

Windermere Community

How Much is
Too Much?

Submitted by Rose & Dave
Hohnstein



Who are the Residents of Windermere?

- The residents are comprised of young families who have just purchased their first home, and seniors who have built their retirement dream homes.
- We have invested our life savings, make monthly mortgage payments, pay our taxes, and do our best to feed and support our families. We have children, grandchildren, parents sharing our homes, and of course, we have our pets.
- We have created a community.

What is it that we want?

- Our wants are pretty basic. We want a community where our children can play in their front yards, learn to ride their bikes, and where they can walk or ride their bike to the school. We want to visit with our neighbours, walk our pets, and take our kids to the playground. We want a quiet and safe community where we can raise our families and sleep well at night.

How do we currently feel?

- Emotions are running high in our community as we are angry, frustrated, and fearful.
- We are struggling with existing and ever-increasing:
 - high-density development
 - high noise levels
 - poor ingress/egress
 - overwhelming high-volumes of traffic
 - frustrated drivers that race down our narrow local roads (one car at a time passage)
 - safety risks to our families
 - poor community livability
- This new application for additional 175 units pushes our frustrations to a new level.
- And it won't be just us. We fully anticipate that the new residents of the proposed development will feel same anger and frustration that we do.

What is the cause of these issues?

Over-populated community with inadequate infrastructure

High volumes of traffic

Compromised safety

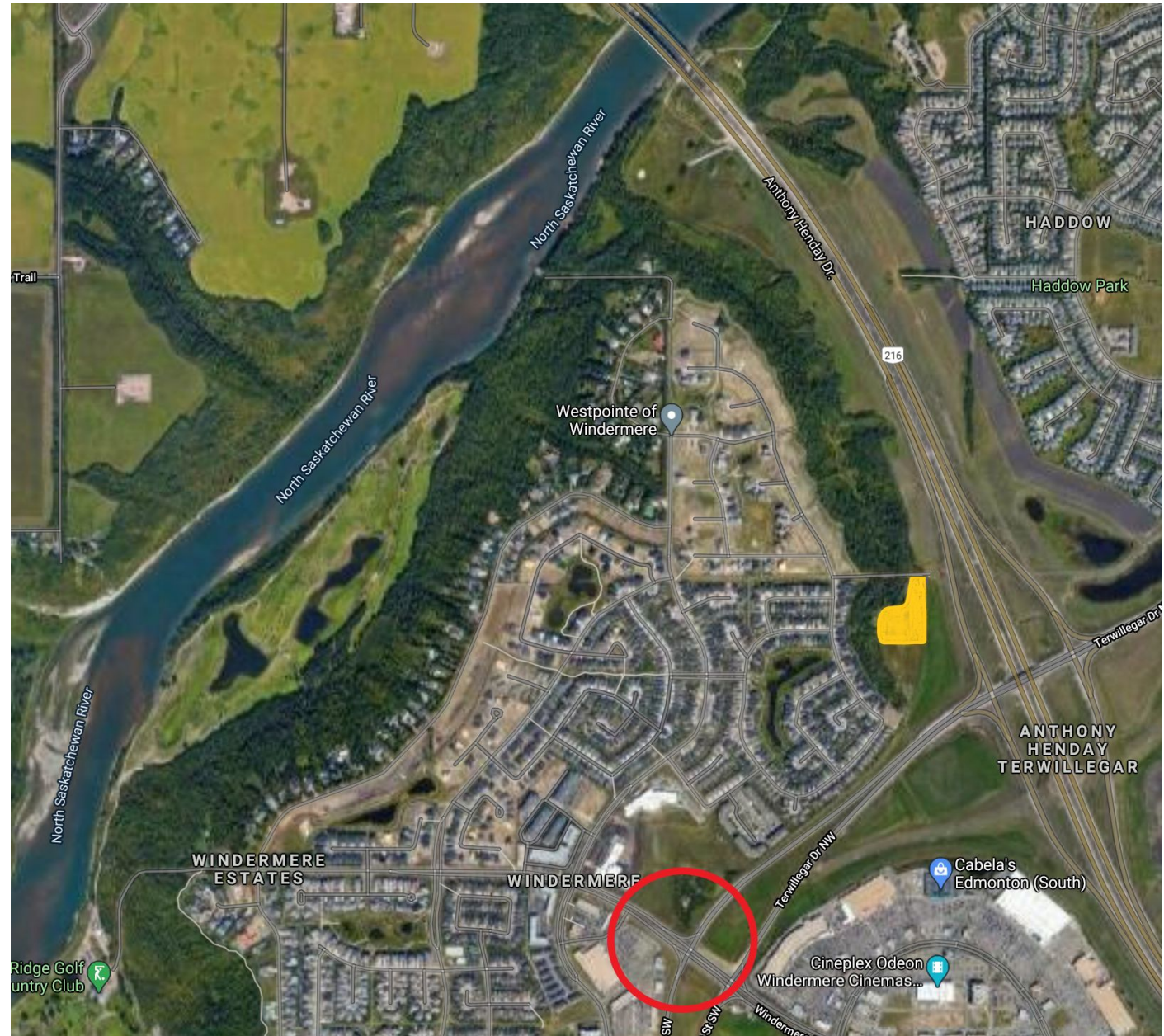
Poor community livability

Unrealistic high density in an area that has only one access point.

The overall access to our community is restricted, as it is closed in by the ravine and Terwilliger Drive (southeast), the ravine and Anthony Henday (northeast), and the North Saskatchewan River (north and northwest).

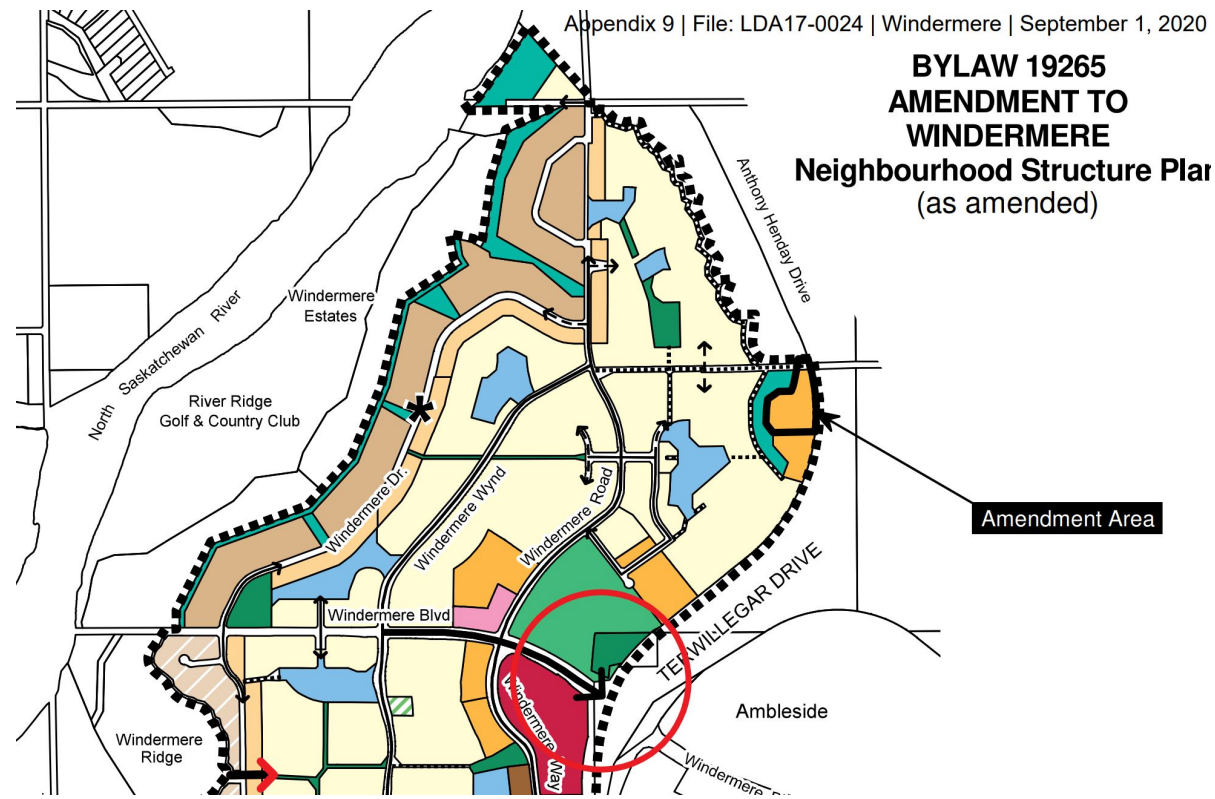
This leaves the entire community with **only one main point of ingress/egress** on Windermere Blvd.

