

Letter, Snohomish County Council Member Dave Somers

Dear Mr. Somers:

My wife and I have lived in Woodinville area since 1979 and our home sits directly across from the proposed Wellington Hills County Park.

We are aware that this proposal came about as a result of the Brightwater Sewer Plant and the mitigation funds that King County gave to Snohomish County to “mitigate” the impact of the sewer plant. The only negative impact that it (Brightwater) created is the loss of property taxes both to the state and the county due to the fact the County now owns it.

It should be noted at this point that the original Brightwater had most of the plant underground, which then would have resulted in soccer and baseball fields being built on top. However, this proved to be too expensive and thus no sports fields. At this point funds were offered to Snohomish County to build the presently proposed park. It is also important to note the property selected is on the southern boundary of Snohomish County, which adjoins King County. The majority of the users will be King County residents. Restrictions on how far such property was to be purchased took away the opportunity to look at more suitable locations. Seems that maybe King County is getting the better of the deal with their sewer plant in Snohomish County and now a sports complex that is better suited for those living in King County as opposed to those in Snohomish County. The result is a double impact to the residents of Snohomish County.

This brings me to point out that the funding for this proposed park in our neighborhood will bring to us the negative impacts of: lighting (the astro turf fields will be lit) increased traffic brought on by the 700+ parking spaces for use of the park and noise brought on by the tournament games that are projected to be played.

The scope of the proposed project in this area seems to have brought on by some very politically active groups, which are the soccer interests and the biking people. As presented this will be a “pay to play” facility and therefore should be considered a commercial project. Currently Snohomish County does not have any park in a residential neighborhood of this magnitude.

We have been told that it has been the experience of Snohomish County Parks that when parks are built property value will go up. According to the real estate people that I have talked to they have said that considering the scope of this project we might expect our home values to drop by as much as 30%! I would like to know what evidence does the Park Department have to make the statement of “increased property value”. If our property values are negatively impacted what recourse do we have?

The building of Costco at the intersections of Highway 9 and 240th has already had an impact on traffic. Before Costco we had 400 cars a day to now well over 2000 cars a day. The parking lot for the park is basically the same size of that of the Costco store and if you consider that the fields when used in tournament play could bring in 2800 more cars and this is based upon using each of the fields for only 4 games a day which could result in even more traffic.

If you look at 240th it is well below standards for what 240th is considered: a rural connector arterial. Grades for a good part of the road are approaching 20%. Throw in no less than 8 curves in the steepest part there definitely is a problem. The speed limit on this road is 25mph but the average is 35 and above. Since we have lived here I have observed only twice when there was any traffic enforcement. The last time I personally thanked the officers for what they were doing and they acknowledged that this road was extremely dangerous. It also might be noted the county has actually never had legal possession of all of 240th.

Now let's consider where parks of this nature can be and should be found. They should be in business parks or manufacturing areas where lighting, noise and traffic will not affect daily living. It has been pointed out that such areas do exist which was met by the reply that the Parks Department had no money to buy additional land but guess what, they made another purchase of a piece of property to make the proposed park even bigger! We live in a residential area and do not think this park fits into our neighborhood.

In closing, the magnitude of this park is well beyond what this area can handle. People from the surrounding King County areas are also aware of the negative impact this will have on their lives.

Soccer fields and baseball fields are great but is there really a shortage of fields in the area? Ask the people from the City of Woodinville about their soccer fields and they will tell you that they are under used. Take a look at the fields in Redmond and you will find pay to play and pay to park and this is for a select group of people who are not in the majority.

This proposal needs to be reconsidered with more time spent considering us "locals" and what we would like to see happen to this area. "We are going to build it and YOU are going to LIKE IT" is not what we want to hear. Let us have a voice in what needs to be done!

Regards,

Anon