



February 3, 2015

To: Joan Frederiksen, Liaison, West Neighborhoods
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Planning and Sustainability Commission
Mayor Charlie Hales

Re: Memorandum in Support of Downzoning

Dear Sirs and Madams:

The South Burlingame Neighborhood Association Board voted in support of the request to downzone of our R5 designated properties to R7. We believe the existing character and conditions of South Burlingame are more reflective of an R7 designation. Our concerns with continued application of the R5 zone designation fall under the following categories:

- lack of sufficient infrastructure;
- public safety; and
- quality of life.

Attached you will find a memorandum requesting the downzone for the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. This memorandum was voted upon and approved for submission by the South Burlingame Neighborhood Association Board on January 15, 2015.

Sincerely,

Robert Lennox
Land Use Representative
South Burlingame Neighborhood Association

Enclosure: Memorandum "Request for Comprehensive Plan Change from R5 to R7 within South Burlingame Neighborhood"

Copy to SW Neighborhoods, Inc.

Board Meeting – R5 to R7 Downzone

MINUTES

JANUARY 15, 2015

7:00 PM

AT SAFEWAY STARBUCK'S

MEETING CALLED BY	Betsy Shand per 1/6/2015 General Assembly Motion for R5 to R7 Downzone Doc
TYPE OF MEETING	Board Meeting
FACILITATOR	Betsy Shand, Chairperson
NOTE TAKER	Robert Lennox, Board Member
ATTENDEES	Board Members: Betsy Shand, Robert Lennox, Lynn Pearson, Sam Pearson, Scott Richman, Suzanne Peters, Michael Andrews

Agenda topics

R5 TO R7 DOWNZONE

DISCUSSION	Motion made by Robert Lennox, see attached. Seconded by Mike Andrews
	Discussions about the document, general idea of the downzone, and rather the downzone was in character with the current density and improvements. Scott felt the downzone would not affect the current out of character infill that the neighborhood has objected to.
CONCLUSIONS	Question was called, 4 in favor, 1 against, 2 abstaining. Motion passed.

Memorandum

To: Joan Frederiksen, Liaison, West Neighborhoods
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Planning and Sustainability Commission
Mayor Charlie Hales

From: South Burlingame Neighborhood Association

Date: January 13, 2015

Re: Request for Comprehensive Plan Change from R5 to R7 within South Burlingame Neighborhood

We fully support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan – particularly with regard to Complete Neighborhoods as well as Planning and Designing to Fit Local Conditions. However, we believe the planners did not fully consider the existing neighborhood character and conditions in the South Burlingame Neighborhood when they concluded to an R5 designation for the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The existing character and conditions are far more reflective of an R7 designation and request the Draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan be revised to apply the R7 designation within the South Burlingame Neighborhood boundaries.

As detailed below, our concerns fall under the following categories:

- infrastructure;
- public safety; and
- quality of life.