To further congest our access point, Windermere Blvd. is shared with 2 schools, a high-density residential and commercial districts to the south and to the west.



Desktop Exercise – Emergency Evacuation

Q: If the river valley to the west is on fire, and parents rush to the schools to rescue their children, how do we evacuate 1,653 residences, 2 schools, and 83 businesses, with one-lane roadways and only one evacuation point?



Safety - How is only one point of evacuation for an entire community acceptable?

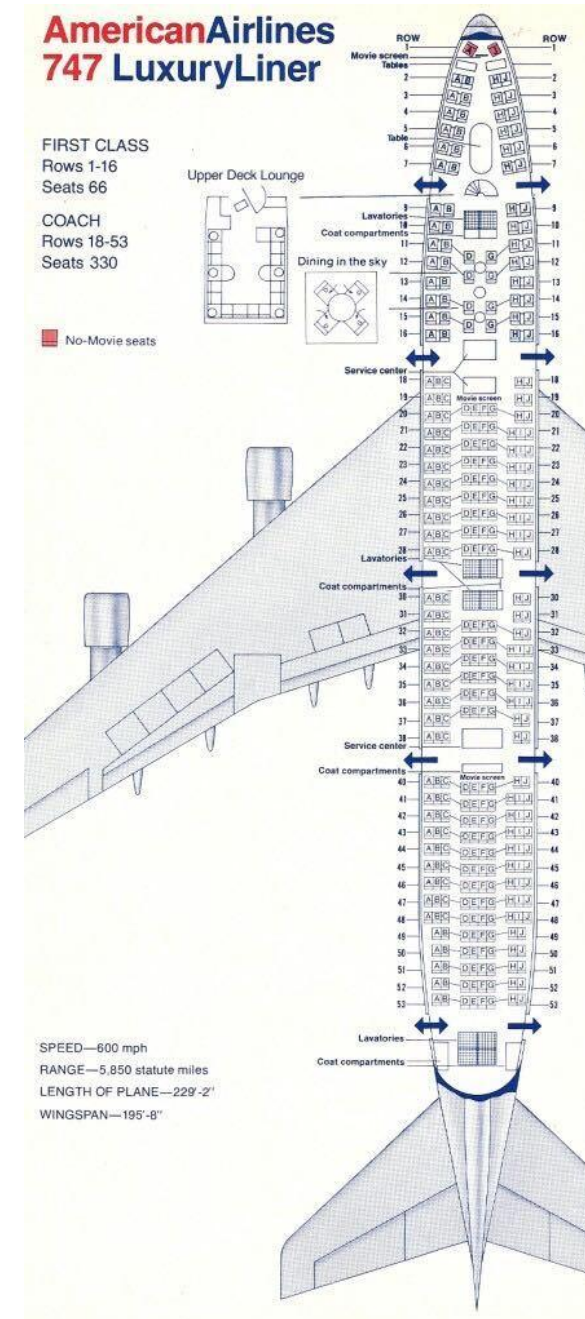
- One access point is a significant safety concern.
- One access point creates major congestion and traffic delays causing immense driver frustration.
- One access point funnels the traffic in front of the two schools and the playground. This is the **last place** where high-volumes of traffic should converge.
- One access/evacuation point defies all levels and types of legislation.

Commercial aircraft, schools, busses, commercial buildings, institutions, utility infrastructure, industrial sites, etc. **all are heavily regulated and have strict safety requirements to deal with maximum allowable occupancy, emergency access, incident prevention, and require multiple evacuation points and associated protocols.**

