

Bowker, Kristina J.

From: Skip Williamson <skipwilliamson@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 2:00 PM
To: Baldwin, Brent L.
Cc: smpy; Bowker, Kristina J.; Bowker, Kristina J.
Subject: Re: Contesting variance at 1109 18th Street

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Thank you Brent. You can just disregard our previous more casual communication so as to not muddy the messaging.

On Jan 22, 2025, at 1:54 PM, Baldwin, Brent L. <bbaldwin@cob.org> wrote:

Thank you, I am ccing the Hearing Examiner's office on this response for inclusion into the record.

Brent Baldwin
Development Manager
Bellingham Public Works

From: Skip Williamson <skipwilliamson@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 12:49 PM
To: Baldwin, Brent L. <bbaldwin@cob.org>
Cc: smpy <alexissmpy@gmail.com>
Subject: Contesting variance at 1109 18th Street

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Subject: Variance Request Objection - 1109 18th Street - Continued Safety Concerns

Attention: Brent Baldwin, Development Manager City of Bellingham Public Works
Department

This letter serves as a formal objection to the variance request for the driveway at 1109 18th Street, specifically regarding the proposed addition of adjacent driveway connections serving other home sites. We previously invested considerable time and resources, including legal fees, contesting the construction of this very driveway. We

explicitly outlined numerous safety concerns *and* voiced our belief that the applicant, Scott Wicklund, intended to use this driveway for multiple properties. These concerns were dismissed during the permitting process and subsequent hearing. Now, the property owner himself, Mackenzie Funk, has documented the very dangers we foresaw, as detailed in his submitted letter. It appears Mr. Wicklund is proceeding with his original plan for multi-property access, further validating our initial concerns. It is, frankly, unconscionable that, after dismissing our well-founded objections, the City would now consider a variance to *increase* the traffic burden on this demonstrably hazardous driveway.

Mr. Funk's letter describes the driveway as a 10-foot wide, 226-foot long access with a maximum 24.6% grade, two blind corners, and a slippery brushed concrete surface. He cites a previous incident where a vehicle slid backward off the driveway, requiring a tow truck. He explains how he and his tenants currently coordinate usage to avoid collisions on the narrow, steep incline where passing is impossible. He asserts that adding more vehicles from multiple households would make this coordination impractical and dramatically increase the risk of accidents. Further, Mr. Funk expresses serious concern, mirroring our own, that Mr. Wicklund intends to use the driveway for access to *additional* properties beyond 1109 18th Street, further compounding the safety issues. Mr. Funk also details Mr. Wicklund's unwillingness to engage in meaningful discussions regarding these safety concerns and potential mitigations.

We strongly suggest that a representative from the Public Works Department conduct a site visit to 1109 18th Street to assess the current conditions and the potential impact of increased traffic. The existing dangers are readily apparent. As residents adjacent to this driveway, we witness daily the near-misses and precarious maneuvers required to navigate this steep and narrow access. Of particular concern is the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, including our two young sons who frequently skateboard and ride bikes on the sidewalk at the top of the driveway, completely hidden from drivers ascending the blind corner. The current situation is already an accident waiting to happen; increasing the traffic flow will only make it more likely that someone will be seriously injured.

Given the pre-existing safety issues, validated by Mr. Funk's own experience, and our previously stated concerns about Mr. Wicklund's intentions, approving this variance to increase traffic on this driveway would be a grave error in judgment. We urge you to prioritize public safety and deny this request.

Sincerely,

Skip and Alexis Williamson
1720 Knox Ave
Bellingham WA

