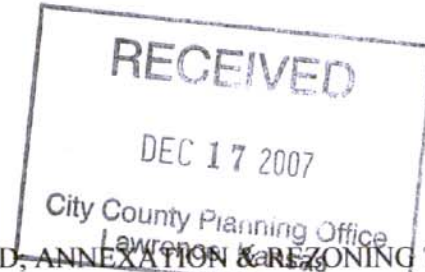


**League of Women Voters of Lawrence-Douglas County**

P.O. Box 1072, Lawrence, Kansas 66044

December 16, 2007

Grant Eichhorn, Chairman  
Members  
Lawrence-Douglas County Planning Commission  
City Hall  
Lawrence, Kansas 66044



**RE:** PC AGENDA ITEMS NO. 4A, B, C, AND D, ~~ANNEXATION & REZONING~~ TO RM12, RM12-PD, AND PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE LINKS, QUEENS RD & WAKARUSA DRIVE. (The south half of the NE Quarter of Section 29; 81.13 Acres)

Dear Chairman Eichhorn and Planning Commissioners:

This is a very troubling agenda item for the Land Use Committee because it represents several general issues beyond the request itself. We ask that you deny this request. We also ask that you re-examine your planning implementation for this entire Section 29. This area is becoming the most unpredictable area in all of the newly-developing neighborhoods, and as a result, the public money that is going into the development of this area could be a risky investment.

Because we have policy plans and blob maps rather than specific area plans for many newly-developing sections such as this, unless the Planning Commission and planning staff are careful, our plans become subject to inconsistent interpretation and consequently, useless. In contrast to the uncertainty that inconsistency creates, neighborhoods and prospective home buyers are seeking stability. Because the investment that citizens make in homes is the most significant that people make in a lifetime, most families are seeking livable, convenient and most of all predictable environments when they choose their neighborhoods.

This northwest area originally was not considered for immediate development. The Northwest Plan was initiated because the School Board chose to locate the second high school in Section 28. These sections—28 and 29—originally had *not* been considered for development in Plan '95, our previous comprehensive plan, because of the extremely rough terrain, the heavy forestation and the sensitive drainage basin of Baldwin Creek—Section 29 being the watershed for two of the major tributaries flowing into that important stream. Because of the environmental sensitivity of the area, the citizens' committee of landowners that had been convened to provide input into the Northwest Plan agreed that the most concentrated development should occur in the southern portion of the two sections that were planned for urban residential development—Sections 28 and 29—and that the central and northern portions of Sections 28 and 29 should be preserved for low density single family land use. The committee was clear in its intentions: it specified low density single family land use for the central and northern portions of Section 29. The committee did not confuse single family land use with that of student apartments, regardless of the density.

Accompanying this letter are attached maps that we hope will explain the conclusion in the Northwest Plan to preserve the central and northern portion of Section 29 for low density single family use. The Slope Map in the Northwest Plan shows the tributary areas having slopes of over 20%. The aerial photograph illustrates how heavily forested much of the northern portion of this section is. The graphic representation of the apartment complex/golf course shows that a good portion of the sensitive area will have to be disturbed. This proposal is clearly contrary to the intention of the Northwest Plan regardless of the interpretation by the staff.

In contrast to the intentions of the Northwest plan committee and the resulting Northwest Plan, the proposed development of The Links golf course and apartment housing complex is a very intensive use.



Although the "density" of the dwelling units is limited to 6 gross units an acre, this density is far higher than the average for most neighborhoods in Lawrence and similar communities, which generally does not exceed three to four gross units an acre. The housing type of apartments is contrary to that recommended for the area by the Northwest Plan. The traffic estimate would be high, but because the section is hardly developed it is not expected to have a negative impact (according to the traffic planner), but this says nothing about the future. The amount of fertilizer and insecticide needed to maintain the greens can be expected to have an impact on the water quality of Baldwin Creek. Perhaps the effect on the continued development of Section 29 will have the greatest negative impact, however, because it immediately creates major uncertainty as to how the remainder of the section will develop if this is considered to conform to the comprehensive and area plans.

Therefore, for the following reasons, we ask that you deny this proposal for The Links:

1. The development proposal is inconsistent and contrary to the stated recommendations of the Northwest Plan and Horizon 2020.

The Northwest Plan specifically states that "single family residential is encouraged in the central and northern parts of Section 28 and 29." *Horizon 2020* recommends for this northwest area as follows:

"... very low-density residential development is intended for use in areas to be annexed to the city and served by urban services but which, due to the presence of *forest, slopes and natural drainageways*, [emphasis added] may not be capable of sustaining residential densities planned in other locations of the community..." (Page 5-9, *Horizon 2020*)

2. If you approve this development proposal you will be adopting the position that there is no difference between single family housing types and apartment developments, and that they are interchangeable. You will have created the precedent for the interpretation of our plans that predictability is unimportant, demographics is unimportant, and gross density is the only determining factor in neighborhood planning.

