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To the Municipal Planning Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on development proposal PLN20-002. As I'm sure you are aware, the community has a great deal to say on this matter. As residents currently residing within 300m of this large-scale development, we have strong concerns about the proposal as presented.

Darrell is the reason that we live in East Hants. Having grown up in Halifax, I was very apprehensive about moving to the "country" – but he convinced me. We purchased a home in White Estates in part because of the price, but it also provided us a beautiful balance between having privacy and space to breathe, and proximity to services and the support of neighbors. Over the past 12 years we have come to love this community, not just for the people we've met here, but for the rural character. Like many residents of East Hants we value the slower pace, lower traffic volumes, green space, opportunities for recreation, support for local businesses and opportunities to be involved and shape the future of the community.

I want to be very clear that we do not oppose development. It is an incredible thing that East Hants has become such a desirable place to live and work – growth is essential to the health of any community. **But we are adamantly opposed to this proposal, and in particular, the rezoning of PIDs 45329901 and PID 45379864 to Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD).** The existing land use designations serve the purpose of protecting the integrity of the community and the principles of the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS).

As informed residents we are very aware that the current zoning of Established Residential Neighbourhood (ER) requires the municipality and councillors to apply policy that would require significant modification to WM Fares' proposal. The MPS states that:

Council recognizes that residential development in East Hants has traditionally been of a relatively low density. Council's intent is to protect the nature of these residential neighbourhoods by providing zoning provisions for the establishment of low density single and two unit housing, consistent with the Established Residential Neighbourhood (ER) future land use designation.

RD1. *Council shall encourage new residential development that will promote a high quality of life for East Hants residents and result in the creation of attractive streetscapes, vibrant public open spaces, and welcoming pedestrian environments.*

RD2. *Council shall encourage context sensitive intensification and infill residential development that complements surrounding homes and preserves or enhances neighbourhood integrity.*

RD4. *Council shall clearly establish where and how new residential development can occur in order to ensure that growth takes place in a predictable manner that provides residents a sense of security and neighbourhood stability.*

RD12. *Council shall require that the overall purpose and provisions of the Established Residential Neighbourhood (R1) Zone and Two Dwelling Unit Residential (R2) Zones be compatible with the*

specified intent of the ER designation. Said provisions shall determine permitted land uses to establish a consistent, predictable, low density residential land use pattern.

RD13. *Council recognizes the value in providing for a limited range of compatible commercial, mixed use, and small multiplex developments in the ER Designation. These developments shall be located primarily at the edge of the ER Designation near major streets in order to provide a transition and maintain the character of the ER designation.*

At the January 5th Public Information Meeting, municipal planning staff indicated that the benefit of the WCDD designation is that the developer would be required to enter into a development agreement – thereby offering the community a sense of security in knowing exactly what is to be built on this property. We believe that the benefits of maintaining the current designation outweigh the benefit of a development agreement.

As a property owner, I do not support sacrificing the existing zoning and the principles of the MPS, to buy the commitment of a developer. Our community holds the cards here – we have the power to drive development that supports and enhances the appeal of the community while maintaining our quality of life.

Approval of the change to Land Use Designation would appear to allow Council to bypass the considerations listed above for an ER. Your third Staff Report for this proposal indicates that proposal PLN20-002 is in line with one objective of the MPS - to ensure the availability of suitable land and space in East Hants to support business and economic growth. This may be true, but upon careful review of the MPS, I would argue that even with a rezoning the proposal does not meet many other core Community Priorities. Specifically:

- **Priority 2: Support well-designed, pedestrian friendly small-town centres.** *While the intensity will vary between each village core based on demand: the desired development form throughout the village core areas is a small town, urban character.*

I am utterly failing to understand how the addition of two 100' tall buildings, and an 80' tall building aligns with these values. There is no possible argument that this proposal maintains small-town community character, attractive streetscapes or safe pedestrian environments.

- **Priority 4: Develop healthy transportation networks including walking and cycling.** *East Hants is an area that primarily relies on the automobile to get around, and this reliance is placing traffic stress upon the Municipality's key transportation corridors. In order to accommodate future development, existing roads will need to be upgraded.*

Your review indicates that the higher density components of this development are located closer to Highway 2, but the reality is that the traffic from this higher density development exits directly into the subdivision. A “driveway” is not adequate to allow for traffic flow for upwards of 400 residential and commercial cars per day, onto the high-traffic end of an arterial street.

Section D50 of the MPS states that *Council shall require that all development proposals that may impact vehicle access to a public street be subject to the approval of the Municipal Engineer, or the provincial traffic authority.* Has this been done? Does it consider the cumulative impact of the

multiple proposals in this area? Please share this publicly – traffic flow and volume is a very real concern, for safety and ease of access, particularly given the location of the school, daycare and businesses on the opposite side of Highway 2.

For my family, and others in this community who walk and bike, the removal of green space and the addition of 400+ cars to the neighborhood (with this proposal alone) will prevent us from safely engaging in these activities. The argument that this will support families to access the very small playground on Concorde is not adequate to justify support for active transportation connectivity. Already, crossing White Rd. along Highway #2 is difficult and dangerous. I have witnessed many close calls and accidents at this intersection.

- **Priority 6: Mixing Compatible land uses and provide transitions between areas of different density.** *For neighbourhoods close to mixed use areas, development pressure can try to push development into their area. Planning for density transitions can help indicate where density should go, and create clear, but gradual separations between low density residential neighbourhoods, and denser community centres*

This proposal does not offer gradual separation between low density and high-density areas. A small block of townhouses is not a gradual nor effective buffer against 85' and 100' buildings. As proposed, houses on Lacy Anne will have an 85' building towering directly over their backyards. Residences on the lower end of White Rd. will similarly have 100' buildings casting shadow on our front yards.

- **Priority 8: Allow a range of housing options appropriate to each neighbourhoods' form and intensity.** *As much as possible, the community character of existing residential areas needs to be respected*

We most certainly agree that the Municipality needs many forms of ownership and rental accommodations. This has never been more clear than it is right now – my heart breaks for the individuals and families that have recently been forced to move from the area to find rental opportunities.

A development on this property that respects the current land use designations will provide much needed housing and commercial opportunities without sacrificing the community character of the existing neighborhood. Allowing large multiplexes does not meet this objective.

The municipality's own documents outline the importance of involving affected communities in planning decisions that impact them. We are grateful for this opportunity, but encouraging participation for the sake of checking a box on the process map is not adequate. I can tell you that based on past consultations the residents of East Hants feel angry, defeated and dismissed – you yourselves can see this in the public discussions on social media and very clearly at the January 5th Public Information Meeting. Fostering ongoing citizen engagement requires that you actually listen to those with whom you are engaging and work to resolve conflict. In your own words, "an angry public contributes to the erosion of our basic institutions. [...] Management of conflict through a proactive, thorough, and well-established citizen engagement program is central to planning and provides a solid foundation for implementation."

I've spent the time making links to Municipal policy as a way to try and "speak your language". But the truth is that the policies are good ones! They allow you as planners and Councillors to feel confident making decisions that align with the direction this community wants to take. Decisions that support our vision for who we are and enhance what we already love about living here.

I question the value of having a strategy framework for land use and development control if ultimately we choose to support projects that take advantage of loopholes in those policies, to the detriment of the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Erin Smiley and Darrell Fardy