



August 30, 2024

The Honorable Bill Hennessy
Major, City of O'Fallon
100 N. Main Street
O'Fallon, MO 63366

RE: Future annexation, zoning changes and development along Highway 79

Dear Mayor Hennessy:

The development of the Center for Advance Skills Training in Law Enforcement has brought concerns that the City of O'Fallon has renewed interest in the folly of further annexation and development of additional lands along Highway 79, particularly on the eastern side (see Figure 1 - 3). You may not be aware that this landscape is within the 100-year floodplain, contains sensitive wildlife habitat, and most importantly, regularly floods. Many of these properties experience annual flooding and you only must look back to 2019 when this entire area, from Peruque Creek Road to Winfield, was under water. Highway 79 itself being under water and closed in 2019, 2008 and 1993.

We should not have to remind you the 100-year floodplain is not an appropriate place to develop. Floodplain's best uses are agriculture, recreational property, and natural spaces. Exactly what exists there today. Annexation and rezoning will destroy the natural heritage of these lands, exacerbate existing local flooding issues, and increase flooding on neighboring landowners. For the people, wildlife, history, and heritage of St. Charles County and the region, we cannot allow this to happen.

You may be unaware of the history and heritage of Great Rivers Habitat Alliance. In 1999, a group of floodplain landowners became extremely concerned about the construction of a 500-year levee to protect a commercial development project alongside some of the best wetland habitats in the Confluence. Garnering support from other conservation interests, the group formed Great Rivers Habitat Alliance (GRHA) in 2000. The Alliance, which now has the support of more than forty state, federal, and nonprofit organizations and works to protect the floodplain from commercial development. GRHA and its partners have testified at numerous public hearings and submitted written opposition to planned developments, zoning changes, tax incentive financing and annexation proposals within the floodplain of the Confluence. As importantly, GRHA has raised public awareness about the floodplain's importance in terms of flood storage, clean water, and agriculture.

GRHA represents the more than 200 duck clubs and 700 plus landowners in the Confluence. We have a long history of opposing development in the 100-year floodplain, promoting legislation that limits development in the 100-year floodplain (such as MO House Bill 1434-HB 1434 and MO Senate Bill 225) and working toward sensible solutions.

The Confluence is our region's defining natural resource. We will not allow it to be destroyed.

As we have with the city of St Charles and St. Peters, we stand ready to fight and challenge any further annexation, zoning changes and development that O'Fallon may have for any properties east of Highway 79.

There is a time and place where you simply must stand your ground and fight. Hwy 79 is our line in the sand. We will fight and use all legal means to protect from development all lands east of the Hwy 79 shoulder. We will oppose and challenge any annexation, zoning changes, 404 permit, or use of TIF for any development planned in the 100-year floodplain. This letter serves notice to the City of O'Fallon, and everyone who wishes to develop in the Confluence, that we are willing to fight for the preservation of our region's natural resources and heritage.

Sincerely,



Adolphus A. Busch IV, Founder



James T. Blair IV, Founder



Christopher Hyams, Chairman



Don C. Musick III, Founder



David Bub, Esq., President



J. Michael Checkett, Executive Director

Cc: Tony Lovasco, District 64 Representative
Wendy Hausman, District 65 Representative
Steve Ehlman, St Charles County Executive
GRHA BOARD:
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Chip Wagner
Patrick Wittenbrink, Esq.

Figure 1.

