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To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [Julie Hoy](#); nanasue03@yahoo.com; [Lisa Anderson-Ogilvie](#); [Chris Hoy](#)
Subject: Planning Commission Report
Date: Monday, February 13, 2023 6:55:45 AM
Attachments: [Plaanning Commission Report 2023.pdf](#)

Please find comments from ELNA regarding Item 5.a.
The Planning Commission's 2022 Annual Report
on today's City Council Agenda

Susann Kaltwasser

ELNA co-president



EAST LANCASTER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (ELNA)

February 13, 2023

To: Salem City Council and Mayor Hoy
From: East Lancaster Neighborhood Association
RE: Planning Commission Annual Report

In 2022 the City Council adopted Our Salem. Many good things are hoped to be the outcome of this major update of Salem's Comprehensive Plan. However, it has come to the attention of ELNA through a recent land use case that some unintended consequences may have happened in the zone changes included in the Plan.

Specifically while trying to respond to neighborhood traffic concerns with an application by a fast food business (Panda Express) on Lancaster Drive, we found roadblocks to addressing safe egress from the property.

Lancaster Drive has had problems with safety for many years and efforts by the City to improve capacity and safety as the city has grown have cost taxpayers millions of dollars over the past 25 years. ELNA supports these efforts. However, whenever possible we believe that utilizing existing infrastructure to its best capacity should be sought.

The primary egress from the new business will be a driveway onto Lancaster and an exit onto Weathers Street where a vehicle can go up to the intersection of Weathers Street and Lancaster Drive. There is no traffic light at this intersection. We were told that we cannot expect one either because of the distance between existing lights is too close. Vehicles can go either north or south at both outlets on Lancaster. However, to go south a vehicle must cross two lanes of fast moving north bound lanes of traffic to enter the flow of vehicles going south. This creates numerous points of conflict. In fact historically there have been five accidents at this location.

ELNA found no way to mitigate this danger other than for vehicles to go to the nearest traffic lights, one at Market Street and the other at D Street. However, in exploring these options, we found that access to the light at D Street was blocked with a fence erected by Willamette Career Academy (former Toys R Us).

Since 1985 neighbors had access through a driveway easement created by the City when permitting Toys R Us that went from Weathers Street to Academy Square and then to the traffic light at D Street. Vehicles could use this route to safely exit the businesses in the area to go south. The City recognized the need for safe travel through an easement. However, it was learned that when Our Salem was adopted the entire area was rezoned from CR to MU. This zone change did not transfer the existing conditions set out in previous land use findings. There is now no way to require the removal of the fence or restore the driveway allowing vehicles to safely exit at the D Street light.

I don't know if there is a remedy for this situation or others yet to be discovered that resulted from Our Salem zone changes. Perhaps this is something on which staff could make recommendations for the future. Most worrisome is what other conditions on properties all along major transit corridors had existing prior conditions removed by the Our Salem zone changes? We doubt that this was an intended consequence of the zone changes, because no notice was given to neighborhood associations in all the several meetings, hearings or presentations. So, we assume this is a new discovery of unintended consequences.

ELNA has directed me to share our great disappointment that we must accept an increase of danger to people in our area. Our goal is to reduce dangerous situations, not create them.

Thank you for your attention to our neighborhood concerns.

Susann Kaltwasser
ELNA co-president