April 12, 2021

Submitted by:
Patrick Goodman
Linwood, Cincinnati

RE: Bloor Development Zoning Change Application, 84-Unit Apartment Complex

To the City of Cincinnati Planning Commission:

I am a resident of Linwood and a Trustee on the Linwood Community Council. I am one of the six council members who voted against the Bloor development as it currently stands at the January 2021 Linwood Community Council general meeting. The vote was 1-6-1 (one for, six against, and one abstention) against the Bloor development as it currently stands.

Please accept this letter as a public statement in opposition to the proposed zoning change to begin construction of an 84-unit apartment complex on Bloor Ave in Linwood, Cincinnati as it currently stands. Namely, the Bloor Ave development presents numerous issues to Linwood regarding street safety, traffic congestion, neighborhood aesthetic, market value, and livability of current residents of Linwood.

Street Safety

Linwood is a small, historic neighborhood of 875 (2010 census). The population of Linwood is broken up into five (5) separate areas: (1) Eastern Ave bordering Columbia Tusculum, (2) Eastern Ave leading to Fairfax/Mariemont, (3) the hillside area on either side of Heekin Ave, (4) the small area along Duck Creek, and (5) the floodplain area accessible from Wooster Pike.

The Bloor development currently wishes to create an 84-unit single-room apartment complex in the (5) floodplain area of Linwood accessible by Wooster Pike. Even at lowest capacity, this would increase the total population of Linwood by 10% minimum. It would also place the entire 10% minimum capacity population increase in one concentrated area of Linwood. This rapid increase of population to a small area will create street safety issues. Linwood has a high number of families with children, all of whom will now have to deal with a sudden increase of traffic due to apartment renters, delivery vehicles, moving trucks, food services, and more.

Crime-wise, Linwood's number one crime in the area is car break-ins. Introducing an 84-unit apartment complex with open lot and on-street parking will greatly increase the likelihood of these crimes of convenience.

Further, we are still in a global pandemic. Having so many living units in close proximity, as well as the rapid increase of population to a condensed portion of the neighborhood, where population is controlled and there is plenty of space for each family, increases the rate of interactions that breaks current Ohio social distance regulations.

Finally, with the location being in a floodplain, in the event of a flood, the ability to safely exit the area decreases due to the increase of motor vehicles attempting to move at once in a small, condensed residential area.

Traffic Congestion

The Bloor developers stated that much of the construction of such a large apartment complex was dependent on the construction of new off- and on-ramps to Beechmont Levy. In an email correspondence to Linwood Community Council, Morgan Kolks in the Dept. Of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) has stated that the city is no longer pursuing or considering this construction.

An 84-unit apartment complex in a small historic neighborhood that lies off a well-used light industrial road will immediately impact the ability to find street parking in a neighborhood that was largely constructed at the turn of the 20th century and therefore have no garage or private parking area.

The traffic that an 84-unit apartment complex does not end with renters. Moving trucks, delivery vehicles, food services, and friends of renters will increase traffic within the neighborhood and on major eastern Cincinnati thoroughfares including Beechmont Levy and Wooster Pike. This will negatively impact traffic congestion in the area for residents of Linwood, as well as neighboring communities like Fairfax/Mariemont, Mt. Washington/Anderson, and Mt. Lookout/Hyde Park.

And to further repeat, DOTE has stated that they are no longer going to pursue or consider new on- and off-ramps to Beechmont Levy.

Neighborhood Aesthetic

The neighborhood of Linwood was primarily constructed on either end of 1900, from c.1880-1925. The majority of the houses are built for 1- or 2-family. The primary construction style falls between Queen Anne and Folk Victorian. The average house market value is within the range of $90,000-$220,000. Linwood is a working class to middle class neighborhood made up of many families with children still in the home. (Attachment 1)

The proposed 84-unit apartment complex that is primarily made of glass and metal, which does not fit with the neighborhood aesthetic. (Attachments 2 & 3) The units have been presented to appeal to young professionals, which does not fit with the large number of homeowners and families with children. Linwood does, however, have a portion of rentals for young adults, which already makes it compliant with City of Cincinnati's Plan Cincinnati. The style has been described as an industrial-style out-facing façade in a tip to Linwood's industrial past, which does not fit with the vast majority of 1- and 2-family houses in the Queen Anne and Folk Victorian style.

