

March 12, 2015

Dear Planning Commissioners and Staff:

We live at 1414 SE Oak Street which abuts 1403-1415 SE Stark, a nonconforming property which the city wants to up zone to commercial from R1.

Unfortunately a commercial designation doesn't require any retail space and could have the opposite effect of the current building being torn down and a dense apartment building being built with no benefits to the neighborhood. For this reason if the city decides to rezone this property it should be CM-1 with the most restrictive FAR under this designation. It should also require retail space on the first floor.

A design review should be required on all new commercial properties with a neighborhood notification requirement. This would help neighborhoods have some self determination, which we believe is in line with our collective American values. Why should a developer have the sole say in what is built when their motivation is profit and most of them do not even live in the neighborhood. Great cities are built with a common vision and goal.

Parking is another concern that needs to be addressed. The city requirement that buildings within 500 ft of a bus line need only to have parking for 25% of the units is a fallacy. PBOT's own study confirms that 65% of apartment dwellers own cars. They may not drive the car to work but they still need a place to park their car. Allowing dense apartments up against single family residential neighborhoods without proper planning for parking overwhelms the adjacent residential streets.

Washington High School was recently flipped from R1 to commercial without any conditional use review. The adjacent neighborhoods are reeling from the influx of a 850 seat, 200 plus events/year venue. City planning was severely lacking with a PBOT requested parking study canceled by BDS. Because of this more commercial zoning is not needed here.

Finally I believe that a more transparent process is needed to rezone a property. When one planner gets too much power something is amiss. A

open process is the democratic way. Three minutes in front of a planning commission with no idea of who is making the zoning proposals is not transparent enough for us. On top of this citizens at this time have only a draft of what the final zoning laws or designation will be. Things need to be slowed down. Democracy is a messy business but it is the way of our country.

In closing I would also like to say we support Chip Rees, Christine Yun and Shelia Baraga letters regarding zoning in the Buckman.

Thank you for your consideration.

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