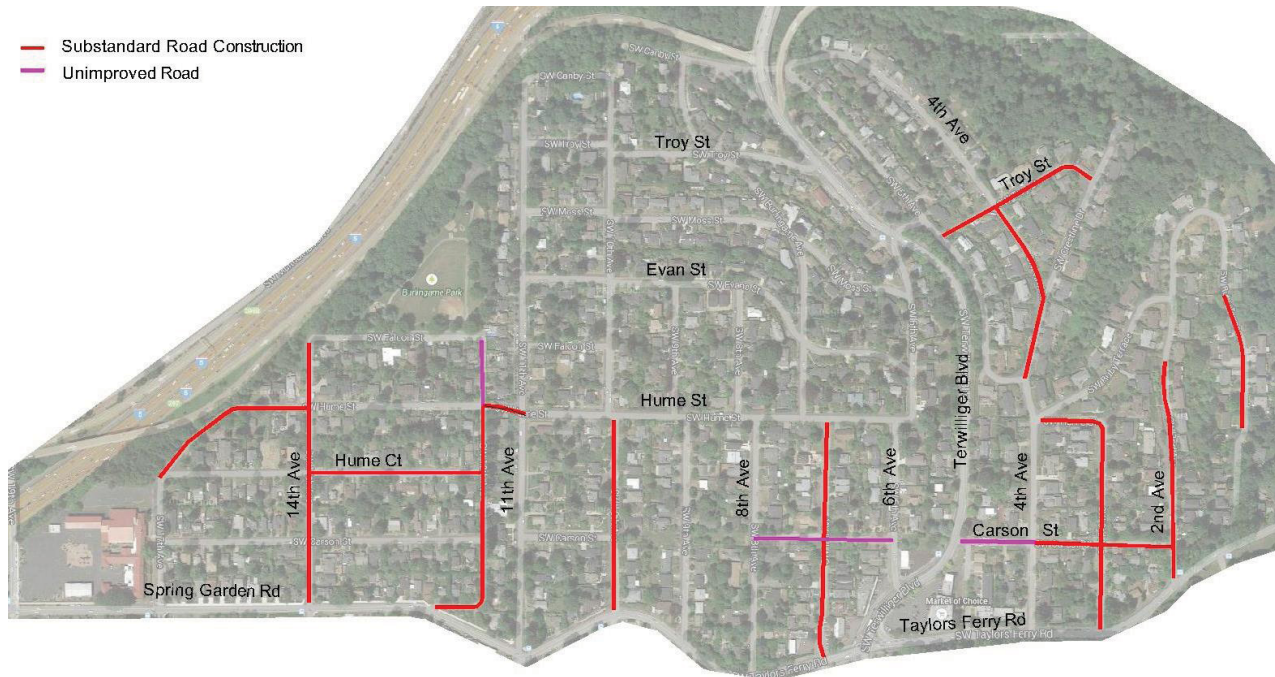
Infrastructure

South Burlingame was incorporated into the City from unincorporated Multnomah County. Much of the infrastructure is substandard to the City's road construction requirements. Many of the roads are constructed without proper road beds and with substandard pavement. Most do not meet design standards for width, curbing, or sidewalks. Most do not have any storm water sewer systems. While some infill requires infrastructure improvements, the small areas brought up to current codes will not improve the entire system. Continuing to designate South Burlingame as R5 will cause public safety and quality of life issues as in-fill continues.

Substandard Roads

Since South Burlingame was annexed into the City, many of the roads have never met the City's standards. The road infrastructure varies greatly across the neighborhood. Some roads have curbs on both sides of the road, some have stretches of curbs but are inconsistent, while others have poorly constructed roads and do not have any curb. Some roads are so poorly constructed that they would be classified as unimproved. None of the roads in South Burlingame, with the exception of Hume Street, meet the City's standard road width. The map on the following page illustrates the road deficiencies in South Burlingame.

Substandard Roads (continued)



Lack of Sidewalks – Poor Pedestrian Connectivity

Many of streets do not include sidewalks and the vast majority has substandard width. Also, most of the existing sidewalks do not meet the Americans with Disability Act requirements primarily due to narrow width, steep cross slope, and lack of ramps at intersections.

There is limited pedestrian connectivity in much of the South Burlingame neighborhood. This requires vehicular traffic and pedestrians share the roadway in much of the way you would in a rural setting.



The following are several photographs that illustrate the character of the existing roadways.



SW Evans, between SW 9th and 10th Avenues. One of the more improved roads in the area, however, due to the narrow road width, emergency vehicles can be limited by parked cars.



SW Carson Street, east of SW Terwilliger. A severely under-improved and narrow roadway.



SW 10th Avenue, between SW Carson and SW Hume Street. A narrow and under-improved roadway. No sidewalks, curbs, or gutters.



SW Hume Street, facing west at SW 11th Avenue. Under-improved - lacking sidewalks, curbs and gutters.



