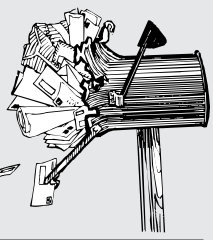


# Letters to the Editor



The Southwest Portland Post  
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## The best place for increased density is along commercial arterials

Regarding "Developer defends proposed four-story apartment building in Multnomah Village," by KC Cowan, *The Post*, July 2015.

As a new resident to Multnomah Village, I offer some points in support of

the proposed multifamily development on [Southwest] 33rd and Capitol Highway.

In order to maintain the character of the neighborhood and accommodate more people, some change must happen.

The best place for this change is along our commercial arterials, so that we can concentrate density in appropriate places and preserve lower density in the residential areas.

The development will also provide our neighborhood with much needed diversity in housing choices. Having more housing type choices brings a more diverse population to the neighborhood.

Good design is also crucial. Design strategies to break down the mass will make it seem less large than it is. Detailing and materials in character with the Village will fit the building within its context.

Parking requirements are derived

from maximum peak use in low-density suburban areas. This results in suburban sprawl where everyone has to drive and park because everything is too spread out to support alternative modes of transportation.

It's a vicious cycle that creates a poor urban environment. Some of the 27 residents [*Editor's Note: Developer Tim O'Brien has proposed building 71 units and 43 parking spaces.*] may be carless. Others may park on the street.

While this may be annoying to some, we must remember that the street is public. Spillover can be mitigated by strategies such as parking permits, charging for street parking, and limiting parking time.

The problems the East side is facing are due to there being no parking provided on site for new developments. This development is providing more parking than required.

As for the argument that street parking will create a dangerous walking environment, I argue that this is already an issue in the neighborhood. Any new development will trigger street improvements, which include sidewalks, around the property. We aren't going to get our much-needed sidewalks without new development.

Sermin Yesilada

**Post editor Don Snedecor responds:** Thank you for your letter, Sermin. For highly urban parts of the city like Downtown, South Waterfront and the Pearl District, I would tend to agree.

For rural and suburban areas, like Multnomah Village, the community has been roughly the same density for more than 100 years, and to suddenly bring in 20-25-story towers like we have in South Waterfront could mean staggering culture shock.

While four-story buildings may seem like nothing to someone used to living in tall

buildings, a similar kind of culture shock can take place for those used to single family homes, a historic main street and skinny, shared streets.

You are partially right about the sidewalk issue. Normally, new sidewalks are required along with new development. Because of geology, topography, and stormwater issues, sidewalks in Southwest are very expensive.

Because of the high cost, for the past 20 years here in Southwest Portland, the City of Portland Bureau of Transportation has been issuing "waivers of remonstrance."

This simply means that in order for a developer or land owner to avoid having to pay to install sidewalks, they only have to agree to waive their rights to object to future street improvements.

Transportation Commissioner Steve Novick, who also lives in Multnomah, has gone on the record as saying he didn't like "sidewalk islands" (sidewalks built adjacent to new developments, then discontinued).

Novick said he is in favor of a "land bank" option where money from developments on quiet streets would be pooled to add sidewalks to nearby thoroughfares.

To my knowledge, there is no current legislation along these lines being considered by the City Council. In the meantime, new single-family houses and apartments spring up in Multnomah Village and throughout the city without sidewalks.

**Sermin Yesilada replies:** Being from the East side, I was not aware of the waiver for sidewalks in Southwest. Thank you for informing me of this. What a terrible disappointment.

I miss the walkability of the Southeast, which has sidewalks on most streets, even along narrow historic streets. It  
(Continued on Page 3)





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