

**To:**

**Marty Stockton, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability**

**Art Pearce, Portland Bureau of Transportation**

City of Portland

1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave #800

Portland, OR 97204

May 12, 2014

Comments for Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Systems Plan

Dear Ms. Stockton and Mr. Pearce,

This is to follow up on the letter of March 10, 2014 to John Cole in which we declared our support for general recommendations for the Comp Plan, as they were articulated by our adjacent neighborhood, the North Tabor Neighborhood Association in their letter of February 24, 2014. This letter expands on our March 10 letter and focuses on issues for the Montavilla Neighborhood that we believe should be considered during in the Comprehensive Plan and TSP Updates.

**Foster Development that Provides Local Employment Opportunities**

We support rezoning to encourage office commercial development or light industrial use in certain parts of Montavilla. Specifically, we support this kind of zoning along 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from about SE Mill to about SE Alder. With the recent expansion of the Portland Community College Southeast Center and its transformation to Campus status, an increase in the educated population seeking employment will emerge in Montavilla. We support local business development that can provide employment and encourage PCC graduates to stay in the local area. Our one concern is that building heights be limited to prevent excessive shading of adjacent properties. This is a particular concern in the Stark Street business district between SE 76<sup>th</sup> and SE 81<sup>st</sup>; and also along 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in the section mentioned above.

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Friendly Businesses and Transit Oriented Development**

As new development occurs, street and sidewalk design should place greater emphasis on pedestrian-friendliness. We recommend zoning changes and other regulatory changes where these changes can result in future businesses being more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. This should include but not be limited to the following:

Zoning changes: Rezone the area around the intersection of the Stark/Washington couplet with SE 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from General Commercial to Storefront Commercial.

Access control: When properties redevelop, limit front-side parking and front-side driveway access for businesses. In other words give greater priority to sidewalks over driveways in future access management decisions.



Street right of way use: Give greater priority to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities over automobile uses in future decisions allocating available right of way widths. Also, wherever needed and feasible, purchase additional road right-of-way for sidewalks, bikeways, and transit pull-outs. These changes are particularly important along 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

## **Aesthetic Improvements on Major Arterials**

We support aesthetic improvements along public streets, particularly 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Glisan Street wherever possible. This may include public art such as murals or sculptures, and also increased trees and other vegetation. We encourage any changes to both of those streets that could reduce the demand for left turn lanes and make space available for median planter strips. Before such permanent improvements become possible, we would like to see temporary planters with small trees placed in strategic locations to add greenery, calm traffic, and provide a buffer from traffic for pedestrians. Removing utility poles by placing utilities underground – particularly on 82<sup>n</sup> Avenue and on Glisan Street - would also be a major aesthetic improvement and contribute to pedestrian access.

## **Foster Density, Preserve Neighborhood Character, yet Limit Displacement**

We support zoning that, in certain limited locations, encourages increased density and low-income housing. In most locations existing single family housing should be preserved to maintain the overall character of individual sub-neighborhoods within Montavilla. While we support economic growth, we also encourage ways of maintaining a stable population that will not be priced out of remaining in Montavilla. We support the existing higher density zoned areas. We also support any state legislation or city efforts that could incentivize affordable housing and limit displacement of existing residents.

## **Transportation Improvements Need to Accompany Increased Density**

We support pedestrian and active transportation improvements in Montavilla, wherever needed to improve safety and accommodate increased future population density. These include sidewalks and pedestrian crossing improvements – particularly on 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and on Glisan, Burnside, and Division Streets. It also includes support for bicycle lanes and cycle tracks wherever possible and support for improvements that would make it easier and more attractive to bike and walk across freeways at all existing overcrossings; particularly at the NE Glisan crossing over I-205 and the NE 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue crossing over I-84.

## **Long Range Transportation and Growth Planning for 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue**

Members of the MNA board and the Land Use and Transportation committee have been active in calling for planning and improvements on 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue throughout its length within the city. We strongly support the need for a comprehensive planning process such as a Transportation Growth Management (TGM) plan. PBOT Planning Manager, Art Pearce, is now considering applying for an ODOT grant for such a plan. We strongly support this effort.