SW 12th, facing north at SW Hume Street. Under-improved, narrow, and lacking curbs, gutters and sidewalks.



SW 14th Avenue, facing north at SW Hume Street.



SW Hume Street, facing west at SW 14th Avenue

Public Safety

Due to a lack of sidewalks, South Burlingame has very few routes for pedestrians where they are not required to share the street with automobiles. Our neighborhood is comprised of many young families. Many have children who walk to one of two grade schools located within, or abutting the neighborhood boundaries. Since the roads are already narrow and poorly drained, as density increases due to the infill possible with the R5 designation, traffic volume will increase on already unsafe roads. This mix of vehicles and pedestrians is currently causing conflicts. In-fill to the R5 level will make the matter worse due to increase traffic and an increase of cars parked on the narrow roads.

As illustrated in the photos above, many of the roads are narrow and lack the adequate width for emergency vehicles to pass if cars are parked on both sides of the road. If in-fill is allowed to the current R5 level, emergency vehicle access could be restricted due to increase street parking.

Steep Terrain and Landslide Hazards

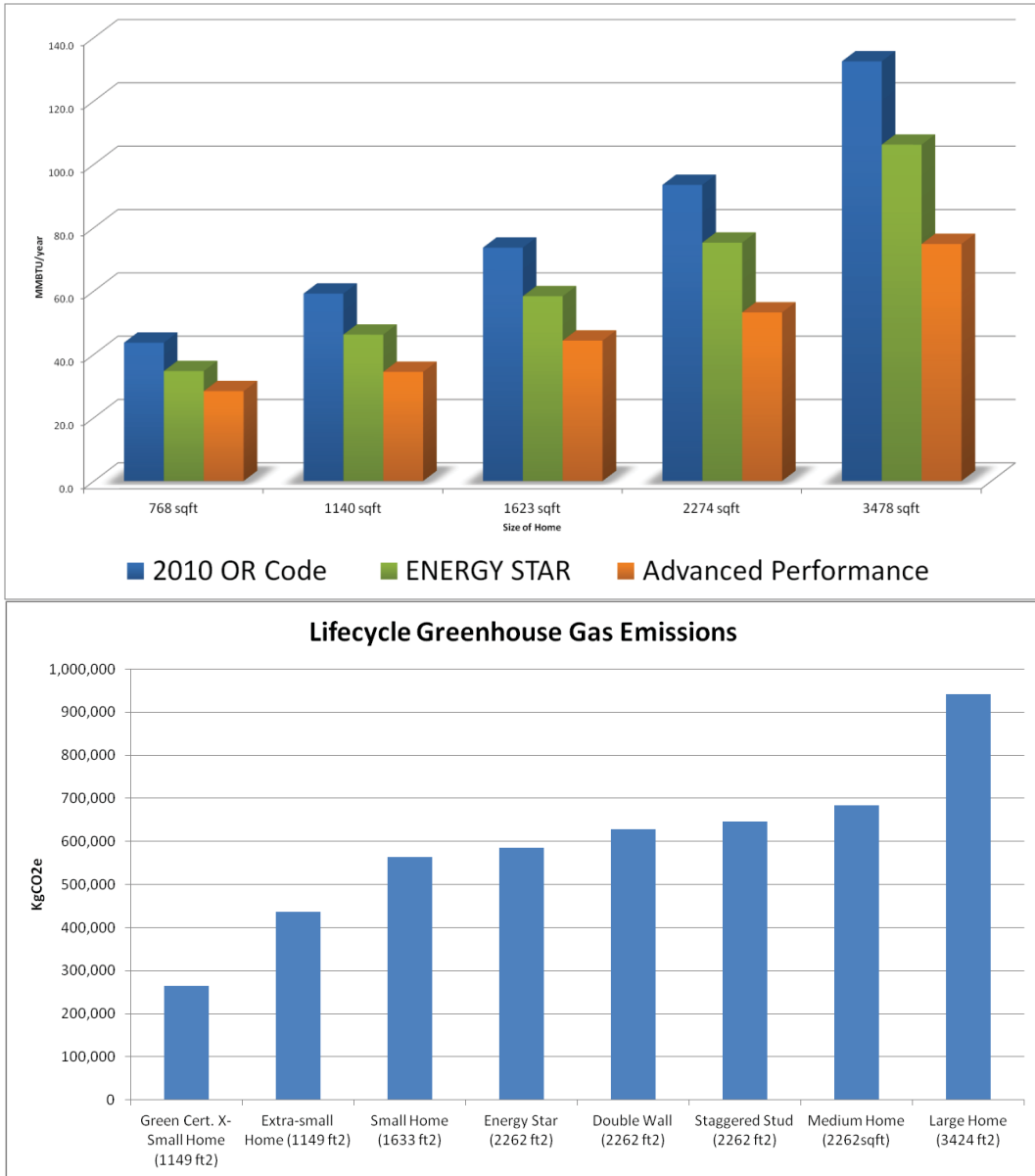
There are many areas in South Burlingame that have steep terrain. Additionally the area is currently labeled a “landslide hazard” on maps found at www.portlandmaps.com. Increased density caused by in-fill could increase the risk to new and existing residents and property. The City code requires new homes with increased impervious surfaces to mitigate storm water on-site. Mitigation is most often handled by the addition of swales or dry wells. While these approaches may account for water quality, and possible peak flow, they in no way replace lost vegetation and trees present prior to the construction of the in-fill homes. This is especially true when the infill homes are built to the maximum allowed by code and the current trend of developers is to build the largest home allowed. Larger setbacks with lower overall height would allow for the addition of larger over story vegetation and more shrubs and garden beds. This additional vegetation would help stabilize the slope and absorb the additional water.

