulse - March 2022





The Public Pulse: Tenets of CRT; Canal is a mistake; Pillen stands out

Updated Apr 4, 2022 |





The Public Pulse: Herbstster wants quality education; Praise for prison series; The Forgotten War

Updated Apr 4, 2022 |



The Public Pulse: Don't throw democracy away; Hat's off to Creighton; More thoughts on Pillen and Herbster

Updated Apr 4, 2022 |

The Public Pulse: Thoughts on gubernatorial candidates; 'Nice' editorial; Symphony was a pleasure

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The Public Pulse: Transition away from fossil fuels; Praise about the Ron Stander story; Stick a fork in Fortenberry

Updated Apr 4, 2022 |



The Public Pulse: Postpartum care for new moms; Sasse shines during hearing; Russian invasion

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The Public Pulse: LB 1027; Biden to blame for gas prices; Invest in children, not prisons

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The Public Pulse: Proposal is political; Thriving small town; Gubernatorial ads disappoint

Updated Apr 4, 2022 |

The Public Pulse: Thoughts on saving daylight; Remembering Ron Stander; Praise for Supreme Court pick

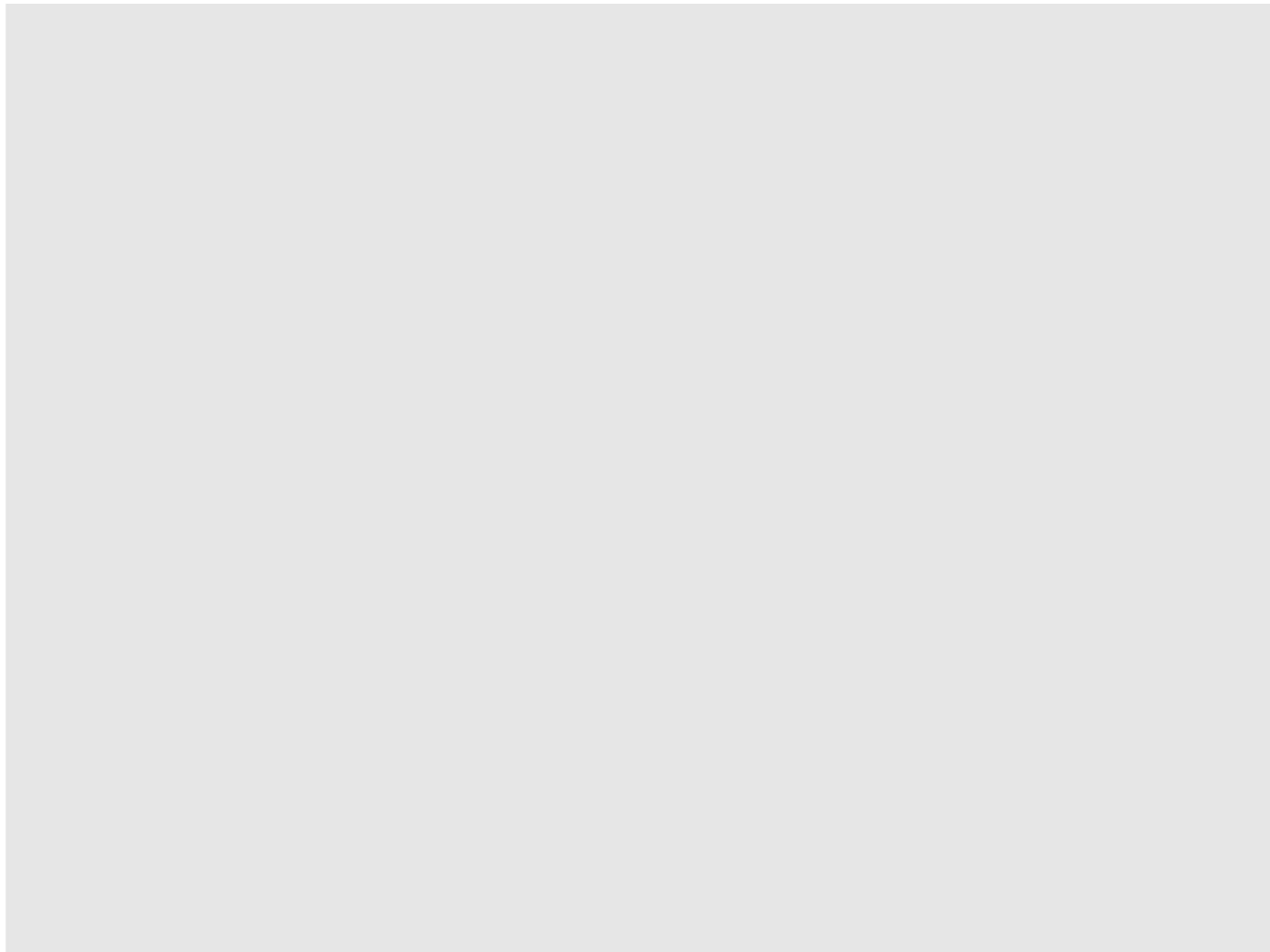
Updated Apr 4, 2022 |

The Public Pulse: Thoughts on library and downtown redevelopment; Congrats Millard North; The writing of Larry Porter

Updated Apr 4, 2022 |

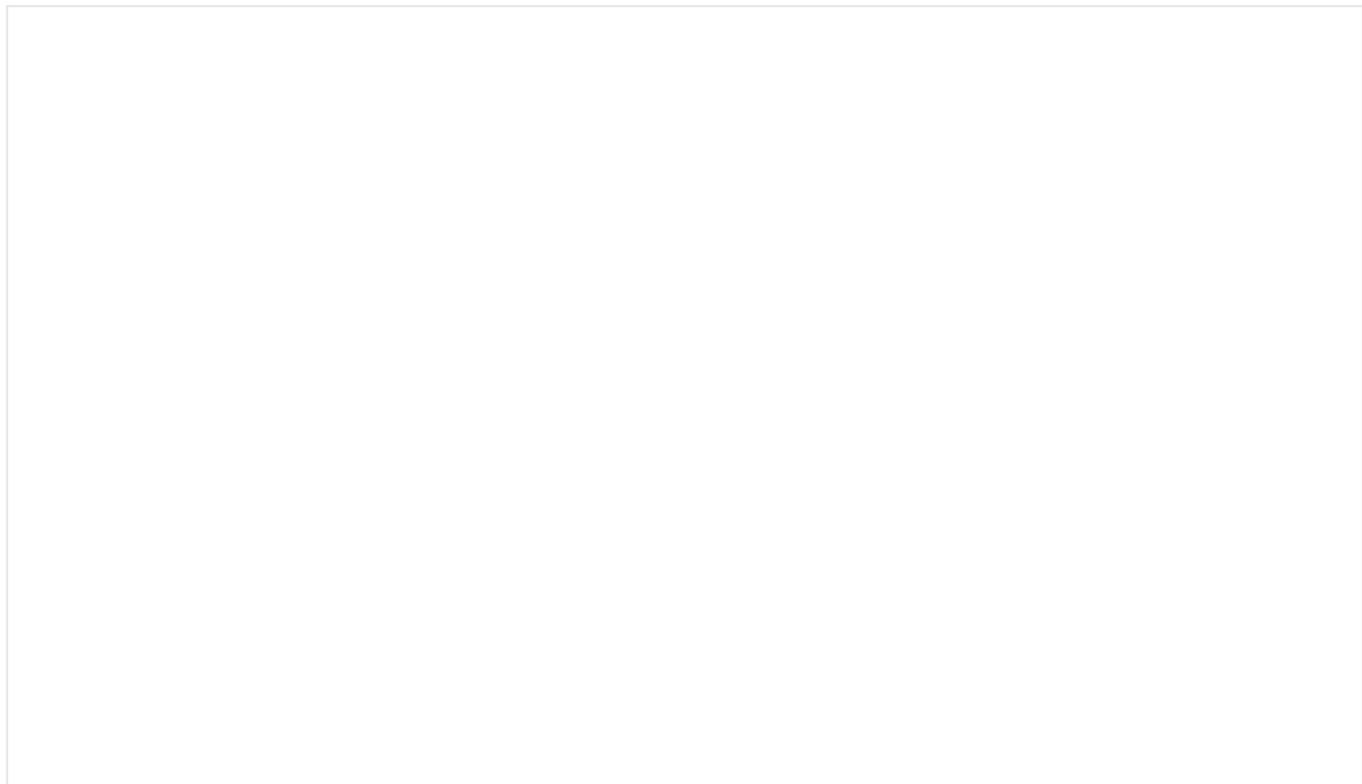
The Public Pulse: Natural Gas Utility Workers' Day; Ricketts resistance; LB 939; Tax brackets

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The Public Pulse: Pillen's experience; Canal proposal; Library space

Updated Apr 4, 2022 |



The Public Pulse: SOTU response; Congrats to Gizmo Gang; Comparison response

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The Public Pulse: Caring for developmentally disabled; Streetcars not the way; Lindstrom support

Updated Apr 4, 2022 |

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Updated 8 hrs ago |

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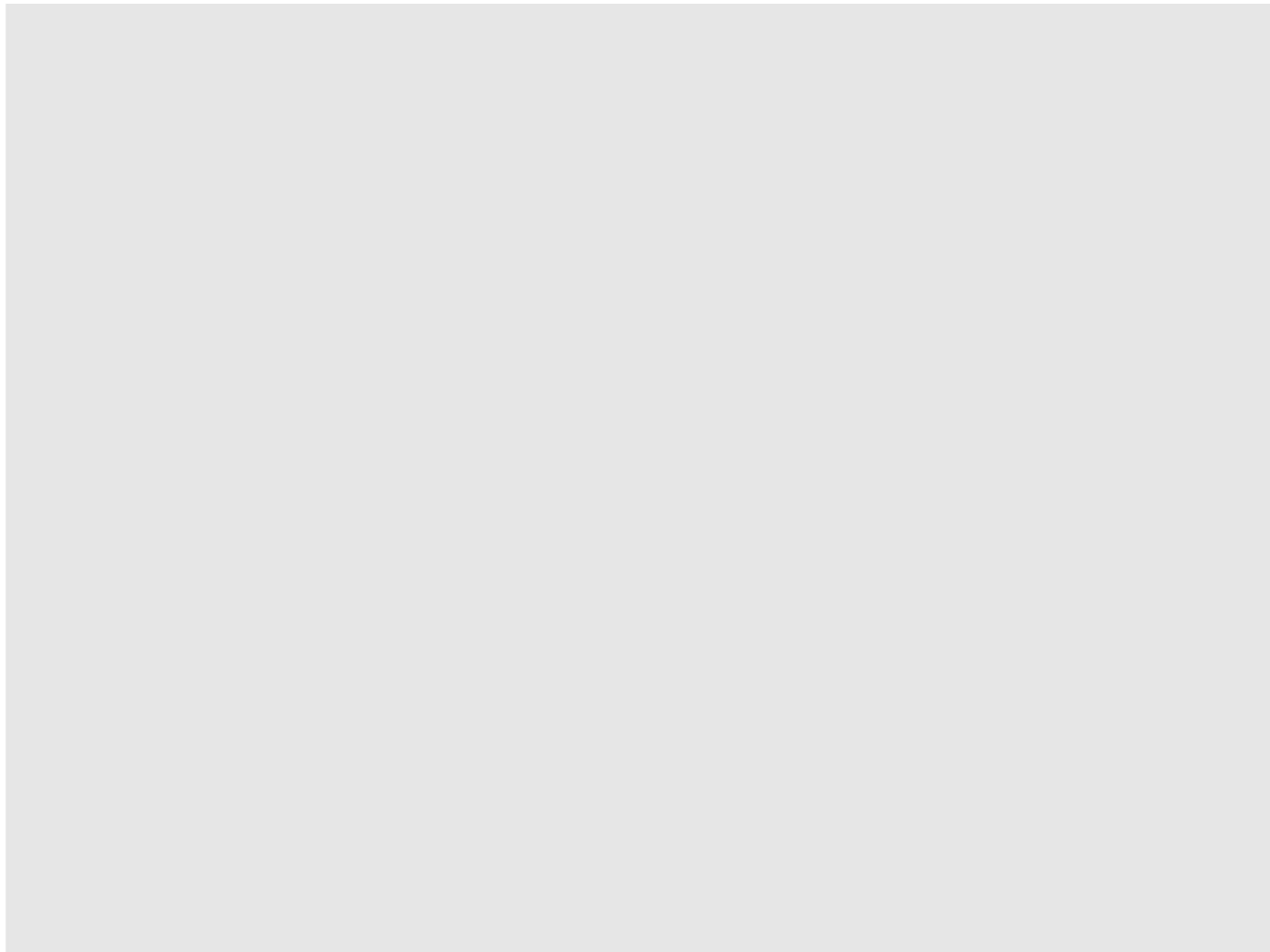
Updated Apr 17, 2022 |

The Public Pulse: Lake Cunningham access; Book bans; and Omaha's streetcar history

Updated Apr 16, 2022 |

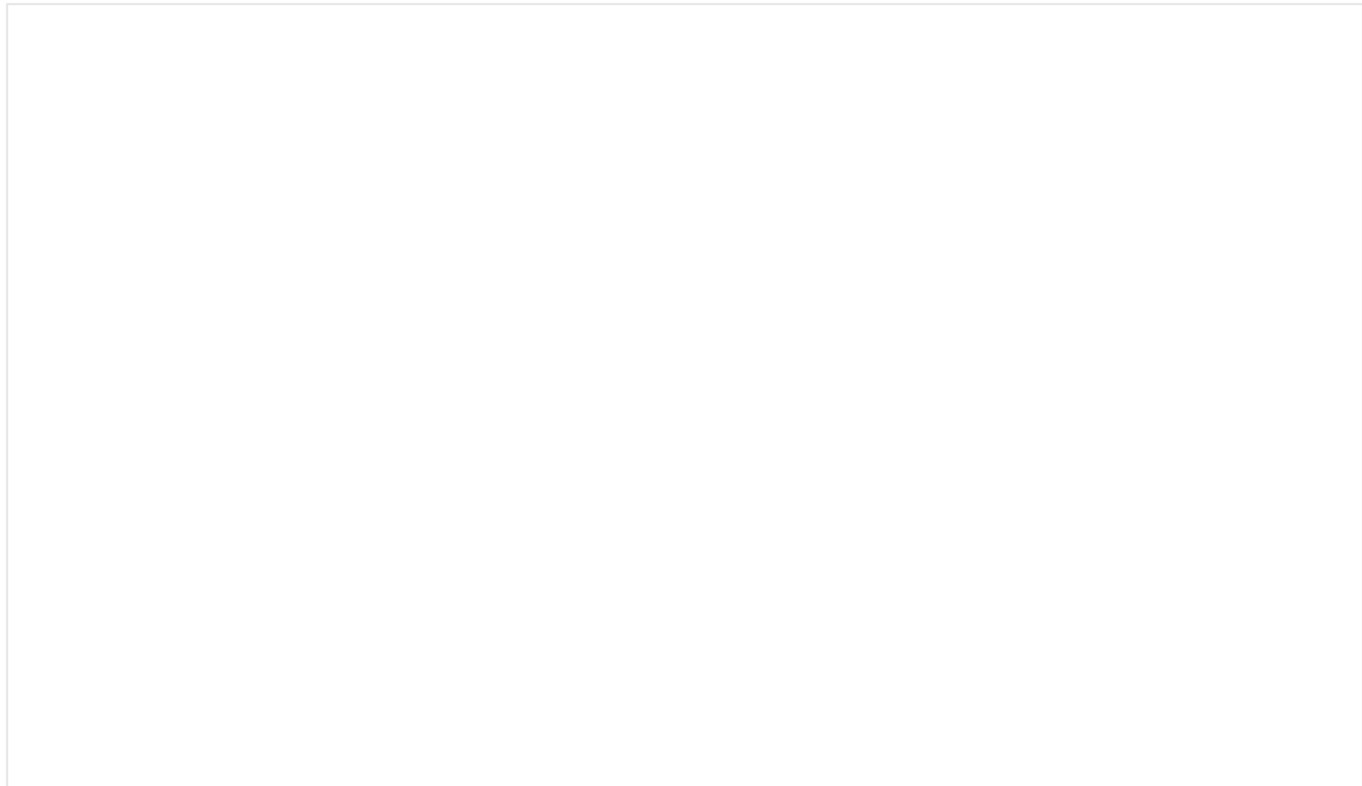
**The Public Pulse: Support paid parental leave; Statewide academic school year;
Brainwave research**

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The Public Pulse: A night well spent; Support local journalism; The Nebraska way

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The Public Pulse: Keeping children safe; Maintain local control of power districts; Rising cost of insulin

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The Public Pulse: Caring for Nebraska seniors; Russian invasion thoughts; Mutual plans

Updated Apr 9, 2022 |

From: [Bruce Johnson](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Comments entered into testimony of the Wilderness Crossing request for Action 4/18/2022
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 6:25:56 AM
Attachments: [Testimony to be entered into the Public Record for the Proposed Wilderness Crossing.docx](#)



I would appreciate if my attached comments be officially entered into public comments regarding the Wilderness Crossing application for zoning change and annexation coming before the City Council on 4/18/2022.

Thank you. Bruce Johnson
Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

My name is Bruce Johnson, and grateful to call Lincoln my home for most of my life. My 38-year career at UNL was in the area of resource and environmental economics; and have continued my involvement with natural resource issues and policy in my retirement. I currently serve on the Board of Directors of Lower Platte South NRD. However, my comments here do not reflect the position of that organization or any other organization but rather those of a private citizen.

I have followed with interest the Wilderness Crossing development proposal.

It is no small proposal. It is taking 75 acres and essentially building a new town of easily 1,500 residents complete with a very sizable commercial center. And doing so adjacent to Wilderness Park—a linear natural wooded/**flood plain corridor** which stretches for miles. It is valuable for numerous eco-services including recreation and flood control.

I sincerely urge you, the City Council, to push the '*pause button*' on this proposal and take a few months necessary to study the ramifications—short term and long term. With all the changes that will occur because of the bypass, I think further study is needed.

As for further study, there are important elements:

1. the environmental implications and interface with intensive urban development in close proximity are important well-being considerations to the future residents of this new development community as well as the greater Lincoln community, both now and into the future. These considerations require wholistic understanding. As an example, the terrible winds of recent days and months bring to mind the possible tragic scenario of Wilderness Park catching fire and roaring out of control for miles.
2. Final design by the developer will be significantly influenced by the pending NE Dept. of Roads decision regarding interchange and exit/entry configurations at HW 77 and Pioneers when the South Bypass is complete. Until that decision is firm, the proposed development can't be assessed with much clarity.
3. One of the key eco-services of major consideration involving Wilderness Park is Flood Management. The 2021 Lincoln Climate Action Plan points out that flooding is one of the most serious, if not greatest natural threat for Lincoln as our climate continues to change. Climate science projects more frequent and intense rainfall events for this region. This is extremely problematic for our city. Lincoln resides in a basin surrounded by the Salt Valley Watershed of over 525,000 acres that drain toward, and much of it through, the city.

In the case of Wilderness Crossing, 75 acres of intense residential and commercial development will lead to more runoff from roofs, streets, and other impermeable surfaces will greatly increase the potential runoff from that property relative to its current agricultural use. The city requires developers to design and build detention provisions such that the development does not add runoff beyond the pre-developed

level of the area. This developer has not yet filed a drainage plan with the city of Lincoln or reached out to the Lower Platte South NRD for their input. I've been told by a city official that the developer did ask for a waiver of a couple items associated with the Salt Creek Resiliency/Drainage Criteria Manual. It is worth noting that the Drainage Manual is being revised including the incorporation of updated rainfall data patterns in the determination of detention needs. Officials expect the revised manual to be implemented by fall 2022.

Granted in the bigger scheme of things, some would suggest this is only a 'drop-in-the-bucket' of flood issues downstream. But one can only imagine the mounting pressure for new development and annexation as the South Bypass is soon completed. Smart development is needed now which factors into current and future development those wise practices that are part of the greater flood management solutions the city is pursuing.

