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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**COMMENTS FOR THE 138-UNIT APARTMENT COMPLEX PROPOSED FOR 1700
BAXTER RD SE, SALEM, OREGON 97306**

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Comments submitted by Daniel Adams, 1689 Baxter Rd SE, Salem, Oregon 97306

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March 31, 2025

After speaking with this project's case manager with the City of Salem Planning Department, Jamie Donaldson, I realize that there is no stopping this proposal from getting the necessary permits to proceed. The project has met the city and the state's requirements, the parcel of land is zoned for multi-family construction, so state law requires that the city grant the permits, regardless of any opposition from neighboring properties. The city will consider certain accommodations that will address issues that are brought up in comments.

So, with that in mind, here are some accommodations I would request to be considered. There are six homes that are adjacent to this proposed project on the west side of the property. All six homes will have three-story buildings just 30 feet from the property line (1688 and 1689 Abbie Ave SE, 1688 and 1689 Snowball Ave SE, 5205 Mac St SE, and 1689 Baxter Rd SE). Building D is the structure that will be adjacent to my back and side yard. What has been for 20 years a private yard will have a three-story, 35+ foot tall building with nine apartments looming over it just 30 feet away once the project is completed. The other homes listed above will have similar buildings near them as well. The project specifications call for an 8-foot-tall fence/wall along the property line. That will help but will not be tall enough to block the view into all our properties. The landscape plan for the project calls for American Beech trees to be planted at several places along the west property line but spaced far apart. This will not do much to block the views of the buildings. Also, a larger number of Leyland Cypress shrubs (6 – 8 feet tall) are planned to be planted along the western property line. Instead of planting them in a straight line, I would request that the cypresses be placed inward away from the property line a little way, and in clusters of 3 – 5 offset from one another to form "small groves" with blocking sight lines into neighboring yards the objective. Perhaps inviting the effected neighbors to view their properties from the buildings before the cypresses are planted and consider their suggestions for placement would be a possibility. The other landscaping is proposed to be smaller shrubs that won't block the view from the project's side and are meant for viewing from the apartments.

Another issue I want to bring up effects my property specifically. The original owner of my home planted 5 large trees along the inside of my property in raised beds 20 years ago. They are very mature now, and I fear they will be severely damaged when digging is done on the other side of the fence. Their roots obviously extend beyond my property line. Loss or damage to those trees will further open up the sightline from the apartments and eliminate the shade my yard gets from them now.

The other major issue is traffic. I learned from talking with Jamie Donaldson at the planning department that they only deal with the plans for the project, not any traffic concerns. These issues are dealt with by the Public Works Department and the Salem Police Department. I will be addressing these issues with those departments, but I want to include them in my comments also. Baxter Rd SE is designated a feeder street, designed to accommodate traffic from adjoining neighborhood streets. So naturally it will be busier. The big problem is that the posted speed limits of 20 and 25mph are routinely exceeded. The 20mph limit is in two sections that have limited sight views due to the steep hills on the road. One starts coming up the hill from Commercial east bound and then increases to 25mph in front of my home. Another 20mph section is further east on Baxter coming up the hill from Reed Lane. I have a front-row seat to the vehicles speeding past my home in the 25mph zone. This includes full-size Charriot busses, that rattle things on shelves in my house as they barrel down Baxter towards Commercial St. Twenty mph is the same as the speed limit in school zones. There is no school zone on Baxter (even though there is a school at the Lutheran Church at 1770 Baxter), but the speed limit is 20mph in sections. Several school buses stop in front of my next-door neighbor's home and across the street in front of another apartment complex to pick up kids five days a week. Some of the kids cross Baxter within the limited sight view area to catch the bus (before the bus arrives and stops traffic with its red lights). Many neighbors cross Baxter while out for a walk. Does it take someone getting injured or killed for something to be done about the speeding in a residential neighborhood? I fear that I will be rear ended just backing out of my driveway by a speeding vehicle, or worse, a Charriot bus. This brings me back to the proposed apartment project. The traffic study submitted by Neighborly Development projects that once the project is completed and occupied, it will generate an addition 900+ trips per day on Baxter. That sounds like an enormous increase to me. If those drivers are also exceeding the posted speed limits, some pedestrians will likely be victims of a speeding vehicle.

I hope Neighborly Development will truly live up to the spirit of their name and consider these comments.

Jamie Donaldson

From: Dan Adams <pvdan53@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 4:06 PM
To: Jamie Donaldson
Subject: Proposed 138 unit apartment project at 1700 Baxter Rd SE

I have been reviewing the proposed project at 1700 Baxter Rd SE, and as I understand there is no comment period for this project. I own the property at 1689 Baxter Rd SE, and I am very concerned about the traffic this project will create along an already busy street. I had seen a few months ago when reviewing this project on the City's website a report in the file regarding the traffic projected to be a result of the project. I no longer can find that file in the records. As I recall, it projected an increase on a daily basis of over 900 trips over the current traffic count. This increase will cause much more traffic noise and hazards as the majority of the traffic exceeds the posted speed limits of 20 and 25 mph. I already have difficulty just backing out of my driveway due to the excessive speeds of the vehicles passing my home. The speeding vehicles even including Cherriot buses. I'm afraid someone will rear end my vehicle speeding over the hill near my house as I back out. I think the city needs to require the developer to design and pay for some real solutions to slow traffic down on Baxter, since they will be dramatically increasing the traffic. There are several school buses that stop to pick up and drop off students of different age groups on Baxter. Speeding vehicles could cause someone to be struck and injured or killed.

Daniel Adams
1689 Baxter Rd Se
Sent from my iPad