

# Jefferson Westside Neighbors

A City-Chartered Neighborhood Association

[www.jwneugene.org](http://www.jwneugene.org)

December 7, 2006

## **Mayor Piercy and Eugene City Council**

City Hall, 777 Pearl Street, Room 105

Eugene, OR 97401

### **RE: Chambers Special Area Zone**

Dear Mayor and City Councilors:

We'd like to briefly address a couple points related to the Chambers Special Area Zone that Planning Commissioner Jon Belcher made during his testimony at the November 20 public hearing on Ms. Judith Bush's Measure 37 claim. (We've previously submitted testimony on the Measure 37 claim, and our comments here are not directed at that issue.)

Commissioner Belcher claimed Council's approval of the Chambers Special Area Zone was "a *de facto* downzoning of this area from R-2 to R-1", and he pressed Council: "If the goal is to reduce the underlying zoning, be honest and just do it."

The S-C/R-2 subarea of the Chambers Special Area Zone (CSAZ) is not by any stretch a *de facto* R-1 zone; and there was no dishonesty by area residents proposing, or by Council adopting, the S-C/R-2 standards.

The S-C/R-2 standards allow three dwellings on many lots, in contrast to the R-1 maximum of one dwelling in most cases, duplexes on corner lots only, and limited provisions for secondary dwellings. The S-C/R-2 standards also allow creation of alley-access-only lots, which neither R-1, nor any other residential zone, allows.

As we approach a full year of experience with the CSAZ, what's noteworthy is that the flood of Measure 37 claims, which some opponents of the S-C/R-2 standards predicted, has *not* occurred. The *only* Measure 37 claim is for a lot that has a highly unusual shape and previous development pattern, as well as the unique provision for gaining access via an easement across an adjoining lot. There is no other lot and development remotely similar in the entire Westside neighborhood. For this situation, it would have been virtually impossible to write generally applicable, clear-and-objective infill standards that would still have allowed the proposed house, especially considering applicable multi-family standards.

We note also that the property owner's son and representative has repeatedly expressed *support* for the S-C/R-2 standards.

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December 7, 2006

Page Two

The true lessons to be learned from this experience are: 1) that an effective “alternate path” would be useful to handle exceptional cases, such as this one; and 2) a high degree of responsible neighborhood involvement is key to successfully handling such situations.

Nothing in this case suggests the need to consume staff and Planning Commission time reexamining CSAZ standards at this point. Severely limited planning resources are better spent furthering Council’s goals for sensible compact growth through the Opportunity Siting and Infill Compatibility Standards programs.

Please contact either of us if we can provide further information.

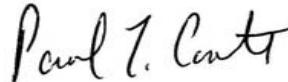
Respectfully,



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