

Received by Planning Dept. 3-7-22

Dear Chair Britt

I am writing to add my voice to the growing opposition to the Ora proposal for Waldingfield Road.

I have been an Ipswich resident for nearly 30 years. During this time I have slowly witnessed the erosion of the character of the town I love. I moved to Ipswich for its rural character and open spaces. These qualities are what have made Ipswich unique and among the most beautiful places in the Commonwealth.

This is not a Nimby issue for me. While I live in Ipswich, I don't live near Waldingfield. I do however bike, walk and run on the road, drawn to its rare beauty. Any increase in traffic there presents a danger for everyone. As has been noted by many others, the road is narrow, windy and includes many blind spots. The railroad bridge alone is barely passable for cars, much less cars and people. It is no exaggeration to say this is an accident waiting to happen.

Another issue that concerns me is the seemingly ad hoc nature of Ora's proceedings with their proposal. There seems to be repeated changes, and late submittals, that come off as both disorganized and illogical at times. Whatever their short or long term master plan may be for this project, I don't see any particular rush on the part of the Town, rather the impetus to rush through the project suits their own needs which are not necessarily in sync with the community. I fear this whole thing is a trojan horse – they come before the town presenting one thing, and over time it turns into something we haven't bargained for. For me, Ora's unwillingness to be transparent and their constant redefinition of the project is what scares me the most. This alone should provide you with ample grounds to deny their proposal.

There are 3 roads in town I feel are among the most beautiful I have seen anywhere, and they capture Ipswich's fading rural character best – Argilla, Candlewood and Waldingfield. Already Argilla road has sadly been ruined by traffic to anyone foolish enough to walk or bike it. Next, as a resident of Candlewood, I have seen firsthand how traffic ruins the passive recreation of our scenic roads. I can no longer safely check my mailbox much less walk my dogs down the road - particularly with the dramatic increase in traffic due to the addition of the Pony Express Fields. Please don't make Waldingfield another fatality.

In closing, I urge you to consider the proposed Plan B. While I am only involved as a signatory to the concept, I understand a group of people have put together the sum of money needed to purchase the property for all to enjoy, as is, in perpetuity. Is there a reason this option has not been fully vetted out?

Please know that I am mindful that the role of the Planning Board in this process has been demanding and I do appreciate your service to the Town.

Sincerely,

Peter O'Connor and family

Candlewood Road.