3. If you approve this development you will acknowledge that the concepts of preserving sensitive land forms and features is subject to the needs of the development rather than the reverse, and storm drainage planning no longer needs to protect open streams and drainageways.

4. If you approve this development you will establish the precedent that consistency is not important when interpreting the area plans and comprehensive plan.

We further ask that you revisit the implementation of planning for this area and try to create a predictable, convenient living area that is based on a cohesive and stable neighborhood form where people will want to live, work, and in which people can have confidence. Our land is too precious to discard by bad planning.

Thank you for your interest in this issue.

Sincerely yours,



Paula Schumacher  
President



Alan Black, Chairman  
Land Use Committee

<sup>3</sup>  
~~Five~~ Attachments



Lewrence, Kansas



Pointer 38°58'52.50" N 95°19'34.32" W elev 979 ft

Streaming 100%

Eye alt 9158 ft

Google™

The red rectangle shows the south 1/2 of the NE Quarter of Section 29: the area of the proposed Links.  
This PDF file was copied from Google Earth, image from 2007.



# Northwest Plan Slope Map-Screen Print

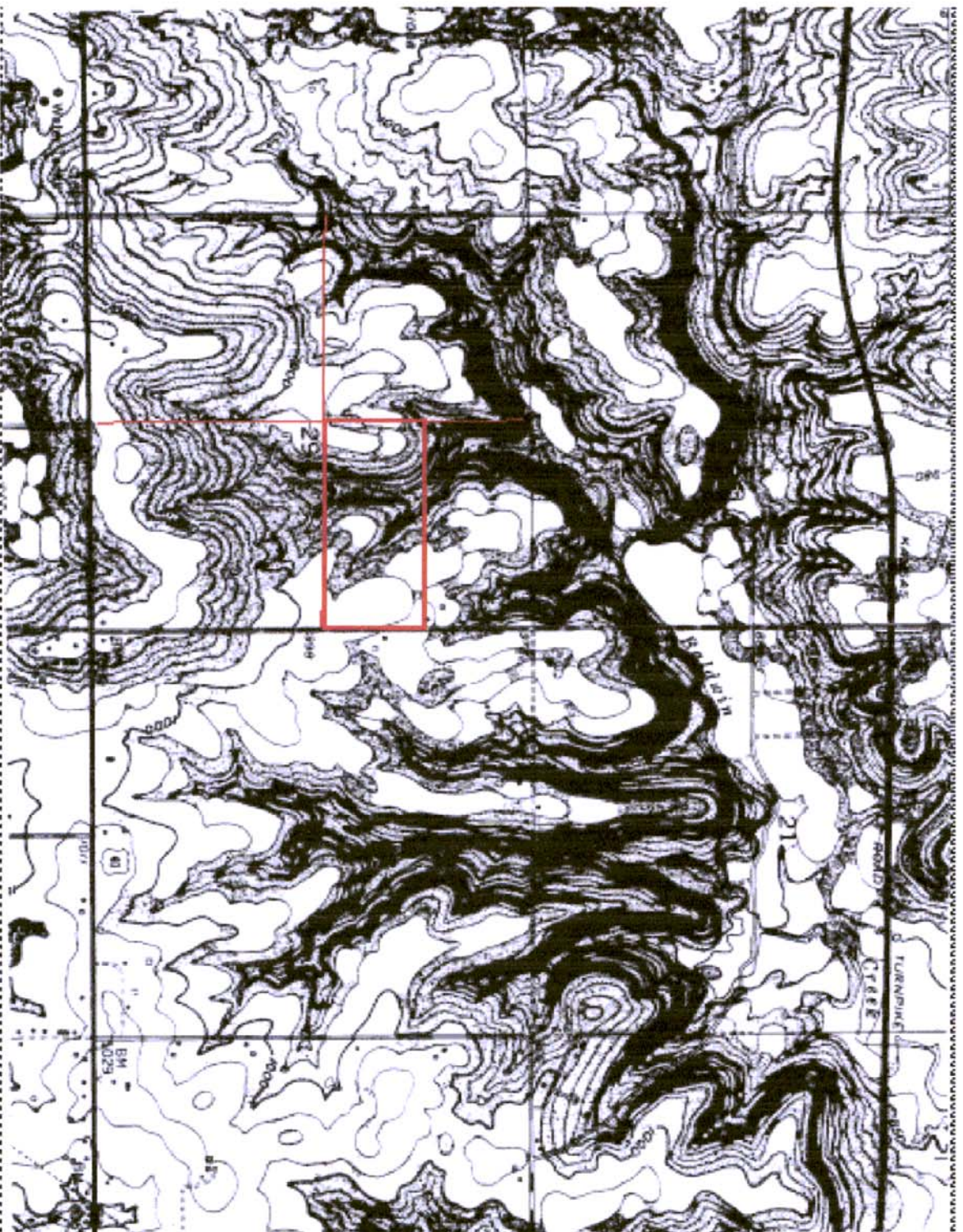
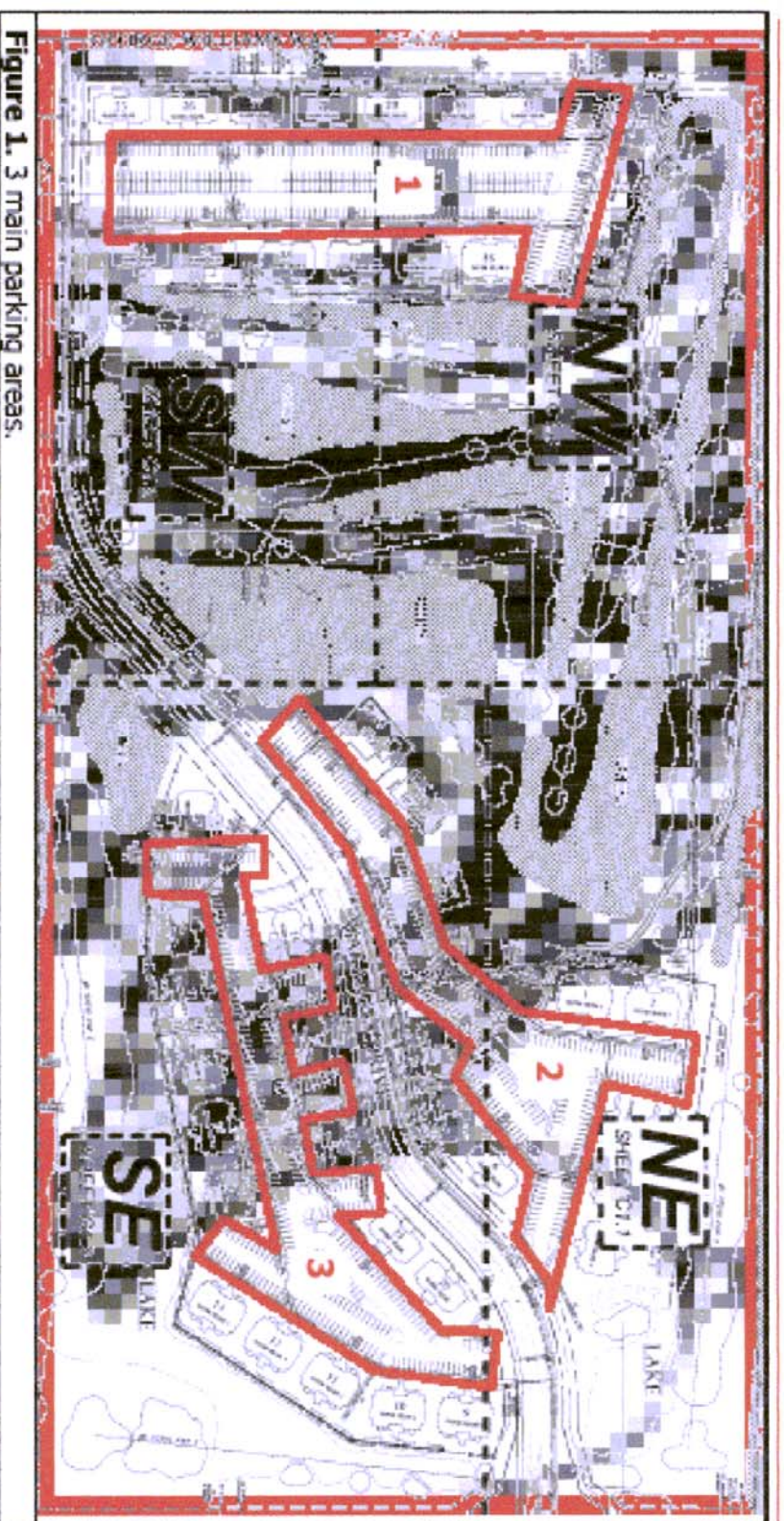


Figure 1. This is a screen print of sections 28, 29, 21, and 20 copied from the Northwest Plan Slope Map page 17. Section 29 has been separated into quarter sections by red lines. The location of the proposed "Links" apartment development and golf course is shown outlined by a red square. The land description of the proposed apartment/golf course area is the south half of the northeast quarter of Section 29. The darkest lines indicate slopes in excess of 20%. This is one of the important watersheds for Baldwin Creek. For tree cover please see the Google Earth aerial photograph taken in 2007.





**Figure 1. 3 main parking areas.**

**Figure 1** This is the PDP map of The Links superimposed on the Slope Map scaled to the PDP map. The black colors underneath represent the steepest slopes, i.e., over 20%. Most of this general area where the stream channels are centered, the side slopes are very steep. It appears that the stream channel will need to be filled to accommodate this plan for the greens.