

June 14, 2025

Re: Residential Land Use

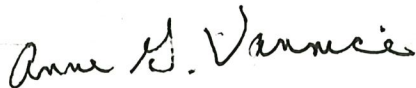
Attention: Donald Whipple,
Chief Planner

ALCP

I received your notice of Community Plan Amendment for property designed for low density to high density on property at 183 East Mercury Blvd. extending to 261 Woodland Road. I expressed my displeasure with your high density earlier and I recommend the city return to low density. I know it will mean more taxes for the city but it will be more gravitation to the citizens who live near and those traveling pass. I live on Pine Cone Drive (Pine Cone Condos at the end of my street) and I see the amount of traffic already on that length of East Mercury and it is a night mare now.

Please do not change the low density project to a much loathed high density.

Respectfully,



Anne G. Vannice

33 Pine Cone Drive

Hampton, VA 23669

From: [nickerdoodle](#)
To: [Brooks, Tracy](#); [kilrogers@gmail.com](#); [Ruthann Kellum](#); [Trina Coleman](#); [Mugler, Martha](#); [Michael Harris](#); [DeProfio, Brian](#); [Whipple, Donald](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wood's Orchard 25-0102, 25-0148, 25-0149
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:33:54 AM

Dear Planning Commission Members and Mr Whipple:

I'm not sure I will be at the Thursday meeting and my comments would exceed the 3-minute limit, but I would appreciate it if you would take the time to read the following. And hopefully I'm not violating any laws/procedures.

I would like to address the proposed rezoning for the Woods Orchard property on Mercury Blvd and request the Planning Commission and City Council NOT approve the recommendation to Amend the Community Plan 25-0102 NOR approve either the Rezoning Application 25-0148 the Wood's Orchard and adjacent Frazier Trust properties to Multi/Family-High Density or the Use Permit Application 25-0149.

Despite community meetings where the neighboring residents were vocal in their opposition to a change from Single Family to High Density zoning for this property, the Planning Department is going forward with a recommendation to approve this change.

Having attended both community meetings and one of Ms Bunting's ivalue budget meetings, I'm sorry to say that most responses I hear from fellow attendees are along the lines of "they're going to do what they want to do" and "better the devil we know".

Let me also preface by stating that the data I've provided below and/or relied on is all gathered from City budget documents, the City annual audit, School Board Budgets and data from the Assessor's Office Land Book 2024.

Before the Planning Commission acts, I would ask that they delve deeper into the "assessment" conducted by the City to determine the actual need for housing.

In the April memo to council, Mr. Whipple stated:

In 2024, when Woods Orchard closed its doors for the final time, an evaluation was conducted to determine the property's best long-term use. The assessment concluded that high-density residential development would be the most beneficial use of the land.

I sent an email to Mr. Whipple asking the following:

*How does one go about obtaining a copy of the 'evaluation' and 'assessment'?
Is it posted online? or can it be emailed?
I would like to know who conducted this evaluation and the basis for determining that high density was the most beneficial use?*

Mr Whipple's response: *Good afternoon – there isn't an actual document, such as a report. The reference evaluation is based on staff discussion and research as well as*

factual evidence regarding the ongoing market need for multifamily residential in the City. For instance, many of the recently built apartment developments such as Lumen, Monroe Gates, Ellipse, Axis, and the Constellation at King are functioning at an occupancy level @95% on average. Such occupancy rate demonstrates the absorption rate for apartments in the city remains very strong. In addition to those projects mention above, there are a number of new apartment developments proposed in the City.

Before the Planning Commission acts, I would ask they investigate whether the 95% occupancy rate stated above for the NEW apartments is simply people relocating from older units to new units; much the way businesses will relocate from old shopping centers to the "latest and greatest" shopping center. Is the city truly growing?

One of the criteria I've heard is "critical housing needs" and I have to question the validity of this argument. I've gone through the various Audits and Budgets posted by the City to their website and the growth of the Hampton population has been less than 1% for the past 10 years. And that population is aging with the proportion of residents in the 65+ group increasing. The student enrollment has actually declined over that same time frame.

The numbers I found for

FY2018 - 136,743 population with 64.5% in the 18-65 yr bracket and 13.7% in the 65+ yr bracket.

FY2024 - 136,781 population with 63.3% in the 18-65 yr bracket and 15.3% in the 65+ yr bracket.

