



Decatur Heights Neighborhood Association
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August 15, 2016

DeKalb Board of Commissioners
Decatur City Commission
Decatur, GA 30030

RE: Traffic and Pedestrian Concerns with Recent and Planned Developments near Intersection of Church Street and North Decatur Road

Dear Commissioners,

This letter is written on behalf of the Board for the Decatur Heights Neighborhood Association (DHNA) with the support of members of the Sycamore Station and Sycamore Ridge Homeowners Association Boards. We note, at the outset, that the DHNA Board is pleased with S.J. Collins' proposed plans for a 365 by Whole Foods Anchored Mixed Use Development at the Southeast corner of the Intersection of Church Street and North Decatur Road (the "Development"). We are excited about the prospect of increased walkability, and regard the 365 by Whole Foods grocery and similar caliber commercial tenants (as yet unnamed) to be welcome additions to the area.

While we are impressed by the quality of design shown in the proposed site plans for the Development, it is clear that there will be an increase in motor vehicle traffic on the surrounding streets due to the intensified use of this site and from other nearby development projects. The DHNA's aim is to bring our community partners together to work towards minimizing traffic impact to the Church Street area neighborhoods, DeKalb Medical, and other businesses. Pedestrian safety improvements to meet the Medline LCI Plan's objectives of connectivity, walkability, wellness, and aging in place are also being sought. We have been meeting with S.J. Collins to express our traffic and pedestrian related concerns, and we now want to involve the Commissioners in tackling the offsite issues.

In order for the existing community to successfully adapt to the higher density and intensified commercial uses to come with the new developments, it is important that the County and City be actively engaged in determining what traffic and pedestrian issues will arise and implement solutions for the same. To that end, the DHNA respectfully requests your assistance to ensure that the following steps be undertaken:

- There is a need for a Development of Regional Impact (“DRI”) review which focuses on this Intersection and the nearby streets. To add S.J. Collins’ proposed plan to the development projects underway will increase traffic to such an extent that it must be thoroughly evaluated and offset. Although a DRI was completed for the Fuqua project (at the six-point intersection on Scott Boulevard), it did not fully assess the impact on streets that are certain to see serious increased traffic, including: (1) Church Street at its intersections with Sycamore Drive, Forkner Drive/Medlock Road, Glenlake Commons Drive, Willow Lane, Norris Street, Lucerne Street, Geneva Street, and Milscott Drive; (2) Forkner Drive between Sycamore Drive and Church Street; (3) Medlock Road between Church Street and Scott Boulevard; (4) Sycamore Drive between Church Street and East Ponce de Leon Avenue; (5) North Decatur Road at its intersections with Winn Way and DeKalb Industrial Boulevard; (6) Winn Way at its intersections with Irvin Way, Pinehurst Street, and North Arcadia Avenue; and (7) DeKalb Industrial Boulevard at its intersection with Milscott Drive.
- The Medline LCI Plan calls for the realignment of Sycamore Drive at Church Street into a “T” formation, corresponding with the redevelopment of the car dealerships. Although a 15 year turnaround was anticipated, the progress is happening much quicker. There is a need for improvements to address the issues with ingress and egress on Sycamore Drive at Church Street resulting from the heavier volume of motor vehicle traffic.
- We are seeking improved pedestrian safety for the entire Church Street and North Decatur Road Intersection and the addition of a Crosswalk at the north end of Sycamore Drive. On behalf of current and future apartment residents in the Church Street vicinity who will be walking to the new developments, we are pursuing the installation of a Traffic Light or HAWK Beacon System at Milscott Drive. We do wish to recognize S.J. Collins for having incorporated our input on pedestrian safety and connectivity into their site plan.

The DHNA appreciates the past support of our City and County Commissioners on our traffic and pedestrian related initiatives, and we thank you for your assistance here. We look forward to DeKalb County and City of Decatur working together to address our concerns. Whatever we can do to be of help, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Deanne Thomas
 President, Decatur Heights Neighborhood Association

Michael Hagan,
 Vice President, Decatur Heights Neighborhood Association