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Members of the King County Growth Management Planning Council
C/o Dow Constantine, King County Executive

SENT VIA EMAIL kcexec@kingcounty.gov

Re: Comments on City of Carnation's Reconciliation Request

To the Members of the King County Growth Management Planning Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this process. We represent Nancy Harvold, a property owner in the Carnation area who would be directly affected by a revision of Carnation's housing target. Ms. Harvold believes a reduction halving the housing target set for Carnation to 350 would be a mistake. For the reasons set forth below, Ms. Harvold respectfully requests that the Council deny Carnation's request.



History

Nancy Harvold is the owner of the Harvold Berry Farms (the "Berry Farm"). Operating since the 1950s, the Berry Farm has long been a fixture of the Carnation community, well-known for its U-pick berries, fall pumpkins, and long history of giving students good-paying summer jobs. At over

59.7 acres, Ms. Harvold is the single largest property owner in the Carnation UGA. Her property straddles State Route 203, and bridges the gap between Carnation and a residential community to the north.



Operating the farm has never been easy; with the passing of her husband, it is now a one 80+ year-old woman operation. To that end, she desires to give back to the community even more than she has over the last many decades while providing a legacy for her and her family. She has proposed to convert the farm into middle housing for young families, that they can raise their children in the wonderful community she knows so well.

Ms. Harvold's efforts commenced in October of 2022 with a discussion of annexing the property with Carnation's City Manager and City Planner. Ms. Harvold formally requested the City annex her property with a Notice of Intention to Commence Annexation Proceedings dated November 15, 2022. Mindful of the City's housing target of 799 units over the next decade, the development project was pursued with the goal of developing 550-650 middle housing units, which was consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan at that time. Throughout the end of 2022 and the start of 2023, Ms. Harvold worked productively with the City's staff to pursue the annexation and potentially rezoning of the property necessary for the development to occur.

Things changed during the April 18, 2023 presentation to the Carnation City Council. At this meeting, intended to address the proposed zoning of the property, the City Council abruptly adopted what appeared to be an anti-development mindset. Several comments were made regarding what the development would do to the character of the community, and what the "loss" of the farm would do as well. No discussion was made of any alleged "error" in the housing target. The City Council also voiced numerous demands in return for the development to occur, such as the dedication of 10 acres of the property for soccer fields, and 3.2 acres for commercial space. Subsequent to this meeting, the City Manager and City Council promised to do a study for utility capacity, but this study never occurred. To aid the process along, Ms. Harvold made further concessions to pursue development of her property (acceding to the demand for the soccer field,

and further committing an acre to the City for a sorely needed expansion of the Carnation Cemetery), but the City instead reduced the available portions of her land that could be used to support economic development. Coinciding with the filing of the 350 unit housing target reconciliation request, the City attempted to further circumscribe development in Carnation by proposing the rezone of 13.24 acres of Ms. Harvold's property to Agricultural Tourism, which would render that portion of the property economically unviable for any given use.

Carnation's request for a reduction in the housing target appears to be only the latest excuse that development is impossible in Carnation. However, the reasons Carnation offers are not empirically supported. Moreover, Ms. Harvold's proposal would positively address many of Carnation's alleged concerns.

Housing Target Reduction Impacts

It is with this history that we take a skeptical view of Carnation's housing target reduction request and the comments it's offered in support of this request as part of its August 20, 2024 memorandum to the GMPC. Contrary to its assertions, the City is doing little to "accommodate" housing needs. Lowering the housing target to a number commensurate with the number of homes already being built in Carnation and seeking a five year moratorium on the imposition of further housing obligations is exactly the opposite of what the state's middle-housing mandate calls for. This "chicken and egg" argument appears to be a veiled attempt at limiting or halting growth in Carnation, which runs contrary to the principles of growth management and state law.

Illustrative of this "chicken and egg" approach to development are the alleged "public transportation" issues the City sees with further development. The City highlights it has no "high-capacity" transit. This is due largely to insufficient population density in the City limits, and a high volume of detached single family homes in Carnation (which have less need for public transit). Of course, that's been the City's preferred development pattern for some time.

The County is aware of the City's aversion to growth: it forms the basis for the Comprehensive Plan's goal H-16. Rather than retaining the higher housing target, which would require the City to abandon its detached single family development pattern, the City instead favors a reduction in its housing targets, which has the net effect of ensuring that this density will not be created. Requiring the City to retain the present housing target of 799 units would encourage it to modify its approach, creating the levels of development that will support such high-capacity transit.

Equally confounding is the City's approach to the effects of development on public facilities and utilities. It has long been state law that when developing a parcel, the permitting authority may impose fees upon the developer to defray the impacts posed by the development upon the government subdivision. These impact fees would necessarily encompass the traffic impacts of such development, and would be the most likely source of the funds necessary for Carnation's contribution to any effort to fund a roundabout like the sort the City is claiming it seeks along SR 203 and Tolt Hill Road.

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Likewise, impacts on the City's sewer, water, and stormwater facilities would be offset through connection fees, making this argument moot, particularly where these utilities were already constructed with a higher capacity in mind (Carnation has admitted this point as part of its August 20, 2024 memo). Rather than seeking to collect these fees however, the City is now asking the housing target be revised lower while at the same time claiming poverty to develop these facilities. The Council should not lend weight to these arguments, which do not reflect the situation on the ground and are not supported by the law.

Nor should the Council lend much credence to the concerns regarding the Tolt Dam Early Warning System, which have improved significantly since the publication of the City's August 20, 2024 memo to the GMPC. As a resident of Carnation, Ms. Harvold is cognizant of the concerns that the City Council may harbor regarding the Tolt Dam inundation zone. With that said, since the August 20, 2024 memo, Seattle Public Utilities has installed a new "state-of-the-art" early warning system, and plans have been made to further expand upon this system. SPU has also established a 20 acre pedestrian evacuation site in the Tolt Highlands, which is more than sufficient to accommodate the populace of Carnation should the worst come to pass.

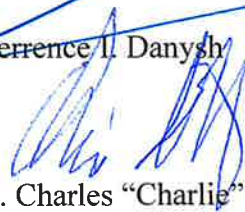
Finally, we all agree that King County, and indeed the entire state, is in a housing crunch. Allowing the City to lower its housing target contradicts the law and policies the state has enacted to resolve this crunch. Construction, development, and growth patterns have shown time and again that young families increasingly prefer the affordability and quality of life afforded by cities and towns along the I-90 corridor including Issaquah, Snoqualmie, and North Bend, to raise their new families. Carnation is a logical next step in this development pattern, and is best positioned to erect the affordable housing which the County desperately needs. Ms. Harvold will do her part to address the crisis. She only asks that the King County and Carnation allow her to do so.

Sincerely,

PETERSON RUSSELL KELLY LIVENGOOD PLLC



Terrence I. Danysh



R. Charles "Charlie" Beckett

cc: King County Councilmember Sarah Perry
Nancy Harvold