In sum, I believe that because of these and other factors, this application merits further study with updated data and analysis BEFORE the City Council can make a wise decision on the Wilderness Crossing proposal and the countless other development and annexation requests that will be certain to follow in the coming months and years. 'Business as usual' is no longer a sustainable option. Please seize this unique opportunity before you, to help in steering Lincoln towards a better more resilient future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bruce Johnson

254 West Lakeshore Dr. Lincoln, NE 68528

PH: 402-310-1585

Johnsonbb28@gmail.com

From: [Kristy Peterson](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001, Change of Zone 21057
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 9:10:58 AM

Dear Lincoln City Council, As a native born Nebraskan who visits Lincoln family often and frequents Wilderness Park, I write to you to voice my opposition to the zone change proposal 21057 at Highway 77 and Pioneers Blvd. This park is an important resource for Lincoln residents and wildlife and should be preserved to keep it as a large natural area with protected waterways. Please consider fully researching the impact of development on this parcel. Thank you for hearing my concerns and thank you for serving the citizens of Lincoln. Sincerely, Kristy Peterson
University of Nebraska alum, born in Lincoln and current resident of Kansas City Missouri, 2919 Campbell Street.
KCMO 64109, 773.332.5520

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Christopher Wiebke](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Friends Of Wilderness Park](#)
Subject: Development in wilderness park
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 10:11:43 AM



To whom it may concern,

Wilderness park is a very valuable treasure within our city. I respectfully request that the utmost care is taken for any plans of development in this area. I am requesting that adequate time is given to complete any necessary studies to ensure that this area remains undisturbed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Christopher Wiebke

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From: [t.langan](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Zoning change consideration CZ21057
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 11:06:30 AM



Thank you for your service and your attention to this matter.

As I'm sure you've become aware the City planning commission staff report omitted large sections of the 2050 plan forward initiative in their review of the development being considered at Wilderness crossing. P18-P-26 as well as G6, G7, & G8 received no evaluation.

The Nebraska Department of Transportations evaluation of the intersection of highway 77 and Pioneers Boulevard is still ongoing and we've yet to receive updated floodplains maps from FEMA.

Simply put, our existing policy is not being followed and the city does not have enough data yet compiled to determine a zoning change or allow a development to proceed in this area.

For these reasons as well as the potential cultural, historical, and environmental impacts to the private and public communities we direct you to delay a vote until a full environmental impact statement for future development in the wilderness crossing area can be completed.

Thank you,
Terry Langan
6248 Las Verdes Lane
Lincoln, NE. 402-770-4117

From: [Maureen Ose](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Development adjacent to Wilderness Park
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 1:29:12 PM

Hello,

I am writing to urge you to delay making any decisions regarding housing development near Wilderness Park until updated, in-depth studies and data are available. I understand several factors such as flood plain impact, grading, buffer areas and others are yet to be fully investigated and considered. Surely you will want to have the latest details available to you as you consider developing the properties immediately adjacent to one of Lincoln's jewels.

Wilderness Park is an oasis of green, a place for long quiet walks, a haven for wildlife and a valuable ecosystem within the context of our lovely city. I trust you will be deliberate in requiring full data and study before a decision is made.

Thank you.

Maureen Ose
1640 Twin Ridge Rd
Lincoln, NE 68506
402-423-8823

From: [Richard Newberg](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 2:16:39 PM



Dear City Council Members, when I describe Wilderness Park I describe it as a "Jewel right in the heart of Lincoln". Please vote NO on the proposed development. Such a development would ruin the peace, quiet and beauty there with noise pollution, traffic, litter.

I, ride like many ride horses there, which is such a great place to enjoy nature as it was meant to be. I am certain adding the traffic, people, houses would ruin what we all love and make it unsafe for hikers, bikers and horse back riders. Once it's put in you can't take it back.

Please vote no to the development.

A concerned Wilderness Park user. Kathy Newberg

From: [Patte Newman](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: 1st & Pioneer proposed changes
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 2:50:35 PM



Please add my voice to those opposed to changing the zoning on a parcel of land proposed near 1st & Pioneers, between the West Bypass and Wilderness Park, and the development being promoted as "creating affordable housing".

This project would add a tremendous amount of impervious surfaces for over 500 residential units, commercial and parking lots.

There are many reasons to say no and I am certain other people will go into detail on those (traffic, increased runoff, impact on Wilderness Park including a site our native american friends use as an urban sanctuary).

My major concern is a lack of detail (conditions waived by the Planning Commission) on the actual solution proposed for grading, drainage and stormwater run-off. Will these meet old standards or new standards currently being worked on? When were Lancaster County floodplains and floodways last mapped and stormwater plans updated? Is that engineering even possible on this particular site without adverse impacts on existing properties?

As someone who served as a Planning Commissioner, City Council representative, member of the Floodplain Advisory Committee (to update FEMA floodplain maps two decades ago), Stevens Creek Advisory Committee (setting standards for new development so that it's done in an environmentally sustainable way now, so that billions of dollars of taxpayer money do not have to be used to improve it after the fact like what happened with Antelope Valley) - there is TOO MUCH about this particular project that raises red flags.

At an absolute MINIMUM this project must NOT be approved unless and until the engineering solutions for grading, drainage and stormwater run-off are proven. This is a normal condition expected with any development. There is no reason those plans should NOT be presented before any change of zone or approval, especially in a sensitive environment.

It also needs to be noted that extreme weather conditions have created problems in areas near Wilderness Park in recent years including 2015 and 2016. I am attaching a LJS photo of Lincoln Southwest High School looking like lakefront property. The 14th Street developments followed all existing city stormwater standards...and yet...there it sat....in water.

The proximity of this parcel to Wilderness Park is no different.

Please vote no on a change of zone from AG to high density residential and let nature be. The City's list of much needed projects funded by taxpayer funded stormwater bond issues is long enough.

At a minimum, at least delay any approval on this project until all the grading, drainage and stormwater run-off details are worked out at the latest updated standards of modelling.

Thank you for being good stewards of sustainability and environmentally responsible

development.

Patte Newman



From: [Kevin Abourezk](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Kevin Abourezk comment on proposed zone change #CZ21057
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 4:22:01 PM

For nearly 40 years, the land we in the Lincoln Native community have come to lovingly know as “The Fish Farm” has provided a sanctuary for countless indigenous people and settlers seeking spiritual sustenance and reconnection to nature.

The property is located just southeast of the intersection of First Street and Pioneers Boulevard, along the west bank of Salt Creek and the west perimeter of Wilderness Park.

There, in a small hut covered with canvas tarps and blankets, gathered around a pit filled with red-hot rocks, people have come for years to experience one of the most sacred rites of the Great Plains tribes.

Now, a Lincoln developer wants to construct nearly 575 homes and apartments just yards from this sacred site.

If you are Christian, I would ask you to I magine trying to practice your communion outside as hundreds of cars and trucks roll by. Imagine the exhaust fumes choking you as you attempt to praise your creator and pray for the well-being of the people you love.

This is the reality so many Native people and their allies face as you, our city leaders, consider this mega-development that will grossly undermine the serenity and sanctity of this place.

Of course, there are many other reasons to oppose this project, or at the very least to slow down the breakneck pace at which it is being pushed through official channels.

For one, we simply don’t know what the intersection of U.S. 77 and Pioneers Boulevard will look like once the South Beltway is completed. Will there be exits leading off and onto the highway? This hasn’t been decided, and if there are no exit ramps, then the nearly 1,200 vehicles that this project is expected to bring will have few avenues for access to other parts of our community.

For another, the City-County Planning Commission simply waived the requirement for plans related to drainage, grading and storm water. So at a time when our environment is rapidly changing, when catastrophic floods are happening with ever more alarming frequency, we are considering disregarding our own policies related to stormwater management? At best, this is short-sighted. At worst, dangerous.

While this isn’t a historically sacred site, I would argue that it has become a sacred site today after serving as the oldest and most heavily utilized inipi grounds for our local Native population. And while there aren’t any identified endangered species on this land, I would argue that preserving the serenity of this area is essential to protecting an endangered culture.

Once you violate the sanctity and serenity of this highly valued greenspace, you can’t reverse direction, but right now we have an opportunity to take a stand and protect the largest and most biologically diverse park in our city for future generations.

This project’s proximity to Wilderness Park will shatter the tranquility of this natural treasure. If our city is going to live up to its commitment to being an earth friendly community that values an active and healthy citizenry, it must create a buffer around Wilderness Park to ensure its integrity for our future generations.

From: [Drew Nelson](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposition to zone change CZ21057
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 4:25:21 PM



To whom it concerns; all residents of Lincoln, especially the city council and mayor Baird,

I am writing to be on the record opposing the proposed construction on the land SW of 1st. and Pioneers Blvd. The reasons are many, including poor traffic infrastructure, unclear planning in relation to the new freeway, the inevitable desecration of one of the highest points in the area and perhaps most alarming, its proximity to Wilderness Park.

Lincoln is growing and that is a good thing, but the proposed 'Wilderness Crossing' development project will be an ugly eyesore regardless of design considerations. Packing 575 houses with apartments and retail onto 75 acres of land is astounding. To put an equivalent of a small town in high density configuration mere feet away from Lincoln's most precious wild space is inconceivable.

I write to you as a concerned citizen. Please consider delaying the vote to approve this project until more research can be done about what effects this will have on our cities traffic, the park, and the neighborhood in question. I will keep this short, I am sure you have many other letters that go into detail about why this should be considered more carefully. Please take a step back and consider what approving this development will mean to the future of our city and our great grandchildren.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Andrew Nelson

2455 S. 8TH ST.

Lincoln, NE 68502

From: [Wyatt Nelson](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: To members of the City Council, regarding Snell Hill
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 6:12:38 PM



Nature is our place of worship. For many Linconites including ourselves, the way to connect with God is through plants, animals, and especially geographical features like creeks and hills. This very old practice of prayer is shared by both Native Americans and the Ancient Tribes of Europe.

There are very few places left in Lincoln to do this. One beautiful exception is Snell Hill, located just south of Pioneers Blvd, between Hwy 77 and S 1st Street. Boasting an impressive vista, this hill also serves an important cultural purpose.

Native American led spiritual worshipers congregate at sacred sites very near to Snell Hill on a weekly (and sometimes daily) basis. These regular meetings bring together community, celebrate indigenous culture, and always welcome newcomers from all walks of life. This type of prayerful human community requires immersion in natural surroundings.

Preserving Snell Hill's beauty and shape is critical for the spiritual well-being of these sites and their congregations, but now it could be graded and paved if the proposed "Wilderness Crossing" development is approved. Must this sad history continue?

The City is considering allowing this agricultural zone to be packed with more than 500 units. While the authors acknowledge the desperate need for *affordable* housing, this is not affordable nor is it the place to do it.

We call upon the City Council, the Catholic Church, and the people of Lincoln to preserve Snell Hill as a natural and cultural site.

Beaumont Bordeaux, Rosebud Sioux Tribe

and

Wyatt Nelson, Lincoln

From: [Kathleen Danker](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: March 18, 2022, City Council Meeting: Change of Zone 21057, Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001, and Annexation 21013
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 7:08:50 PM



Date: April 16, 2022
To: Lincoln City Council
CC: Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird
From: Kathleen Danker

Dear Lincoln City Council Members:

My name is Kathleen Danker, known to my friends as KD. For forty-two years, since 1980, I have owned an approximately 2.24 acre property at 4700 South 1st Street. It is on the east side of South 1st Street and surrounded on the north, east, and south by Wilderness Park. My house was built in 1910, and the property was grandfathered in when the park was founded some sixty years later. In the 1970s, someone named the acreage the Flying Fish Farm after a fish-shaped windsock, and it is often referred to just as the Fish Farm. We have never actually farmed any fish.

In the past, I used to walk with an empty gallon jar north on South 1st Street from the Fish Farm toward Pioneer Boulevard, turn west before I reached the intersection, and climb on the driveway up the hill to the dairy barn there to get milk from Mr. Snell, its owner. Sometimes, I would venture on to the house at the top of the hill to visit with Mrs. Snell. I felt privileged to experience the serenity of that hilltop and to take in the wonderful view of Wilderness Park spreading to the east and south, the capitol building to the northeast, Yankee Hill neighborhood to the west, and a distance as far as my eyes could see to the south (at least to Saltillo Road). That hill is the highest point for miles around. It was a rare privilege to stand there because from South 1st Street below on the east or from Pioneer Boulevard on the north, a person on foot or in a vehicle would not suspect the height of the hill or the extent of its views.

Now, developers are proposing to change the name of the Snells' old dairy farm to Wilderness Crossing.

I am writing you to oppose the changes in land use in Lancaster County scheduled to be decided at the Lincoln City Council meeting on April 18, 2022. Please vote "no" on Change of Zone 21057 from AG (Agricultural District) to R-3 (Residential Unit) PUD (Planned Unit Development), Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001 to revise the future land-use and growth-tier maps and service limits, and Annexation 21013. I oppose these changes because they would destroy a unique and significant landscape/vista contiguous with Wilderness Park that should eventually be included in the park; negatively impact the environment of, the animals and birds in, and the visitors to the park; create traffic flow problems in the area which could ultimately be costly to fix; and, most destructively, cause more rain runoff that would increase the volume of the inevitable flooding of Salt Creek. If you are unwilling to vote no against these changes now, please at least agree to postpone deciding on them until further data can be collected about their impact on this special area of Lancaster County.

The proposed changes are designed to accommodate the building of a massive urban-density residential and commercial development on the land that was the Snell Dairy Farm before it was sold and used for row crops on its more level parts. Manzitto Construction, Development, and Real Estate specifies that, along with commercial buildings, the development would consist of approximately 134 townhouses, 162 single-family homes, and 205 apartment units. That means at least a thousand people and their vehicles, probably more. Between Pioneer Boulevard and half way to Old Cheney Road, individual housing lots would run right up to the western boundary of Wilderness Park because South 1st Street, which borders the park (and my property) on the west, would be removed and the land now covered by the road and its ditches given to the developers. The developers have unofficially offered to build a six-foot fence between their lots and the park, but that would do almost nothing to mitigate the noise and nocturnal light pollution and the water and chemical runoff.

I have heard that the City Council usually follows the recommendations of the City Planning Commission in zoning and land-use issues. Please do not do that in this case because on March 30th, in spite of a few responsible “no” votes, the Planning Commission was overly hasty in approving this zoning change and development project. The majority voted for it even though the developers did not present a complete prospectus, but asked for and received a waiver excusing them from providing details about the crucial related matters of grading the land and of storm water drainage, as well as other waivers. When a Planning Commission member asked for an explanation of the waivers, one of the commission staff assured her that the waived aspects of the project would eventually have to comply with all the usual regulations, the only difference being that they would not be subject to scrutiny at a public hearing. As a member of the public, I object. I have questions:

How are the developers going to create numerous level building lots out of the Snells' high hill? The hill is made up primarily of Dakota Sandstone rock with a layer of dirt on top. Are they going to blow it up with dynamite? Attempt to quarry it down like was done at the beginning of the 20th century on the hill's lower east flank across South 1st Street in what is now Wilderness Park? Erect houses on its steep inclines? What?

More importantly, will the Wilderness Crossing project increase the size of future Salt Creek floods? Salt Creek forms the back boundary of my property. I have seen it flooding many times, though never as badly as Mr. Snell told me happened in the 1940's when it rushed past what is now the bottom edge of our garden. He said it didn't reach our house then, but I am afraid that coming floods in this century may outstrip those of the last one. The Climate Action Plan adopted by the City Council last year placed “Flooding” at the top of its list of “Lincoln's Climate Risks” (p. 7). It states that because of climate change “Winter and spring precipitation totals will be 10-16% higher than current conditions” and “Heavy precipitation days in Nebraska are projected to increase 15% to 35% by 2050. Furthermore, multi-day extreme precipitation events will increase in severity” (p.6). In the case of long or heavy rains (which can overtop any detention pond), how will the Wilderness Crossing project be graded or otherwise constructed to prevent rain and chemicals from running off its innumerable concrete, asphalt, and other impervious surfaces and draining directly down into the adjacent Salt Creek flood plain? So very close to the creek, isn't it more responsible to preserve the water-retaining qualities of undeveloped land to lesson the amount of flooding?

The reasons the commission members gave for their approval of the Wilderness Crossing project with its waivers, zone change, and city annexation were that the Snells' old dairy farm land had long been pinpointed for urban development in a Comprehensive Plan city expansion

map that has not been substantively rethought for over twenty years and also that, by the time of the public meeting, the Planning Commission staff had already devoted much time and effort into helping the developers create their proposal. During the meeting, the staff indeed took more time presenting about and advocating for the project and zoning changes, and answering questions about them, than did the developers, who mentioned few concrete details.

The Planning Commission members indicated that they approved the proposed land-use change precisely because it had been included unaltered for so long in the Comprehensive Plan's projected city expansion maps. We are learning more all the time about the effects of climate change, the dynamics of Salt Creek flooding, the importance of preserving the environment, the benefits of local food production (on land zoned AG), the value for people of vistas and other significant landscapes, the advantages to human mental health of spending time in natural settings, and the like. Why prioritize the land-use projections of past city planners who did not have access to the information and data that we either have today or have the prospect of soon obtaining? Why not instead change the expansion projections and maps to reflect current environmental and climate information?

PlanForward Comprehensive Plan: At its March 30th meeting, the City Planning Commission invested great importance in the development goals of the city's Comprehensive Plan, but completely ignored the same plan's many policies, elements, and action steps regarding Goal 6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People; Goal 7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability; and Goal 8: Community Resiliency. I hope that the City Council will not follow the Planning Committee's example in this regard. After all, the Introduction to the most recent Comprehensive Plan, called PlanForward, says that the plan "acknowledges the importance and interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural domains, and the ways in which technology and public policy are applied and affect outcomes in these domains" (np). Some of the relevant passages from PlanForward include the following:

"Introduction: The Rural Environment: Focus on Agriculture: Rural areas should be preserved for agriculture, a limited supply of low-density residential and other compatible land uses. . . . Ensure that agricultural and rural development preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas and maximize the preservation of our non-renewable resources such as land" (p. 1.6).

"Element 4: Environmental Resources: Lancaster County boasts a set of environmental resources that should be respected and maintained" (p. 3.51).

"Element 4: Environmental Resources: Signature landscapes are those areas and natural features that are unique to a region and contribute to the identity of the community. The Lincoln and Lancaster County community's landscape is primarily shaped by Salt Creek and its tributaries and the natural features in it include riparian and floodplain areas, freshwater and unique saline wetlands, wooded corridors and urban forests and rolling hills covered in agricultural crops, pasture, and rare fragments of remnant tallgrass prairie. As open spaces are identified for conservation or inclusion as public parks, the preservation, enhancement, and restoration of our environmental resources and signature landscapes should be included in planning" (p. 3.51).

"Element 4: Environmental Resources: A critical element to envisioning resource protection is maintaining the natural systems that support wildlife" (p. 3.51).

"Policy 16: Rural Economy: Though agricultural activity is identified as a separate land use category in PlanForward, agricultural land does constitute a distinctive natural resource feature

as well. These lands are an integral element in the natural landscape, providing habitat as well as serving as a basic element of the County's signature landscape" (p. 4.29).

"Policy 24: Local Food: Encourage opportunities to grow local food.

Action Step 1: Continue to promote the preservation of prime farmland in the rural areas of the county" (p. 4.40).

"Action Step 3: Environmental Resource Protection: Consider the relationship among environmental resources . . . key corridors/linkages, and the adjacent land uses (my underlining) for appropriate management and resource protection" (p. 4.45).

NRGIS Greenprint Challenge: Some of the important topics included in PlanForward use wording from and reflect the values laid out in the Greenprint Challenge document first developed in 2001 by the City Planning Commission (how soon they forget what they don't want to remember) in conjunction with the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District. This document was revised and reformatted for the Internet by the City of Lincoln as the NRGIS Greenprint Challenge this year (2022). The PlanForward document states that "the resources identified, and the recommended principles for their protection, in the Greenprint Challenge are still applicable today and will continue to be in the future" (p. 3.51). Some relevant passage from the new version of the Greenprint Challenge include the following:

"Definition: The Greenprint Challenge is part of an overall long-range planning effort designed to provide the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County with an approach for sound and sensitive urban and rural development that is interwoven with the community's desire for maintaining and enhancing the ecological and economic benefits from our natural and cultural environment. . . . Suitable water and air quality, flood plain governance, habitat protection, and soils management all contribute to a vigorous ecosystem. Proper land use planning and plan implementation can also aid in maintaining an overall healthy natural system. The Greenprint Challenge endeavors to provide a framework for the wise preservation and perpetuation of these critical natural features in Lancaster County. The Greenprint Challenge recognizes that there is an emerging ethic in Lancaster County about the natural world and the inter-relationship of human activity and our natural heritage. This ethic encourages a sensitivity to the natural environment as economic and development decisions are made. This sensitivity fosters an attitude that environmental concerns should permeate all planning processes" (p. 8).

