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Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 11:53 AM
To: BPS Mailbox <BPSMBX@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: Dee A. Walker, Richmond/Lombard Farid Bolouri Proposal

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Planning and Sustainability Commission
Dee A. Walker
City of Portland
1120 SW Fifth Ave Rm 800
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Dear Dee,

This letter is regarding the property at Lombard and Richmond and the proposed development by Farid Bolouri. It will be asked that you vacate City property under the St. Johns Lombard Plan for his project. I ask that you deny the request.

I. Three Reasons, by the St. Johns Lombard Plan, not to Vacate Property.

The St. Johns Lombard Plan (SJLP) is given as a justification for the Bolouri Development. In the SJLP there are three main objectives for the Lombard /Richmond Intersection. The Bolouri development fails outright on two of these, and with the remaining one, there are other reasonable alternatives that call into question the necessity of vacating public land. The following three objectives are the benefit acquired, the trade off for the razing of lovely * Ivy Island, and putting in a traffic signal. If these objectives are not met, there is no good reason for vacating the Portland City property in favor of Bolouri. The objectives: 1) increase visibility into the Downtown, 2) increase walkability from the Eastside to the Westside, 3) make the Charleston/Lombard corner safe for pedestrians.

* Ivy Island, the traffic island at Richmond and Lombard, landscaped with trees and plants.

1) Currently, as traffic travels west on Lombard, we begin to see downtown at about the Oswego light (two blocks). At this point we can see Signal Pizza and Peninsula Station; one block in on Charleston, as we approach the curve, Tulip Bakery becomes visible, and when we are in the curve much more of downtown is visible. The current one story structures slope with Lombard at Ivy Island to allow this visibility. In the Bolouri Development, because he squares his building at Charleston and because it's bigger and taller, you will have a four story wall of apartments that will not allow visibility into downtown St. Johns until just before you reach the

proposed right turn stoplight. As you travel west you will be greeted full on by a four story apt. wall. It is a physical, visual, and psychological barrier, NOT an invitation into St, Johns. Bolouri's Development "Fails" on this point..

2) In the SJLP, as the Lombard Slip is closed off, Ivy Island itself creates a barrier that protects pedestrians walking east to west (or vice versa) from the heavy traffic, noise and exhaust pollution of Alt Truck Route 30 on Richmond. This sense of safety encourages residents to leave their cars at home and walk into downtown. Bolouri's Development will make walking from the Eastside to the Westside less friendly than it currently is, and also it might actually divide St Johns into an East and a West side. First, in Bolouri's plan, as you walk west, you are confronted by a four story barrier to downtown in the form of apartment buildings, which you will need to walk around. The only way to walk around it is the sidewalk Bolouri provides, which forces the pedestrian to walk with little separating them from and being exposed to Alt Truck Route 30, EXACTLY AS IT IS NOW, IF YOU MAKE THAT SAME WALK ON RICHMOND! The proposal offers little enjoyment or protection to the pedestrian who wants to walk into town. Ironically, the current slip lane is a nicer walk than Bolouri's Plan for it has fewer vehicles and no heavy trucks. Bolouri's Development "Fails" on this point.

3) The strongest support for the Bolouri Development is the blind Lombard curve and the safety issue at Charleston. With the complete razing of Bolouri's lot, as will be done, that offers a clean slate with which to build. Simply put, if the sightline is moved back four or five feet, the curve is no longer blind. In the making of SJLP this option wasn't even a consideration because the current structures were immovable markers. Any plan made had to work around these buildings. Now we don't, for the buildings will no longer exist.

A curiosity about this intersection is that though it feels unsafe, we don't actually have accidents there! Believe me, I always have a wave of gratitude once I've crossed it! It doesn't matter how slow the vehicles are travelling, they just appear out of nowhere. You don't see them and you assume that they don't see you. It feels dangerous.

If the sightline is moved back, Charleston becomes as safe as any street on Lombard. Pedestrians can see approaching vehicles, and if they step onto the street, vehicles can see them. The current speed limit is 25 mph, perhaps because it's an entrance to a Business District the speed could be reduced to 20 mph. And it's the same moderate traffic one finds in Downtown SJ. The urgency is dissipated. At this juncture, more conventional approaches to making it safe will do. For example at John Street, safety was achieved with a pedestrian crossing signal.

An added benefit to moving the sightline back, is that vehicles on RT30/Lombard now have greater visibility into Downtown St Johns. More to the spirit of the St. Johns Lombard Plan, and a solution that couldn't be foreseen in 2004. Where currently you could see to Charleston, now you'll be able to see to John Street and beyond. A much warmer invitation for business entry.

