

Jane Rasely

From: Robert Thiele <rjthiele@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 10, 2018 6:48 PM
To: PCD
Cc: City Admin; Ron Peltier; Rasham Nassar; Leslie Schneider; Kol Medina; Joe Deets; Matthew Tirman
Subject: Wallace Cottages

Kelly Tayara, Senior Planner
City of Bainbridge Island

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on the Wallace Cottages development. As I note below, the Wallace Cottages project is one of five similar high density residential developments along a short stretch of Madison Avenue that should be considered for their combined impact. However, Wallace Cottages by itself is not a viable sustainable development even if the collective impact is not assessed.

Today the land proposed for use for the Wallace Cottages project is open space covered in vegetation and trees. The parcel is landlocked, with no direct access to roads, or utility services. Vehicle access is shown on the notice documentation as a long, narrow drive stretching between the two adjacent properties that front Madison Avenue. There is no apparent path for the utilities needed to support a high density residential project, in particular sloped piping for gravity waste and storm drains. By all reasonable appearances this parcel is far more suitable as community open space, than developed land with vehicle and utility access that must be unnaturally directed to Madison Avenue.

I have worked in design and construction of energy conservation projects (the old school term) and sustainable/green projects (the more modern designation) for over 40 years. One of the fundamental lessons I have learned is the purpose of this work is not only to improve the physical environment and conserve resources, but also to enhance the human experience and health of its communities.

Sustainable construction involves many considerations that are key to maintaining the beauty, wonder and resources of the planet and its communities, and the health and welfare of the people that inhabit those communities. These considerations include many that are important to the City of Bainbridge Island:

- Storm water management
- Access to quality public transportation
- Protecting/restoring habitat
- Providing open space
- Optimizing energy performance
- Reduced parking footprint
- Reduce vehicle emissions
- Walkability

A sustainable outcome for a building projects does not depend on merely one or two of these considerations, but require best effort to incorporate many. High density development within walking distance of Winslow Center, or energy efficiency alone is not enough. Likewise, projects are not constructed in a vacuum, existing and planned neighborhood conditions and diversity must be included in the evaluation.

There are presently five high density developments planned along the same, very short stretch of Madison Ave, Including Wallace Cottages. Given the proximity in time, location and infrastructure requirements of Wallace Cottages and the four other developments, the impact and sustainable footprint of all must be assessed as one. Particularly,

since Wallace Cottages is approximately 2.5 acres of presently open space that is landlocked and must be connected to Madison Avenue for transportation and utilities to be useful for residential use.

The combined negative impacts when looking at the Madison Avenue developments together include:

- Significant reduction in rainwater infiltration: The five developments together will involve almost 9 acres of land that are mostly open today. The new developments will construct new impervious surfaces (housing, parking, driveway, sidewalks, etc.) over a significant portion of this land that will prevent rainwater infiltration into the soil and increase runoff into the existing storm water systems.
- Significant reduction in open space: The five developments will reduce the open space in this area that now benefits the people of Bainbridge Island, and the birds using the Pacific Flyway, an international migration route.
- Significant reduction in mature trees: The construction of the five developments will require the destruction of dozens of mature Douglas firs and other trees in the 9 acres to be used for high density residential.
- Significant increase in vehicle exhaust emissions: Traffic consultant estimates indicate an additional 744 average daily car trips can be expected on Madison Avenue.
- Significant increase in traffic: As noted above, an additional 744 average daily car trips are anticipated on Madison Avenue, which today is a congested 2-lane urban street.

What should be done to mitigate the impact of developing infill sites near Winslow Center? That is a community conversation that should consider whether additional development benefits the community and should be allowed at all. If there is a decision to support development, then robust sustainable/green concepts must be implemented in the projects. This must include measures that not only lessen the environmental impact of the developments, but also improve the comfort, health and safety of the immediate community and the City of Bainbridge Island at large, such as:

- Increase the open space in and around each new development
- Plan the site and orient structures in each development to preserve existing trees
- Maintain the landlocked Wallace Cottages acreage as community space for park land and trails
- Incentivize a reduction in vehicles in the Madison corridor; e.g., reduce parking in developments, and have the developers fund additional public transportation.
- Prioritize rain water management by creating open areas for filtration and retention, and requiring permeable surfaces for parking, drives and sidewalks.

As a resident of the Madison Avenue corridor, I respectfully request the city reexamine the planning decisions regarding the five Madison Avenue developments. The impact on the community must be considered as a whole, rather than as separate projects individually. I believe the planning and approval process must to be slowed to allow the careful and considered assessment that is necessary.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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