"Some of the **environmental benefits** [bolded in the original] to be derived from the fulfillment of the Greenprint Challenge concepts include:

- Preserving valuable habitat and ecosystem features to maintain biodiversity.
- Furthering opportunities for creation of 'signature landscapes' throughout the County.
- Affording passive and active recreation.
- Fostering sustainable natural systems.
- Recognizing the role played by watershed functions in development and provision of utility services.
- Championing the value of prairie restoration and preservation.
- Seeking the reasoned conservation of agriculturally productive land" (p. 9).

"A number of 'economic co-values' were identified as part of the process including:

- Maintaining a favorable ‘quality of life’ through the management of natural features that enhance the community’s attractiveness as a place to live and work.
- Enhance property values through proximity to parks and natural areas.
- Protecting life and property through flood plain protection.
- Lessening tax burdens for future flood control structures and stream channeling.
- Furthering health and saving health care costs through improved air and water quality.
- Supporting physical and psychological health benefits through access to outdoor recreation.
- Advancing land development opportunities by identifying areas needing long-term protection from those more suitable for development” (p. 9).

“Views and Vistas: Importance:

- Views and vistas help to create cognitive maps and provide points of reference.
- Views and vistas help to create the “signature landscape” of the County.
- Views and vistas provide a visual orientation from afar.
- Vistas tie together natural features, urban features, and cultural features into one comprehensible view” (p. 47).

“Views and Vistas: Human Impact/Threat:

- Development can compromise or hide short-range and long-range views.
- Development can remove vistas.
- Ridgeline development obstructs views” (p. 48).

“Views and Vistas: Planning Implications:

- All significant views and vistas should be documented.
- View corridors to the State Capitol should be protected and preserved.
- County roadway planning and design should take into account significant views.
- City of Lincoln lighting standards should address the preservation of views” (p. 48).

“The Greenprint Focuses Attention on Unique Landscapes in the County: A signature landscape supplies much of the sense of who we are. It serves as a constant reminder of the particular ecosystem that forms our economic base, and it provides the visual images that remind us of our history and the way we must work with our resource base in order to sustain our culture. . . . The long-term viability of the County’s signature landscape components should be ensured. These places should be afforded attention and care” (p. 54).

“Maintenance of Natural Features Recognizes the Individual Context Within Which They Reside: Resource imperatives that require a certain separation from development should be accorded that separation and protection” (p. 54).

Along with the Snells’ hill and Salt Creek, Wilderness Park constitutes one of the “resource imperatives” that should be accorded separation and protection from nearby development. The hill, the creek, and the park are closely related. Wilderness Park was founded, at least in part, to keep people from building and rebuilding houses and other structures in the flood plain of

Salt Creek. The Snells' dairy farm and my acreage were not included in the park because they were not in the flood plain, both of our houses being built on the hill, theirs at the top and mine on the lower southeastern slope.

Apart from its role in preventing flood damage, city planners seem to have originally given little thought to the value of Wilderness Park as a park. However, through time, that value has increased for many people in this area. The respite and pleasure we experience from the natural, undeveloped, environment of the park, so unlike that of any other park in Lincoln, has made it special to us and worth preserving in its natural state, buffered from urban noise and congestion. The time has come for Lincoln's city officials to recognize the importance of Wilderness Park to their constituents, value its environment, protect its borders and immediate surroundings from urban development, and ultimately, add the Snells' hill and its beautiful vistas into its boundaries, even though the hill is obviously not part of the flood plain. It may take some time before Lincoln can afford to purchase the Snells' hill, but keeping the land zoned AG has preserved it mainly intact for over a hundred years now. Rezoning it to R-3 PUD, however, will likely result in the hill's hasty and irreversible destruction.

Few of the wild animals and birds that live in Wilderness Park pay attention to its legal borders, but freely cross South 1st Street back and forth from the park to the Snells' old land. Deer and flocks of turkeys do this all of the time. Enough trees and other cover remain on the hill and elsewhere on "Wilderness Crossing" that the farming currently done there does not seem to scare them away. Herds of deer glean the harvested cornfields. We've seen foxes, raccoons, and coyotes roaming around; great horned owls perch in the trees; and bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, and turkey vultures fly overhead. In spring, after it rains, chorus frogs start burbling from a freshly filled intermittent pond. I know of no intact remnant of tall-grass prairie on the Snells' old property, but clumps of individual native plants like Little Blue Stem grow there. None of these plants and animals can attend the City Council meeting on April 18, but the Council's decisions will affect them greatly.

They will also greatly affect me and the people and their pets who live at the Flying Fish Farm. In many ways, our concerns are the same as those of Lincolniters who dread the impact of the Wilderness Crossing development on Wilderness Park. The difference is that visitors to the park stay for a while and then go home. The Fish Farm is our home and has long been our refuge from the city. Now it seems the city will be coming to us with a vengeance, destroying everything wild and natural west of South 1st Street and even the street itself.

It's hard to imagine the extent and duration of the proposed Wilderness Crossing construction, its noise and dust and mud and air pollution. It's even harder to actually believe what things will be like when the construction is over. It feels like a bad dream, hard to keep in mind: Will we really be looking out our front door into someone's back yard? Will there actually be tall powerful street lights shining down into our yard all night? When we are located at the end of a cul-de-sac called Back Bay Court, will car after car drive up and turn around in our driveway? Will countless neighbors complain that our trees aren't trimmed and we have too many cars and too much clutter?

What will happen to the sweat lodge? Since the 1980's, pipe carriers, usually Lakota or Dakota, have been coming to the Fish Farm to lead sweat lodge ceremonies for their relatives and friends. It's not easy in a city to find a good place to build a sweat lodge. Optimally, the setting where it is erected should be private, peaceful, and surrounded by the natural world. We have been blessed throughout the decades to be the site of so many prayers for the healing

and well-being of people, animals, and birds—of everything that lives, all our relatives, the whole world. You could say that we Fish Farmers agree with the words that begin the introduction to Lincoln’s PlanForward Comprehensive Plan, its Land Acknowledgement Statement: “We want to acknowledge that our community rests on the traditional lands of . . . [the Otos and other native people] and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it through the generations. This calls us to commit to work in partnership with our Indigenous Peoples, continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we now inhabit as well” (np). We at the Fish Farm feel this way, but what about our many prospective neighbors? Will they object to the singing and drumming that are part of inipi ceremonies and try to get them banned?

Actually, there’s little point in my worrying about living in the backyard of Wilderness Crossing because it is unclear that the Fish Farm can financially survive the development’s construction and our being annexed into Lincoln. We depend for meeting our utility and other bills on everyone paying a few hundred dollars a month for expenses. When the road is torn up and access becomes difficult (and the racket approaches unlivable), those who have someplace else to move to likely will. They will need to be able get to their places of employment. Annexation will mean being required to pay for being hooked up to Lincoln’s sewer system no matter how far away from us the city and the developers decide to place the main pipes. I have heard a figure of \$7,000 for such a hook-up, but it could easily be much more. We have, of course, been regularly sending property taxes to Lancaster County, but paying Lincoln city taxes will be an entirely different story. If we can’t afford all this and I have to sell, I don’t know if I will be able to find a buyer. The attraction of the Fish Farm has always been its solitude and beautiful surroundings, certainly not its run-down old buildings. People driving past have stopped their cars and walked over to ask me if I would sell the place to them without even bothering to look inside the house. All this will pretty much be decided on April 18.

Lincoln does need to plan for and implement balanced, symmetrical growth on all sides of the city, including to the west. However, those who originally developed the Comprehensive Plan map of proposed western city expansion in regard to the Snells’ dairy-farm land and those who have since followed that map unquestioningly have failed to take into account the unique terrain of both hill and flood risk in the same area, the climate changes that make environmental preservation more urgent, and the growing importance to the citizens of Lincoln of the peace, quiet, and undisturbed nature found in Wilderness Park. I doubt that those who first drew up the city expansion maps even knew about the grand views from the Snells’ hill because the hill has been private property for a long time, probably ever since the 1800’s. Clearly, the city should plan for and build urban-density housing and commercial units in west Lincoln, but that should be done farther away from Salt Creek and Wilderness Park than the proposed Wilderness Crossing. Indeed, there already seem to be several other developments being planned or constructed which meet that requirement.

Again, I ask you to vote against the proposed zoning and land-use changes at Monday’s meeting, but if you feel you cannot do that at this time, at least agree at the meeting to postpone the City Council’s decisions about the changes until further data can be collected about their ultimate impact. The data I mean include the following:

- **Updated Flood Plain Maps and Information:** The city is just beginning the process of updating its maps to address the twin effects of advancing development and increased

heavy precipitation due to climate change on the Salt Creek watershed and flood plain. No extensive development near Salt Creek should be approved until this data becomes available.

- **Updated Department of Transportation Studies and Plans:** The DOT needs to update its assessment of traffic load and flow on Pioneer Boulevard caused by the Wilderness Crossing development which may require intersection and street improvements. Will the bridge east of the the intersection of Pioneer Boulevard and South 1st Street need to be rebuilt because the road must be widened? Will increased southbound traffic on South 1st Street become bottlenecked and dangerous when it is diverted from the current straight road to one that meanders through a residential neighborhood? Also, the DOT should finalize its plans for the design of its new intersection at Pioneer Boulevard and the Highway 77 Bypass as well as its plans for turning Old Cheney into a dead-in road. All of this will have an impact on traffic.
- **Wilderness Park and Environs Conservation Design Master Study:** The time is long overdue for the city/county to conduct a study and create a policy plan to protect and enhance the varied natural environments of Wilderness Park and of adjoining properties that affect it. This would include maintaining and protecting riparian, habitat, and pollinator corridors and creating standards for adjacent areas that would regulate grading and drainage, stormwater runoff, noise and nocturnal light pollution, pesticide and herbicide drift, and the like.
- **Study and Documentation of the Snells' Hill:** Permission should be sought from the current owner of the Snells' old dairy farm land to study and measure the hill, document its views, and assess its potential for eventual addition to Wilderness Park as a public vista.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Kathleen Danker

From: [Rebecca Hruby Seth](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: for the official Public Hearing record for April 18th
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 7:09:36 PM



I am submitting these comments to be included in the official Public Hearing record, item 22R131.

I am writing to request a delay on changing the zoning for the parcel across from Wilderness Park. From what I understand due diligence has not been done regarding the impact the proposed Wilderness Crossing development would have on the Park. It would be only sensible to wait until updated floodplain maps and a traffic study could be completed. The recently updated Comprehensive Plan calls for protecting our environmental resources and floodplains. As the city grows, the area around the rest of Wilderness Park will also see pressure for development. We need to set a precedent now that protects environmentally sensitive areas. Wilderness Park is a valued resource for many citizens of Lincoln, offering walking and bird watching opportunities not found elsewhere in our city. Please protect this resource.

Thank you,

Rebecca Seth, 1971 Sewell Street, Lincoln

From: [April Fearing](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: #CZ21057 Wilderness Crossing
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 8:01:11 PM



Dear Members of the Lincoln City Council:

We are writing to express our opposition to the promised zoning change and development of the area near Wilderness Park. This project is #CZ21057 and the development is called Wilderness Crossing. We believe our city must act now as a community of mindful citizens in order to thoughtfully develop in this area.

Lincoln has a wonderful collection of city parks and trails. As a lifelong resident (April), I am really proud of this and Justin was amazed at the abundance of parks when he moved to Lincoln. However, there is only one park in the city like Wilderness Park. The name of this park is really important to how it helps us and how we believe countless other Lincoln residents feel about the park. Wilderness Park's wildness gives solace to the mind and body. Especially during the uncertain years of the recent pandemic, the park was there to provide a moment of escape from the daily struggle as events unfolded. Additionally, the park is considered a church or very holy place to a large number of residents. There was a beautiful letter to the editor in the Lincoln Journal Star recently from several Native American residents expressing their feelings about Wilderness Park's significance to them. Many species of animals and plants call Wilderness Park their home. Our precious Salt Creek also winds through the heart of the park. We believe this proposed zone change and development will fundamentally change the park. Despite the best efforts of the developer and their supporters, stewardship to the park cannot be maintained if the current proposal is approved.

Our love for the park is evident, but we also believe there are many practical considerations that have not been adequately addressed by the developers or city staff reporters. One very important consideration is traffic flow. We drive Pioneers Street on a daily basis and most days one of us is stopped by a train. These trains are slow and traffic gets backed up quickly. If a thousand cars are added to this area, we really feel like traffic could regularly be backed up to Highway 77, thus creating a dangerous situation. This area is already busy and we don't believe the current road situation would be safe. Another unaddressed situation is Salt Creek. The history of the last hundred years in Lincoln history shows flooding has been devastating to this area. Developers of the past finally abandoned their businesses due to continued serious floods in this same area. Climate change in the future, as well as looking to the past, needs to be fully researched before a development of this magnitude is built. These requests for time and research are thoughtful and practical. Please don't let these considerations slide by.

We appreciate your service to our community and your deep consideration of this letter. Lastly, we urge you to go to this area of Wilderness Park and the proposed site at Pioneers and 1st Street. Walk around and see for yourself what we are writing about.

Most Sincerely,
April and Justin Fearing

From: [Lucy Fer](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Wilderness Crossing/CZ21057
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 8:01:52 PM



Do you remember Snell's dairy farm? Did you ever get to savor their fresh whole milk? Since it was not homogenized, the cream rose to the top overnight; how the kitties loved it, and it was the best coffee creamer! I've lived out here more than 30 years. I miss the dairy, of course, but still enjoy the quiet, and watching all the wildlife cross back & forth between the park and the farm, with its groves, treelines, and pond where the chorus frogs serenade us with their Spring songs.

The proposed development would destroy all that, and threaten the park itself with noise, light pollution (which a six-foot fence would do almost nothing to eliminate), and runoff contaminated by lawn chemicals and dripping automotive fluids. Plan Forward 2050 sets forth many green/climate change-mitigating goals and policies with which you're probably familiar. The Planning Commission, however, evidently is not, since said policies seem to have been ignored in their approval of this. Perhaps the most egregious example is the granting of a waiver in regard to grading, drainage, and stormwater. This is extremely short-sighted and potentially disastrous, given the ever-accelerating climate catastrophe and its attendant torrential downpours. If the productive, rain-absorbing soil is covered with impermeable concrete and rooftops, where will that water go? Into Salt Creek, obviously, and straight on down to Lincoln.

Since the entire area west of Hwy.77 and north of Denton Rd. is being inundated with housing developments now and in the near future, why do we need still more, and immediately adjacent to the park? We don't. And what's the big hurry? Before even thinking of developments here, much more information is needed. The Wilderness Park Subarea Plan is over 20 years old and needs to be updated. A thorough traffic study is also required, as the DOT still does not know what a new Hwy.77/Pioneers Blvd. intersection will look like, and closing Old Cheney will shift a huge amount of traffic to Pioneers. Does the Salt Creek Resiliency Study truly take into account all this explosive growth in the watershed?

So what should we do with the Snell place instead? A number of greener options come to mind: continue farming, with a transition to organic methods, keeping more food production local, as suggested in Policy 22; make land available for Community Crops; add the east portion to the park; perhaps a solar array in the south area; some combination of all these. And here's a radical idea: return it to Native people. At any rate, keep the existing trees for the owls, hawks, turkeys, various songbirds, vultures, and occasional bald eagle that utilize them.

Deny the zoning change and development. Just say no to further encroachment on our beloved Wilderness Park!

Sincerely,
Steve Hutfless
4700 S. 1st
Lincoln, NE 68512

From: [Diane Walkowiak](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposition to Wilderness Crossing Project
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 8:05:46 PM



Dear City Council member:

We need to hit pause and reconsider development in areas near Wilderness Park, especially the proposed Wilderness Crossing development near South 1st and West Pioneers Blvd.

It boggles the mind that a high density development would be approved when decisions are being made using outdated and insufficient data. Documents such as flood plain maps, traffic models, and Parks & Recreation maps all need to be updated, and we still don't know details about the Highway 77 overpass/interchange. How will that reworked intersection (and development to the west of it) affect traffic flow and congestion? Is it wise to plop a high density development right next to that intersection?

The 2025 Plan mentions "connecting habitat for the movement of wildlife" and protected greenspace, and the city touts the Salt Valley Greenway yet lags in setting up plans to protect it. There are so many questions that come to mind. How will all this development affect the natural corridor for animals that use Wilderness Park? What effect will domestic cats in a large residential area have on birds and small animals in and near the park? What environmental and flood protections will be in place? How much will light and noise pollution plus a marked increase in activity nearby affect people and animals using the park?

The Planning Department admits that it used a Parks & Recreation sub-area plan that is 22 years old (!), so naturally the land proposed for Wilderness Crossing isn't currently identified for potential acquisition or to serve as a buffer for Wilderness Park. The fact that the city was negligent in updating the plan doesn't remove the necessity of a buffer.

I urge you to vote against annexing the area where the Wilderness Crossing development is proposed, and against changing the zoning from agricultural, until the city has taken the time to carefully examine the area in and around Wilderness Park, update pertinent information, and talk further with shareholders.

Once greenspace is lost to development, it can never go back to what it once was. Wilderness Park is too important an asset to the city to approve a development proposal that will so dramatically affect a segment of the park and also have residual effects along W. Pioneers Blvd.

Sincerely,

Diane Walkowiak
1600 Sioux St, 68502
402-613-9132

From: [Vienna Kopischke](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposition to CZ21057
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 8:52:03 PM



Dear Council Members and Mayor,

Please do not support zone change CZ21057.

Please let Wilderness Park remain a place for all Lincolniters to enjoy. Remember it's role in the flood water management for the surrounding area.

I understand our city is growing and more residential areas are needed to meet the needs of our neighbors. But there are other more environmentally responsible locations to develop.

Please also remember that this little patch of wilderness is very important and meaningful to our local native community. Their needs and desires are too often disregarded. We should not forget that our city grows on their land. Their input should weigh heavily in decisions of land management.

Please do not support this zone change. Make developers be more conscientious and forward thinking in their schemes for our city.

Thank you.

Vienna Kopischke
Lincoln NE, born and raised.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Margaret Vrana](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park Encroachment
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 9:00:36 PM



Dear Council Members,

I write urging you to delay any decision on the development proposal west of Wilderness Park to U.S. 77, between Pioneers Boulevard and Old Cheney Road until after the decisions have been made regarding traffic flow from U.S. 77 and Pioneers, as well as a new study of storm water systems for the entire area. This is definitely a time for fact finding first. Thank you for your wise consideration.

Sincerely, Margaret J Vrana
1700 J St Apt 605
Lincoln NE 68508

From: [Mark Brohman](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Letter on Proposed Zone Change CZ21057 (Annexation 21013)
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 9:00:40 PM
Attachments: [final letter with Mayor on Wilderness Park.pdf](#)



Please share the attached letter from the Wachiska Audubon Society Board with the City Council and the Mayor in regard to the proposed zone change CZ21057 (Annexation 21013) being addressed by the Lincoln City Council on April 18, 2022. Please consider the attached letter as our official comments at this time.

Mark Brohman
Executive Director
Wachiska Audubon Society
402-525-1504

Wachiska Audubon Society

Southeast Nebraska Chapter of the National Audubon Society

4547 Calvert Street Suite 10 Lincoln NE 68506-5643
402.486.4846 office@WachiskaAudubon.org



Wachiska
Audubon Society

April 18, 2022

RE: Agenda Item 6.k.22-71 (Annexation 21013) Wilderness Crossing LLC commercial and residential development to annex 141.46 acres, SE corner of Hwy 77 and W. Pioneers Blvd.

