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Impact on the Environment Comment for DEIS Rapp Road Residential/Western Avenue Mixed Use Redevelopment Projects

1 message

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To: Kovalchikk@togny.org

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Attention: Kenneth Kovalchik, Town Planner, Kovalchikk@togny.org

I am a Town of Guilderland resident and I prefer native Pine Barrens to a Costco and more apartment dwellings that will up the already heavy traffic here in my neighborhood in McKownville. We already were forced to accept the newly-being-built apartments on Fuller Road despite years of neighborhood protest against the destruction of the Laughlin Street neighborhood. Here we go again after my early years in the 70s of working with Citizens Protecting the Environment who struggled to keep the Pine Bush from overdeveloping entities whose only aim was profitability not protection of this unique microenvironment that has an important role to fulfill.

Surely, the fact that Pyramid does not own the roads should provide some bargaining leverage to ensure that they act as responsible stewards in minimizing their destruction of our unique and irretrievable Pine Barrens.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed development by Pyramid (Crossgates) on Rapp Road, the Mall Road and Western Avenue to build up to 360 Apartments with up to 3 five-story apartment buildings, up to 50,000 sq ft of office space and up to 278,900 sq ft commercial expansive retail including including a Costco with a 700 car parking lot and a 18 pump gas station should be rejected because the following are not adequately addressed: 1. The Pine Bush borders the Crossgates expansion. The Albany Pine Bush is considered the best example of an inland pine barrens ecosystem in the world. The Pine Bush contains 78 wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need, including the federal and state-endangered Karner blue butterfly) and state-threatened frosted elfin butterfly, and the largest inland sand dune system in eastern North America. The site has been designated a National Natural Landmark, a National Heritage Area Site, a NYS Bird Conservation Area and a National Audubon Society Important Bird Area. Appendices F and G in the DEIS are inadequate to evaluate the impact of the proposed development on the plant and animal species in the Pine Bush. 2. The Pine Bush habitat is threatened by the expansion of this commercial venture, whether it is adjacent to the construction or a few hundred feet away. These species are important not only to the Pine Bush, but to the local ecosystem as well. The cumulative impact of this development plus other proposals on the Pine Bush is not adequately addressed. 3. The world is experiencing the sixth major extinction. The mitigation measures offered in the DEIS are inadequate to address the destruction of 46 acres of land. The proposed development decreases the size of the Pine Bush and the mitigation measures offer no possibility for expanding the habitat. 4. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is woefully incomplete because it does not adequately address the effect this massive development would have on the ecosystem of the Pine Bush, or the effect on plant and animal species. Thank you,