

January 09, 2020

City Council
Residential Infill Project Testimony
1221 SW Fourth Avenue, Room 130
Portland, OR 97204

Honorable Mayor and city Commissioners,

The Collins View Neighborhood Association, a recognized Portland Neighborhood Association, is grateful to the City of Portland for recognizing the importance of citizen input for the Planning and Sustainability Commission's recommended proposed changes to the zoning code, currently referred to as the Residential Infill Project (RIP).

We question aspects of the proposed plan and are concerned with its impact on our livability. This plan fails to address our unique geographical and transportation infrastructure challenges. We must oppose this plan as currently written as it relates specifically to our neighborhood.

Our intersections and roadways support the transportation needs of the neighborhood's three main institutions — Lewis and Clark College, Lewis and Clark Law School and Riverdale High School. During the last 25 years vehicular traffic generated by Lewis and Clark College and its Law School has also significantly increased. And Riverdale High School, which is in our neighborhood although it serves the adjoining community of Dunthorpe, did not even exist 25 years ago. Almost all its students, parents and staff commute to and from Dunthorpe via vehicles.

The traffic lights at our neighborhood intersections were designed to manage traffic needs that existed more than 25 years ago. The conditions today are far more severe.

There is now the added burden of increased vehicular traffic from the Clackamas county sections of SW Boones Rd. and SW Terwilliger Blvd. and their adjoining/connecting neighborhoods. Traffic from Lake Oswego, which has massive new housing developments on SW Terwilliger Blvd. and SW Boones Ferry Rd., and traffic from Lake Grove use Terwilliger and Boones Ferry to enter/return from the freeway, cross the Willamette River and access downtown Portland and beyond. This traffic has increased fourfold since the existing traffic signals were designed.

All this traffic ultimately converges on the only neighborhood collector, Terwilliger Blvd., with a single lane each way. It is not unusual to see traffic jams for up to a mile or more during peak times. PBOT has designated our main streets and intersections as being at or near failure.

The important and dire issue for our neighborhood traffic is the quick access needed for emergency vehicles. We strongly urge that issues such as these be at the forefront of any RIP under consideration.

We must note that in 2009, Lewis and Clark College petitioned the city for increasing the housing density via dorms and other types of student and staff housing (case of LU08180498). In that case, the hearings officer denied the college's request citing the inability of the infrastructure to sustain this growth without major improvement to the transportation system and studies of the environmental impact on the surrounding natural areas.

Due to its challenging geography of hills and steep roads, and distances to jobs, shopping and schools, the neighborhood has evolved into low-density, automobile-dependent living.

The Southwest Corridor Light Rail will come oh-so-close but not close enough. Bus service is currently almost nonexistent. A one-and-a-half-mile walk, sometimes on steep hills and in adverse Oregon weather, can be challenging for the best of us. We believe that these difficult aspects of Collins View neighborhood were inadvertently overlooked by the commission in its recommendation of the proposed RIP policy.

Under any currently known or planned scenario, Collins View will never be a walking, biking neighborhood as it cannot be assumed that only able-bodied people will live here. And to where do we walk? There are no grocery stores within walkable distances. There are very few sidewalks to walk on. Increasing density will not tame the steep hills nor bring wider roadways or nearby shopping. Let these necessities be in place before we overburden the citizens of our neighborhood.

We are also surrounded by the very delicate and sensitive natural areas of Tryon Creek State Park, River View Natural Area and Marshal Park. Our runoffs directly impact these areas all the way to the Willamette River. The runoff due to increased density would certainly have a negative impact. Managing the existing stormwater runoff is a continual challenge. We applaud the work BIS has done to protect these few natural areas in the city. We believe stronger provisions are needed to protect the tree canopy as lots are developed and trees are removed.

The citizens of our community believe increased density will massively overwhelm these natural areas and our already-overworked transportation infrastructure. Ironically, it will also seriously impact our mobility into, within and out of our own neighborhood.

We sincerely believe the proposed RIP's goal is NOT to degrade the current standard of livability of an existing neighborhood. We agree the city needs a plan for the future, and the proposed RIP plan is likely feasible and essential for most areas of Portland.

However, not all the areas under the city's umbrella can be stuffed under a universal RIP. The topography, location and existing infrastructure make our neighborhood one of those compelling exceptions, and the city has not shown any research or findings that would mitigate the issues raised in this letter.

A proposed solution.

We propose that the city take a constructive, practical approach and designate specific areas on separate timelines for application of the RIP policy. This will move the plan forward in areas more ready for implementation. Areas such as ours can be on a separate plan to address the conditions needed to implement the RIP without likely irreversible damage. Other areas of the city may produce favorable results, but we fear we will be the forgotten casualty of this policy. The current proposal is needlessly hasty for some neighborhoods, such as ours, and falls short of the important goal of at least maintaining if not improving our livability.

The board of the Collins View Neighborhood Association is available to work with city bureaus to mutually understand the issues and challenges to a correct and timely RIP implementation for our neighborhood.

It's extremely important to note that the conditions cited by the hearing officer in case LU08180498 have worsened in the past decade, and PBOT has not proposed a single solution to alleviate the situation or future degradation of these roads and intersections

The commitments you all swore to in the city's Comprehensive Plan are in danger of becoming meaningless. We strongly believe in a process that relies on the informed findings and decisions by the city's bureaus and the all-important input from community members who reside in the area in question.

We believe the proposed RIP, if implemented without the neighborhood's input, would be disastrous for our livability.

Please consider some of the standards set forth in the city's Comprehensive Plan entitled GOALS AND POLICIES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN in Chapter 2: Community involvement.

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the city's intent to:

- Provide a wide range of opportunities for involvement in land use decisions.
- Foster ongoing positive relationships between communities and the city in support of positive land use decision outcomes.
- Recognize that the city has a responsibility to plan for the needs of and engage with under-served and under-represented communities to achieve greater equity.
- Expand opportunities for meaningful community engagement in land use **decisions**, from issue identification and

project scoping through implementation.

- Require transparent, well-designed, thoughtful public processes for land use decisions.
- Increase the community's meaningful participation in land use decisions.

Thank you for your consideration.

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