Lincoln City Council Members:

Wachiska Audubon is a local chapter of the National Audubon, and our office is in Lincoln. We own nine prairies and hold conservation easements on 23 properties in southeast Nebraska. We have over 320 members and most of those members reside in Lincoln. We are concerned about the recently announced development adjacent to Wilderness Park. We would like to see any decision about this development be delayed until you and the citizens have more information.

Flood storage for Salt Creek was the main original purpose for putting Lincoln's largest park under public ownership, but it also serves to protect birds and the web of natural services that support them: insects, trees, native plants, water, etc. Wilderness Park's 1400 acres have been enjoyed by Wachiska Audubon members as one of the excellent benefits of living in this city.

National Audubon has done several significant peer-reviewed studies showing the connections between climate change and the health and very existence of many bird species. Since we understand that addressing the causes and effects of climate change is one of the biggest challenges now to all of us who respect the natural world, we were pleased to see the city's study of climate's effects on Lincoln in 2020 and the Council's adoption of the Climate Action Plan last year.

The Climate Study identified flooding as "one of, if not the most, important climate risks for the city." (p. 60). The Climate Action Plan calls for implementing the recommendations of the Salt Creek Resiliency Study (also called "the Olsson report") and in Key Initiatives numbers 52 and 53 specifically point to the new data in NOAA Atlas 14 as essential to management of stormwater runoff, setting regulatory standards for freeboard and bringing up to date the floodplain map for Lincoln. (p. 20).

"NOAA Atlas 14 rainfall data is the best available data and is currently the best national practice for floodplain modeling." (Resiliency Study p. 101). In its Summary, the Resiliency report concluded: In the City of Lincoln, actual flood risks and potential flood damages are greater than depicted in the current regulatory models, maps and public information. Flood hazards on

Salt Creek and its tributaries can be expected to increase in the future. The degree of increase is uncertain, but generally, Lincoln should expect floodwater surface elevations multiple feet higher than the existing flood hazard data. (p. 103).

We believe that the information in the Climate Study and the policy directives adopted by the Council in the Climate Action Plan call for the city to wait for the new maps and analysis of their significance before approving this development project. This is the first real test of the Council's commitment to applying what we have come to understand about climate change. We hope it reflects an understanding of how dramatically a hotter climate has changed our world.

Another concern is the traffic congestion created in this area by such a large development. At this point the Department of Transportation has not presented their plan for the area and this could have a large impact on this property, Wilderness Park and the surrounding area. The Department of Transportation needs to develop a plan for street and intersections associated with this residential and commercial development, as well as future development.

We also have concerns about light and noise pollution from such a large development adjacent to Wilderness Park. Artificial light and noise can be very disruptive to not only birds, but all wildlife. The potential negative impacts of pets, especially cats, to ground nesting birds can be disastrous. Both migrating and nesting birds will be impacted by nearby development and must be taken into consideration when planning such a development near one of Lincoln's most valuable parks. We have not seen any details on how impacts will be avoided or minimized. With development so close to Wilderness Park, we are concerned that invasive species could become an issue. Exotic and non-native plantings in the development can have a huge impact on adjacent publicly owned parkland. Invasive species can also be a problem during construction with undesirable plants being introduced into the site.

We would ask that the Lincoln City Council delay action until some of the questions raised above are answered and that a Wilderness Park and Environs Master Plan be developed.

Thank you for your consideration,

Wachiska Audubon Society Board

Cc: Honorable Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

From: [Jodi Reese](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: CZ21057 Wilderness Park
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 9:16:23 PM



Dear Lincoln City Council Members and Mayor Gaylor Baird,

At first glance, the proposed development across from Wilderness Park may seem harmless and possibly even an asset for Lincoln. However, the reasons this project should be postponed and frankly cancelled far outweigh the benefits.

- The 2050 Plan Forward which is a consensus agreed upon for Lincoln and Lancaster County to use for future development of the area is not being followed. Specifically pages 18-26 were disregarded in the builder's proposal and not required by the Planning Commission. We knew when the Plan Forward was enacted making necessary changes to our behaviors and old practices was going to be uncomfortable, create pushback, and attempted exceptions, but the commitment was made and it is imperative. Why have a "Plan Forward" if it is not going to be followed consistently?
- This project impacts the park directly and by proxy the people. The existing animals, plants, and water will be impacted negatively. The green spaces of Lincoln are one of its charms and draws. One of Lincoln's oldest and most cherished parks will be destroyed. Once this is gone it will never be replaced.
- Fresh air and a connection to nature are a proven strategy for overall health, especially mental and emotional wellness which in these pandemic times has become utterly essential.
- Affordable housing is a great need in Lincoln. This development is not affordable housing. The housing needed is within the city proper, near existing public transportation, stores, jobs, healthcare, etc. Spending money and creativity on building urban infill is the answer to affordable housing. This type of housing development is wasteful and will not solve any of our current housing problems. In fact, this will only drive up the market making housing even more unaffordable and inaccessible.
- In addition to being a beloved destination to citizens of Lincoln, this is a very sacred place to our indigenous family, and it is quite possibly an ancient ceremonial space. I would request a geological land survey of the land in question. The hills alone are worth investigating.

As an elected City Council person, I will remind you of your duty to represent your constituents, all the citizens of Lincoln, not just those with deep pockets, big voices or a web of connections to people or organizations of influence. You are also bound to consider the land Lincoln resides upon currently, it's legacy and to consider the future impact of your vote. Part of your responsibility is preserving and conserving what we have currently and given our current socioeconomic situation, finding ways to creatively improve and plan for the future. This includes being cognizant of the damaging practices of farming and construction we have participated in and not repeating them because they are what we know and have done so many times before. Climate change is real and we all need to be part of a positive, forward-thinking impact on our environment near and far. For the Lincolnites of today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,
Jodi Reese, APRN - NP
Lincoln Resident

From: [Heather Klein](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Proposed Zone Change CZ21057
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 9:33:24 PM



To the Lincoln Nebraska City Council,

As a citizen of Lincoln, I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed zone change CZ21057. I am highly concerned about the short and long-term effects that moving forward with the zoning change will have on our beloved Wilderness Park, Salt Creek, and the area that lines them.

Wilderness Park and the portion of the Salt Creek that will be directly affected by the proposed zoning change are valuable, irreplaceable natural habitats. The close proximity of the zoning change region and impending housing development will have a grave impact on this stunning natural sanctuary. These effects will inevitably be:

- A significant rise in noise due to increased traffic and the number of people living in such close proximity to the park.
- A disruption to nocturnal birds and bats due to the addition of neighborhood street lights and the lighting from the proposed homes.
- Increased risk of fire due to the residents of the potential new dwellings, such as Fourth of July fireworks, in such close proximity to Wilderness Park.
- A dramatic increase in the amount of litter that will be blown into the park and Salt Creek.

The impact of a zoning change will affect the serenity that the park lends to so many of our city's inhabitants. The current, few in number homes that have neighbored this region of Wilderness Park have respectfully coexisted with the park's inhabitants, fauna, and waterway. This will cease to be the norm if the zoning change occurs and the proposed housing development is allowed.

It is not hard to imagine the intensified noise level that is certain to occur when hundreds of families are driving to and from their homes which will be located across the road from the park. Nor is it a leap of the imagination to recognize all of the varying sounds and commotion that the families will produce at their homes. There had been stated that a tall wall can be built alongside the park to protect it from the effects of the proposed development. My goodness, really? To wall in the animals who use the proposed building site for food collection, breeding, and as a throughway to other regions nearby? Plastic bags regularly fly in the wind, getting caught in trees all around the city, as does paper and other forms of garbage. A wall will not preserve Wilderness Park from the effects that the development will incur.

Wilderness Park is a location that provides retreat and a return to undisrupted nature. Within the park, there is seclusion that is precious and rare. It is the only remaining truly natural habitat of its type in our city. It is absolutely vital that we preserve the sanctuary of the park and the areas in close proximity to it from an onslaught of development and the many forms of pollution that will result from a change in zoning.

I ask that each of you, the mayor included, visit the regions of Wilderness Park that the proposed zone change CZ21057 would affect. I ask that you take your children, grandchildren,

nieces, and nephews along with you to walk in these regions. And as you walk, do so in silence or with hushed voices. Stop occasionally and listen to the bird calls, the wind moving through the trees and grasses. Hear the sound of the water, watch the fish swimming in the creek, and notice the beavers that live there. I encourage you to watch the faces of the children, and notice their enjoyment as they react to the sounds and scenes around them.

Lincoln is home to numerous parks however none of them are truly wild as Wilderness Park is. None other has the absence of man-made buildings, playgrounds, grills, and paved walkways. Wilderness Park is a haven in the city where the playground consists of fallen trees to climb and untrodden areas to explore, all in solitude from the bombardment of traffic and the ever-presence of human-made sound and light.

It is too easy for those with money to be had from the proposed zoning change and development to shrug off the effects that the proposed change in zoning will have on Wilderness Park, Salt Creek, and their inhabitants. It is the responsibility of the City Council to look into our city's future at the possible long-term effects and the impact of the proposal on the people, natural habitats, and the water. I ask that you, please, deny the proposed zoning change CZ21057 and vote to protect and preserve Wilderness Park and its nearby surrounding areas.

Sincerely,

Heather Klein
1727 Garfield Street
402-601-1286
vermontyoung@gmail.com

From: [Emily Levine](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Agenda Items 6 k. - m.
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022 10:53:11 PM



Dear Council

I hope you will all read this. I don't know if you folks read all the messages you get but I'd really like you to take a few minutes.

Two years ago this weekend my companion of thirty years died. It wasn't a romance, but a friendship we should all be so fortunate to have in our lives.

Betty was one of the people who lived in the house "grandfathered" in to Wilderness Park. You know, the house across the road from the monstrous development y'all might give the go-ahead to SW of Pioneers and S 1st Street.

You may not understand what that land is. Maybe you've never even been out there. Maybe you don't know how the line of osage orange stand atop the west ridge and how that looks when the sun goes down. Or maybe you never seen the little pond—a whole world. Or watched the deer, and turkey, and foxes . . .

Anyway, this is a poem I wrote shortly after Betty died. Yup, *that specific piece of land* conjured a poem. And is the subject of a poem. Like Betty, once that land is gone, we'll never get its wonders back.

I Take Peaches for a Walk

I take Peaches for a walk,
"around the block" you used to call it:

Up the road to the drive of the old house where the dairy was—both long gone now—
to that high point where we sat for the eclipse totality,
you in a pissy mood because the storm the night before
drove a tree branch through your pickup windshield
and we couldn't go up to the river to camp.
But we looked down across the valley of Salt Creek
sharing that once in a lifetime strange dimness together.

Down to the pond where the calamus grows in wet years,
blooms smelling like tangerines.
Where we talked about how the Lakota call it *sinjkphéthawote*,
muskrat his/her food,
or *hoñwa*, for the leaf and stalks,
and *šúŋkčhé*, dog penis, for the root.
One year it was so dry even some of the old cottonwoods along the pond edge died.
And we mourned them.

She runs off and back on dog business, sniffing rabbits and so much more.
She seems almost happy.
Not like that first walk after you died
when she was scratching herself non-stop, chewing her feet bloody—
manifesting the pain we all felt,
waiting for you to come home.

On these walks is when she is happiest
On these walks is when my tears finally come.

How many walks did we have in thirty years?
How much tramping and bushwhacking?
How many paths and two-tracks?
How many adventures?
Remember that raw October day at Fort Rob
when we ducked into an old wooden shed to escape the wind,
only to find it stacked high with severed buffalo heads?
That was some horror.
Whites of eyes, tongues lolling.

Remember that baby beaver along the bank
when we were walking the sandy-bottomed Loup?
Or that last trip, just this past September,
running into quicksand out in the middle of the river,
getting serious stuck and sinking,
Peaches trotting by,
looking at us as we tried to pull our legs out,
the suction holding us?

Or that long walk up to Bucking Mule Falls high in the Bighorns,
when we camped at Porcupine Creek?
Your place with Mary, mine of family childhood.
What was it you used to say about coincidence?

Or all the walks at the lakes around here—
man-made for flood-control,
oases of life amid sterile fields of row-crops.
That one time we hadn't seen each other for a while
and we were finally walking again
and we walked and walked and walked
all around Conestoga,
and when we stopped and looked down,
between us was a large perfect turtle shell.
It rests now with my others in the Cabinet of Curiosities.

All the dead animals we came upon,
you called them "carci,"
your made-up plural of carcass—
so long- and often-used that I would forget and use it among others,
receiving blank looks.
Our own language, yes.

Severed deer legs along railroad tracks, jaw bones,
indeterminate pieces of hide and fur.
Feathers and feet.
Remember we bought, at some highway gas station pit stop,
“Road Kill Bingo”
and howled as we played, driving west?

All the walks that first winter,
a Deep Snow Winter, they called them.
Trudging behind you in your footsteps,
the great Gentleman Dog, Lupé, still a pup, leading the way.
He always led, or took off on his own dog business.

The first time I took Peaches out after you died,
she walked right behind me the whole walk,
making me Alpha in your absence, staying close.
But yesterday she ran, tail wagging,
so busy—going here, going there, disappearing, reappearing.

I leave the Acorus pond—did we ever figure out:
was it natural or did someone plant a few once, long ago?—
and I head uphill to the ridge.
I stay inside the tree-line, away from the highway below,
and walk the top of the field.
It’s a “corn year.”
There was always one year you liked better, corn or alfalfa,
but I can’t remember which.
Or why.

Now the little green shoots force themselves out of the brown earth
and into the light and air
among last year’s tire-shattered stubble,
cells inexorably replicating, green, green, green.
The rusty-orange of the Osage roots ripped out by the tractor
lie exposed, wounded.

I stop at the badger hole
and think of all the animals
we saw together over thirty years of companionship—
you would love this:
“‘one who accompanies or associates with another,’ from Old French *compagnon* ‘fellow, mate, friend, partner’ (12c.), from Late Latin *companionem* (nominative *companiono*), literally ‘bread fellow, messmate,’ from Latin *com* “with, together” (see *com-*) + *panis* ‘bread,’ from PIE root **pa-* ‘to feed’”—
could I list them all?

The dark coyote crossing the Loup behind us
that baby beaver
Blue Racer snakes
countless deer
elk

sunning turtles on stones,
and a hundred turtles laying eggs along the gravel road up at Bowman Lake—
each digging her hole and stretching one crook-ed leg down into it
so the soft white orbs would
gently roll down and her foot could tuck them to the side
to make room for the next;
the following morning most of those nests were dug up,
bits of now-hardened shell strewn about.
There had been a raccoon banquet.
And, yes, raccoons
Muskrats
Least weasels
Prairie dogs and buffalo
Rabbits and squirrels, of course
And Lupé gulping down a whole den of some baby critters—
woodchucks, maybe?

So many hawks
eagles
that huge osprey
all the backyard birds—
you so strung on pain pills that summer your back went nuts,
lying in the old webbed recliner with binocs and field guide.
Obsessed, a running commentary on them all.
And herons in their rookeries.
I saw my first magpie with you.
Remember that line of white pelicans moving slow and low down the river?
Owls, gliding silently through black trees,
and hooting in the night wherever we camped
and cranes,
always the cranes—garoo-ah-ah!
That sound of them in their thousands lifting off in the dim light of morning
and coming back to roost in the safety of the river at dusk as the sky caught fire.

Dragonflies and damsels, and the difference between them
Clouds of skeeters
Tick bombs
The fat spiders webbed across the paths at Gasteyer Nature Sanctuary,
so thick we had to swing sticks in front of us.
How many butterflies?
The ant lions in the fine dust out by the barn,
lying in wait at the bottoms of their conical traps.

Mountain trout—rainbows and browns.

I cross the spot where that huge mound of mined topsoil was,
someone selling the very earth.
But it made a great safety backstop
when we target-shot your .22,
plinking tin cans;
my gratification in learning, after a childhood of cap guns,

that I actually am a good shot.

All the strands of barbed wire lifted or pushed for each other
to cross fences,
and gates opened—and closed.
All the cottonwood logs we sat on
resting and having a smoke.

Standing on countless rises or above creeks
looking at our shadows side by side.

I get to the survey marker,
turn downhill toward the little dredged pond by the church—
the huge windowless pre-fab metal rectangle—
you called it The Warehouse of the Souls.
Peaches leaps in the water,
little frogs scattering and plopping in ahead of her.
Later, rolling on the grass, wriggling on her back to dry.

You are everywhere. Everywhere.
So I don't know how to make sense of your absence.

We head home back up the road,
the dog trotting along behind me now,
knowing to be safe from the rare dust-raising car.
Cutting through the Parks Department shop yard,
we stand on the bank high above Salt Creek,
studying the tracks in the sandbar below.
Your shadow is not next to mine.

Emily Levine
May 23, 2020

Thank you. Do the right thing.

Emily

Emily Levine
Independent Scholar
724 South 18th Street
Lincoln NE 68508
(402) 475-4387
emily.levine@earthlink.net

From: [Rachel Ellis](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposition to Zone change cz21057 Wilderness Crossing
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 12:04:55 AM



Dear City Council,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed zone change CZ21057 "Wilderness Crossing." As a life-long resident of Lincoln, I can say Wilderness Park is my favorite place in the city. I was very concerned when I heard about the proposed housing development at 1st and Pioneers Blvd. My concern is not only because of my desire to preserve the wildness of Wilderness Park, but for structural concerns as well.

Salt Creek has flooded in the last 10 years, and with the addition of non-diverse yards, concrete, and increased storm water run-off from housing so close to the creek, that risk will be increased. More data must be gathered about current flooding projections that reflect the world's current climate state, as the last data gathered for the Salt Creek Watershed was over 20 year ago. It would not reflect the goals of the city per the Comprehensive Plan to proceed rapidly with any development decisions until more data is gathered for the Salt Creek Flood Plain, and until a Wilderness Park environ study can be done to preserve the delicate sandstone prairie within the park.

Another reason to reconsider this zone change is because the NDR has not yet decided what plans are for HWY 77 and Pioneers Blvd. interchange. Adding several hundred additional houses and other housing units to this area would exacerbate the existing traffic congestion that occurs at this intersection.

I believe a broader view is necessary when considering how to develop with ecological conservation in mind. Salt Creek and the salt flats north of Lincoln are a rare ecosystem that should be included in necessary studies. This includes following the recommendations in the City's Climate Action Plan.

I oppose the development and zone change CZ20157 "Wilderness Crossing" as it is currently proposed. The decision to vote on this matter should be delayed until more data can be gathered and the studies laid out in the Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Salt Creek Flood Plain Resiliency study have been completed and assessed. There is no rush to proceed in development in this area when there are so many other suitable locations for development in other areas with less direct ecological impact.

I deeply appreciate you taking the time to read my concerns.

Thank you,

Rachel Ellis

4011 Witherbee Blvd.

Lincoln, NE 68510

From: [Robert Klein](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 6:31:26 AM
Attachments: [21057.bio.pdf](#)



Dear City Council,

Please find attached a pdf of my input for your deliberations in regard to the subject. Please also find attached a picture of the property for perspective (right of road). The individual on the road at the top of the hill is approximately 6 ft. It has been said a 6 ft fence would mitigate light trespass from street and urban lighting into Wilderness Park. The feasibility seems in question.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Robert Klein

Dear Lincoln City Council,

Human consciousness is shifting. I see it in things like the Plan Forward and the vision it contains. Not that long ago climate change was a term used almost exclusively in science-related circles, absent from language of guiding documents like the Greenprint Challenge.

We are beginning to see recognition and respect for the rights and sovereignty of other organisms. Progress with the rights of nature would be significantly useful today- future citizens will likely regret policies and legal instruments weren't available to decision makers in the present. Forward thinking people like our Mayor will help get us there.

The riparian woods of the Wilderness Park area represent the western limit of the Eastern deciduous forest ecosystem. Within that ecosystem are several plants that are not found elsewhere in the county. The presence and distribution of understory plants in the wooded areas of the park and their characteristically slow rate of dispersal are evidence of the very long term presence of the woods along Salt Creek. The woods precede white settlement and any urban planning language concocted by their descendents.

