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Zoning Board of Appeals  
Walpole, MA

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you today as a resident of South Walpole in regard to the Omni Development's 40b proposal for the Cedar Edge/Cedar Crossing development of 300 new units of housing at 55 Summer Street in South Walpole. While affordable housing is certainly a necessity and I respect and understand the need for such, the small community of South Walpole is not the place for this magnitude of an establishment as currently proposed. As a resident, and mother of two young children, safety is my top priority. I fear for the safety of not only my family and those of my neighbors, but also of the 300 prospective families to join us. While there are many safety and environmental concerns surrounding the demolition, construction, development and daily upkeep of the proposed Omni Development, I will focus this letter on our daily struggle with the current traffic issues and how this proposed development will greatly impact our already devastating traffic pollution, especially with the new Kraft Line in progress, as well as the concerns surrounding the construction process if this project moves forward.

In recent years, our quaint South Walpole community has been plagued with the uproar of Patriot Place and Gillette Stadium. Although we all love the Patriots and our neighboring communities, we do not love the constant battle to drive through our streets in bumper to bumper traffic on Patriots game days, Revs night games, concerts, stadium events and the daily commute of cut-through traffic to Route 1. Our neighborhoods have become highways to outsiders in their daily commutes, endangering the safety of our families as these drivers are oblivious to the small-town speed limits and crosswalks. It is a struggle to simply cross the street, in the crosswalk, taking our children to school each day.

On October 21, 2019, the Kraft Line started bombing through our backyards with 20 trains, running over 30 times a day. In just the first two days, we had already seen the negative effects that the new train schedule had caused, such as traffic backups which have jolted the routines of our children as they walk to Boyden Elementary School and our neighbors as they travel to work. The train is extremely loud, blaring its horn multiple times with each pass, in addition to the ringing bells from the railroad crossings, literally all day and through the night.

Can you imagine what an additional, approximate 600 cars will do to our already treacherous daily commute and weekend travel?

In addition, the proposed Omni Development has only one egress abutting the train tracks that are now fully loaded during the weekdays. There are also no fences, nor talk of installing a consistent fence abutting the entirety of the tracks (as they cannot place a fence on the wetland areas), nor implementing any safety precautions to stop children from playing near or on the train tracks. As a mother, I can assure you that curious young children will absolutely find the gaps in any fence to explore new areas. As a community, we have fought tirelessly and lost to the Kraft Line and all that comes with living within walking distance from Patriot Place and Gillette Stadium. The prospective 300 units and their approximate 600 cars added to this already over-congested tiny travel area between Route 1 and the entrance into Walpole through our small community will inevitably be disastrous. Our children are at risk every day in their commute to and from school. Adding a preposterous number of cars and residents only increases everyone's risk of being hit by a car or worse, the train. Our community cannot handle this amount of added traffic or residents.

I also have grave concerns about the construction process and the negative effects it will have on our current residents. First, we residents deserve assurances that construction will strictly follow the current Commercial, Industrial and Manufacturing Operations bylaw (Article III 404-3), whereas no construction will begin before 7:00am or end after 8:00pm (8:00am on Sundays), and that this will be strictly enforced by our Walpole Police Department. Second, the noise pollution from the heavy machinery to and from the site and while working each day over multiple years to complete the project will put a huge strain on our little South Walpole community. We have many families with young children and elderly that are sensitive to loud noises and the consistent roaring and banging will abruptly and continuously interrupt our daily routines. The massive trucks will surely cause constant traffic jams entering and exiting through the only planned egress onto Summer Street, which is already a heavy traffic area from the daily commuters and students headed to Boyden Elementary. Lastly, and most importantly, is the frightening unknown of what the effect of massive digging and shifting of the earth's ground will emit into the air and soil from the old Bird Machine property that was once deemed contaminated. While I understand that Omni Development has 'promised' that the land is safe due to their testing, is this

really worth the risk to the hundreds of current and new residents living in and around the development? I do not wish to find out years after this project is completed, that the land was indeed unsafe to interrupt, and families are terminally ill from the contamination. It may seem a bit dramatic or a reach, but the health of my family, my neighbors and our community is not something that I will ignore.

The massive demolition of 57 acres also begs the question of the wildlife currently living on the land. Once the land is torn down, where will the thousands of wildlife species go? Our fear is that these animals will look for new homes in our backyards and will roam the streets where our vulnerable children and loving pets will then be in great danger. How will this delicate matter of displaced wildlife be remedied?

As you can see, there are numerous significant safety concerns surrounding the Omni Development project, many of which I did not even address in this letter. I truly hope you will take these serious concerns into consideration and encourage you to, at the very least, narrow the size and scope of this project to keep all of our South Walpole children and families safe.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

*Becky Litvak*

Becky Litvak  
South Walpole Resident