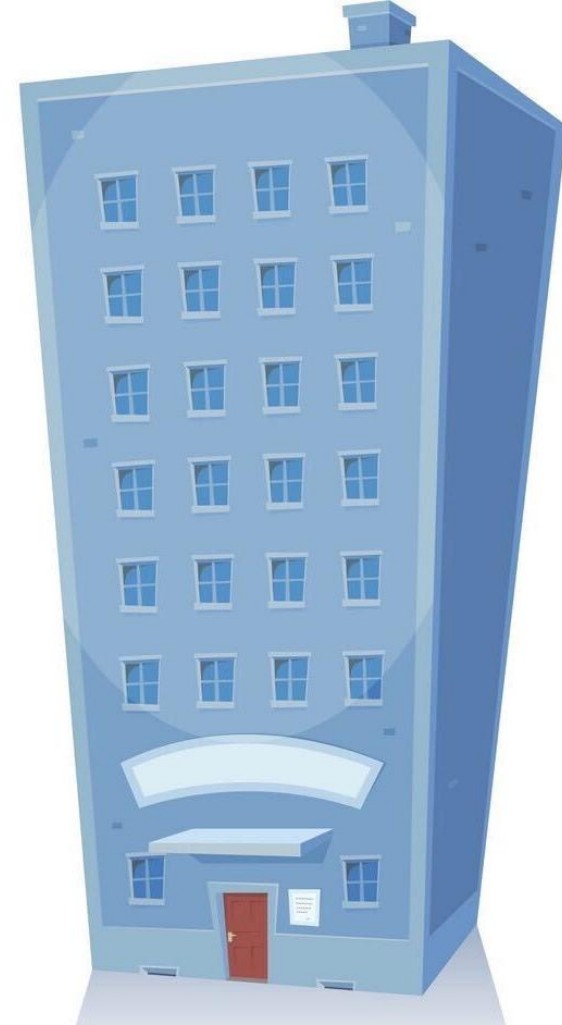
Q: Why do basic safety principles not apply to a community that holds 1,653 residences, 83 commercial sites, and 2 schools?

A 747 seats **330** persons and has **10** emergency exits.

Q: Would you fly on an airplane that has only one emergency exit and no evacuation plan?



Q: Would the City of Edmonton approve a 100 unit apartment building with only one door?



Never say never...

- 1979 Millwoods explosion and evacuation
- 1987 Sherwood Park/Clairview /Evergreen Park tornado
- 2007 MacEwan neighbourhood fire
- 2016 Fort McMurray Wildfire and evacuation, etc.
- Community evacuation and emergency vehicle access is a very real need that cannot be discounted. Windermere North has compromised access to these basic necessities for survival
- The proposed development will significantly compromise ingress/egress and the safety of all community residents



How would we evacuate the Community?

Q: In the event of a major incident, **what is the City's plan** on how to evacuate **1,653 residential units (not including the proposed development(s))**, **2 schools**, and **83 businesses**? Adjacent communities will compound the issue as they evacuate as well.

Q: How will emergency vehicles access our community on one-car roadways while everyone is trying to evacuate?

Q: Where will we go when our only escape is to the south and the roads are impassable?

Q: Will the elderly, mobility impaired, and families with their small children and pets in tow, be forced to evacuate on foot? What would we do in the winter months with snow drifts, windrows, and flesh-freezing temperatures? How will families jump the community's **8 foot perimeter fence** to evacuate? How many will be left behind to perish? How will the City handle the thousands of homeless without their vehicles?

Q: What would the outcome have been if the Fort McMurray residents were without vehicles and forced to evacuate on foot?

How much is too much?