Also within the park specific to the property under hearing review, is a unique native prairie that probably survived the plow due the sandstone topography. All other prairie habitat adjacent to the park's woods in the lower areas of the basin were turned to agricultural fields. So, the prairie is a special place. Yes, the proposed change of zone isn't within the park. The change of zone creates implications for the habitats which are within the park boundaries and for the organisms that are dependent upon areas like the proposal property for their survival and reproduction. The amount of land area that an individual species requires to successfully exist and reproduce varies and is species specific. Biological preserves (which Wilderness Park functions as) overtime suffer from what is called 'ecological decay'. A process where the number of species that exist within a preserve declines. Many factors are involved, but particularly relevant here are those that pertain to land use around the preserve boundaries. Changes in land use, like prairie to agriculture and agricultural to urban environment, present changes which organisms must adapt to or become extirpated from the area. Completely modifying all landscapes adjacent to the park to residential as the Comprehensive Plan and which the proposal property is one of those puzzle pieces, present factors, individually and collectively, which will affect long-term survival of a portion of the organisms that inhabit Wilderness Park. Sound, light, and habitat change are the main factors that will impact survival.

There are organisms that utilize the proposal property as a corridor to other areas or resources, for food, and other purposes. Some species, probably like the Robin, may adapt, others will be restricted to the park itself and dependent exclusively on the park habitats. Housing development introduces cats as an additional novel mortality risk- I've seen estimates that pet and feral cats kill on the order of a billion birds in the US annually. Collisions with building windows will present a source of mortality to birds that utilize a property changed to high density housing. Nighttime outdoor lighting affects migratory songbird ability to navigate by confusing or drowning out the mechanisms they've adapted to using over millions of years. It also complicates the ability of prey to hide from predators as a result of both direct sources of light and skyglow created by artificial light. Outdoor lighting also is detrimental to insects that confuse the urban lights with the natural nighttime light source, the moon, they evolved over hundreds of millions of years to reproduce by. Sound pollution from roads, radios, dogs, construction,

vehicles including exhaust enhancement and car stereos, children, recreation vehicles, fireworks increasingly not limited to Fourth of July and New Years, emergency response vehicles, etc, all impact the ability of organisms to communicate. If this seems difficult to conceptualize, consider holding the public hearing outside city hall and see how effective the public process is. Because so much of the property is higher in elevation to the rest of the surrounding area, all the sound pollution sources noted above would be broadcast to the lower surrounding areas.

Action step 3 of Comprehensive Plan Policy 24 states: "Consider the relationship among environmental resources (i.e., prairies, riparian corridors, floodplains, freshwater and saline wetlands, and other natural areas), key corridors/linkages, and the adjacent land uses for appropriate management and resource protection." What studies can be relied upon to know what species are in the park, what species depend on habitat in adjacent properties, and assess what the consequences of adjacent land use and how to mitigate and protect?

The proposal details housing unit development immediately next to the prairie mentioned early. Comprehensive plan policy 19 directs 'Protect, restore, and enhance native prairies', under which action step 3 specifically addresses buffers. "Identify opportunities to work with property owners, both public and private, to acquire land or conservation easements that can serve as buffer areas around prairies and other natural areas for management and resource protection as well as support use of federal, state, or local conservation programs." Here's an applicable opportunity for native prairie and natural area resource conservation and protection. This language establishes the recognition of the importance of buffering native prairie from adjacent land uses. If Wilderness Park has long been recognized as an environmentally sensitive natural area, why is there not a buffer? Certainly an opportunity that involves public and private ownership. Over the past decades, much work has been done by both Parks and Rec staff and local organizations like the Boy Scouts and Friends of Wilderness Park to control invasive species to the prairie along 1st street. A buffer would be a means in accordance with action step 4 of Policy 19 by not unduly creating factors that inhibit restoration efforts or incite degradation. Conservation managers and botanists can confirm the incompatibility of the housing intentions of the proposal and the native prairie in Wilderness Park.

One perhaps unanticipated rationale for a buffer is fire. Periodic prescribed burns are an integral part of the health of native prairies. The Greenprint challenge (pg 16) notes: "Management of native prairies requires the implementation of ¼ to ½ mile smoke buffers to accommodate periodic fire."

Another justification of buffers is mosquitoes and ticks. While an important food resource for bats and birds, they are not appreciated by people. Housing at the edge of the park would likely result in significant applications of pesticides and destruction of non-target organisms (pesticides don't just kill mosquitoes).

My involvement with the Wilderness Park subarea activities illustrated an awareness/comprehension about buffer areas for the park. Policy 19 of Plan Forward illustrates understanding as well. This proposal doesn't communicate comprehension. The proposal would involve housing closer to the Wilderness Park border than previously and to the native prairie immediately adjacent to the proposal property. Past development projects have had some variant of buffering. This proposal seeks to place housing as close as possible. Intentions to

encroach upon and degrade the native prairie neighbor with light, sound, household/yard chemical, and invasive species trespass is absolutely objectionable. The development proposal is a version like what is seen with some farmers that rip out a treeline to put in another row or so of corn. Here, the proposal is to rip out and move a road so another row of houses can be built-right to the edge of the park.

Wilderness Park provides habitat for monarchs and native pollinators, so the Mayors' Monarch Pledge noted by Policy 19 action step 13 and Policy 24 action step 4 are pertinent. Some residents of a proposed development might view native prairie plants as weeds and see it their right or an act of generous good will to use herbicides at the detriment to the prairie.

The planning department has been talking about clustering for a while now. Policy 18 Conservation Design states, "[c]onservation design is a type of development where buildings are grouped together on part of the site while permanently protecting the remainder of the site from development. There is a savings in development and maintenance costs due to less road surface, shorter utility runs, less grading and other site preparation costs." Comprehensive Plan Policy 49 action step 1 d also reiterates and "[e]ncourag[ing] energy efficient compact development, conservation design for new subdivisions and mixed use development. How does the proposal show leadership commitment with any of these?

In this circumstance, clustering/conservation design (for the owner the term might be creation care), the practice would serve the larger community by separating housing away from the park. As noted on page 83 of the Salt Creek Flood Resiliency report, "[c]luster subdivision regulations protect open space or environmentally sensitive lands, including hazard-prone areas." The proposal does not obviously demonstrate clustering or retention and incorporation of existing aspects of the property. The slopes of the proposal property would require more, not less site grading and preparation to achieve the street design. The topography of the property provides a mitigating factor to the sounds from Highway 77. Site grading would reduce sound buffering (especially if the Department of Roads grades their strip of land to the west). The loss of highway noise buffering would be an additional tragedy to the solitude and peace that can be experienced in the park. The layout of the proposal is an imposition of ideas upon the landscape rather than illustrating forward thinking of working with the land.

The Greenprint Challenge (page 10 & 11) that Policy 24 acknowledges relevant to today, describes a community attitude survey done for a Comprehensive Plan that preserving natural resources was the highest scoring response. The survey presented a key finding quite relevant for this circumstance. "When asked about trade offs involving such natural resources as native prairies, wetland, trees and floodplains, the households surveyed were strongly in favor of preserving such natural assets even if it meant public funds would need to be used to purchase land development rights." The public sentiment is probably stronger today than when the survey was done. What action shall the Council take or set into motion on account of public sentiment?

Comprehensive Plan Policy 25, action step 15 is : "Identify open space areas that are particularly valued by community residents for rare or unique attributes and establish development regulations utilizing a balance of incentive and mandatory measures." Wilderness Park is clearly an open space valued by Lincoln citizens that measures, interwoven from Policies 18, 19, and 24, clearly apply.

Comprehensive Plan Policy 24 action step 5: "Support natural climate solutions identified in the Climate Action Plan including carbon sequestration, interconnected habitats, flood

mitigation and water conservation and apply strategies to quantify the benefits of ecosystem services." How does the proposal show comprehension or concern about any of these?"

Comprehensive Plan Policy 34 action step 2: "Continue to identify and maintain high-value Capitol View Corridors and protect those views through regulations and guidelines, including vistas that gain prominence as the community grows. Structures that may interfere with these public corridors should be reviewed by the Capitol Environs Commission and a recommendation made within the context of their overall effect upon the view." It is my understanding the Capitol can be viewed from the proposal property. I have been to many places where views of downtown areas of other municipalities are on public lands. It would be amazing if the view from this property could be held for all of Lincoln citizens to experience and afforded an overlook of Wilderness Park as well.

Some have advocated as an alternative opportunity for the property owner to influence the Lincoln community and for the economic impacts of the property, large scale community garden and market food systems in partnership with numerous entities such as schools, non-profit organizations, and local farmers from diverse cultural backgrounds seeking economic opportunities. (Comprehensive Plan Policy 22). This concept would provide much longer term job creation than the duration of housing unit construction and progresses the city toward greater food security and resilience while positively impacting the health and well-being of community members. All while sequestering carbon and increasing stormwater retention in accordance with recommendations of the Natural Resource District resulting from the Salt Creek Flood Resiliency report.

Another consideration is development of a utility scale solar farm given the solar orientation and access a portion of the property benefits from. Solar installations are one of the faster growing job industries. And a source of income for property owners.

Pushing residential development for the property ahead of the priority C timeframe currently in Plan Forward and efforts to change the Tier priority designations per the hearing agenda, appears a dramatic effort to place private interests first in disregard to the policies of Plan Forward. It appears private interest is being pushed at public expense and premature to the planned process that public dollars were invested to create. The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

Sincerely,
Robert Klein



From: [tanika.cooper](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposition to Zone Change #CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 7:17:12 AM



Good Morning,

I'm a third grade teacher and unfortunately, I cannot attend the city council meeting today at 3 p.m. Please accept this as my testimony in place of my attendance.

I recently finished teaching my students about environmental health as well as city planning. My students can tell you why it's important to plan where you build schools, houses, factories, farms, airports etc. They would be able to tell you that it is a bad idea to build 500 plus units near Wilderness Park. So, you can say I'm also writing this letter on their behalf as well as my own. I'm in opposition of the council approving the zone change (#CZ21057) west of Wilderness Park at 1st and Pioneers. If you cannot disapprove of the zone change outright, I propose you delay the vote on zone change #CZ21057 until further research of the area is conducted. It's imperative that we all know the effects a high density residential zone would have on Wilderness Park, the community, the culture (for I know there are several Native Americans that depend on the medicines found in Wilderness Park) and the Salt Valley Greenway.

I was proud to learn that our city has a comprehensive plan of conservation and environmental consciousness development. I was disappointed to learn that the developers ignored and even requested waivers to basic requirements for development such as having a plan for drainage, not to mention their obvious lack of consideration for flood damage prevention. It seems I wasn't the only one, for two planning commissioners voted against the zone change #CZ21057 and there is a considerable amount of opposition to the zone change from the community.

I must end this letter as I need to get ready to teach the future leaders of this city. One of their lessons this week will be on Lincoln's government and I want to tell them that our current city council and mayor has used their comprehensive plan of development to make sure our environment is healthy in the future.

Please delay the vote on the zone change #CZ21057 until more data can be collected. Say no to business as usual tactics and do your homework.

Sincerely,

Tanika Cooper

From: [Linda Plock](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: CZ 21057 Wilderness Crossing zone change
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 7:41:44 AM



Dear City Council members and Mayor,

I was introduced to Wilderness Park a few years before it became a park as a young Botany student at the University of Nebraska. We went on a field trip through a beautiful forested area stretching along the Salt Creek waterway south of Lincoln. There were diverse riparian plant communities, trees, birds and animals that could no longer be seen in the city of Lincoln. It was a rare treat to encounter cactus in the remnants of a sandstone prairie there in the area off of S. 1st St. by Flying Fish Farm. Since that time, I return to Wilderness Park during all seasons. I have led hikers, Scouts, and school groups along its winding trails in a world they never thought grew in Lincoln. I have also participated in Native American ceremonies there and removed invasive plant species for years. It is a special place and the 35th largest city park in the United States.

To place a village adjacent to the Wilderness Park section in question concerning this zone change would cause an amazing number of impacts to the area such as noise and light pollution, heavy traffic, invasive plant species, garbage, uncontrolled pets, destruction of the surface due to grading, and uncertain storm water drainage in a place that could flood.

The policies involving Conservation Design (P18), Native Prairie (P19 for the sandstone prairie area), Ecology and Habitat (P20), Floodplains and Riparian Areas (P21), Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Green Corridors Concept Implementation (P23), Environmental Resource Protection (P24), Open Space with Development (P25), and Watershed Planning (P55) in the city's 2050 Comprehensive Plan have not been addressed at all for this zoning project. This is a serious oversight. The watershed and floodplain data sheets are 22 years old and really need an update because of climate change and major flood events that have happened since their creation and already changed the land. The City of Lincoln Climate Action Plan probably was not consulted either because it suggests many initiatives that can be taken by citizens to preserve the land and mitigate the risks of living within the watershed. This requires communication with them. Has anyone asked the folks in that neighborhood and those living downstream what they thought about this development? It concerns them.

The Highway 77 and Pioneers Boulevard intersection project has not yet been decided. It would considerably impact traffic. This adds another uncertainty to the development plans of this area.

When you mess with a watershed, unfortunately everyone pays for it. Communities downstream will be flooded unnecessarily, property damage could be in six or seven figures, and the irreparable loss of a perfectly functional natural hydrologic system would cause far more expense than any planning could foresee at the moment with outdated data. A lot of homework needs to be done considering the environmental impact, the certainty of future flooding, updating watershed information, the use of the land by numerous Native American people in the community, degrading a unique ecosystem and compliance with the city's own Comprehensive Plan's policies. Please take this into consideration.

I hope that the CZ 21057 zone change will be put on hold until all these problems are properly addressed and discussed with the communities involved.

Sincerely,

Linda Plock

From: [Clint Densberger](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposing Zone Change CZ 21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 8:25:48 AM



----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Clint Densberger <cdensberger@yahoo.com>
To: C Densberger <cdensberger@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 18, 2022, 08:20:42 AM CDT
Subject:

I was conceived in war, a time of great struggle and conflict, a time of poison and deceit, and a time of new birth. In December, 1969, boys from across America fled to Canada escaping the first draft since World War II, Fred Hampton had just been brutally murdered by the machinations of J. Edgar Hoover's illegal COINTELPRO program. Napalm, made here in the heartland, had been dumped aflame atop some 4.8 million Vietnamese. The NAACP was still struggling to get their youth access to public swimming pools, while some communities just filled them with concrete. The death and poison and struggle echoed in through the soft, safe, tender womb of my mother and reverberated into my flesh.

We don't choose the time of our birth. We can decide what to do with the conflicts that are thrust upon us in our time. Climate Change creeps into our lives at present.

Great conflict and struggle fluctuates like the cycles of the seasons. We are at the crossroads of another great struggle today that is beginning to consume all of humanity, planet wide, with ramifications so complex that none of us can fully foresee. And so we have an immense opportunity to make bold new decisions.

When the First Nebraskans carefully prepare their sweat lodge, it is done meticulously, with a care, a gratitude that reflects their respect with Mother Earth, because they are creating a living representation of the womb. From that womb, all life is created and all life returns. All the ancestors dwell there and can be

spoken to. All the wisdom of time and all healing can be summoned, if one is prepared in the right way. These are not secrets I disclose, these are religious rights, rights that were systematically stripped away from the First Nebraskans.

Nebraska is in my blood. Born the fifth generation on one side and fourth on another, my roots go back to the first and second generation of colonial settlers here in Lincoln and up north where the Niobrara River finishes its course at the Missouri. My great grandmother washed our family's clothes in the Missouri, my granddad watered his livestock from the Ponca and Redbird. My granddad here pumped water from the Oak Creek for his livestock. These waters, like the Salt Creek, have become sacred to me, mni wiconi, water is life, water is sacred. These are the ever flowing braids that have literally sustained my family for generations.

My father, when he died, came to me often in my dreams those first few years. Working and drinking consumed my existence then, unwilling to stop and deal with my anger at cancer or my guilt for being so absent from my mother. Those dreams confused me, how could they be so real, when my conscious life seemed so unreal and chaotic?

Socrates reminded *us that a life unexamined is not a life worth living*. I kept myself so busy I didn't have time for self-reflection.

This City, my home, is often too busy for that same introspection. Commissioning studies, creating complicated schemes for growth with complicated terms. Some of the officials in charge probably struggle to understand its complexity.

The Dalai Lama points out in his Paradox of our Age, "*we have more degrees, but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgement, more experts, but more problems.*" What set of circumstances compels the City to take a step back and reflect? When will we take a collective breath and imagine our future?

Shortly after getting into recovery from my addictions, I was invited to sweat, in a lodge much like the one that sits feet away from a proposed backyard. I prayed with my father, my ancestors, my higher power. I sought and I found healing. I forgave my father for being defeated by cancer, I forgave myself

for being angry at him for his defeat.

There are multiple studies and goals and objectives and policies which speak to addressing concerns of Climate Change, feeding underserved communities with healthy local food, protection of natural resources, infill housing development for efficiency. And as many of my colleagues and fellow citizens have so eloquently pointed out, the proposal before us addresses a small portion of those stated goals. A stakeholder group composed of parties directly affected by this proposal needs to be created before any shovel full of dirt is approved.

Myriad other developments are already underway west of highway 77 that will do a great job at increasing the numbers of affordable housing. This development can and should be tabled until the community can reflect on her rare natural resource and what condition we would like to leave it for our next generations.

The tradition and protocol that exists regarding growth designations throughout the city, most have been created by officials years or decades ago. These are not reasons to proceed unabated. On the contrary, these are the reasons we need to set aside normal operating procedures and bring the stakeholders to the table, with current data around rainfall patterns, with current values that reflect the growing importance of our limited and decreasing natural resources that are under threat not just from development or growth, but from Climate Change knocking on the door.

Jared Diamond, after decades of studying societal collapse, points out *that human impact, that is communities which inadvertently destroy the resource base with which they depend, combined with Climate change, plays a significant role in that collapse*. The relationships of friendly neighbors and enemies are equally important. Look at the struggles for water in the seven states adjacent to us, and our Governor's attempts to exacerbate our relationship with a canal. Think of Russia right now, and the struggles for resources abroad that directly affect our lives. Mr. Diamond points out *that it is often a society's conflict between the decision makers and their short term interests, and that of the majority which leads to long term collapse*.

In recovery, I was taught to do a fearless moral inventory. I had

to surrender all that no longer served me, to adapt using new tools to confront my problems. Adapting is healthy.

But our current problem looms before us and we have not yet reacted with any action equal to the challenge. That we have just a couple decades to adapt at best, scientists agree. It is at our peril to ignore the IPCC warnings that grow ever more dire. Our soil's health or erosion, with which we depend, our reliance on fossil fuel heavy imported foods, our reliance on irrigation dependent water intensive crops in the arid west, our toxic chemical dependent crops in our Salt Creek Basin that destroy our water ways, the monoculture fields of corn, that destroy biodiversity and the insects that thrive on that, our continued reliance on natural gas, all of these issues need to be resolved and now.

Or as Jared Diamond points out, that his most consistent question by his grad students, will be asked by any surviving future generations, ***“what were they thinking when they knew they were destroying the soil and water and didn’t adapt?”*** Long held values and traditions like urban growth charts can get in the way of adapting soon enough.

The Anishnaabe have a language that does not recognize plants or animals as objects. Linguists call it animated nouns. A Cottonwood might be a he, for example. These sentient beings were teachers, an old tree had much to teach if you paid attention and listened. Scientists have confirmed that plants communicate, some of them audibly, that they make choices, they adapt and learn. Animals communicate not just amongst themselves, but across species, they play, they worry, they experience anxiety and stress. We have not been listening for a long time. We have a lot to learn, if we want to become their stewards again, before we have lost all the insects and sacred plants and animals.

Mni Wiconi, the waters are sacred for all life. Winona LaDuke talks about ecological amnesia across generations, forgetting how we once connected to our environments. My great grandmother using the clean waters of the Missouri to wash our family's clothes, or my father catching and eating fish from Oak Creek, relationships with the earth. We are losing these connections because we are destroying them.