Maintenance of the dry wells and the swales has also proven to be a problem. Many of these systems fail over time, with the loss of the vegetation on steep, landslide prone areas could end in disaster. To protect the public the City should not continue to allow in-fill to the R5 levels in areas designated as land slide prone.

Sustainability

Just recently the City of Portland was awarded the Presidential Award for Climate Action. Portland’s Climate Action Plan has set a goal to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2050. However, the majority of the homes currently under construction in the Burlingame Neighborhood, as allowed by the R5 zoning designation, would work against, and subsequently prevent the achievement of this goal.

DEQ research shows that reducing house size is the most effective way to reduce both material and energy-related impacts of residential homes.



The Executive Summary for the April 2012 Portland Plan states that: “Together, Portlanders cleaned the river, improved air quality and became the first city in the U.S. to adopt a plan to lower carbon emissions. Portland . . . promoted new ways of managing waste and stormwater . . . Over the past 40 years, Portland has shown it could grow a vital local economy, protect the natural environment and support vibrant places to work and live”

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to help implement the Portland Plan, yet as currently drafted, the implications of the zoning and development strategy would directly contradict these goals and achievements.

The Portland Plan claims that “high-quality basic services are fundamental to success. We cannot make Portland prosperous, educated, healthy and equitable without providing reliable and quality basic services like public safety, clean water and sewer services.”

Quality of Life

The existing lot configuration and home design is far more reflective of the R7 zone designation than the R5 designation. Lot splitting and in-fill construction of large, out-of-scale homes creates disharmony, resulting a declining quality of life. Increased density without improvements to existing inadequate infrastructure will also negatively affect the quality of life.

Neighborhood Character, Existing Lot Size, and FAR

Compatibility in design and scale of housing is important to a neighborhood identity and enhances quality of life and value overall.

In spite of its being one of the latest areas of Unincorporated Multnomah County to be brought into the City of Portland, the South Burlingame neighborhood character is cohesive with respect to lot size, home size, and overall floor area ratio (FAR). The neighborhood is comprised of 1940's-era single- and 1.5-story bungalow construction situated on lots that are typically in excess of 6,500 square feet with significant set-backs and low site coverage ratios, conveying a garden feel.

