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UGB Remand Project - Public Comments

August 25, 2016

Victor Chudowsky, Chair
City of Bend UGB Steering Committee

Mr. Chairman:

At the April meeting of the USC, the Bend Neighborhood Coalition requested that additional policy language be inserted in Chapter 5 of the Comprehensive Plan on Housing, in paragraphs related to neighborhood livability and residential compatibility, to add the concept of transitional zoning. We applaud the insertion within the Vision of Neighborhood Livability of the statement calling for, "Comfortable integration and transitions between housing types and commercial uses."

However, no change has been made to Sections 5-23 on Residential Compatibility. This section states that where non-residential uses abut residential areas, "nonresidential uses will be subjected to special development standards such as setbacks, landscaping, sign regulations, and building design that harmonize and provide transitions consistent with the primary purposes of the adjacent zones."

The Neighborhood Coalition believes it is important to include in this section reference to the possibility of a step-down in permitted uses within a defined buffer zone in order to minimize what are called "offsite impacts and nuisances". This type of policy is standard in many other cities that have learned how to achieve some degree of harmony between adjacent zones with different levels of intensity of use.

The physical design of a building is only one aspect of its impact on surrounding areas. The use of a property has a much greater impact, but currently, there are no policy statements in the comprehensive plan that provide justification for implementing policy tools such as the "Neighborhood Compatibility Zones" called for in the Central Westside Plan.

We encourage you to consider adding a reference to the possibility of limiting permitted uses in addition to requiring special design standards in transition areas.

We understand that further discussion of these topics has been tabled within the UGB process but may be taken up by the City Council in the coming year as part of a broader look at livability. We look forward to being a part of those future discussions.

Sincerely,

Bill Bernardy
Chair, BNC Steering Committee

About the Bend Neighborhood Coalition:

Our members have been active in Bend's civic life, participating in advisory groups, task forces, neighborhood associations, HOAs, and ad hoc committees. We have joined together because we believe that healthy, cohesive, vibrant residential neighborhoods form the backbone of a strong city, and that public policies should preserve and improve upon this great asset.

We also believe that livable residential neighborhoods encourage small businesses to locate here, creating a more diverse and sustainable economy. People are happier, more productive, and more civil when they are able to enjoy peace and quiet at home, safe streets, and the residential character of their neighborhoods. So, we embrace both smart growth and policies that protect and improve the quality of life for residents.