

Testimony before the Planning and Sustainability Commission

By: Jim Howell [jimhowell89@hotmail.com](mailto:jimhowell89@hotmail.com)

Subject: Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan

November 4, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

I wish to speak in opposition to the proposed down-zoning of the Eliot residential neighborhood from its current low density multi-dwelling R-2 zone to a still lower density single-dwelling R-2.5 zone.

The residential area bounded on the west by Williams Ave, the east by Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, the north by Fremont St, and the south by Hancock St has traditionally been a medium density multi-dwelling neighborhood of affordable housing types that include modest detached homes, duplexes, 4-plexes, town-houses, row-houses and apartments.

It is an ideal compact transit and bike oriented Neighborhood. There is no property within its boundaries that is more than 600 feet from a frequent service bus line. Over 600 buses and streetcars serve its residents every day by six different routes. It is also served by an extensive bike network. The new Rodney Bikeway goes north and south directly through the middle of the neighborhood. There are east/west bike routes on Tillamook, Russell and Morris Streets and of course, the Williams/Vancouver Bikeway, probably the heaviest used bike route in the city, borders it on the west.

For those who live light, by choice or economic condition, Eliot is an ideal neighborhood. It has two great parks, Albina and Dawson Parks, a brand new New Seasons Super Market and a modern but mothballed elementary school (the former Eliot Elementary School) ready for an influx of new students from a compact, diverse and family friendly neighborhood.

The Eliot Neighborhood has always accommodated the working class and never had a high-end enclave of stately homes for the more affluent class like the neighboring Irvington and Alameda neighborhoods. Now is not the time to try to change this historic tradition.

The Albina Community Plan of 1993 reduced the density of this area by one-half by rezoning it from A-1 (now R-1) to R-2 to help stabilize Eliot from decline due to the then frenetic flight to the suburbs. Since that time, values have skyrocketed and affordability has plunged. Now is the time to increase inclusiveness with affordable multi-family housing, not impose more exclusive single-dwelling zoning (R-2.5) as currently proposed.

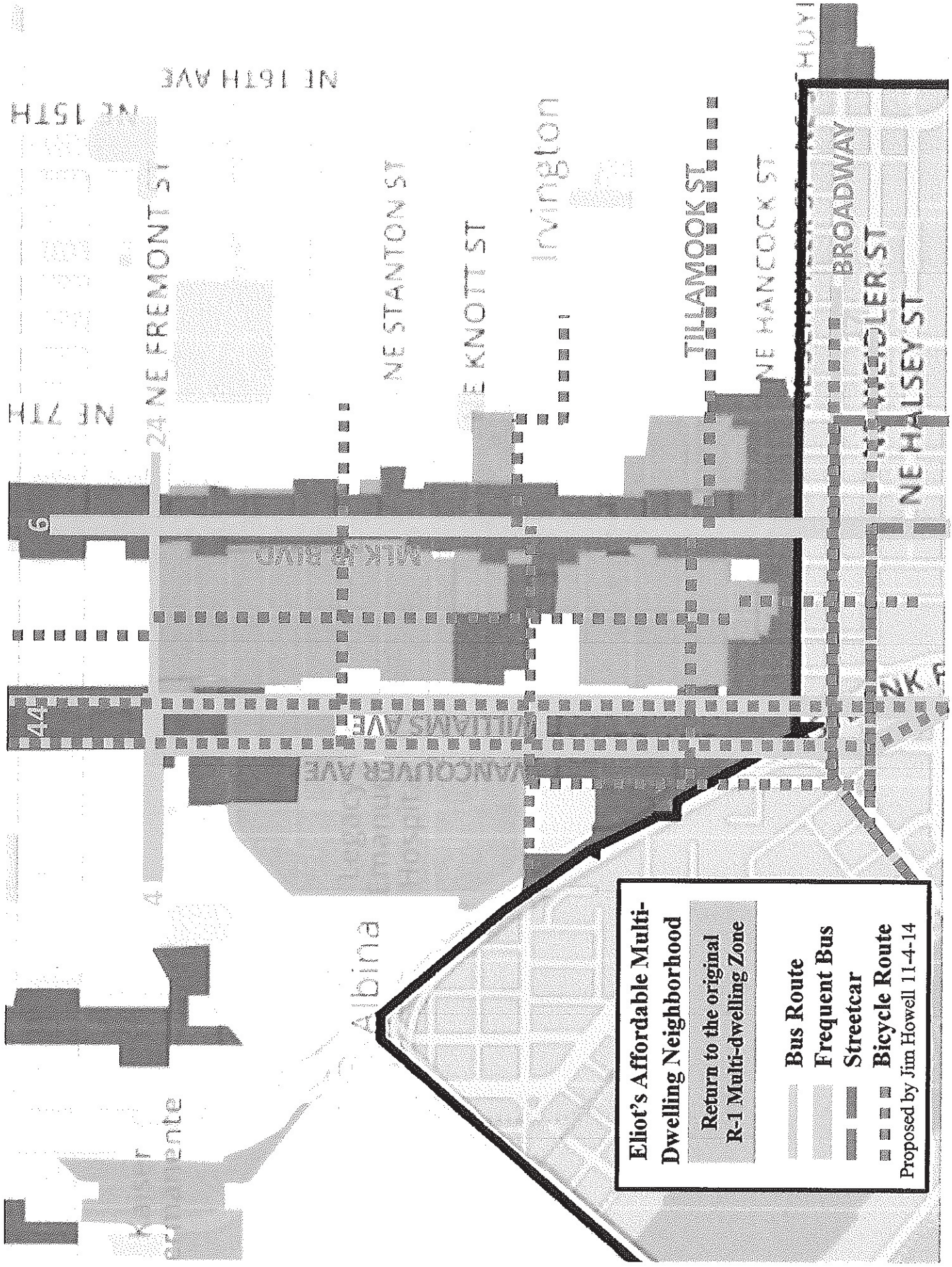
Objectives 9 and 12 (page 54) of the 1993 Albina Community Plan's Housing Policy stated:

**Revisit the housing affordability issue in the Albina Community neighborhoods in 10 to 15 years after the Albina Community neighborhoods have stabilized. Seek to increase opportunities for affordable housing and reductions in displacement that might otherwise result from neighborhood stabilization and rising property values.**

**Revisit the issue of housing density in 10 to 15 years after Albina Community Plan neighborhoods have been stabilized. Seek opportunities for increasing housing density and accommodating a greater share of the region's growth.**

Now, 21 years later, we should follow the advice of these farsighted planners and increase neighborhood density to better accommodate a greater share of the region's growth, as well as help to preserve affordable living in the heart of the city.





**Eliot's Affordable Multi-Dwelling Neighborhood**

Return to the original R-1 Multi-dwelling Zone

- Bus Route
- Frequent Bus
- Streetcar
- Bicycle Route

Proposed by Jim Howell 11-4-14