Walter Echo-Hawk, just 12 days ago, opened a three day symposium sponsored by the Center for Great Plains Studies with an address to the Lied Center on Reckoning and Reconciliation. His thoughts were succinct and sobering. He did not harbor any ill will. He called for an elevation of dialogue, acceptance, forgiveness and commitments to healthier relationships going forward.

The near extinction of the Pawnee, over 91%, happened despite that tribes' friendly relationship with the US and with the earliest Nebraskans. We removed them anyway. Our reckoning with the depredation thrust upon the Pawnee, Oto-Missouria, Ponca, Winnebago, Omaha, Lakota has been long overdue. We must have the courage to accept the reality and begin the healing, with them, and with our relationship to the natural environment both. We stole their land and we haven't done a very good job as stewards of her resources.

A few days after the presentation, Walter told me that there has been very little repatriation of exhumed Pawnee from Nebraska. And yet, adjacent to the Salt Creek, there is purported to be several hastily buried graves at various locations after settlers murdered them in fear. Our community has not yet taken responsibility for those crimes, yet this remnant parcel of soil may still hold evidence of these atrocities, buried underneath the horse trails or underneath the soils of the farm adjacent, the last pieces of relatively undisturbed virgin ground in the entire City. The least we could do, would be to locate these remains, before any development.

And then, as a small token of reconciliation, from our community, should include a small donation of land atop the Dakota Sandstone, a sacred site that had been used for hundreds of years. The Oto or Pawnee would walk up the centuries old trail on the west bank of the Salt Creek, look out over the entire Salt Creek with its vast salt pans and plan the hunt for the elk, the bison, the antelope or bear that would gather from miles around to replenish their salt. This hill top would have been a place of prayer, of gratitude for the bounty of these lands.

This gift, which the city could purchase for that purpose, could easily be tied together with the Park's trail system, creating a

ceremonial prayer trail connecting this sacred place with the City's Indian Center, facilitating a religious restoration for this underserved community. A spiritual reconciliation that is so desperately needed after these 166 years of misunderstanding and oppression. A small token of healing could be achieved.

Surrounding that outcropping, fanned out in a semi-circle like the spokes of a wheel, this agricultural land could produce thousands of pounds of healthy, sustainable food for the sacred corn varieties of the tribal communities, the culturally important foods of the Karen, the Sudanese, the Ukrainians helping to decrease the stresses of uprooted lives with familiar, healthy meals that help families adapt. LPS and UNL could collaborate with state of the art solar powered hydroponic gardening. Kids could learn to create food from seed to table, taking their skills back home and encouraging families across Lincoln to eat more healthy, hands on vegetables. This semi-circle of growth would speak to our State's agricultural roots, while addressing the realities we face today and into the future. This project would decrease reliance on crops from California that are continuing to struggle for water to grow them as the drought continues.

The womb of Mother Earth would become a target for the curious teenagers who could escape to the safety of their backyards if this proposal would go forward. The religious expression that was so admirably defended in our Constitution was not applied to the First Nations. We cannot continue to steal and encroach on these spiritual practices, so little remains as it is.

A garden wheel fanning out from a restored prairie hilltop, what a showcase of the best of this City, how fantastic an entrance from the south and west our City would be. Not just another strip mall or convenience store, not just a few new houses. No, as farmers from Beatrice prepare for the bend west on highway 77 heading north, spread out across the hill in front of them, will lay the best examples of a community, coming together for healing, for restoration, for the future, using the best gardening methods and in ways that grandfathers decades ago had learned. We can become the model with which other cities across the nation would come to learn from.

And in so doing, we would indeed achieve most all of the goals of the Comp Plan 2050, address the flooding concerns of the Salt

Creek Resiliency Study, address the Climate Action Plan, the Mayor's Lean Forward Plan, and begin to reckon with the First Nebraskans in a sacred place and in a sacred way that respected our entire community and all our collective resources.

This idea, while expansive and requiring great collaboration, is absolutely attainable. If we reflect on our responsibilities to the next generations, and accept the Climatic changes that are happening, we can only conclude that now is the time to set this in motion, in this spot, with our entire community involved. Our City will continue to develop affordable housing, but we can expand and foster the growth and health of our diminishing natural resources at the same time.

Relying on an urban plan set in motion years ago, by people no longer present, is a weak excuse for continuing that plan. That plan was merely an aspiration of yesterday without the foresight of today's realities. We cannot be ensnared by old processes that do not meet the challenges before us.

These times call for reflection, as Dick Lourie asks in his poem *Forgiving Our Fathers*, *"Maybe in a dream. Do we forgive our fathers for leaving us too often or forever? For speaking through walls, or never speaking, or never being silent? Do we forgive our fathers in our age or in theirs? Or in their deaths? Saying it to them or not saying it?"*

I forgive my father for not acting or not knowing how to act about Climate Change. But I have no excuse now, for myself, for my child.

Will our children forgive us if we fail to act?

Or will you stand up for the entire community as the challenges of your time are thrust upon you? You have the courage to reflect upon your responsibilities, your own connection to the natural world. Now is the time to begin being a steward to our resources that speaks to your best nature, your values and the seeds you plant for this City's future.

This development, this zone change are not needed, not here, not now, not ever. This sacred parcel is already a bread basket. Our future requires bold actions by all of us consistent with her stated goals. And at this moment, it is dependent on your

courage, your faith, your alignment of actions to your words.

From: [Anica Brown](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Comment - Proposed Zone Change CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 8:52:52 AM



Hello,

I am opposed to the proposed zone change CZ21057. Wilderness Park is a wonderful, natural environment that needs to be protected for generations to use and enjoy. We should not be thinking about planning for houses or any development around this area.

I am so pleased to be living in Lincoln where climate change plans and the environment are important and to enjoy for future generations. We enjoy our bike trails and parks. We love the hiking opportunities Wilderness Park provides for us to feel the wilderness without having to travel far away. We shouldn't build homes in or around this area. We should provide a buffer zone around Wilderness Park so no one in the future builds close to it. We need Wilderness Park as it is now, without the intrusion of cars, homes, traffic, encroaching on this natural space. Please say No to the proposed zone change CZ21057.

Thank you,
Anica Brown
4500 Pagoda Lane
Lincoln, NE 68516

From: [Erin Poor](#)
To: [James M. Bowers](#); [Bennie R. Shobe](#); [Sandra J. Washington](#); [Tammy J. Ward](#); [Jane Raybould](#); [Tom J. Beckius](#); [Richard W. Meginnis](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Zone Change Opposition - Preserve Ecological and Spiritual Integrity of area around Wilderness Park
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 9:06:06 AM



Dear Council Members,

I hope you're all doing well!

I'm reaching out to sincerely ask you to oppose OR delay the proposed zone change #CZ21057 for the property west of Wilderness Park southeast of 1st & Pioneers.

This area has ecological and spiritual significance and those things MUST be taken into consideration before the zone change is approved.

The Friends of Wilderness Park have done extensive work to research all of the possible ramifications of residential & commercial development in this area and they've concluded that there are too many components that need further investigation to move forward with development at the present moment. It is irresponsible urban development to green light the zone change at this stage. Please read more about their research and concerns here: <https://www.friendsofwildernesspark.org/learn/blog.html/article/2022/04/10/wilderness-park-needs-your-voice>

Friends of Wilderness Park are already in conversation with the developers and have offered to support funding for the needed report.

Essentially, there are unique environmental traits of that area, and as leaders of this city, we need you to advocate on behalf of the land and its integrity. The path towards responsible, ethical urban development is possible, but it involves community collaboration. Please support this path by delaying or opposing the zone change outright.

Additionally, and something that I implore you to consider deeply, is that this zone contains an active Lakota ceremonial site. This area is the spiritual home for many of Lincoln's Indigenous People and allies, including many people who are Lakota, Dakota, Umonhon, and Ponca--this land's original, Indigenous stewards. The current zoning of the area allows for the Urban Indian population and allies to have a site to pray together, to be in deep relationship with Mother Earth, and for the privacy needed to facilitate their ceremonies. The Inipi ceremonies that happen in this area occur multiple times a week. And these opportunities to be in ceremony are extremely rare and hard to come by outside of this particular site. They are also absolutely vital to the mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of folks who pray in this way.

The city of Lincoln is on Indigenous Land. We have a responsibility to acknowledge the long-standing history and on-going reality of harm done to Indigenous Peoples. Lincoln citizens and especially its city leaders must honor our responsibility to heal the wounds of past generations that live on in today's Native Peoples. One significant way to do that, is to respect the Spiritual rights and needs of Lincoln's Native community. **Please, be in solidarity with Lincoln's Native Peoples and oppose this zone change.**

Tonight there will be a ceremony and I can guarantee that prayers will be said for each of you, for your hearts and minds to be strong, and for you to do the right thing by protecting this land, and protecting the integrity of this spiritual site. For the people of today and the future generations.

I have had the honor and privilege to get to know several of you on a personal level. And I know that you have good, caring hearts. I know that you care about the well-being of the Native community. Please, vote with your minds and hearts aligned. Resist the urge to develop the city at all costs. Some costs are far too high.

Thank you for reading this letter. Please vote to oppose, or at the very least to delay the zone change #CZ21057 for the property west of Wilderness Park southeast of 1st & Pioneers. .

Sincerely,
Erin Poor
1628 E St.
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-601-6642

From: [Sam Gross](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park Project
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 9:09:47 AM



Hello City Council,

I am reaching out to you in regards to the planned development surrounding, and including, Wilderness Park.

To share a little bit about myself with you - I was born here in Lincoln, raised here, and plan to live out my life and die here. Lincoln is my home. Lincoln has helped to shape me into the person I am. I care very much about this city, the people who live here, the land, and the habitats of wildlife.

Over my lifetime it has been exciting to see Lincoln grow and turn into a diverse city. I can remember a time when it seemed as though Lincoln was going "down-hill" fast, but the last twenty years or so have brought with them so much wonderful revitalization. I'm proud of Lincoln for stepping up and taking pride in its identity.

As someone who has spent the last decade working in the affordable housing and social service sectors, I appreciate the greater idea of establishing more housing opportunities. However; taking into consideration the impact this particular project would have on the proposed area of Wilderness Park, this is one project I cannot and do not support.

I don't know if you are aware of the traditional use of that land by Indigenous tribes of the area. That land holds great spiritual significance to the Great Plains tribes. Please listen to the voices of the Native peoples. This is a sacred space for so many. The serenity of the beauty and isolation one can experience in that park is beautiful. There are so many who go there for inspiration, relaxation, meditation, motivation, and self-care. It's not just a "park", it's church, therapy, and home rolled all into one. Let's preserve that! It's a beautiful gift that, once destroyed, cannot be brought back.

Also, I would like to share with you my concern about development in general and the destruction of ecosystems and native wildlife habitats. I am quite sure I am not the first (or last) person to bring up this concern, but I find myself growing more and more upset with how much the development of buildings and houses is destroying the available spaces for native grasses, flowers, and trees to grow and for wildlife to live.

I realize that I am not a professional in city planning or development but I strongly encourage, if there are any alternatives to continuing to spread the city outward and removing nature to be replaced by concrete, please please consider those alternatives. Instead of building up and out, what are the options for taking what we already have - a great rich history - and work on revitalizing those spaces and places to serve the same purpose as building new.

If you're familiar with the movie "FernGully - The Last Rainforest", perhaps you'll realize the significance of this quote from the movie:

"There are worlds within worlds, Crysta. Everything in our world is connected by the delicate strands of the web of life, which is a balance between the forces of

destruction and the magical forces of creation." - Magi Lune
(and if you've never seen the movie, you should consider doing so. It's a good one.)

Thank you for your time.

Samantha Gross
941 Garden Valley Road
Lincoln, NE 68521
402-613-0168

From: [Bryan Seibel](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [James M. Bowers](#); [Richard W. Meginnis](#); [Jane Raybould](#); [Tammy J. Ward](#); [Sandra J. Washington](#); [Bennie R. Shobe](#); [Tom J. Beckius](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposition to Change of Zone 21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 10:03:22 AM



Dear Members of the City Council,

I urge you to delay zone change 21057 for the Wilderness Hills development until more data can be collected about the impacts such a change will have on Wilderness Park.

Wilderness Park is the most ecologically sensitive, and purposefully preserved, natural habitat in the City of Lincoln. It is a foundational asset to Lincoln's quality of life and should garner a higher threshold of protection when adjacent developments are proposed.

Several significant components impacting this development area have unanswered questions:

- 1) **State of Nebraska planned a freeway interchange for Hwy 77 & Pioneers Blvd.** Do we know with certainty the configuration, the traffic flow, the traffic count from this interchange and how it will impact Wilderness Park and the surrounding area?
- 2) **Old Cheney Road closure.** Do we know with certainty the date of that closure, and how that closure will impact Wilderness Park and traffic related to this proposed development area?
- 3) **Proposed development with 575 basements, driveways, patios and sidewalks, plus miles of streets directly adjacent to Wilderness Park.** Is a current watershed management plan in place to inform how this high density of impervious surfaces will impact water runoff into Wilderness Park?
- 4) **Proposed development with hundreds of streetlights, porch lights, yard lights and commercial parking lot lights directly adjacent to Wilderness Park.** Is a current environs study in place to guide how the city manages these potential impacts on the ecology and environs of Wilderness Park?

Finally, if a change of zone for future development is ever approved, I urge you to keep S. 1st Street in it's current location to act as a buffer. Moving S. 1st Street allows homes/lots to be built up against Wilderness Park and eliminates a much needed separation between private residential development (direct backyard access) and Wilderness Park.

I love seeing our city grow! I am a proponent of well-planned, robust development. But as a 37-year resident of Lincoln, and a regular user of Wilderness Park, I urge you to pause this proposed zone change to gather more data. Are sufficient protections in place for this unique, one-of-a-kind natural habitat? Your decision today will set the precedent for all future development surrounding this city asset that so greatly underpins our quality of life.

Thank you for the work you do!

Bryan Seibel
5845 Woodstock Ave
Lincoln, NE 68512

From: [Carla Paulsen](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 10:15:17 AM



I am concerned regarding the property near First and Pioneers used by the indigenous people as a sacred place and the possible development there. Not only is thos place sacred but, as I understand, drainage studies and access roads have not been thoroughly studied, which could possibly impact this sacred place and the nearby Wilderness Park.

Please vote no on the proposed zone change CZ21057. Thank you.

From: [Carlye Kush](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Word of Opposition to the Proposed Zone Change CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 10:32:35 AM



Dear Lincoln City Council,

I would like to send this email to express my opposition to the proposed zone change CZ21057 near Wilderness Park. Please allow time for an updated study to be done that will give a clear picture of how the proposed zone change and housing development will impact Wilderness Park. There are simply too many questions right now instead of answers about how the zone change will impact wildlife, flooding and industrial runoff into the salt creek, noise pollution, air pollution, light pollution, traffic around Highway 77, and other negative effects on our unique forest space.

The proposed zone change CZ21057 does not fit in with Lincoln's long-term comprehensive plan promoting green spaces and resilience against climate change. Approving the zone change before the needed data would be an incredibly short-sighted decision, so I encourage you to truly consider all the environmental and community factors at the meeting today (4/18/22). Another major concern includes the lack of a plan from the Department of Transportation about mitigating traffic on Highway 77 in the future with new developments.

Beyond the specific concerns mentioned above, I would also like to offer my own personal comments regarding my love for Wilderness Park. Wilderness Park is hands down the best part of Lincoln for me! It is my solace: the place I go for hiking, biking, wildlife photography, to spend time with friends, and to renew my spirit. I am 25 years old, and I can honestly say that if Lincoln didn't have Wilderness Park, I would have moved on from this town a long time ago. I must oppose any proposal that could tarnish the atmosphere and health of such a precious resource. Please consider the petition that has been signed by Lincoln residents opposing the zone change and the community members who are speaking out against this. We do not want a housing development in such a uniquely wild part of the city, we want wild spaces that can stay wild for generations to come.

I sincerely hope you can consider the long-term environmental and community impacts, not just the short-term economic benefits of zone change CZ21057.

Thank you,

Carlye Kush

From: [Stephanie Bondi](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposition to rezoning
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 11:59:02 AM



Hi Councilmembers - I've heard about the rezoning proposal near Hwy77 and Wilderness Park. I do have concerns about the wildlife that will be impacted by significant construction in this area. I also believe it's important to protect the area used by local Indigenous peoples who gather for Inipi ceremonies near the proposed rezoning area. While some are focused on the benefits that changes could bring, we are all responsible for stewarding our lands that take such good care of us. Thank you for your service on the council.

Warmly, Stephanie

Stephanie Bondi
she/they
Lincoln, NE

From: [Renee Sans Souci](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Letter to the City Council Re: CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 12:57:20 PM
Attachments: [Letter to City Council.docx](#)



To the Lincoln City Council,

I am submitting this letter in regards to CZ21057.

Thank you,
Renee Sans Souci

--

Moving forward on this path, I desire to understand...
The ancestors.
The ceremonies.
The medicines.
The land.
The languages.
The future.
A way of life that brings them all together in a good way...

Monday, April 18, 2022

To the City Council regarding CZ 21057, and associated proposals,

My name is Renee Sans Souci (New Holy) and I was born in Lincoln, Nebraska and have lived here more than half of my life. I am a member of the Omaha Tribe.

Today, I am here to state my opposition to the City Council's potential support of the proposed developments.

The proposed areas of development are near locations where many Native and non-Native people seek healing from our traditional ceremonies. We consider these areas sacred and precious to our way of life. Our traditional ceremonies help to sustain us in times of crises, sickness, and grief. Through such beautiful ceremonies, our people have found a way to heal from addiction and strife and to return to living healthy lives.

What may not be known is that on this land that is proposed for development, better known as green space, exists an ecosphere for plants and animals that depend upon a healthy balance. There are also traditional medicines in this area that can be harvested for medicinal use by Native Spiritual Practitioners.

For many generations, Salt Creek, was an area where many Native people came to harvest salt. It is well known for the wetlands and was considered a once healthy habitat for all who lived nearby or within this area.

As a child, I was often taken out the Fish Farm and to Wilderness Park for cultural events. I often played in these areas. As an adult, I witnessed the Fish Farm become a place of ceremony.

Much needs to be considered in these areas, such as Dakota Sandstone Prairie Restoration that is happening at this moment.

I am beseeching you, the City Council, to hear us, as Native stakeholders and Friends of Wilderness Park, and to vote no to advancing these proposals at this time until we have all been included in this discussion and a stakeholder committee has been established.

Vote no to any decisions regarding the advancement of these proposals. Help us to establish protections and to continue a way of life that helps us to stay in good health.

Wibthahoⁿ,
Thank you,

Renee Sans Souci (New Holy)

From: [Nathan Duffy](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Protect Wilderness Park and Our Native Heritage
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 1:58:07 PM



Dear Lincoln City Council and Mayor Gaylor Baird,

My name is Nathan Duffy and I am the owner of Midwest Natives Nursery, LLC, a thriving business within the lovely city of Lincoln that specializes in the sustainable cultivation of Nebraska-native wildflowers and grasses for the home landscape.

I am writing today in opposition of the proposed zone change from agricultural to residential for the plot of land southwest of S 1st St and Pioneers Boulevard.

While I am all for Lincoln's future growth and development, I believe not enough has been done to fully assess how this project's proximity to Wilderness Park may impact one of the few remaining tracts of true wilderness our city has left.

Areas of concern include but are not limited to watershed and stormwater runoff management, noise and light pollution, displacement of native wildlife living within the park, potential destruction of critically endangered habitat, and ultimately the sanctity of the land and heritage of our indigenous citizens.

I implore you all to please consider halting this vote of zone change for the time being in order to continue to study the effects this project will inevitably have on such a critical piece of our local ecosystem and environment as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Nathan Duffy
Midwest Natives Nursery, LLC

From: [Bruce Mellberg](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Proposed Zoning Change #21057, near Wilderness Park
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 2:03:20 PM



Honorable Members of the Lincoln City Council,

“There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot.” —Aldo Leopold, “Sand County Almanac”

I hadn't known that very near the site proposed for the zoning change (#21057) was a focus for First Americans in our community, even tho I once lived nearby. Without some legal protection or recognized voice & wise accommodation, their local tradition of regenerative use is at risk of compromised value, with the crowding effect of this ill-sited proposal.