School enrollment for 2019-2020 was 19,589 and for 2024-2025 was 19,474 (including virtual learning)

Only 48.5% of the population lives and works in the City (FY26 Budget)

To me an indicator of commercial growth would be business licenses issued/renewed. Those numbers are also down from 9,743 in 2022 to 8,005 in 2023. And according to Economic Development statistics, the # of meetings held with existing or prospective business dropped from 865 in 2022 to 581 in 2023. So the number of "prospects" also appears to be on the wane.

The memo further states "the amendment aligns with Hampton geography, growth patterns, environmental conditions and the need for efficient land use supporting the City's long term growth strategies and housing demands".

Before the Planning Commission acts, I would question what exactly is the City's "long term growth strategies and housing demands" as it relates to the hundreds of tax exempt properties owned by the Economic Development Authority (62 properties), the Hampton Housing and Redevelopment Authority (428 properties), and the hundreds of undeveloped properties owned by the City of Hampton (per the 2024

Landbook). These properties represent millions of dollars that are currently exempt from taxes and not generating any tax revenue. Some of these properties have been sitting in inventory for years yet these agencies continue to acquire more; i.e. the City's recent purchase of the Fisherman's Wharf property.

Before the Planning Commission/City Council act, I would ask they review "affordable housing". The developer of the proposed subdivision has indicated they would market to young professionals and seniors wanting to downsize and has indicated rent would start at \$1590/month. The old "rule of thumb" was that housing costs should be no more than 30% of your income. So, \$1590/month would mean an annual income of \$63,600.

I have heard that Langley Air Force Base is bringing in additional personnel and has asked the localities for housing assistance so the cynical me has to ask if it is a coincidence that the \$1590/month is the equivalent of the military housing allowance for our area (which I believe is actually \$1596 for E1)???

Before the Planning Commission acts, I would ask if the issue of the Great Horned Owl nesting/hunting grounds has been addressed. A speaker at the April meeting raised the issue of there possibly/probably being Great Horned Owls in the area and the development would potentially destroy their nesting/hunting grounds. While not threatened or endangered, they are protected under the Migratory Bird Act.

Before the Planning Commission acts, I would ask that they seriously review the traffic study documentation. The study indicated the proposed buildout would have less impact on traffic flow than current zoning. However, they assumed a strip mall would go in on the current Commercial site generating 700+ visits in/700+ visits out. Really? Do you see that happening? I've lived here since 1969 and I just don't see that happening in that location. **And** they also neglected to account for any development of the adjacent Frazier property which would (apparently from the developer's comments) route thru the new development. I understand that impact probably wasn't asked for but what would be the impact of an additional +/- 500 units on traffic flow?

I also take exception to the traffic study comment that generally implies – “too much traffic on Southerland, well then go down Stonehurst”

“In particular, the eastbound direction only has a maximum left turning volume of 17 vehicles which is not very many vehicles and is not enough to even consider a traffic signal. In addition, these 17 left turning vehicles do have the option of utilizing Stonehurst Road to turn left which is only 400 feet to the north, in the direction they intend to go. As such, traffic can easily mitigate itself to achieve better traffic flow.”

As a resident of Stonehurst Rd I have seen it go from a quiet little dead end street of 15 houses that was then opened up with the development of the peach orchard (20 houses) and is now a cut through to Pembroke Ave and other streets. There has been no enhancement to quality of life – just a lot more traffic and litter.

I'm assuming there was a logical, valid reason when the Woods property was originally zoned R-11/Commercial - maybe to keep the general esthetics of the surrounding neighborhoods? And wouldn't the 'most beneficial use' be to keep the Single Family zoning where you potentially have homeowners with a vested interest in the City and not come-and-go renters? Focus on the "tax exempt" properties the various agencies of the City own and turn them into properties that actually generate revenue rather than just cost the City (and the taxpayers) money?

The memo further states The R-11 District, classified as low-density residential under the Hampton Community Plan, prescribes 3.5 to 9 residential units per acre. My reading of the code found R-11 designates all lots "shall be a minimum of 9,000 SqFt with a minimum frontage of 70 feet" which seems to be a contradiction to the memo. And if an acre = 43,560 SqFt, then an acre would support 4 Single Family.

