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Westwood, KS 66205  
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Westwood City Council  
4700 Rainbow Blvd  
Westwood, KS 66205

Dear City Council,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposed project in our neighborhood, particularly the partnership with the respected developer, Karbank. While I regret that I am unable to deliver these comments in person due to a pre-scheduled work trip, I wanted to ensure my voice is heard in favor of this endeavor.

In my discussions with fellow neighbors, I have observed that in my neighbors, when there's an absence of support, the prevailing sentiment regarding this project is often one of apathy. When informed, citizens seem to generally be in support, once some oppositional narratives are presented with more context. This project has the potential to inject new life and vibrancy into our community. It is heartening to know that Karbank, a developer with a strong track record of high-quality, long-term investments in our vicinity, is behind this proposal.

Furthermore, I believe that when evaluated as a part of the full Rainbow Corridor, this project aligns seamlessly with the character of our area. Rainbow Boulevard being a State Highway owned by the Kansas Department of Transportation makes a non-residential use near it a reasonable and expected land use decision.

One of the key reasons for my support is the city's ability to shape its own destiny through this partnership. Should the Karbank proposal not move forward, we may be more at the mercy of the free market. The prospect of a brand new park, offered at no cost to the city, is an opportunity that may not arise without our active participation.

My family and I moved to Westwood in 2020, drawn by the walkability, amenities, and vibrancy of our town. I appreciate the efforts of residents, staff, and elected officials who have worked tirelessly to create the thriving community we now enjoy. I recognize that progress is often met with challenges, and I see parallels between your dedication to our town's better future and the current discussions about Joe Dennis Park and the old Westwood View Elementary School.

I also want to commend the staff, elected officials, and volunteers for their unwavering transparency and openness throughout this process. Your timely and detailed responses to my inquiries, along with proactive communication, have set a commendable example of civic engagement.

Detractors of the project argue that Westwood is primarily a residential community, but I believe that access to amenities and retail options enhances the appeal of residential land use. This project has the potential to not only improve the city's financial standing but also upgrade amenities at the park, making it safer and more enjoyable for residents like myself, as well as my young children.

As a parent of two young boys, aged 3 and 6, I am eager to see new amenities that my family can enjoy. The opportunity to participate in planning and programming a park that suits the needs of families like mine is tremendously exciting.

I also envision a vibrant community with a mix of retail offerings, including restaurants and recreational venues that cater to all age groups. Moreover, I hope the project accommodates community events such as the KC Symphony in the Park, public book readings, and neighborhood-friendly music shows.

Density is another factor I consider important, and I would welcome a residential component within the project. Having residents in the building during non-working hours can foster a greater sense of community than transient office workers or short-stay patrons of retail establishments might achieve. While I understand that the developer may not specialize in residential projects, I wonder if they could consider partnering with experts in this aspect.

Lastly, I urge the council to consider the unique small-city dynamic of northeast Johnson County when determining planning and rezoning notification requirements. Residency should be given due consideration since the project's tax and revenue implications affect citizens differently from non-citizens.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support this project and appreciate your dedication to our community's betterment. I believe that, with careful planning and collaboration, we can create a vibrant and prosperous Westwood for both current and future residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Trent Dansel