II. The St Johns Lombard Plan and St Johns Today.

The greatest insult is using the St. Johns Lombard Plan to justify the destruction of Ivy Island. The SJLP starts with a simple idea “shift the island north and merge it with the sidewalk.” The current developers have taken this perfectly elegant and uncomplicated solution and heaped on it apartments, retail stores and underground garages, and then tell us that this is what we asked for. If this is part of PDOT’S Portland Transportation Plan, then ask for this change under their Plan, but don’t tell us it’s the St. Johns Lombard Plan. The least that could be done is to respect sections of the St Johns Lombard Plan, like Downtown visibility and St Johns walkability, to help the St. Johns Business district and to help make this a nicer place to live.

Why should we keep Ivy Island? Consider the whole of Lombard, essentially a succession of strip malls and traffic lights. It feels gritty with asphalt, power poles and undistinguished architecture. And then you come to Ivy Island. Ivy Island is a unique, lovely, effective and traditional segue into the business district. Perhaps a little quaint, but it is nice. It’s shady with trees and it’s landscaped. And there it is right in front of you. You can’t miss it. Only St Johns has it and for those of us who live here, we know we’re home when we see it. Not as iconic, with a capital "I" as the bridge, but it is distinctive to St Johns and we like it. It’s a landmark. And the Lombard slip lane at Ivy Island makes an easy entrance into St. Johns. It’s a nice experience.

There’s a lot that works with the current Ivy Island and the Lombard slip lane configuration, and it’s not necessary to destroy everything. There are more elegant fixes to the Charleston corner.

The St Johns Lombard Plan, when conceived, had hundreds of people and dozens of meetings go into its creation. A lot of hard work by the St. Johns Community. People put that work into it because they were told that this was a new way of doing things. No longer would the City and Planning tyrannically impose rules that had little regard for the Community’s wishes. St. Johns was going to have a say about the destiny of St. Johns.

Since then we’ve seen constructions in our town, like the Bolouri Development, that have little regard for the St. Johns Lombard Plan or the Community. His four story apartment complex, right in the Business District, will be the tallest, biggest building on Lombard. Built in the contemporary square style so common now, it has little to do with the character of its surrounding architecture, both in size and appearance. It changes the face of St. Johns, its traffic and parking patterns as well as putting the exit/entrance of its parking garage facing directly into James John Elementary School. This tells us that in the end, after the champagne and back-slapping, and words of a new way of doing business, that the City and Planning are going to do what they want in St. Johns, irregardless of their statements and signed documents of Community cooperation. The St Johns Lombard Plan was supposed to protect us from Bolouri’s Development, not be used as a justification for it.

If the bulldozers climb Ivy Island many people in our community are going to feel anger, sadness and confusion. And many, many more people will be surprised and shocked. To the

outsider Ivy Island may not look like much, but it is our Ivy Island; a landmark and traditional entrance into St Johns. It's BEAUTIFUL!

Sincerely,

John Teply

Supporting Statements from the Johns Lombard Plan (boldface added by author)

1) page 86, under Implementation Guides, " The new design concept shifts the island to the north and merges it with the sidewalk area, creating a more traditional right angle... The space occupied by **the former island could be designed to allow for more active pedestrian use and improve sight lines into the commercial core for traffic approaching the intersection from the east.**"

2) page 36, under Development Concepts, "A signal is installed at the intersection of Lombard at Richmond to slow traffic, increase pedestrian safety, **and improve visibility for the downtown St. Johns commercial core. The newly created space can function as a plaza, and offers an opportunity to create an enhanced gateway to the downtown business district.**"

3) page 22, under Planning Goals, "**Respect the unique characteristics of the St. Johns town center and Lombard main street, and emphasize human scale in new development.**

4) page 22 under Planning Goals, " Reduce reliance on autos, and make transit, walking and bicycling the preferred modes of travel to and from the town center and main street."

5) page 100, under Desired Characteristics and Traditions, " New development should support downtown St. Johns' role as the heart of the town center, and should have a strong pedestrian-oriented presence. Throughout downtown St. Johns, new development should recognize the history of St. Johns as a city by **utilizing design elements that strengthen the traditional small town character, pedestrian-scale orientation, and rhythm of building facades.** Strategies to achieve this **include development of small-scale buildings**, 50 feet in width or less, **one to three stories in height.** Mass of taller or wider buildings can be moderated by incorporating architectural details that individualize storefronts or stepping back from the street. New development should incorporate architectural features and exterior materials that complement the quality of respective nearby civic and institutional buildings, including James John School, the St. Johns branch library, and community center.

6) page 100, under Desired Characteristics and Traditions, "The transition between commercial and residential zones is important. New commercial development along streets serving as boundaries between residential and commercial zones (such as segments of Princeton, Syracuse, Burlington, and Richmond) **should reflect the scale and character of the residential zone.** Where possible residential components of mixed-use developments should be located adjacent to existing residential zones to improve compatibility."