In addition we recommend improvements as follows but do not wish to limit our recommendations to these so as not to exclude others that are not yet recognized:

Pedestrian improvements on 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue; Its entire length through Montavilla: Coordinate with ODOT in studying and improving pedestrian crossings – especially along 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue adjacent the PCC Southeast Campus.

SE Alder at 82<sup>nd</sup> and 84<sup>th</sup> Avenues: In the two blocks frequented by left turn traffic going from 82<sup>nd</sup> southbound to Washington Street eastbound, find a solution to the problem cause by prohibiting left turns onto SE Washington Street. If no other solution is available, at least make full street improvements to Alder Street and SE 84<sup>th</sup> to accommodate the high volume of traffic.

SE Lincoln between 87<sup>th</sup> and 89<sup>th</sup> Avenues: This is a very bad unimproved street with many large pools of water when it rains. It is the most direct access to Harrison Park School for many students. Either construct sidewalks, or a pedestrian path on this section; or perform basic street improvements to improve access for students walking to Harrison Park School.

NE Everett between 76<sup>th</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Avenues: This is another very bad unimproved street that provides school access. It is a direct route to school for many students at Vestal Elementary. Study how to improve it at least enough to make it an attractive and mud-free walking route to Vestal School.

Improve bicycle access across I-84 somewhere between 80<sup>th</sup> and 84<sup>th</sup>:

Currently the official bike route across I-84 from the 80's bike greenway is at 74<sup>th</sup> Ave. This requires back-tracking more than 10 blocks. An unattractive alternative is for bikers to walk through the large concentration of pedestrians on the I-84 overcrossing at 82<sup>nd</sup>. There should be a more direct and inviting bike route across I-84 from the 80's greenway. This will be particularly important when the Sullivan's Gulch bike/ped path is constructed. A new pedestrian-bike overcrossing of I-84 at NE 84<sup>th</sup> could be particularly effective as a bike connection between Montavilla Park and Community Center and the future bicycle mega-center at Gateway Green.

Change signalization and signal timing to protect and honor pedestrians: This applies at all major intersections, but particularly along 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and at all on-ramps and off-ramps at I-205. Currently most of these intersections give a green light to vehicles turning right at the same time as the "walk" signal is actuated for pedestrians crossing their path. This can create an extremely dangerous situation. We recommend changing signal timing and in some cases redesigning signals to prevent this hazard.

Add traffic calming and "sharrows" along SE and NE 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Because 80<sup>th</sup> between NE Glisan and SE Stark is wider than most city streets, it tends to attract more than average traffic volumes

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at more than average speeds. This can be a particular hazard where school children walking to/from Vestal Elementary need to cross. Also, 80<sup>th</sup> (both NE and SE) is already planned as a bike greenway but this has never been implemented. Add "sharrows" and other signage as needed to designate it as a bike route/greenway.

Add traffic calming and vegetation on SE Stark Street: The main Stark Street business district between SE 76<sup>th</sup> and SE 82<sup>nd</sup> is an active pedestrian zone with many people getting in and out of cars in a high traffic zone. Study how to calm traffic there to improve safety. Consider including planter areas in the right of way as part of the traffic calming.

Add formal pedestrian crossings for travel on SE 80<sup>th</sup> at SE Washington, NE Glisan, and at E Burnside. A crossing of SE Washington would provide improved pedestrian access to Stark Street businesses from the 80th Avenue bus stop. Crossings at Glisan and Burnside would improve safety for Vestal Elementary students who currently either cross at lights at SE 82nd or cross without a formal crossing at 80<sup>th</sup>. Both are undesirable. Crossings at arterials along 80<sup>th</sup> are important because it is destined to become a bike greenway.

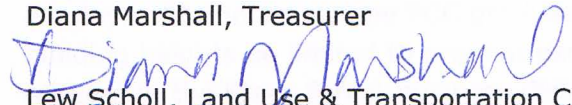
Sincerely,

Montavilla Neighborhood Association Board

Fritz Hirsch, Board Chair

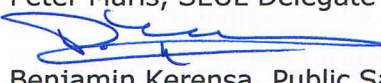
  
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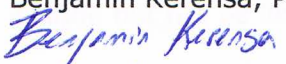
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