

Hello Town of Caroline Board Members,

I am writing to you in favor of the moratorium on new building construction and in opposition to the construction of a commercial building on Route 79. Although the representative from GBT did not explicitly say, from my research on this particular developer, it seems most likely that a Dollar General store is being proposed.

The only argument I have heard for the construction of a dollar store in Caroline has been to improve access to budget friendly goods for those in need. While this argument is not one to be taken lightly, I do not see how the proposed location would lead to that outcome. The proposed site has no access by foot, is located on a very busy highway (that I do not feel safe even riding a bike down), and is not easily accessible by public transportation. Additionally, there are already several dollar stores within a 10-15 minute drive. If we want to increase access to those who cannot drive for 10-15 minutes to access an already established dollar store, the store in Caroline would be better placed at a location to which walking, biking, or public transportation was safe and easily accessible.

In addition, dollar stores are known to compete with (and outcompete) locally owned grocery stores and markets, such as Brookton's market. Brookton's Market is an anchor to our community and a place so many of us value as a gathering location. A dollar store is a poor substitute to locally owned grocery stores. They offer very limited fresh produce, employ low numbers of people (the average Dollar General employs only 9 people), and offer low income jobs. The money earned does not return to the local community the way it does with a locally owned store.

Finally, I strongly believe that a Dollar General store clashes with our town's character and the attributes of this area that so many of us hold dear. As written by a fellow neighbor, "We envision Caroline as a place where green space is plentiful, enabling sustainable agriculture and forest production, reducing pollution, providing outdoor recreational opportunities, and preserving biodiversity and rural views. We support businesses that complement the peaceful rural nature of the town."

Best,
Emily Riddle
7 Hickory Trail