The 2035 Comprehensive Plan goals of *Complete Neighborhoods* and *Planning to Fit Local Conditions* is incongruent with application of an R5 designation in South Burlingame neighborhood boundaries. Continued application of the R5 designation also is in conflict with Title 33's stated objective that the development standards for the Single-Dwelling Zones "preserve the character of neighborhoods by providing six different zones with different densities and development standards." The City has affected changes in the definition of the R5 zoning designation since the last Comprehensive Plan was drafted. This zone designation now allows development on lots as small as 3,000 square feet – and on lots as small as 1,600 square feet on historic lots of record. These lot sizes are not remotely reflective of the existing character and local conditions. In contrast to the current R5 designation, the R7 zone designation would be more appropriate and reflective of the existing conditions and character.

According to Chapter 33.611 of the zoning code, the minimum lot size permitted in the R7 zone is 4,200 square feet and the maximum lot size is 12,000 square feet. In 2014, only 4% of the lots in South Burlingame are smaller than 4,200 square feet and 2% of the lots are in 12,000 square feet and larger. Comparatively, the minimum lot size allowed in the R5 zone is 3,000 square feet and the maximum is 8,500 square feet. In 2014, 2% of the existing tax lots are in excess of 3,000 square feet in size (none of which is improved with a home and more than half are too small to accommodate a home), and 15% are in excess of 8,500 square feet. These statistics clearly indicate that the existing character is more reflective of the R7 density than the R5 density. Correct interpretation of the stated goals of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan should recognize these statistics and appropriately apply the R7 designation to those areas of the neighborhood that are currently designated R5.

The character of the neighborhood is incompatible with the scale and quality of the homes being added. The average home in 2014 is 1,494 square feet in size. The average floor area ratio (FAR) in the neighborhood is 23%.

Comparatively, two homes that were recently developed by Everett Custom Homes on a lot that previously housed one home are 3,550 square feet in size and have FAR of 79% and 82%, respectively. Clearly, homes that meet the minimum standards for setbacks and landscape allowed in the R5 designation are not compatible with the character of the existing neighborhood. This is also in direct conflict with the goals of *Complete Neighborhoods* goal and *Planning to Fit Local Conditions* and in conflict with Title 33's stated objective that the development standards for the Single-Dwelling Zones "preserve the character of neighborhoods by providing six different zones with different densities and development standards."

The existing neighborhood character is in high demand, as evidenced by sales statistics from RMLS.

Average Days on the Market – 36 (metro average is 74 days)

Average Sale Price - \$364,741 (Almost 10% higher than the metro-wide average)

