

November 29, 2016

Tammy de Weerd, Mayor
City of Meridian
33 E. Broadway Avenue, Suite 300
Meridian, Idaho 83642

Re: Proposed Firenze Plaza at the corner of South Eagle and Amity Roads
Application H-2016-0102

Mayor de Weerd:

We are residents of the Tuscany development. The proposed Firenze Plaza will allow **Commercial properties**, i.e. a Grocery store (purportedly Albertson's, which makes no sense since they have an existing store open 3 miles from this location, at the corner of Lake Hazel and Cloverdale), fast food restaurant with drive thru, bank with drive thru's, gas station/convenience store, and various shops & restaurants to be built on land which is currently shown as Low Density Residential on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. Application H-2016-0102 also references the **potential for attached housing** in the area behind the shopping center, along Amity, and backing up to Montague, which currently borders the Tuscany development – a subdivision of single-family homes priced in the \$250,000 to \$500,000 range. Attached housing most definitely does not reflect the aesthetics of the community.

Allowing a commercial plaza with all the retail properties, food services and drinking establishments listed in the application, plus attached housing, will increase traffic into and out of the plaza. South Eagle Road will not be widened for at least four more years, and neither it nor Amity Road will be able to handle the additional traffic. There is currently a lot of traffic at that intersection when people are going to or coming from work, even though a traffic circle was implemented to ease congestion. The applicants' proposal to extend **four streets** from their Commercial Plaza into the Tuscany subdivision, to connect with South Eagle Road, is their way of solving the problem. Four streets within Tuscany (Mount Etna Drive, Taormina Drive, Santo Stefano Drive, and S. Burgo Way), all with homes, sidewalks and driveways on them, will be used to support the existing Arterial (Major) roads which can't handle the traffic. One of them even has a community pool on it. This increase in vehicle traffic is potentially dangerous to the families living in the development and our hope is that ACHD will not allow it.

A traffic study commissioned by the developer, The Land Group, is designating these streets in the Tuscany development to function as Commercial Collector roads. The Ada County Highway District "Livable Street Design Guide" defines Collector roads as connecting to arterial roadways, which they don't currently do, having posted speed limits between 25 and 35 mph (they are currently posted as 25 mph) and **NOT** providing direct access to individual residences, which the streets currently do provide.

We are extremely worried about the safety of our children if any roads in the development are turned into “feeder” roads for a commercial plaza. We have children who toss a ball back and forth in the street and smaller children whose bikes sometimes get away from them on their driveways – **which all slope downhill, toward the street.**

We enjoy washing our cars in the driveway on summer weekends, with neighbor children and their friends playing or riding bikes around us. We LOVE all the Trick or Treaters we get – literally hundreds of them! – their parents watching from the streets and sidewalks, visiting with other parents and those of us handing out candy. We watch the little children dress up in their snow gear and head outside, hopeful that wearing their snowsuits will actually bring the snow (!) and, when it finally does so, they bring out their snow saucers and sled down their driveways ... into the street. They’re kids – what do they know of Commercial Collector roads going through their neighborhoods. They’re used to other community residents who drive 20 – 25 mph through these streets, always keeping an eye out for them, for balls or wayward pets who might be chased by children, our most precious treasures.

The developer is recommending that Tuscany be the one exception in the whole Treasure Valley to have four of their residential streets turned into Commercial Collector roads. We may be the first but, if this is allowed to go through, we can assure everyone moving to Ada County in the future that we will not be the last.

Other cities in the country will not allow proposed developments if the major roads in the area cannot handle the increased traffic; many of them require the developers to build new roads or pay for enlarging them. If this is the way the cities of the Treasure Valley are going to solve the transportation issues that come with high growth, we can say goodbye to all those “Best Places to Live” recognitions.

Mayor de Weerd, we wanted to bring this to your attention and to the attention of the City Council, as this is a dangerous precedent to set. We are also copying some of the media on this communication because we can’t help feeling there are some “movers and shakers” behind the scenes forcing this development through. It doesn’t make sense otherwise.

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designation of Low Density Residential for this property indicates that those tasked with planning thought single-family homes were the best outcome for this property. We agree with that.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our concerns with this proposed project.

Sincerely,

cc: Meridian City Council

City of Meridian
33 E. Broadway Avenue, Suite 300
Meridian, Idaho 83642

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Joe Borton, Vice President
Luke Cavener, City Council Member
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cc: Meridian Planning Staff and Planning and Zoning Commission

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cc: Ada County Highway District

3775 Adams Street
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Bruce Wong, Director
Kent Goldthorpe, President, ACHD Commission & District 4 Representative
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cc: C. L. "Butch" Otter, Governor, State of Idaho

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