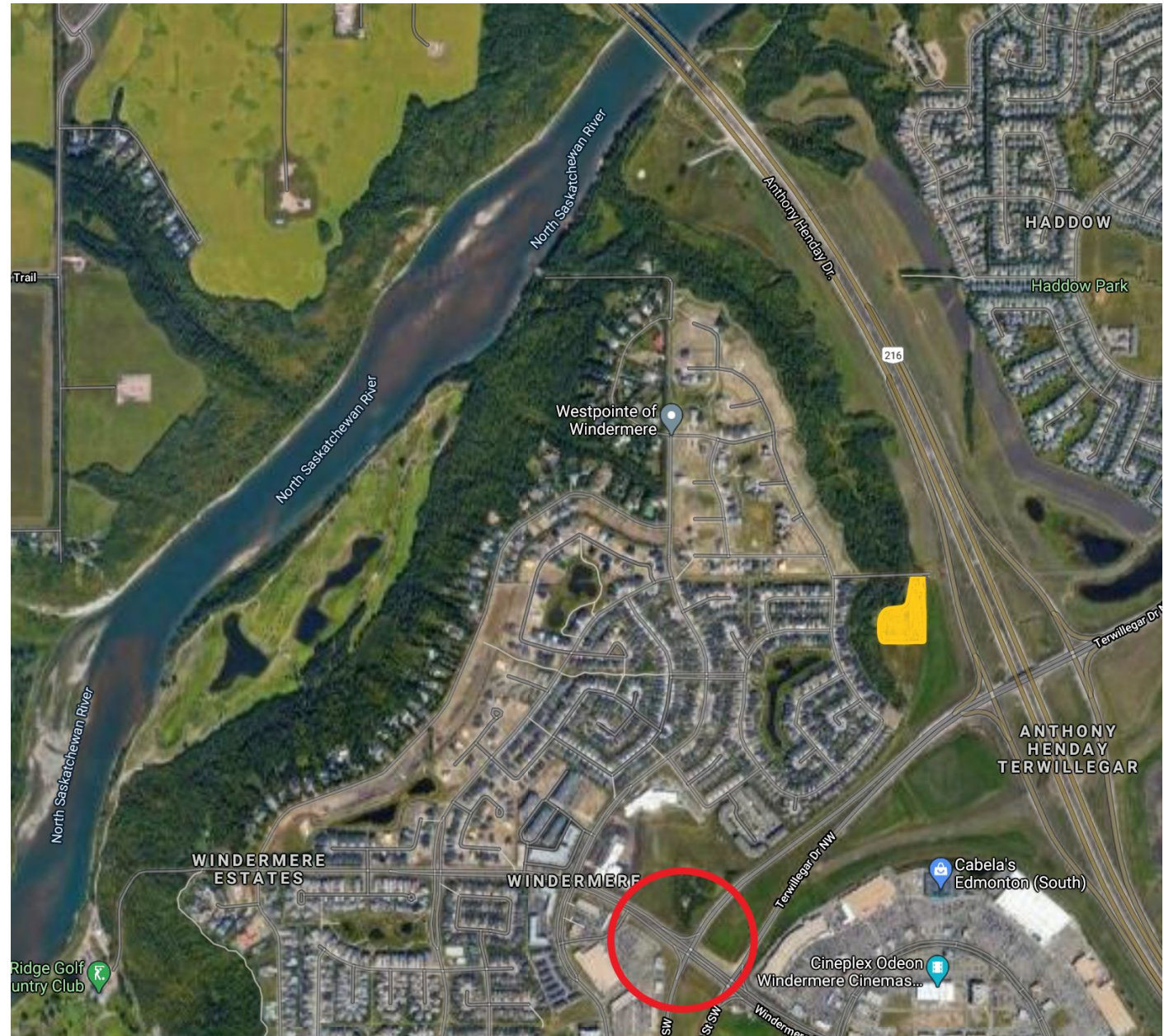
Our roads are narrow, and can only accommodate one vehicle passage at a time.

Daily, there are long traffic line-ups just to get in and out of our community.

Drivers are frustrated and often reach their breaking point. And, this is without the proposed develop and current home construction at only 85-90% of completion.

This re-zoning will create upwards of 175 new dwellings. Ultimately, and an additional 1,494 vehicle daily trips, adding to the congestion driving past the schools each day.

These additional dwellings do not take into account the impact of the 80 plus dwellings that are already approved for the property immediately south of the property of discussion (currently is for sale and undeveloped).



How can this be acceptable?

The *City of Edmonton 2015 Edmonton and Region Household Travel Survey Overview* states that each household contributes an average of **8.54** daily trips.

Once all currently planned residences in the community are occupied, there will be approximately **14,117 vehicles per day** driving past the schools and associated playground zone.

Is there really room to add more traffic?



On August 13, 2020, a child was hit by a car in front of the school. It will happen again.

- After the dozens and dozens of near misses between cars and kids in front of the schools and on the side streets, on August 13, 2020, our worst fears were realized. We witnessed the aftermath of a child being struck by a car directly in front of the schools. Our hearts broke as we saw the child's mangled bike, the distraught driver, two police cars, and a half-dozen pre-teens on their bikes being interviewed by the police. All were clearly rattled.
- Increased traffic will proportionately increase the likelihood of future incidents and a child losing their life.

