

**From:** [Clem DePalma](#)  
**To:** [Sirwaitis, Sherri](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Public Hearing 09/25/2025- Case No. C14-2025-0054  
**Date:** Sunday, September 14, 2025 10:59:27 AM

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### External Email - Exercise Caution

*Sherri, Please include this letter into the appropriate support documentation available to the above City Council hearing*

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**I object** to the proposed rezoning at 11700 Flower Scent Court (Case No. C14-2025-0054).

As a nearby homeowner, I would like to raise several concerns that are not fully addressed in the staff recommendation report.

#### **Infrastructure Concerns**

The Forest Subdivision was designed and built with underground utilities, unlike the surrounding neighborhoods that rely on above-ground poles. While underground systems offer protection, they are also more vulnerable when tied to a single point of failure.

I personally witnessed a transformer explosion on the utility pole directly behind 11709 Flower Scent Court. This failure caused a complete outage across the entire subdivision. Despite replacement of the transformer, our subdivision has experienced two additional outages, each failure occurring at the very same location. Pedernales Electric repair crews confirmed the source each time.

The most recent outage occurred this past spring around 9 p.m. — without any storm, wind, or rain — and lasted for several hours because demand exceeded supply. This demonstrates that the existing system is already fragile and stretched thin. Adding additional housing on Flower Scent Court would only increase demand and place further strain on an already overburdened network, creating risk for every resident of the Forest Subdivision.

When this subdivision was first built decades ago, its underground utility system was also designed with gas street lighting. When Austin annexed the neighborhood, the city replaced those with electric streetlights, adding even more load to infrastructure never designed for such demand.

Storm drainage is another critical weakness. The intersection of Lemens Spice Trail and Flower Scent Court has long been a problem spot, evidenced by frequent Austin city storm drain clean-out visits. Additional development will increase impermeable surfaces, funneling more runoff into a system that is already inadequate and prone to failure.

Beyond electricity and drainage, other critical systems — gas, water, wastewater, digital cable, environmental protections, and even property appraisals — may all be negatively affected by this proposed rezoning. These factors are not minor details; they are fundamental to the stability and

livability of the neighborhood.

### **Environmental Concerns**

The staff report does not address the vegetation and wildlife currently supported in this area. As a homeowner living on an adjacent cul-de-sac, I have direct, firsthand knowledge of the environment and wildlife activity in this area.

In my own yard, I have photographed:

- Three white squirrels simultaneously, a rare and unique population in Austin.
- Great horned owls, which rely on mature tree canopy.
- Foxes, raccoons, and other native species that depend on the current environment for survival.

The loss of vegetation on this lot would eliminate habitat and could significantly reduce or even threaten the unique white squirrel population — a valued part of the neighborhood's character. These environmental costs have not been acknowledged in the staff recommendation and must be weighed before any decision is made.

### **Broader Impacts**

At the Zoning & Platting Commission hearing on August 19, 2025, it was noted that current Austin building codes would allow for up to eight additional housing units on the subject lot if this rezoning is approved.

The impact of eight new units is not insignificant:

- Increased electrical load on a system already failing at a single point.
- Greater strain on stormwater drainage infrastructure already at capacity.
- Loss of vegetation and wildlife habitat.
- Potential effects on water, gas, wastewater, and digital infrastructure.
- Reduced property values for surrounding homeowners due to increased risk and environmental loss.

The negative effects on infrastructure, public safety, property values, and the environment far outweigh any speculative financial gain by the property owner seeking rezoning.

### **Principle of Governance**

A basic tenet of good governance is to “do no harm.” Approval of this zoning change would cause harm to an established neighborhood, its infrastructure, and its environment.

Commission members should not base decisions on speculation or hearsay regarding the property owners' potential building plans. The reality is clear: the zoning change itself permits far greater density, regardless of current owner intent, and that density brings documented risks to the neighborhood.

### **Conclusion**

For all these reasons — documented utility vulnerabilities, stormwater limitations, environmental impacts, and community risks — I respectfully urge the Commission to consider the broader impacts and reject the proposed rezoning at 11700 Flower Scent Court.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration.

Respectfully,

Clem DePalma

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8/15/25

Case Number C14-2025-0054  
Project Location - 11700 Flower Scent  
Court

We object to this project

Enrique and Teresa Cebal  
11548 Cedarcliff Drive  
Austin, Texas 78758

SF1 to SF2 - Going from a low density single family residential use to a SF-2 moderate density single-family residential use lot will impact the taxes, environment and unforeseen elements for my property