I also question why the two lots owned by the Maurice Frazier Revocable Trust are being included in the rezoning request? At the last meeting the developer showed slides pertaining only to the Woods' property and, I believe, when questioned why the discrepancy between his slides and the City's slides (including Frazier property) at the earlier meeting (to the best of my recollection) he stated he wasn't interested in that property, the two daughters of Mr Frazier had been asked and were not interested in selling.

However, the most recent information coming through the packet now states the "dumpsters can be moved for access to that property."

The following statement is taken from the package presented to the board.

If the opportunity exists to further expand the development of the property to the north, access points have been created where the dumpsters are presently located. These dumpsters will have to be relocated if this expansion occurs.

I don't see a developer allowing someone else to route their traffic through his property which leads me to assume this developer is in fact looking at acquiring and developing the Frazier Trust property at some point. And the question is – if you allow Multi-Family/High Density to the tune of 316 apartments on 10 acres then how many more will they cram on to 14 acres?

A recent query of Realtor.com for "Hampton, VA" shows there are currently 369 properties for sale (townhomes, multifamily, single, mobile, condo) ranging from \$100,000 to \$3.5M (beachfront property). In addition there were 156 rentals listed ranging from \$400 to \$4,600.

In addition, the City had before them another rezoning request for an additional 215 apartments on Armistead Ave (Riverbend Landing). Not to mention the potential units with the Trilogy 1 and Trilogy 11 buildout.

So if the population hasn't grown then why the "critical housing needs"

Now, addressing the specifics of the site involved. This is property that has been

farmed for generations and who knows how many gallons of pesticides have permeated the soil and to what depth? So what happens when dirt starts being moved? Based on the contour map from the City's GIS system and the drawing from the proposed developer it would appear the site for the proposed retention basin will be located at one of the highest points of the property (12 ft). Therefore, in order to lower the basin to the point at which it would/could accept the run-off would mean removing a LOT of dirt. Will this dirt be tested? Will it be removed and if so where? Will it simply be redistributed on the property?

I also question whether the retention pond is able to accommodate the run-off once the property is developed; essentially 8 acres of previously permeable soil is now concrete and impervious. According to US Geological Survey data, 1" of rain over 1 acre = 27,154 gallons of water. And we're talking several acres..... Can the basin really manage that? Have they allowed for a worst case scenario in terms of torrential rains and the flow onto/into the adjacent properties.

It also appears a lift station has now been added to the project. The placement of the lift station has it at the back of some of the homes in Washington Gardens. I don't believe this pump station was in the original design and/or discussion so I would question the impact of noise levels on those homes, along with odor control system(s), backup power, flood/overflow issues, etc.

The adjacent property owned by the Frazier's is currently zoned wetlands so how will the retention pond water be released so as not to impact that adjacent lot??? In addition to which the run-off will now contain oils/greases from the concrete under parked cars along with add'l litter. How does that not impact the wetlands?

Olde Hampton has already turned into a concrete jungle - let's ask some hard questions and not rubber-stamp this request. Please vote NO and keep the "neighborhood" in Hampton.

Thank you

Teresa Salnoske

From: tnahcsdrama@gmail.com
To: [Whipple, Donald](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Alternative Housing Suggestion For Wood's Orchard Acreage
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:30:17 PM

Having homes which provide a master bedrooms lends themselves to in-law independent living spaces for aging family members. The homes built at the intersection of Briarfield and Queen Street are good examples. Seniors and their younger family members can cohabitate in 1 dwelling. The single dwellings that are one level in Scotts Landing and those between Mercury Blvd. and Woodland Road is another example of dwellings/homes which could address some of the needs for our aging population of “baby boomers “ in our community. Let’s keep them by providing their needs. Let keep them here by providing them privacy in the families homes or providing rancher, 1 level homes even with security as other nearby communities have and are doing. High density has already addressed in our city.

Within the area of the Woods Orchard acreage are grocery stores, gas stations, pharmacies, and dollar stores. There are school’s K thru 12th grade nearby. This location is close to both highways and beaches. It lends itself so much with these types of living spaces other than “high density” living of townhomes or an apartment complex. Please thoughtfully plan for Hampton’s future families. Please carefully plan on what Hampton needs to keep residents to feel safe and comfortable in their familiar environment. Please keep apartments away from this community.

I love Hampton and want our families/residence needs considered other ways.

Tina Pierce
1402 Antoinette Circle