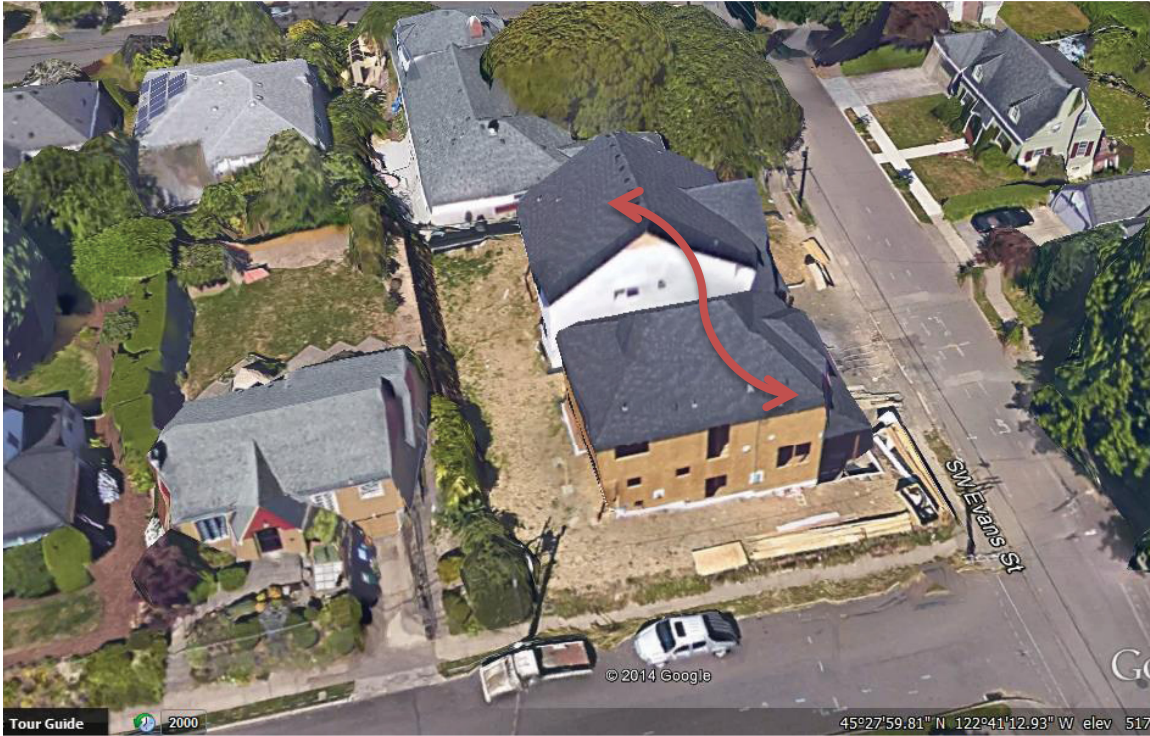
An example of demand for the existing, lower-density housing stock being in high demand is the recent sale of a renovated, 1.5-story 1940's bungalow on SW 9th Avenue. This renovation was done concurrently to the construction of two Everett Custom Homes on SW 8th and Evans. The renovated home sold with a price 10% higher than the asking price the day it hit the market. Comparatively, the newly constructed, higher density Everett Custom Homes houses remained available for sale months after completion – one is in fact, still unsold. This is clear evidence that the existing housing stock is in higher demand than the out-of-character in-fill developments.

The following photos illustrate the cohesiveness of the existing homes in South Burlingame.





The following photos illustrate the total lack of compatibility between the infill constructions as allowed by current zoning code with the existing character of the surrounding homes.



Two, three-story homes where only one home one story with basement home previously stood. The size and scale of the new homes are not compatible with the existing home stock.



