

## Aaron Panko

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**From:** Northeast Neighbors <salemn timers@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 14, 2024 4:40 PM  
**To:** Aaron Panko  
**Cc:** Northeast Neighbors  
**Subject:** NEN letter re Green Light Application #23 123424 00  
**Attachments:** NEN letter re Green Light application 23 123424 00 PLN.pdf; NEN Letter of Support, Exhibit 10.pdf; Flooding south of affordable housing.jpeg; Proposed design for GLD.pdf

Good afternoon, Aaron,

Attached please find the letter from Northeast Neighbors Neighborhood Association (NEN) along with several attachments in response to the Green Light Development application..

Please confirm receipt.

Thank you,

Lynn Takata  
NEN Chair  
Northeast Neighbors (NEN) Neighborhood Association  
Salem, Oregon  
[www.SalemNEN.org](http://www.SalemNEN.org)  
[salemn timers@gmail.com](mailto:salemn timers@gmail.com)



June 14, 2024

To: Aaron Panko, Planner III  
City of Salem | Community Planning and Development Department  
555 Liberty St. SE, Room 305, Salem, Oregon 97301

From: Northeast Neighbors Neighborhood Association (NEN)  
Re: Green Light Development Application # 23 123424 00 PLN

NEN is sharing our input on Green Light Development's application (GLD) for a proposed affordable housing project at 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NE and Center St. Our neighborhood association began communicating with Green Light in February of 2023 and voted to support the affordable housing development in March of 2023 as we understand there is a critical need for housing. The letter of support also requested that concerns in the neighborhood be considered. (See attached letter from NEN).

We looked forward to collaborating to share input on neighborhood concerns, some of which we hoped could be incorporated into the development plans. On June 11, 2024, our board voted unanimously to withdraw our support for the development's current design which does not adequately implement the city's Climate Action Plan goals, address our concerns, and will negatively impact livability in our neighborhood. We hope that adjustments in the plan will make it possible for us to again support this affordable housing development.

#### 1). Critical Root Zone Variance

**NEN strongly objects to the request for a critical root zone variance during construction in Phase I of the development.** Our neighborhood association requested in March of 2023 that the giant sequoia, a significant 80" DBH tree (#3602) along with other trees, be protected and saved during construction in compliance with Section 808 (Preservation of Trees and Vegetation) of the Salem Development Code.

This giant sequoia is a beautiful landmark in our neighborhood. The importance of the species is recognized by the City of Portland that shares locations of the tree on their website: [Sequoiadendron giganteum | Portland.gov](#)

Although the Giant Sequoia tree is in Phase 2, the critical root zone (CRZ) extends into Phase 1 and it appears a building foundation, parking lot, and sidewalk are proposed within the CRZ of the giant sequoia. When construction equipment drives over a tree's CRZ, the structural integrity of a tree can be negatively impacted.

The GLD arborist states: "Prior to construction, a 12-inch layer of wood chips shall be placed over geotextile fabric to minimize compaction from heavy equipment within the critical root zones of the trees. This is a concern.

Tim Lawler of Green Light stated, "Our plan is to try and save as many trees as possible, especially the large ones. To Lynn's point about the roots, we've had experiences and seen many developments where we save trees but once the first big storm of the year comes, they can blow over."

The following sources stress the importance of protecting the CRZ during construction to protect the stability of the tree.

From Purdue University: "Tree roots... this underground system is one of the most vital and easily damaged parts of the plant, making roots the leading cause of decline and death of injured trees. Any encroachment, disturbance or compaction of the soil around the tree can lead to harm, destroying these fine absorbing roots."

“Cutting or disturbing a large percentage of a tree’s roots increases the likelihood of the tree’s failure or death.” (Or. Dept. of Forestry, Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources, Or. State Univ. Extension Service, and Washington State Univ. Extension in cooperation with USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture).

**NEN requests that the sidewalk be relocated (an option the arborist mentioned), parking spaces be removed under the CRZ, and that the building design or location be adjusted to protect significant trees on site that the developer hopes to save.**

## 2). Traffic Study

GLD stated in NEN’s October 2023 meeting that a traffic study would be done as recorded in the NEN minutes on the City of Salem website. We understand from our meeting with the city on June 10, that the development does not meet the criteria for a traffic study (TIA) as the volume of traffic would be comparable to traffic at the old Salem Hospital that was on site several decades ago.