How much is one community expected to endure?

We are frustrated, overwhelmed, and angry.

We have already endured:

- 10 years of high traffic volumes
- 10 years of residential and commercial construction
- 6 sets of lottery homes
- Builder show homes far too numerous to count



How much is one community expected to endure?

Noisy, mud covered, heavy equipment

- cement trucks
- dump trucks
- large bulldozers & earthmovers
- double flat beds, semi's, contractor trucks and trailers
- cranes, hydrovacs, etc.

Every day, all day long, 7 am to 7 pm.



How much is one community expected to endure?

And more heavy equipment destroying our roads....



How much is one community expected to endure?

Backing out of our driveways is becoming an extremely difficult task.

The prospect of 10 more years of construction with heavy equipment traveling our narrow local roads is gut wrenching.

These pictures are only a small sample of the construction vehicles driving our street in a one-hour period.



Dangerously high water levels

- In addition, our lake is frequently exceeding capacity due to over-development. More roofs and pavement = more water in the sewer system.
- During a recent 2-hour rainfall, the water level rose 52" above normal.
- Dozens of trees around the lake are dead or dying as a result of continual flooding.
- An additional 10" will submerge the pathway.
- An additional 17" will flood our gardens and yards.
- An additional 25" will flood our homes.
- It will be extremely costly for the City to upgrade the drainage system to accommodate the increased run-off caused by the new development.



Social & financial impacts on community families

- Our quality of life and livability in our community is being destroyed.
- Our community is already well-known for high-traffic, congestion, and long travel times just to get to Terwillegar Drive (10 to 15+ minutes during peak hours). We now have a reputation as an undesirable community.
- Our real estate values are being reduced accordingly, as our homes are selling for far less than their original value. It is becoming increasingly harder to sell homes in this community. Additional development will drive the values down further, financially destroying many of our families. As the values continue to drop, residents will expect the City to reduce property taxes accordingly.

Social & financial impacts on community families

- School capacity will also be impacted. The schools are already over-crowded, and children living in the new development will displace children already living within the community. Due to the long walking distance (1.2km) and poor location of the new development, even more traffic will be generated as the parents will need drive their kids to and from the schools and the playground.
- All for what? No one will win. The proposed development site is an undesirable, noisy, poorly located property next to one of the city's largest and busiest vehicle interchanges. There are already hundreds of vacant condominiums across the city and in Windermere, in far better locations.
- We will lose. The developer will lose. The City of Edmonton will lose.

Can the City build us a park where we can walk and ride our bikes?

We are squeezed out of our own neighbourhood.

Our livability is gone as our community is no longer family and recreation friendly.

Each and every week there are new stories (social media postings) of children narrowly escaping being hit by vehicles in front of the school and the playground. **Yes, this is a weekly occurrence.**

Children cannot play in the front yards of their homes, ride their bikes down the street, or walk alone to the school or playground.

Parents must constantly supervise and escort their kids everywhere. Even the sidewalks are dangerous. Children **and most adults** ride their bikes on the sidewalks as our local roads have treacherous high volumes of racing traffic.



Repair and Accountability

Community anger and frustration will turn into outrage that will demand solutions.

To support and recommend increasing traffic volumes to their breaking point, then to offer mitigation by reducing speeds and adding more signs on the street, is completely ignorant and unintelligent. Last year the City added more signs in front of the schools. Now there are **over 100 individual signs** on the short span of road in front of the schools. Kids, cars, signs, lights.... It's all too much.

No one would declare the widening of the Anthony Henday unnecessary and recommend speed reduction as the solution. Unreasonable traffic volumes on inadequate residential infrastructure creates dangerous, distracted, frustrated drivers.

This will result in a **multitude of costly consequences for the City** that the City will eventually need to address and repair. As the consequences unfold and the costs rise, the City Planning and Council members who supported this development will be held accountable by the community, and by the City's own administration.

There are some things that "sorry" won't fix. Development can't be undone, and sadly, it will be far too late to exercise the good judgement and foresight that is clear to all of us right now.

Please help us

Our community has been in pain and anguish for years. The issues in our community are already terrible. Please don't make it worse.

Please, please, please, help us.