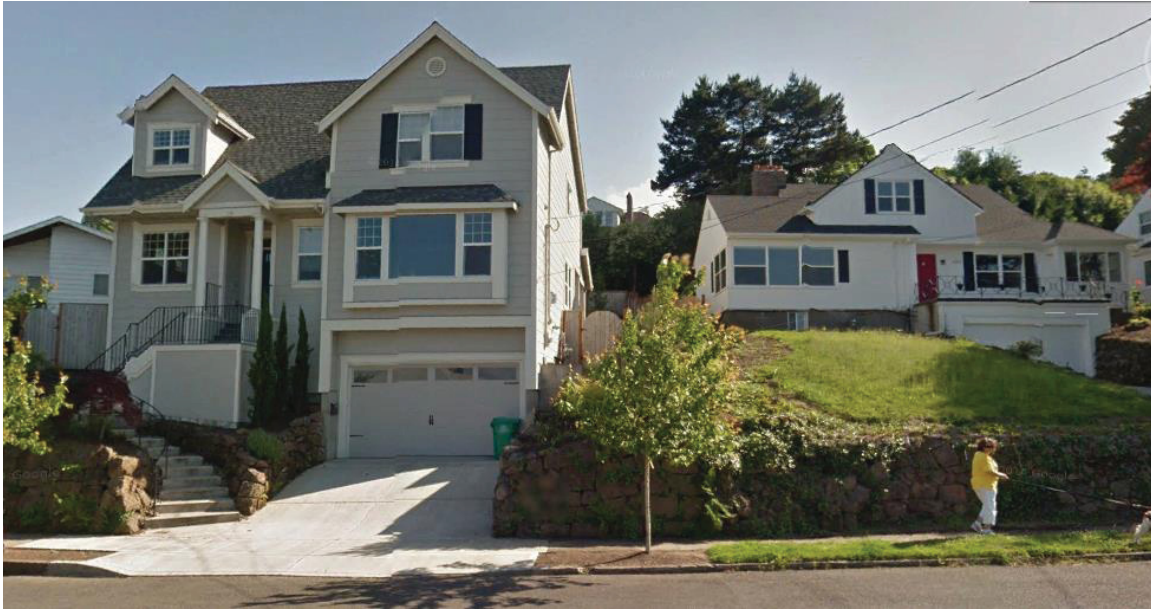
Newest infill houses at the corner of SW Evans Street and SW 10th Avenue is an example of infill currently happening in South Burlingame. There are now two, three-story homes where a one story with basement house previously stood. The size and scale of the new homes are not compatible with the existing neighborhood. The architectural style is substantially outside the character of the existing housing in South Burlingame. Furthermore the yard and gardens sacrificed for maximum square footage of building.



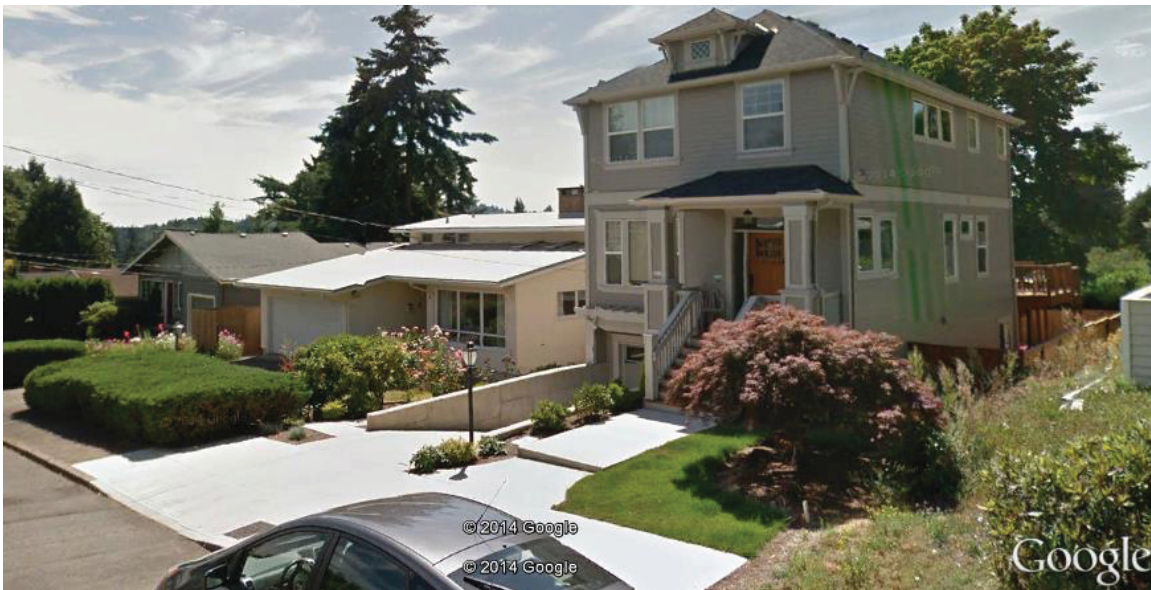
Scale and character of new infill is not compatible with existing home stock. This home dwarfs its neighbors.



One of the few two-story homes in the area – located immediately NW of Everett Homes' newest infill in the neighborhood. Even this, one of the area's largest homes is dwarfed by the infill construction being approved.



