

**Dear Honorable Chair Smith; Commissioners Savas, Schrader, Fischer, and Shull;
Administrator Schmidt and Planners Johnson, Hughes and Buehrig:**

Re: Park Avenue Community Project

Please **do not approve Planning Staff's recommendation**, allow instead the Park Avenue Plan to **terminate, replacing** with a more discretionary review program for project proposals as they are brought before the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

The Plan before you is not in the best interest of existing residences/businesses but rather more befitting of Planner idealism and those minority of folks who are planning enthusiasts.

0 On page 2 of the packet the plan states: **"Prohibit new auto-oriented uses** and self-storage facilities. Reduce on-site parking requirements."

This is a **planner ideal universally adopted in the early 1990s**, but **belies the fact that automobiles remain the favored choice of mobility** by every community almost everywhere in the developed world. The mobility offered by automobiles opens a more prosperous set of choices for job seekers with more opportunities for jobs in a larger accessible geographic area, for shoppers looking for competitive prices on goods and services, and allows for recreational opportunities not accessible by transit or practical by bicycle (I also attach in my e-mail the history of the largely failed attempt to 'get people out of their cars,' per Vlad Yurlov, Cascade Policy Institute, March 2021).

My last review of **American Community Census data (2018)** shows **over 90% of all trips in Clackamas County is by automobile (when carpooling is included)**. Even in more transit-oriented Multnomah County, some 75% of all trips is by automobile. Moreover, **TriMet's ridership data shows a steady decline in public transit rides from 2012 to 2019**, even prior to Covid-19 which is especially reducing for the use of public transit. The **Orange line peaked out in ridership in the year 2018** only one year after its first full year of operation **and** is on track to be **over 30% below** the ridership level forecasted for it when it is planned.

It is high time for Clackamas County to show its independence by removing such language as contained in this packet with its unnecessary restriction on people's choice of mobility.

This does not mean I oppose improvements for bicycle and pedestrians along McLoughlin Boulevard. In fact, if you recall, at one point there is consideration by Clackamas and Metro regional governments for building a bicycle and pedestrian-only bridge over the Willamette River connecting Oak Grove-Milwaukie to Lake Oswego. This proposal fades because of certain objections. But it does point out there are better uses for these Metro bridge monies and building overpasses for bicycles and pedestrians over McLoughlin looks to be one of these better uses.

- As for self-storage facilities, here again there is a robust market and need for people to store their belongings. And yet Planners and their minority of enthusiasts 'look down' on these people and their need for storage facilities. Mcloughlin Boulevard provides ready access to people and their belongings.

A better way of dealing with storage facilities is to allow their proposed siting but deal with on a case-by-case basis, weighing the community input in each case. Maybe the Storage facility developer is willing to address these concerns and so compensate.

- **The planners want to encourage higher density buildings.** But what we generally find is these **new buildings require higher rents and leases than those of existing buildings.** In mixed use buildings, the shops in these new developments must charge higher prices to repay the cost of new construction. These shops also tend to be boutique size in nature, and here again smaller volumes of goods and services are generally more expensive than the bargain like prices offered by the big box stores like Walmart and Fred Meyer.

Small entrepreneurs/small businesses often go with an existing building with some interior modification, rather than some cookie-cutter planned space for them.

What we have seen happen in other areas where high density buildings are developed is a kind of gentrification. The cost of living increases significantly because of lack of big box stores and because the area becomes less mobile with the increased density and lack of ample parking. Existing residences move out in some degree and are replaced by those of higher income and means; and sadly, some of those who can no longer afford these higher end areas end up homeless.

Again, I believe the **best approach is to deal with proposals on a case-by-case basis** rather the proposed broad-brush approach, which **frankly also encompasses too big of an area.** A case-by-case approach lends itself to a more organic, incremental pace of development which better balances the quality of life of existing residents of the area with the creative proposals that come along and best advance the quality of life.

- **Lastly, there is already a great deal of employment in the Mcloughlin corridor.** Here again it does not seem to fit the planner ideals of an imagined future of employment. Maybe this planning mecca of future employment does not actually materialize. It would not be the first time, and it is not difficult to imagine the substantive risks of giving up what we already have in favor of some imagined plan benefits.

Sincerely,

Elvis Clark Milwaukie, Oregon 97222