Such development also ignores the rare & unusual microhabitat of native botany among Dakota sandstone outcrops near this hill--where I have recently visited to find it largely unchanged from decades ago. A small, unforested clearing is there host to surprising prickly pear cacti, lichens, a vetch and other wildflowers in bloom, seemingly a vestige of an isolated ecology, significant of its own merit and, I feel, worthy of an environmental assessment of impacts to its integrity by the proposed development—to say little of the creatures who have long depended on the particular microhabitat there--I would hasten to say.

Surely there are better choices for low-cost housing than such an undisturbed gap in the midst of surrounding settlement--given the unique value this vicinity holds for those of us like myself who have found some sense of wonder that such a site still persists there. Elsewhere in the city limits, over less than a decade, we have seen the abandonment of an eagle aerie near encroaching housing developments in far north Lincoln that were too close for their comfort—as noted during our Wachiska Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count bloc.

I am reminded of the phrase, "not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress."

Please reconsider the wisdom of this proposal in light of these concerns and the practical concerns of other stakeholders like Friends of Wilderness Park. I am a frequent user/hiker/birder on the trails throughout Wilderness Park and declare my opposition to Zoning Change #21057.

Sincerely,

Bruce Mellberg

From: [Samm Johnston](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 3:02:20 PM



To all of you,

*Please don't consider 6j-6m PLEASE DELAY THEM ALL!!!

*I as one of your voters OPPOSE THEM ALL!!!!

I would like you to rethink this proposal before you!

STOP...THINK...AND RECONSIDER PASSING THIS!

PLEASE do NOT change the zoning of this area next to Wilderness Park! You all have not done enough research on how this will affect this "wild" area we love. Former President Obama said something to the effect we all need these wild places for our well being.

Thank you for reading this and reconsidering the change in zoning. Keep it zoned for agriculture and keeping it a "wild" place!

Truly,
Samm(Cynthia) Johnston

From: [Jaz Schoeneck](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park and Zone change CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 3:23:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)



Though I'm not as informed as I'd like to be on this issue, I just wish to express my support for the Friends of Wilderness Park and their goals of preserving Wilderness Park and the First Nation People's sacred space. Its not just a beautifully diverse biome full of amazing wildlife and Flora; Its not just someones sacred space; its not just a great Morrel Mushroom hunting spot; It's a piece of our city that keeps us connected to a natural and green world, in line with our Nebraskan Traditions and those of the First people's of this land. Placing homes on this space may be lucrative and it may be good for our city in some ways, but please ask yourself if that trade is worth it? Is it worth potentially harming that connection? If you choose to still go forward I hope that you have thought through the ramifications and that there are no negative complications from the choice.

With Respect,

JAZSCHOENECK

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From: [charles struble](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001, Change of Zone 21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 4:04:43 PM

Dear Lincoln City Council, As a citizen of Lincoln, I write to you to voice my opposition to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment 22001, Annexation 21013 (141.46 acres =/-), and the zone change proposal 21057 from AG to R-3 at Highway 77 and Pioneers Blvd. please customize the body of the email with your concerns about development encroachment threatening our beloved Wilderness Park. Thank you for hearing my concerns and thank you for serving the citizens of Lincoln. Sincerely,

“Author, lecturer, traveler, philanthropist, occasional hero and... US MARINE EXTRAORDINAIRE!”
Charles E. Struble III
3030 N 74th st
Lincoln Ne 68507

From: [Joseph Sutton](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Proposed Zone Change Of Wilderness Park
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 5:15:23 PM



Hello Lincoln City Council, My name is Joseph Sutton, and I'm a citizen of Lincoln who is dispirited by this proposition and I sol hope that reconsideration of this change is contemplated and found unfavorable by the city council if the majority vote takes precedence and not the minor council vote. The natural world diminishes and withers with each impetuous decision humans make. We constantly mistreat the world with facetious ignorance that self-fulfills into an everlasting cycle of fatuity and self-destruction. I implore you to be conscious of the fact that this remnant of natural beauty that is wilderness park is a sanctuary for people's mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. People find serenity and compassion in this bastion of hope from the darkness negativity that pervades the world in our modern era. Here's a poem I wrote that best surmises my expression,

Terra Invidiosa

Blood spills from the saplings bark
Through the murk and harrow
Aggrieved resounds the telluric dark
What ghastly wreakings man has wrought
Gloating malignantly upon the crippled earth
Plundering, mutilating her bestowments with fanciful musings upon her
impending rot.
Once she was beseeched for her prophecies, concilliated, worshipped;
But man abases and affronts her wisdom
Cosseted by the austerity in which his mind is gripped.
Shall our slumberous nascence cocoon us
in the laurelled tombs of deathly waxen?
For all of her horizons bespoke beauties sempiternal, sanguine and flaxen.
Man is guileless, avaricious, and this is her somber vexation, he juxtaposes
morbid ignominy with noble heart, prevarication.
The skies will gleam, the sun will shine radiant, she offers her munificence,
infinite hues of green and sepia umbers.
Her heart pulses through innumerable
roots, firma, bark, boughs, stems, and petals. The oceans are her blood and we
drink deep in order to exist, it's up to all mankind to answer her unheeded
pleas.

My sincerest regards,
-Joseph

From: [Janette Robb](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 6:07:05 PM

Please save Wilderness Park. It is a religious area. The houses and highway will affect peoples right to worship and enjoy nature

Thank you

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Tricia King](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Flooding pictures: Wilderness Park, oppose zone change CZ21057.
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 8:12:07 PM



March 2021, pictures taken 24 hours apart. From the records I found this was from about 4 inches of rain.

Tricia King

On Fri, Apr 15, 2022, 3:22 PM Tricia King <triciaschuller@gmail.com> wrote:

Please see below link and quote from the mayor on keeping wilderness park wild. The mayor cares about wilderness park, it's Lincoln's park for everyone to enjoy.

\$2.1 Million dollar campaign that the city of Lincoln has invested in to make improvements to the park. SEE BELOW FOR THE FULL ARTICLE.

https://journalstar.com/niche/l-magazine/features/parks-advocates-city-of-lincoln-campaign-to-keep-wilderness-wild/article_da6148c9-9ad8-57fb-a3d8-3e15f62f867c.html

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter,

Tricia King





From: [Kelly Seacrest](#)
To: [K.Seacrest](#)
Subject: Public Testimony : Opposition to proposed zone change CZ1057 (Protect Wilderness Park)
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 9:02:32 PM



My name is Kelly Seacrest and I am a resident of Lincoln.

The thing I hope most of all is that you all listen to the Indigenous people who have spoken and reached out to you about the environmental, cultural, ceremonial and spiritual significance of this place. I hope you listen and understand how this development will harm them and the wider Lincoln community. Please follow their lead. They have clearly communicated with you their reasons to vote against this proposal. The only ethical and wise decision is to listen to them.

Please listen to the people who spend time at the park, who know it, who need it and have made it a joyful part of their lives.

Please listen to the Indigenous people and others who are telling you that Wilderness is critical for wildlife like birds and amphibians.

Listen to all the different people who have spoken about how Wilderness provides vital flood management and helps prevent other climate change devastation.

Speaking of Climate Change, we can not afford to make decisions that ignore our current reality. Flooding here will get worse due to climate change. Lincoln is in desperate need of flood management. Wilderness provides critical protection for Lincoln. Protecting Wilderness means protecting the wider Lincoln community.

Developers have one aim; profit. They want to rush this process because they are in a hurry to make money. Their plan will negatively impact this area and the rest of the community on multiple levels. If you allow developers to start to eat away at Wilderness, they will not stop. They will want more and more and more.

Wilderness Park clearly plays many different roles. These roles are deeply interconnected. To sum things up, listen to Indigenous people, protect the park, protect Lincoln by saying NO to these developers. Say NO to the proposed zone change CZ1057.

- Kelly Seacrest
2621 Austin Drive
Lincoln, NE 68506

From: [Peter Stegen](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [James M. Bowers](#); [Richard W. Meginnis](#); [Jane Raybould](#); [Tammy J. Ward](#); [Sandra J. Washington](#); [Bennie R. Shobe](#); [Tom J. Beckius](#)
Subject: Public Testimony: Opposition to proposed zone change CZ1057 (Protect Wilderness Park)
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 9:24:02 PM



My name is Peter Stegen and I am a resident of Lincoln.

First of all, I strongly urge you to listen and follow the demands, asks and ideas that many Indigenous people have brought to you regarding this issue.

Developers have no right to this land. And honestly, neither does the city of Lincoln. The land should be in control and care of Indigenous people. Here is your chance. Say no to these developers, and then you can return the land to the Tribes. It's their land and they have told you explicitly that this space is culturally and spiritually vital to them.

I also would like to say that I run a self-directed democratic learning space called Wild Learning with my wife. Our young students, ages 6-12, have incredibly enjoyed Wilderness Park. Wilderness Park is vital for the health and well being of all the children and young people who visit.

Developing around Wilderness Park goes against your very own climate change goals. You know what we actually need, is affordable housing. And guess what, this is not it. There are tons of empty buildings, falling apart strip malls, unused parking lots and spaces in Lincoln to develop. The developers can go somewhere else.

All in all, developing around Wilderness park is one step closer to developing in Wilderness Park. This is a horrible idea, for so so so many reasons. It will have horrible short term and long term impacts. Say no to this proposal.

-Peter Stegen

--

peter stegen

402.405.1875 (mobile)

[pictures](#)

From: [LeAnn Kern](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: CZ21057
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 10:56:22 PM

Please honor and protect the spiritual and healing space of Wilderness Park and The Fish Farm.

Thank you.
LeAnn Kern

Sent from my iPad

From: [Rich Higgins](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: #21057
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 6:37:52 AM



Please oppose the zoning change 21057 for development of Wilderness Park areas. This will endanger the natural integrity of this historic park. Please save it for our future generations.

Thank you,
Richard J Higgins

From: [Hannah Demma](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposing wilderness park zone change
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 9:01:17 AM



Hannah Demma
3730 N Street

I oppose the zone change and proposed development at the edge of my beloved Wilderness Park. They say it doesn't change the park but it 100% will. A lot of us go to Wilderness Park to clear our heads and get away from the noise of the city. I've been going to the park regularly for my entire life (37 years!). I need the quiet to stay sane, I treasure the hiking trails and birdwatching. Please don't let this happen. If you want young people to stay in your city, there needs to be accessible wilderness to add diversity to our city's offerings. Please at LEAST delay the vote until we learn what the impact will be on the vital ecosystems to be found within the park. Please.

Hannah Demma

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From: [LSB](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposition to CPA22001, CZ21057 regarding the proposed Wilderness Crossing PUD
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 9:23:16 AM
Attachments: [Proposed changes to CPA.pdf](#)
[Possible park areas within Wilderness Crossing.pdf](#)



1. I am not opposed to AN21013, the proposal to annex 141.46 acres incorporating the proposed Wilderness Crossing PUD and the area to the south.
2. My opposition to CPA22001 is for the specific proposal to move the commercial area from Foxtail Meadow to Wilderness Crossing.
 - a. Note that Foxtail Meadow, as originally planned, included a commercial area on the north side across the street from the YMCA soccer and ballparks (SW corner of Pioneer and I-77). The ballfields are shown as green space on the attached map prepared by the Planning Department but in reality are no more green space than my front yard. There is a great deal of traffic, noise, and litter associated with activities at the ballfields for most of the year. To the north and east of the Foxtail Meadow north commercial area are NDOT properties that will eventually be used for an overpass or similar. A commercial space is appropriate here due to the traffic already associated with the church, the ballfields, and commuter traffic to the Yankee Hill School and other nearby facilities.
 - b. The commercial space planned for Foxtail Meadow has been essentially arbitrarily moved east to the proposed Wilderness Crossing PUD, as shown on the attached map. According to the report issued by the Planning Department, Andrew Thierolf stated moving the commercial space from west of Highway 77 to east of Highway 77 will allow the PUD to meet the desired “complete neighborhood” definition. In other words, the move was essentially arbitrary. In my opinion, the undeveloped land adjacent to Wilderness Park is far more of a “green space” than the manicured ballfields of the YMCA ballfields.
 - c. In the same report, Mr. Thierolf states “a complete neighborhood is a mix of housing types, price points, easily accessible commercial services, such as parks and schools”. However, there is no open space, school, or park in the proposed Wilderness Crossing site plan. Rather than arbitrarily insert a commercial space into the plan, consider returning the commercial space to the Foxtail Meadow area as originally planned.
 - d. To satisfy the need for open space at Wilderness Crossing, consider requiring park space in the geographically sensitive areas of the site such as the sandstone ridge on the east side, shown in orange on the attached Lonowski map, labeled East Hill. This would provide a needed buffer between the development and Wilderness Park. In addition, the topography would make construction difficult, and would require destroying the natural hill. The developer carefully did not submit a plan with the required grading.
3. I am opposed to CZ21057, changing zoning in the Wilderness Crossing area from Ag to R-3. Eventually the developer will come back to the City with a request for even greater density.
 - a. Although there is always a need for more affordable housing, multiple subdivisions in the area, including one across the street from my house, will at least attempt to fill this need. It is likely, due to the expense of grading etc., no part of the proposed Wilderness

Crossing development will be considered “affordable”. Because of this, it makes sense from an environmental point of view to limit the number of homes in the area. Few homes equals less roof space, less paving, less runoff, less contamination.

- b. Consider restricting this area to larger lots and single family homes. Although multiple price points are typically encouraged, this is a special area.
- c. In addition, developers are not typically required to pave roads past their developments, but an exception should be made in this case. The developer stated access to the Park from Wilderness Crossing itself will be blocked by a tall fence and routed to the existing access south of the subdivision. The developer should be required to pave 1st Street to at least this point since they are specifically including it as a sales point.

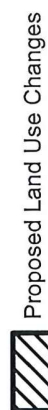
Thank you for your time.

Laurie S. Brunner
5500 S Folsom St
Lincoln NE 68523

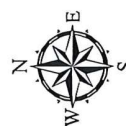
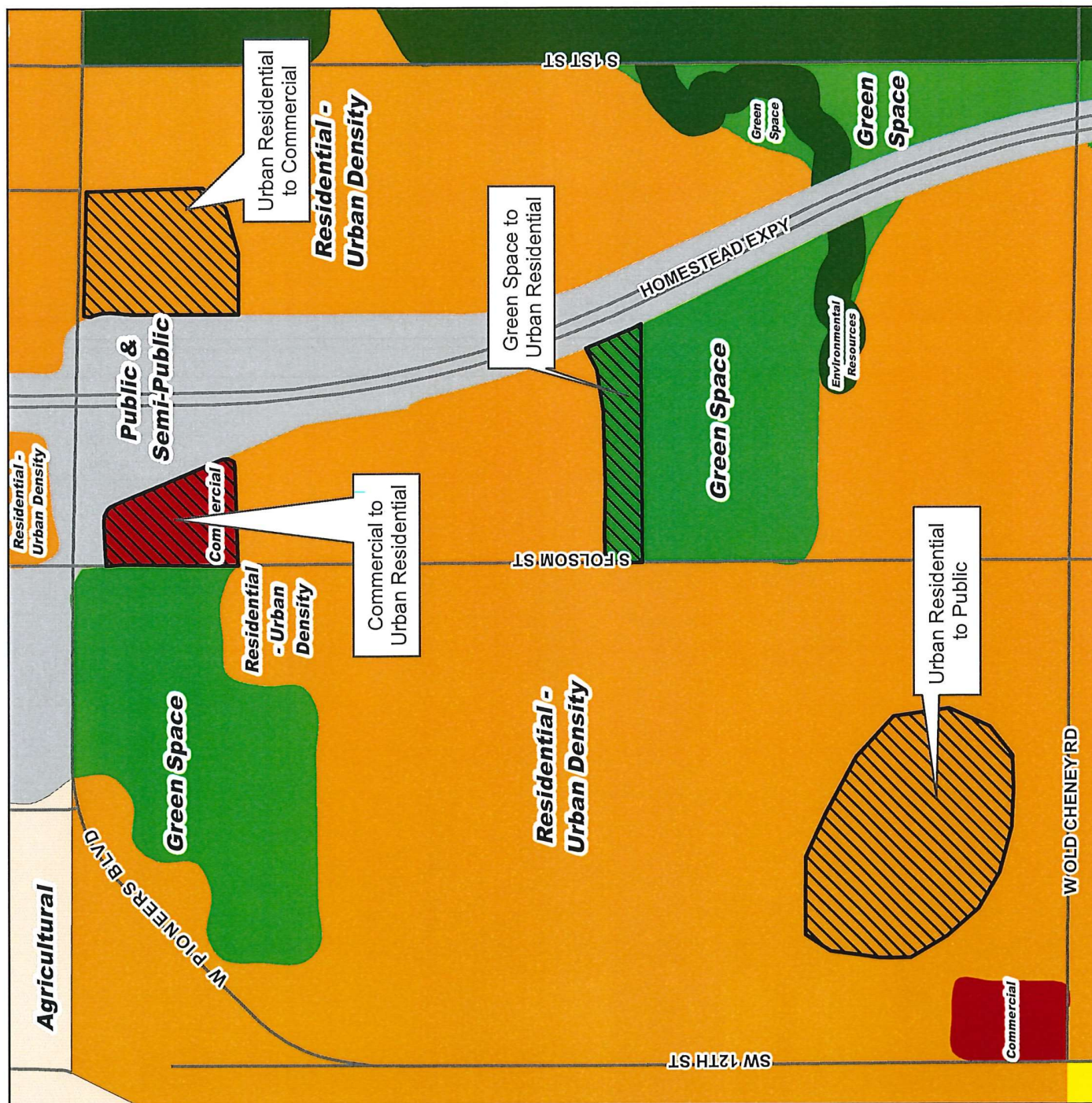
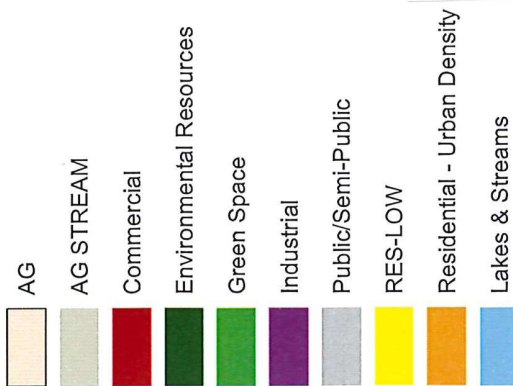
CPA # 22001
Hwy 77 & W Pioneers Blvd

Proposed Land Use Change

Legend



Future Land Use



LINCOLN - LANCASTER COUNTY
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
JULIA HARRIS, Planning Director
JULIA.HARRIS@LANCASTERCOUNTYPAID.COM
781.326.2000
781.326.2001
781.326.2002

EXHIBIT "A"

f:\its\gis\arcview\CompPlanAmendment.mxd
(CPA22001)

From: [Caitlynn Gillaspie](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposition to proposed development near Wilderness Park
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 10:00:01 AM

Dear Members of Lincoln City Council,

My name is Caitlynn Gillaspie, my address is 5035 Holdrege Street, Lincoln.

I was unable to attend the council meeting last night (4/18/22) in person along with my dear friends and neighbors. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposals brought forth by Mr. Manzitto and his representation regarding the potential housing development adjacent to Wilderness Park. Please vote NO and block this proposed development.

I watched hours of the testimonies that you also heard last night during the meeting from concerned residents, including many Native community members.

Our nation, including our state of Nebraska, have a brutal history of desecrating Native peoples, their land, and culture. Supporting this grossly inappropriate development would uphold the corrupt disregard and erasure of Native culture, sacred spaces and community.

The proposed development on sacred land - to both Native and Non-Native residents of Lincoln - is in direct conflict with Lincoln's 2021-2027 Climate Action Plan. It does not support the goals for affordable housing. It is also at odds with the City's pledged support to preserve and protect natural resources and to maintain natural systems.

I echo the concerns many have already voiced - the integrity of the ecosystem within Wilderness Park will be harshly impacted by this development. No amount of proposed "considerations" for this housing development could be satisfactory to protect the wildlife and flora that depend on the preservation of the surrounding land. The damage that would be done by building hundreds of houses, apartments, and commercial spaces (likely bringing in thousands of people into this serene area) would be irreparable. To put a grotesque development next to this living, breathing, peaceful space that Lincoln has bragged for decades would be completely out of touch with the true needs of this community.