Renaissance Homes' infill at the corner of SW Moss and SW Burlingame. The house is a full two stories above a basement and sits nearly on-top of the street. It is not compatible with the existing housing stock. The vintage home on the right is one of South Burlingame's largest homes.



Two-story infill on SW 8th Avenue. Out of scale and character. The construction is two-stories above a sub-grade garage, implying three-story construction to the street. Again, the Craftsman style is substantially outside the character of the existing housing stock, which amplifies the incongruity of the existing and new housing stock.

Lack of Mass Transit

If the City continues to allow in-fill to increase to the current R5 level in South Burlingame, the additional density will rely on the automobile due to a lack of full-time public transportation and a lack of walkable commercial services.

- Bus service on Terwilliger is at peak commute hours only.
- Bus service on SW Taylors Ferry is also relatively infrequent.
- Access to full-time, rapid transit is one mile, or more, away on SW Barbur Blvd.

Conclusion

The neighborhood infrastructure and character is not compatible with the R5 zoning as it is currently written in the Portland Zoning Code. We hereby request those areas in South Burlingame currently designated R5 in the Comprehensive Plan be revised to reflect an R7 zone designation.

The Comprehensive Plan has stated goals of *Complete Neighborhoods* as well as *Planning and Designing to Fit Local Conditions*. We submit that the R7 zoning designation is substantially more reflective of the existing character and local conditions. Furthermore, continued application of the R5 designation directly allows development that is not compatible with the current character of South Burlingame. As such, the R5 zoning being applied is in conflict with the stated objectives.

- A preponderance of the existing tax lots is in excess of 6,500 square feet, supporting application of an R7 zone designation.
- Photos provided in this document illustrate the lack of cohesiveness between the existing housing stock and the in-fill development being approved.
- Market statistics indicate the market demand is for the smaller homes that characterize the neighborhood and not the in-fill construction with high site coverage, low setbacks and a significant lack of Open Space.
- Anecdotal evidence in the neighborhood further illustrates market demand is for housing that is smaller, and lower density than the in-fill being approved.

Continued development that meets the minimum standards allowed in the R5 zone will overwhelm the existing, substandard infrastructure and increase life-safety risk.

- Narrow roads impede emergency vehicle access,
- Narrow roads and a lack of sidewalks combined with increased density will lead to an increase in vehicle-bicycle and vehicle-pedestrian accidents.
- Increased flooding and slide hazard due to lack of on-site open space provided by the R5 development standards.

The area lacks access to full-time mass transit. Lot splitting will increase the density of the neighborhood without providing any additional transit options.

R5 to R7 Downzone Motion

Whereas, The City of Portland is currently in process of writing ratifying the 2035 Comprehensive Plan; the Planning and Sustainability Commission has applied an R5 zone designation to the same areas of South Burlingame that are currently designated R5 in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan; and

Whereas, On December 12th and January 7th, at their regularly scheduled SBNA meetings, a Letter in Support of Down-Zoning all areas of South Burlingame designated R5 in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan to an R7 designation was submitted to the board for review and consideration; and

Whereas, On January 7th, in response to this letter submission, the Board formed the R5 to R7 Special Committee; and

Whereas, The R5 to R7 Committee convened on January 10th to review, discuss and consider the Letter in Support of Down-Zoning; the Committee found the Letter compelling and the Committee unanimously agreed there is sufficient evidence and argument to support down-zoning in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The committee further voted unanimously to edit and resubmit the Letter to the Board along with a motion to support and endorse said Letter; therefore

We move that the Board vote to support down-zoning from all areas of South Burlingame designated R5 in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan to an R7 designation, and that the Board sign the resubmitted Letter in Support of a Comprehensive Plan Down-Zoning, and submit the Letter to the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, the Planning and Sustainability Commission, and Mayor Charlie Hales.