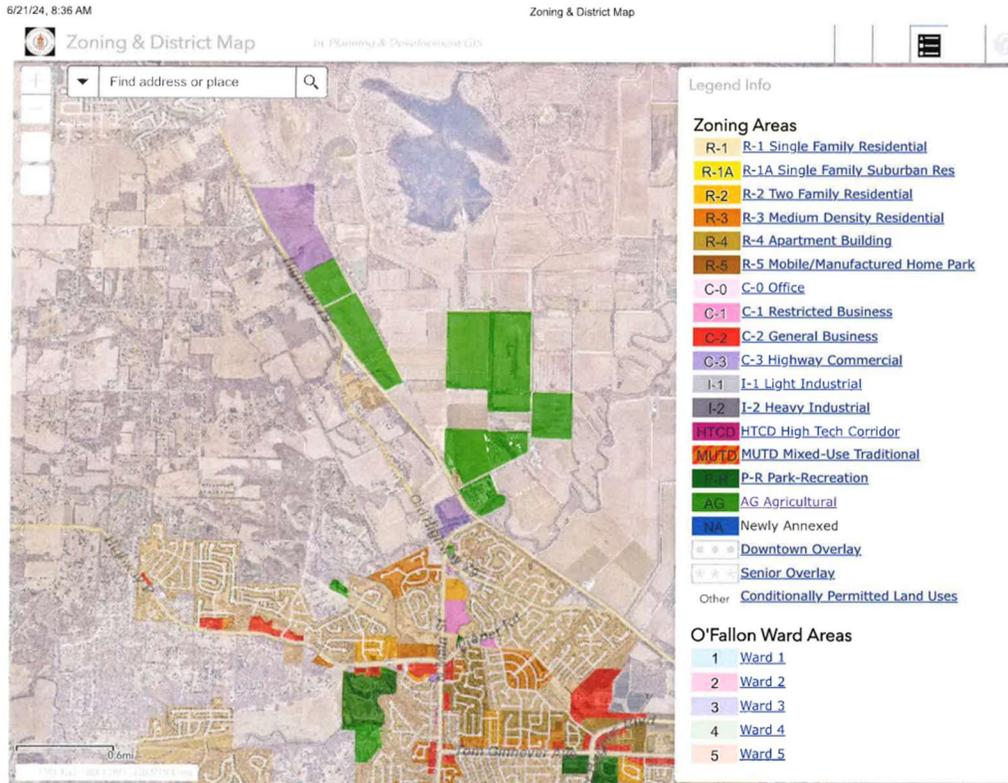


Figure 2.

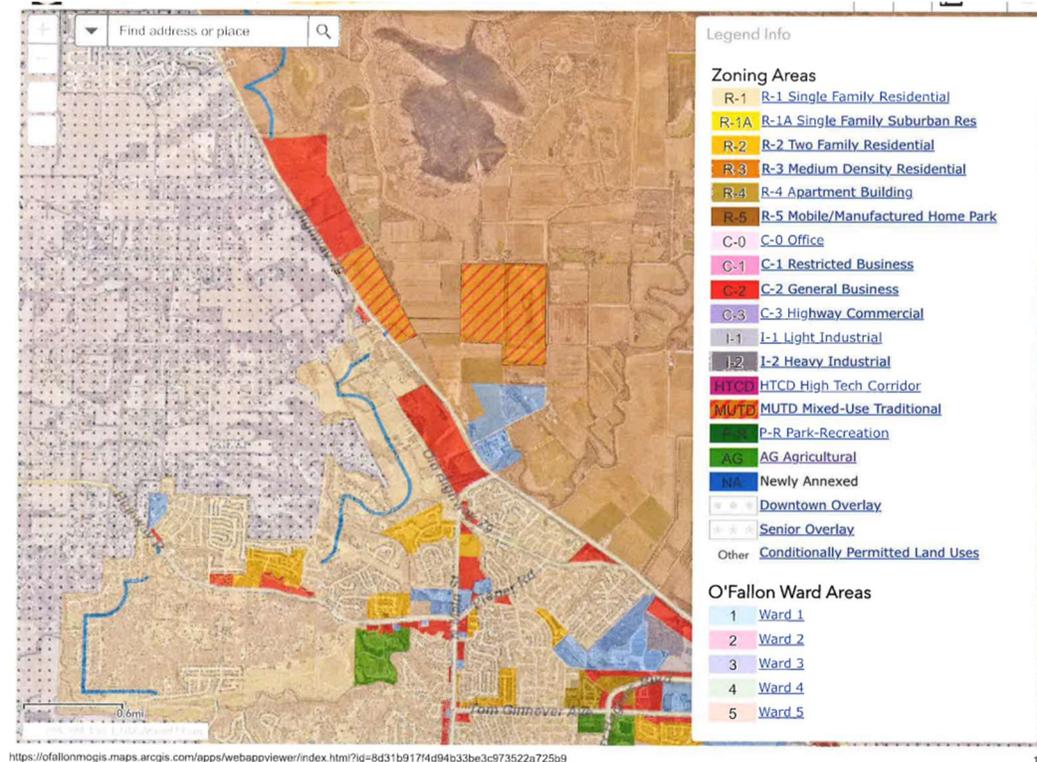


Figure 3.