You heard many people speak on this issue last night. The suggested lighting restrictions enforced by a housing association would assuredly be ineffective and poorly enforced. And the fence? I'm unable to wrap my head around how this fence is anything but a way to protect the proposed houses from wildlife - this fence was never intended to protect the park or the environment.

I echo the concerns about fireworks on public holidays. Additionally, the noise of residents and traffic would be detrimental to Native ceremonies and Non-Natives who take solace in Wilderness Park. Increased traffic would be a tremendous danger to wildlife in the area. This area is simply not fit for a housing development. There is so much potential for meaningful uses with this land, and Native people in Lincoln should be the first stakeholders consulted in ongoing plans for this land.

It is shamefully unethical of the Catholic Diocese of Lincoln (although not surprising behavior) and the developers to have considered this housing development without consultation with Native stakeholders and community members like those on the board for Friends of Wilderness Park.

Last year, Nebraska officially celebrated the designated Indigenous Peoples' Day on the second Monday in October with a bill proposed by State Sen. Brooks. During the celebration, a statue was unveiled honouring Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte, the first Native woman physician, and the first Native person to earn a medical degree. Mind you, Native people have been practicing indigenous medicinal and healing practices to prevent and treat illness for thousands of years.

NE State Sen. Brooks said, "Indigenous Peoples' Day is a day to reflect on our past as well as a day to challenge

ourselves to build a brighter and more inclusive future for all our people.” I would argue that EVERY DAY is a day to challenge ourselves to build a brighter and more inclusive future. One important way to do this is to vote NO and block this housing development adjacent to Wilderness Park. This housing plan is an insult to Native people and a danger to their essential spiritual practices and connection to the surrounding land. If we allow this plan to go forward, it is all the more evidence that every level of government is only interested in lip service - and not real, sustainable action.

This housing development does not support actions we must take to address challenges we are facing due to climate change. The seller, developers and this plan do not support actions we must take to not only include Native people at the stakeholder meetings but to honor and to listen to Native voices. This plot is not the spot for a housing development. I implore City Council to work with the developer to find another more appropriate space.

Please do not let this plan go forward near Wilderness Park.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,
Caitlynn Gillaspie
5035 Holdrege Street, Lincoln NE

From: [Kay Hegler](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park Development proposal
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 10:21:36 AM

Dear Council members,

Please vote against the proposed development adjacent to Wilderness park and Highway 77.

This proposal is in a high-risk flood zone, reduces viability of the natural environment, and violates a sacred space. This proposal is in stark contrast to The City of Lincoln, NE's Climate Action Plan. If the plan is allowed to proceed, future residents would suffer from increased risk of flooding. The City of Lincoln can grow in positive ways without decreasing its rich historical protection of sacred spaces and natural beauty.

Please vote against this proposed development to send a clear and consistent signal to residents and developers.

Kay Loomis Hegler, PhD
Doane University, Professor Emeritus

From: [Lorrie Benson](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: development near Wilderness Park
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 10:22:54 AM

City Council Members and Mayor Gaylor Baird,

I urge more careful consideration of the proposed development adjacent to Wilderness Park. Of course we need more housing in Lincoln. But, we do not serve Lincolniters well if we don't fully consider environmental impacts as well as potential flooding increases, particularly in a changing climate. Thank you for considering my opinion.

Lorrie Benson
7100 Holmes Park Rd, Apt 103
Lincoln, NE 68506
402-450-8342

From: [Karley Coday](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposition to proposed zone change CZ21057
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 11:31:13 AM

Hello,

My name is Karley Coday and I am writing because I oppose the zone change for Wilderness Park. I have lived in Lincoln my entire life and Wilderness Park is a staple. By adding in more housing development you will be taking away a major FREE resource to the community, as well as destroying a huge portion of wildlife that resides there. In addition, you will be imposing on a traditional Native American way of life, the sweat lodge. As colonizers, the United States in general, and Nebraska specifically, have taken so much away from Native Americans over the years, why would you want to continue that trend? Particularly a spiritual ritual that means a great deal to these people. Please strike down the proposed zone change. I understand it would provide housing and money to the community, but at what cost? At the cost of destroying our environment, losing part of a wonderful park, and taking away a sacred ritual from Native people.

Thank you for your time,

Karley Coday

From: [Lucas orth](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Opposing zone change for purposed Wilderness Crossing sub division
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 2:47:19 PM



This land should be converted back to native prairie and used for educational purposes. Teaching younger generations about the importance of prairies and grasslands, and how to manage them responsibly.

And at what point is the city going to address the fire danger that plagues wilderness park? The weather trends are only to get hotter and drier with more frequent severe weather outbreaks. We just watched a fire run across 30,000 acres of Nebraska two weeks ago. Perfect conditions aligned and created a firestorm. The same thing happened in Superior Colorado at the start of the new year. That wasn't a wildfire in the mountains, that fire raged through suburban forests and well maintained neighborhoods. So the idea of putting a neighborhood 43 feet away from the park seems a bit short sighted. Even without the insane fourth of July firework obsession, this proximity is still dangerous. Only exacerbated by the fourth of July fireworks. Regardless of the city's decision on this proposed development, I think it's time they start taking forest health and fire mitigation seriously within the park. Cedars are completely engulfing the park from the south setting the perfect conditions for a wildfire to climb to the canopies of bur oaks and healthy cottonwoods. If these cedars and invasive suckers trees are not managed soon, there won't be any biodiversity left in the park. And once the cedars completely take over, which they will do. There will be no wildlife left in the park. Also if there is a wildfire in the park what does that mean for flood management?

Our environment is changing, things that have never happened are happening. Let's be wise and be prepared.

Thank you.

Lucas Orth
402-641-6663

From: [Katie Skean](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Protect Wilderness Park
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 7:53:13 PM



Hello Honorable Councilors,

I'm a concerned Lincoln resident that wasn't able to make it to the meeting yesterday. I don't really know a lot about the zoning issues and I'm sympathetic to the need for more affordable housing in Lincoln, but I'm concerned about decisions that will negatively affect Wilderness Park and have unforeseen results in regards to flooding issues etc. I would like to urge the City Council to take your time and study these issues thoroughly before making any decisions that might negatively affect our city's crown jewel that is so important to our quality of life and our ecosystem. Thank you for your consideration.

Appreciatively,
Katie Skean

From: [River Sky](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Wilderness Crossing Development (4/18/22 Agenda Items 6j, 6k, 6l, 6m)
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 7:58:02 PM



Re: Wilderness Crossing Development (4/18/22 Agenda Items 6j, 6k, 6l, 6m)

Dear City Councilmembers,

Please heed the voices of Native peoples in this. From what I have heard them say, their will is unanimous and clear.

Do not allow a development by force, against their will, on their ancestral lands and adjoining their sacred grounds.

At the least, do not force this desecration without current and complete data.

Thousands of decisions like this, playing out in city and local governments across the USA and across the world, will determine the fate of Planet Earth.

This is a battle of Good vs. Money.

Please vote for the right side.

Just Say No!

Sincerely,

River Sky (They/them/theirs)
1724 D St, Apt 2
Lincoln, NE 68502
402-646-0039

From: [John Carlini](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park Development
Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 2:05:05 PM



Dear City Council and Mayor,

I am writing you today to oppose the development being considered at Wilderness park at Pioneers and 1st street. I'm sure you've gotten plenty of technical reasons for opposing this but mine are more philosophical. I use the park as a place to enjoy nature, bird and escape the constant urban noise that dominates our space and time.

From what I've gathered it doesn't sound like the Planning commission has followed the protocol in their review of this matter...

Enough already. This place is special and doesn't need to be compromised by some giant urban intrusion.

Thanks for your consideration.

John Carlini

From: [Kathie Starkweather](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park and proposed new housing development
Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 3:04:53 PM



Good afternoon.

First, let me thank you all for your service to Lincoln and the work you are all doing. It is very much appreciated.

I am reaching out as someone who is against putting a new housing development close to the Park.

I recognize that the City Planners have looked at the water issue and indicate there is no need to worry. That may or may not be true. However, what is true is that entire Park area is absolute serenity in a city growing larger by the minute.

What has not been measured is what that type of interruption can do to the fragile balance of nature and the mental health of the many people who use the space - either routinely or occasionally. Native Americans consider it to be a spiritual space. My grandkiddos and I consider it to be sacred ground in other ways - sacred to us as we just put everything aside and get into nature in a space unique to our city. Definitely one of Lincoln's crown jewels.

While city planners have looked at the space, has a social impact assessment been done to evaluate what this disruption could do to as important of a consideration as the water issues?

Lincoln is known as one of the healthiest cities in the country. One of the reasons it can claim that title is that we have this wonderful oasis of quiet and beauty known as Wilderness Park, that allows people to use it without the congestion of traffic or the noise that so many new houses and families would create. We care as much about our folks' mental health as we do about their physical health.

Please consider all of this as you ponder how to vote on the matter.

Thank you.

Kathie Starkweather

From: [Tricia King](#)
To: [Council Packet](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Wilderness Park, oppose zone change C221057, wilderness needs a buffer zone. The boundaries have become prime real estate.
Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 10:26:34 PM



Please read:

Natural wilderness areas need buffer zones to protect from human development: Researchers look at ways to protect biodiversity, untouched lands

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/06/150627081222.htm>

Despite heavy development, the United States still has millions of acres of pristine wild lands. Coveted for their beauty, these wilderness areas draw innumerable outdoor enthusiasts eager for a taste of primitive nature. But researchers say these federally protected nature areas have a problem: **Their boundaries have become prime real estate.**

Tricia

Natural wilderness areas need buffer zones to protect from human development

Researchers look at ways to protect biodiversity, untouched lands

Date: June 27, 2015

Source: University of Georgia

Summary: Despite heavy development, the United States still has millions of acres of pristine wild lands. Coveted for their beauty, these wilderness areas draw innumerable outdoor enthusiasts eager for a taste of primitive nature. But researchers say these federally protected nature areas have a problem: Their boundaries have become prime real estate.

FULL STORY

Despite heavy development, the U.S. still has millions of acres of pristine wild lands. Coveted for their beauty, these wilderness areas draw innumerable outdoor enthusiasts eager for a taste of primitive nature.

But University of Georgia researchers say these federally protected nature areas have a problem: Their boundaries have become prime real estate.

As the country's population continues to grow, people have built homes close to national parks, forests and wilderness areas for the same reasons these systems have been left protected from development. However, this construction and growth near the National Wilderness Preservation System is beginning to degrade the quality of these lands and erode biodiversity.

"People like the idea of having a national forest in their backyard," said Lauren Ward, a graduate student at UGA's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. "But from over-applying lawn care chemicals to introducing invasive plant and animal species, landowners' choices can have far-reaching negative impacts on neighboring wilderness areas."

We need buffer zones, Ward said.

In an article published in the journal *Illuminare*, Ward and Gary Green, an associate professor in the Warnell School, propose that federal agencies overseeing these wild areas begin creating zones to help wilderness managers better preserve and protect them. Encroachment into wilderness areas will only continue to worsen as the U.S. population grows, Ward said, with some estimates predicting the number of people doubling by 2050.

There are nearly 1,000 designated wilderness areas in the national wilderness system, made up of nearly 110 million acres that remain in its natural condition. Human activities are limited on these lands to preserve their pristine state and leave it untainted by people. These areas include national parks, wildlife refuges and national forests maintained by four federal agencies. Visitors to these lands are restricted in what they can do and are encouraged to "leave no trace."

In the article, Ward and Green lay out three factors influencing the encroachment into wilderness areas: population growth, increasing technology and global climate change. These factors could lead to loss of undeveloped land surrounding protected wilderness areas, soil erosion, air pollution, reduced water quality and the spread of invasive species.

Ward and Green propose that wilderness managers establish five zones around these protected areas:

- A central "core zone" where all human activity would be banned;
- A zone surrounding the core to be used for scientific research and environmental education;
- Cultural and historical zones that would allow managers to protect and improve the unique qualities of each site;
- A recreation zone where all users would be allowed for outdoor play;
- A buffer zone surrounding them all to help minimize outside impacts. In some cases, it might be necessary to work cooperatively with private landowners around wilderness areas.

"We believe that encouraging landowners to embrace an attitude of stewardship through education and incentives will be the best approach," Green said.

Buffer zones have come up repeatedly over the decades as the U.S. population grows, bringing with it concerns about American wild lands disappearing with an increase in development. Studies show these concerns are valid: Previous research shows that counties with protected wilderness areas have experienced an uptick in population compared to those without these lands. One study found that the number of houses built within 30 miles of these protected wilderness areas will increase by 10 million from 2000 to 2030.

This trend not only would convert undeveloped land into human-occupied property, but it would also lead to the development of more roads and utilities to support those people now living close to these protected lands, Green said. Once roads are in place, people who would normally have been unable to visit these areas would be more likely to visit. New and inexperienced users could even lead to more demands for help or rescue when cellphones and other technology they rely on fails them.

"Wilderness is easy to destroy, but it is nearly impossible to re-create. Americans should continue to protect natural wild lands for future generations to enjoy," Ward said.

The zones are just a proposal, Ward explained, so it would be up to wilderness managers to use them as a flexible tool and work with local communities to promote sustainable development and ecologically responsible land uses. Their study also focuses on how these managers can use buffer zones to help better manage natural resources and mitigating outside influences.

The agencies could mandate buffer zones by providing federal funding for them, or they could work at the local level by creating tax incentives or conservation easements, she said.

Story Source:

Materials provided by **University of Georgia**. Original written by Sandi Martin. *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

Journal Reference:

1. Ward and Green. **Wilderness Zoning: Applying an Adapted Biosphere Reserve Model to Wilderness Areas**. *Illuminare*, June 2015
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University of Georgia. "Natural wilderness areas need buffer zones to protect from human development: Researchers look at ways to protect biodiversity, untouched lands." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 27 June 2015. <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/06/150627081222.htm>.

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From: [Elsa Forsberg](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Protect Wilderness Park
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2022 1:14:55 AM



Dear Council Members,

It is with great concern that I am writing to you all today. I and many others vehemently oppose the proposed zone change of the land west of Wilderness Park along Pioneers Blvd for the purpose of building the housing development Wilderness Crossing. Concerns about the environmental impacts of this proposal need to be more heavily considered, especially in regards to our beloved Wilderness Park.

Wilderness Park is a refuge for wildlife, plants, and the Lincoln community. The stretch of park between Pioneers Blvd and Old Cheney Road could be considered the heart of the park itself for its central location, trail system, and popularity for visitors. Wilderness Park is a haven of peace, a retreat into nature, and a treasure for so many in the Lincoln community. Light pollution, noise pollution, increased traffic, and other negative disturbances and effects from human development will not only tarnish the tranquil wildness of the park but will disturb the ecosystem that sustains it. As an applied ecology graduate student at UNL, I am very concerned about how this zone change would impact wildlife populations that not only reside in our area but also those that pass through. The effects on the environment make ripples elsewhere.

Riparian ecosystems are important corridors that connect wildlife through a landscape that has been increasingly fragmented and degraded by human development. Wilderness Park follows a significant swath of Salt Creek. Not only will any consequences of urban runoff bring harm to the park and Salt Creek, but repercussions will be felt downstream where the creek empties into the Platte River- the source of our drinking water. Wilderness Park and Salt Creek are an integral component of our watershed and provide a home and safe passage for myriad wildlife species. Without this corridor many wildlife would need to find refuge elsewhere and face increased risk of vehicular collision and mortality and suffer from a lack of resources on the landscape. I have specifically chosen to wander the Wilderness trails with my binoculars to marvel at migrating warblers. In fact, only one week ago I saw both ruby- and golden-crowned kinglets in the same bush! I cannot begin to stress the magnificence of this occurrence, an experience I would not have witnessed if Wilderness Park had not provided food and shelter for the birds on their migratory journey. This is of incredible importance in light of the recent report by Cornell University that North America has lost a devastating amount of songbird species in the last 30 years. Preserving Wilderness Park is vital to conserving what remains before it is too late. More human disturbance from increased housing development so close to this important habitat area will not allow the park to continue providing for our wildlife in such a way. On many other visits I have had magical encounters with deer, woodpeckers, great blue herons, wood ducks, eastern bluebirds, Baltimore orioles, fox squirrels, wild turkeys, and many many more. If we do not protect the integrity of Wilderness Park and its ecosystem, then we are failing not only our wildlife but ourselves and the future generations of the Lincoln community.

As the world around us changes and becomes more developed and urbanized, pockets of nature like Wilderness Park are increasingly precious. Where else will the youth of Lincoln hear chorus frogs for the first time, build a tree fort, or swim in Salt Creek? Where will their wonder grow for the natural world and be called to save it? Where will they find a place where they can find escape

from the stresses of school or work and be purely themselves for just a few hours? Or hug a ginormous ancient oak tree, trying to stretch their arms all around the circumference of the great trunk. Where else will our children have these enriching, life-changing experiences? Green spaces have been shown to be crucial for the mental and physical health of communities. We need Wilderness Park as much as the park needs us to protect it.

Wilderness Park is a home for me and many others. My heart aches in tandem with the alarms ringing in my biologist brain at the possible degradation such a unique and valuable place. Please, Council Members, hear the cries of the community you pledged to serve. Let us speak for those who call Wilderness Park home. Let us give a voice to the wildlife, the trees, the creek, and many others who cannot advocate for themselves. Please hear what we are saying. Do not approve this zone change. Protect our park. We are asking you to listen. I trust that you will.

Thank you,
Elsa Forsberg

From: [Rosina Paolini](#)
To: [Council Packet](#)
Subject: Proposed Wilderness Crossing Project
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2022 6:51:00 AM
Attachments: [22WCRebuttal.docx](#)

Dear Council Members -

I hope we will take the high road and raise the bar on the processes that risk our flood management system.

I am grateful for your service and watch how your humility serves you and allows to govern with grace.

Respectfully-
*rosina

To the Council Members and the Mayor -

Thank you for so patiently listening to so many so late into the night, Council Members. Your service is much appreciated. I am following up on a couple things came to mind.

1. Tim Zach provided great testimony was presented well, yet information was omitted or vague. He was my beginning source for my hydro research and provided dates and phases. Why?

Flood mapping is to be done in phases, stating the maps aren't available for review until 2027 is important and yet was omitted.

There is a difference b/t the retention pond that will take more maintenance and causes less erosion and a dry detention pond that will require less maintenance, and causes more erosion. The best is when the pond is elevated. **None** of them mitigate poison and their ½ life.

2. If a covenant is responsible to uphold the maintenance of the pond, and the other amendments made to the developer's design plan and they fold or don't uphold standards, how's that governed?

3. Rainfall coupled with projected volume and velocity of water flow will provide a bigger picture. Traffic studies need to be current and improvements in the works before a development of that size is permitted., I am saddened by the lack of foresight to realize no-one knows the effect of multiple housing developments on the Saline River/Salt Creek? I find this to be a lack of transparency to you and the citizens of Lincoln.

3. How is it that the Planning Commission Chair can instruct fellow members to only vote on land use when considering developments and not to take into account the other variables, especially with Wilderness Crossing?

It seems some development that need to be denied from the get go or City Council has to analyze the other variables and decide on it's approval causing more work for the Planning Department, associated departments and the City Council.

4. We need our exemplary staff to think out of box, to be transparent and invite all views, be prepared for the unknowns by waiting until data is current and provides a better sense of the probabilities and above all weighs the cost benefit to all.

The taxes of a 575 door/rooftop development do not offset the cost of flooded Lincoln and hopefully this time in a more affluent neighborhood so we really pay attention.

Many more issues were brought up with roads, affordable housing and they are very important. The unknown potential to flood Lincoln in the next 50 - year flood that may occur in 10 years is an issue we cannot repair when it goes south. Be cautious, I urge everyone to PAUSE and consider everything before action is taken. That area has been sitting there my life - time, it can stay Ag awhile longer to allow for prudent long - term decisions to be made. There are no "take backs".

Respectfully -
*rosina

Rosina Paolini 1850 Dakota Street, Lincoln NE 68502 404-423-1260