

STEPHANIE HANSEN
STATE SENATOR
10th District



SENATE
STATE OF DELAWARE
411 LEGISLATIVE AVENUE
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

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September 15, 2021

Ms. Karen Peterson
New Castle County Planning Board, Chair
87 Reads Way
New Castle, DE 19720
KarenPeterson183@msn.com

Madame Chair:

Thank you for allowing me to speak at the Planning Board hearing last Monday evening on Application 2021-0163-T (Ordinance 21-036). This application proposes a text amendment to the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan ("Comprehensive Plan") in which the draft Southern New Castle County Master Plan ("SNCC Master Plan") will become a new chapter within the Comprehensive Plan.

Master planning is an important and dynamic process, and we are grateful that New Castle County government is focusing on the future development needs of southern New Castle County. I have attended many of the public meetings held by the County to discuss the SNCC Master Plan and have been heartened by the County's desire to hear from the community and look at the many interrelated elements involved in master planning.

A number of recent events have occurred which could have a significant impact on the growth pattern in southern New Castle County, and because these have arisen recently, they are not accounted for within the current, draft SNCC Master Plan. First, there is the transfer of development rights ("TDR's") of a number of dwelling units from the Port Penn area to the West Wing¹ area under the County's TDR program resulting from legal settlements between the County and a number of landowners.

This precedent sets the stage for the West Wing area as a receiving area for TDR's and, as a result, could foreshadow further development of the West Wing as a continued future receiving area.² Designating an area within the County as a potential receiving area under the County's TDR program should not be done without a robust discussion with the community located in and around the targeted area. The community should be given time to hear from the County regarding what this

¹ The "West Wing" designation and geographical extent of this area is found within the SNCC Master Plan, Final Draft, released January 4, 2021; p. 6; Fig. 1-1 (Southern New Castle County Planning Area).

² This will be further encouraged by the current designation of this area as a future, sewered growth zone within the draft SNCC Master Plan.

designation means, what to expect, why the designation is being proposed, and the County should be open to hearing from the community regarding their concerns and working with the community on how those concerns will be addressed.

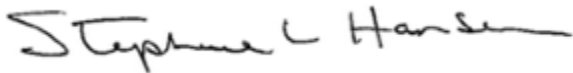
Given the confidential nature of the recent settlement agreements, that conversation with the community did not occur and, as a result, the community was very surprised and rightfully concerned when they recently learned that their community would become a receiving area under the settlement agreements. They feel that they did not have a say in that decision-making process. There is also no discussion in the SNCC Master Plan of the West Wing area becoming a TDR receiving area. The community is fully engaged in this issue at this time and is ready and willing to have this conversation. Unfortunately, due to the timing of this Ordinance, this conversation will be curtailed unless the Ordinance is denied or amended to remove the reference to incorporating the SNCC Master Plan into the Comprehensive Plan.

Secondly, as I mentioned at the Planning Board hearing, I have also begun conversations with DelDOT and the County regarding the formation of a new Transportation Improvement District (“TID”) or the expansion of the current TID located in the Central Core³ area of SNCC, encompassing the West Wing. This step has been necessitated by the recently discovered need for the Appoquinimink School District to pay for approximately \$3 million in offsite roadway improvements at its future, planned Summit Campus to serve the growing West Wing area and its surroundings.

DelDOT is currently performing an area-wide traffic study to help guide the discussion about whether a TID would be advisable, and if so, the extent of the boundaries. The imposition of a new TID or the expansion of the current TID would be an important planning component within the SNCC Master Plan. Unfortunately, as is the case with the community conversation above, this planning component is not currently a part of the draft SNCC Master Plan and cannot be so unless the Ordinance is either denied or amended to remove the reference to incorporating the SNCC Master Plan into the Comprehensive Plan.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that the Planning Board vote to deny Application 2021-0163-T (Ordinance 21-036) or vote to table the Ordinance so that it can be amended to exclude the reference to the draft SNCC Master Plan until such time as the above issues are addressed.

Sincerely,



Senator Stephanie Hansen, 10th District

³ The “Central Core” designation and geographical extent of this area is found within the SNCC Master Plan, Final Draft, released January 4, 2021; p. 6; Fig. 1-1 (Southern New Castle County Planning Area).

cc: Mr. Richard Hall, NCC Land Use Department, General Manager (Richard.Hall@newcastlede.gov)
Mr. Conor Gibbons, NCC (Conor.Gibbons@newcastlede.gov)
Mr. Antoni Sekowski, NCC (Antoni.Sekowski@newcastlede.gov)
Ms. Janet Vinc, NCC (Janet.Vinc@newcastlede.gov)
New Castle County Councilman David Carter (David.Carter@newcastlede.gov)
Mrs. Melissa Heller, MOT Alliance (Heller.Melissa@gmail.com)