Market Value

Despite making multiple requests for information on the rental prices for each unit in the proposed 84-unit apartment complex Bloor Development, the developers have never once given a price range. Not even a ballpark figure

Despite making multiple requests for information on how this will impact local housing market values, the developers have never once stated how the neighborhood's housing values will be affected.

Livability

Linwood is a working- to middle-class neighborhood made up primarily of 1- and 2-family houses. Linwood offers quintessential affordable housing for the people of Cincinnati. This culture of Linwood has existed for over 150 years.

Introducing a glass-and-metal mega-structure like the proposed 84-unit apartment complex at Bloor Ave will forever change the culture and livability of Linwood. It will increase traffic issues, safety issues, housing values, and the look and feel of an historic Cincinnati neighborhood. It will also increase the number of transient residents by a minimum of 10% in a concentrated area, with a constantly rotating number of short-term renters.

In terms of livability for any potential renter there is low incentive, as well. First, renters will be living in a flood plain and will most probably need to purchase some type of flood insurance on top of their rent. Second, there are several large, unmovable billboards on the proposed construction site. This includes two large billboards that the proposed pool will be directly under. (Attachment 4, billboard locations left out of blueprint) With DOTE no longer proposing or considering new on- and off-ramps to Beechmont Levy, commuting in such a small, congested area will be difficult. Further, a minimum of on-street parking for a second renter in a single unit, a visiting friend or relative, etc. Will create parking issues for the entire area. Finally, while there are entertainment amenities within the area, all are accessed via walkways along some of Cincinnati's busiest roads (Wooster Pike and Beechmont Levy). Due to this, most renters may find it more appealing to drive for entertainment. This would include entertainment involving alcoholic beverages.

Conclusion

Though I am not against any development on Bloor Ave, I am against the current proposed 84-unit apartment complex, especially after learning that DOTE has no plans pertaining to new on- and off-ramps on Beechmont Levy. As the development stands, I would like to voice my opposition to a zoning change. I would also like to voice my opinion that if the area is to be re-zoned, it remains consistent with the surrounding neighborhood of 1- and 2-family houses. I would even be in favor of increasing the zone to 4- to 8-family units if proportionately mixed with new single-family homes built to own.

Attachment 1

Linwood Neighborhood Surrounding Proposed Bloor Development

4718 Wilmer Ct
c.1925
Market Total: $99.7K

3754 Kenilworth Pl.
c.1913
Market Value: $79.7K

3748 Pennsylvania Ave.
c.1880
Markwt Value: $75.4K

4830 Winter St.
c.1901
Market Value: $132.8K

4721 Wilmer Ct.
c.1875
Market Value: $121.8K

3760 Kenilworth Pl.
c.1912
Market Value: $99.1K

3749 Pennsylvania Ave
c.1887
Market Value: $126.2K

3714 Hutton St
c.1885
Market Value: $111.3K

4727 Wilmer Ct.
c.1901
Market Value: $83.2K

3767 Kenilworth Pl.
c.1920
Market Value: $136K

3754 Pennsylvania Ave.
c. 1925
Market Value: $208K

3718 Hutton St.
c.1898
Market Value: $233K

3742 Kenilworth Pl
c.1905
Market Value: $111K

3766 Kenilworth Ct.
c.1905
Market Value: 146.8K

3761 Pennsylvania Ave.
c.1885
Market Value: $88K

3726 Hutton St.
c.1895
Market Value: $235K

37 44 Kenilworth Pl
c.1905
Market Value: $61.7K

3740 Pennsylvania Ave.
c.1928
Market Value: $115.9

3769 Pennsylvania Ave.
c.1890
Market Value: $155K

3747 Hutton Ave
c.1908
Market Value: $145.8K

3751 Kenilworth Pl.
c.1910
Market Value: $74.3K

3743 Pennsylvania Ave.
c. 1892
Market Value: $142K

4823 Winter St.
c. 1886
Market Value: $71K

3753 Hutton Ave
c.1866
Market Value: $162K

Attachment 2

Proposed Bloor Development of an 84-Unit Apartment Complex, 1

Attachment 3

Proposed Bloor Development of an 84-Unit Apartment Complex, 2

0' 8' 16' 32' 64'

Attachment 4

Proposed Bloor Development of an 84-Unit Apartment Complex, 3