We question whether the analysis is comparable as the population of Salem has changed, the Jory Apartments have added hundreds of residents and significant traffic trips, and the D St. Park will be developed across the street. The criteria for the City of Salem to consider a TIA on 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NE (the entrance to the development), is that a new site would need to generate over 200 trips per day. The current plan includes 208 parking spaces in Phase 1. If 150 vehicles left the apartment once a day, the criteria would be met as that would generate 300 trips per day. Our concern remains the safety for children and families on D as it is on 3 routes to local schools, there is speeding on D, and crossing the street is dangerous, especially for young children who we see frequently run across the street at 21<sup>st</sup> St. NE and at other locations.

## 3). Climate Action Plan Goals

We hope the City of Salem will act to make what we understand might be a difficult decision to increase the number Climate Action Plan goals implemented in affordable housing developments. Planners understand what good development entails and we recognize there is political pressure to maintain the status quo. Reducing parking can save money in affordable housing developments as the cost per unit will be decreased if there is more room for housing. We strongly encourage the city to plan for livability in the future by acting to encourage GLD to decrease parking at this city-owned site which will reduce carbon emissions and help meet Salem’s Climate Action Plan goals in the future.

Restricting parking will decrease driving as shown in this study: [Verified: More Parking Puts More Cars on the Road - Sightline Institute](#). The current GLD plan has 1.73 parking spaces per unit, 2 spaces less than the maximum allowed despite our request to reduce parking to 1.5 spaces per unit. The site is adjacent to good bus service on Center Street, making it possible for some residents not to have a car, which can be one of the largest expenses for a low-income household.

## 4). Flooding

Neighboring businesses on the south side of the development on Center and Gear Streets have expressed concerns about the existing flooding from the old Salem Hospital property as their businesses are at the lowest elevation and receive runoff from this site. The development is not in a flood plain or wetland, but we strongly encourage the city to support measures to reduce additional flooding as we understand about 50% of the proposed site will be developed with impervious hardscape.

In closing, we want to acknowledge our appreciation that the city included in the buyer covenants in the purchase agreement with GLD that “the buyer and seller would work together to come to a mutually agreeable solution that provides a safe crossing on D St to nearby schools.”

**We encourage planners to work for the city we want, not the city we have if we want to create a livable city for everyone.**

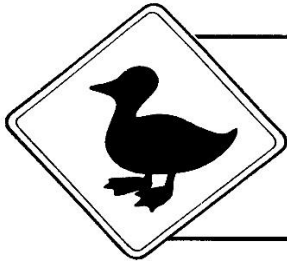
We appreciate your time and consideration.

Attachments:

NEN letter of support

photo of flooding

proposal by designer for a pedestrian oriented development



# NEN

**NORTHEAST NEIGHBORS**  
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March 28, 2023

To: Green Light Development  
From: Northeast Neighbors (NEN)  
Re: Salem Apartments Affordable Housing Proposal

Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with Green Light Development on the proposed Salem Apartments development on 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NE in our neighborhood. There is a great need for affordable housing in Salem which has reached a critical level.

The proposed development will include 156 units of affordable housing at 60% of the median household income including 1/3 of the units being rented at 30% of the median household income, making units available to those in the greatest need of housing.

Northeast Neighbors (NEN) appreciates the dialogue with Green Light. NEN looks forward to learning more about the affordable housing development as it progresses, while providing stakeholder input during the process.

Successful projects involve collaboration with the community where they are built. As such, our board and neighborhood have expressed some concerns relative to the current plan. We want to ensure these priorities are addressed as the project moves forward in the process.

- Preservation of exiting green space
  - Ensure the largest evergreen tree remains.
  - Preserve as many other trees as feasible.
- Reduce the ratio of parking units to 1.5 or less.
- Work with the city to prioritize pedestrian safety crossing Center and D Streets.
- Work with the city traffic engineers to minimize traffic impacts on Center and D Streets.
- Support Salem's Climate Action Plan by implementing strategies that decrease greenhouse gases in both the site and the buildings.
- Implement features that reduce water runoff.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to continue to provide feedback from the NEN board and neighborhood in planning a successful project. We are looking forward to a positive working relationship in the future.

[illegible]

## Easy Access Wrap Around Road For:

- ## Center Circular "Englewood" Park Setting

Parallel parking all along the circular road allows for ample parking

Visitors Cars:  
= Orange

Residents Cars:  
= Blue

## Maximize Community Belonging

Erik Kokkonen

Bike / walking path  
off main road.

