

12/28/14

Portland Bureau of Planning
1900 SW 4th Avenue
Portland Oregon,

RE: Comments on the Comprehensive
Plan Update



To Whom It May Concern,

I am an architect and planner living in Eastmoreland where there has been a noticeable increase in demolitions and new construction of speculative housing in our neighborhood to replace the demolished housing. The design quality of these new buildings with few exceptions, is poor. In some cases, significant houses reflecting a high degree of design quality were demolished. Without exception, the newly constructed skinny houses are glaring deviations from the neighborhood character, for the scale as well as design quality. I am hoping that my neighborhood's pursuit of a specific plan will address these issues. In the meantime, I offer the following comments on the Comprehensive Plan Draft .

Key Directions

Complete Neighborhoods and *One size Does Not Fit All* "Plan and design to fit local conditions" is a concept I strongly support. However the "Five Portlands" aka *Pattern Areas* do not recognize the distinct characters of neighborhoods within the Inner Neighborhood Pattern.

Also in Key Directions there is no reference to neighborhood associations in structuring public participation. Historically neighborhood associations are the designated contacts in land use review, requesting neighborhood planning and protecting Portland citizens from destructive impulses of urban freeway visionaries, the pressures of irresponsible development and careless abuse of environmental and cultural resources. While admittedly varying in capacity, these organizations along with business associations (that are mentioned) the Neighborhood Associations need to be recognized as integral to ongoing success of formulation, implementation and enforcement of policies.

Planning Goals and Policies

GP2-1 Community Involvement notably fails to mention Neighborhood Associations as primary vehicles or even participants for public participation in the planning process.

GP10.5 Land Use Designations. I support R7 designation east of SE 36th Avenue to SE Cesar Chavez Blvd. This area is considered part of our neighborhood - its lot sizes, character of houses and streetscape essentially the same as the western portion of Eastmoreland. The impacts of skinny house development in this area is changing this character and undermining the wholeness of our neighborhood.

Alternative development options.

I support ADU's but do not support by- right zoning of R2.5 for corner lots as long as they allow skinny houses. In general, my objections to skinny houses are architectural and would consider allowing 2 units on a 5000 square foot lot if there were sufficient architectural controls

to insure that the two units provided the same architectural appearance as a single family house.

I do not support skinny houses in Eastmoreland for the following reasons:

1. They are incompatible with existing architectural fabric of the neighborhood in the following ways:
 - A. Their garage doors dominate the front facades. Almost all Eastmoreland houses have garages in the rear of the property or in basement locations, partially sunken in the front walls. This dominance is also in conflict with Community Design Standards.
 - B. Their proportions (primarily vertical) are incompatible with the primarily horizontal proportion of houses in the neighborhood.
 - C. Their architectural detailing is minimal.
- 2.. Their heights (necessary to obtain the square footages given the small footprint) reduce solar access to adjoining lots.
3. They do not offer more affordability compared to existing houses.
4. They are by nature energy inefficient given their large amount of exterior surface relative to their enclosed area.
5. They encourage demolition of existing houses which conflicts with Comp Plan Policy 441 (Preservation Equity) and the retention of historic resources (4.36, 4.37, 4.38) This is also contrary to basic Sustainability goals of the Comp Plan.

Summary

1. I believe that every neighborhood should have the opportunity to create a neighborhood plan based on the guidelines established in the Comp Plan.
2. Existing neighborhoods with historic character need to be preserved while allowing increased density in the form of accessory dwelling units rather than demolition and replacement by poorly designed houses which undermine neighborhood character.
3. Skinny houses should be banned as a form of achieving higher density.

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully,



Bruce Sternberg, AIA
President