

To: Planning and Sustainability Commission  
[psc@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:psc@portlandoregon.gov)

1900 SW Fourth Ave  
Portland, Oregon 97201-5380

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**Re: Preservation of Multnomah Village and other historic affordable communities with significant trees and natural character**

I am requesting that the Planning and Sustainability Commission consider zoning changes that would maintain and encourage the retention of affordable housing that supports wildlife and the urban forest by assuring that lot coverage does not exceed certain maximums for single family residential housing (35%) in Multnomah Village residential neighborhoods. Multnomah Village is historically rural in character, with the exception of housing which is already mixed single-family and multifamily along major corridors (Beaverton Hillsdale Highway, Barbur and Capitol Highway for examples). I derive my suggested standards from sample urban code provisions. I believe that driveways which are non-permeable and required sidewalks (if the city continues to insist on those in the narrow residential barely improved side streets of the Village) should be considered for a maximum of 35% coverage. The current zoning requirement is 37.5% by the way I read the statute overall for our neighborhood, but this is not providing protection for our heritage sized trees and wildlife habitat. There seems to be some confusion since new exceptions are now being sought (for example the corner of SW Nevada Court and SW 29th Ave) based on lot divisions requests to consider corner lots effectively as zone R2.5 which allows even greater coverage. So as part of this request, I would be asking for no part of the current neighborhoods zoned R-7 and R-5 to be able to have effective rezoning to R2.5 based on the corner lot provision.

Limitation in lot coverage would prevent the degradation of the environment by leaving room for significant trees to be preserved (instead of rigid setbacks which might require the removal of significant trees) as well as to allow ground water infiltration. It would also remove the incentive for developers to stalk smaller older affordable homes and buy them before they go on the market with the goal of replacing a 200,000 smaller home with a large yard and Douglas Firs with a new house filling over 50% of the lot (I think now porches and driveways and walkways may be excluded from being counted even though they are impermeable cover) that costs 500,000 to buy and is set directly next to and looming over other homes. In some cases, the open character of the neighborhood has been replaced with giant walls with dark passages between the houses. A provision such as this would level the playing field for developers who would all have to adhere to these guidelines in older neighborhoods like Multnomah Village and stop the competition that drives land prices so high that prices seem to justify trying to cram in the maximum development for resale without regard for wildlife, affordability or neighborhood character.

Trees are not only a benefit to the environment in all of the ways well known to the commission, but our neighborhood is part of a general wildlife corridor connecting the Coast Range to the Willamette via Tryon State Park and encompasses the Headwaters of Stephens Creek. A less known fact is that healing from surgery or any illness including mental illness is significantly aided by the view of trees even a small view from a hospital window. This is empirically validated by research and one reason Hazelden Springbrook Residential Treatment Center for Drug and Alcohol is located in a rural setting.

There would remain plenty of room for affordable housing within the urban growth boundary if there were limits on the numbers of strip malls, large grocery/pharmacy complexes with huge asphalt footprints being installed on mixed use corridors like Beaverton Hillsdale Highway, which has some really nice truly affordable housing on it. The sidewalk requirements could be dropped where they do not support walkability and safety (floating sidewalks on low traffic streets) and the fees collected could be used to place sidewalks where they are needed along busy stress like SW 30th which connects the bus lines on Capitol Highway and Beaverton Hillsdale Highway in Multnomah/Hillsdale.

Please add this to the record. I am a homeowner and the owner of a small business in Multnomah Village. I also work as a health care professional at Northwest Permanente Medical Group. I appreciate the difficult work of the commission and, like many stakeholders, appreciate your attention.

Thank you,

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