

Public Comment, Woodinville City Council Meeting, September 9, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. And thank you for listening to your citizens and to those of us, who for all intents and purposes, consider ourselves your citizens because we shop in Woodinville, work in Woodinville, operate businesses here, send our children to Woodinville schools, or perhaps play sports here or even coach your children.

The City of Woodinville is at a crossroads. It must decide how it will respond to the pressures of growth. Of particular importance is whether or not the city will continue to protect its residents from what its neighbor, the Snohomish County Parks Department, would do if it were to proceed unrestrained.

Bordering your city limits, a commercial sports complex, masquerading as a community park, threatens Woodinville's reputation of "country living, city style".

Wellington Hills Park is attempting to paint itself as mitigation to the residents who live around it—it must, because it will be paid for with money that is part of the Brightwater Settlement Agreement, a supposed attempt to make things better for the homeowners living near the massive new sewage treatment plant.

But the plans for Wellington Hills Park are anything but mitigation for those of us who would be forced to deal with its by products of traffic, lights, noise, loss of trees, water runoff, and much more.

Please consider that Wellington Hills Park—with its multiple lighted artificial turf fields and parking for well over 600 cars—has in fact been designed specifically with tournaments in mind. Yet Snohomish County claims it should not be held responsible for accommodating the heavy traffic they want us to believe would occur only once a year. Snohomish County seems to want it both ways.

Does it make sense that a park designed for daily near constant usage from back-to-back games and practices would NOT have significant impacts on the surrounding roads and intersections?

Imagine the intrusion into Woodinville's quiet, country homes from 80-foot light poles, fields, sound amplification systems, parking lots and other park "features" that would operate well into the night. And this heavily used, high-turnover, high volume facility would be entirely located in a rural residential area that is zoned for one home per 5 acres.

And somehow, Snohomish County expects us to believe that this park would serve as a buffer from the commercial and industrial businesses on Highway 9.

In reality, their plans for a sports complex would just move commercial usage closer to our Woodinville neighborhoods.

Indeed, Snohomish County's plan for Wellington Hills Park should be considered a wolf in sheep's clothing.

But your continued objections to the County's plan for Wellington Hills Park will ensure that Woodinville residents are not left to deal with the consequences of placing a sports complex in a totally inappropriate location—consequences such as traffic jams and increased emergency response times; light pollution from streetlights, stadium lights, and headlights; noise pollution from year-round use of fields and amplification systems. These consequences cannot be avoided if a sports complex is built in rural Woodinville.

I urge you to continue backing up your objections to the current plans for Wellington Hills Park with actions. Let's design a realistic plan for the park without destroying our Woodinville neighborhoods.

J.L.