

July 22, 2019

Olivia Glantz, Case Manager
Case Number SUB-ADJ19-02
City of Salem, Oregon
Wren Heights Subdivision Proposed Development

We reside at 895 Salem Heights Ave S. Our concern with this project is the traffic load with attendant safety issues created by the planned higher density level, and the nature of the attempts to mitigate it in the future.

We have resided at our home for 33 years, and from our vantage point developed a sense of the character of the traffic utilizing our street. This is also supported by following drivers from various parts of town over the years in reaching our home.

There has been a marked increase in traffic count since 1986, yet basically the same residential capacity exists as then. This would imply the increased source is from something other than collector usage.

With the advent of the dog park at Minto, much can be attributed to dog walkers, who are evident both from their canine occupants and following them to and from the park.

Most of the traffic however originates from those avoiding congestion and lights on Liberty and Commercial by utilizing the Salem Heights-to-Owens Street connection in both directions. Many of these drivers exhibit the same impatience that led them to this alternative by running stop signs and speeding on Salem Heights. Some will pass cars after running the stop sign at Crestview and Salem Heights. This traffic has no vested interest in the neighborhood or its occupants.

Both of the above sources would not be characterized as “collector” traffic. Collector usage seems to imply local residents collecting on routes leading to and from non-residential areas.

Salem Heights Avenue traverses rolling terrain and contains three vertical curves that significantly impede sightline distances for both pedestrians and vehicles entering the street. Adding additional traffic to Salem Heights will increase risk from this public safety hazard given the current user type. The existing physical nature of the vertical sightlines cannot be overcome. Widening the street will not improve sightlines for pedestrians, bicycles, or cars crossing the street. Widening the street without additional traffic controls however will potentially result in increased speed, which will exacerbate the sightline response time. Some form of “non-collector” traffic control is warranted if additional loading is planned from development – whether it be speed “humps”, intersection barrier circles (as needed on Saginaw for similar use), intermediate stop signs, or traffic lights.

Alan & Becky Gahlsdorf