

From: [Jennifer Levy-Peck](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Written Testimony for Tonight's Public Hearing of the City Council
Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 4:32:21 PM
Attachments: [Robins Lane Development Residents" issues.docx](#)

Please see my attached letter as written testimony for tonight's public hearing on the proposed development at 2527 Robins Lane SE.

Thank you.

Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck

Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck
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**Re: PHASED SUBDIVISION / URBAN GROWTH AREA PRELIMINARY DECLARATION
/ CLASS 2 ADJUSTMENT CASE NO.: SUB-UGA-ADJ22-01**

LOCATION: 2527 Robins Lane SE, Salem OR 97306

Dear Mayor and City Councilors for Salem:

I'm a resident of Robins Lane in South Salem and wish to provide my testimony regarding the proposed development at 2527 Robins Lane SE. I have serious reservations about the proposed development, especially relating to safety and livability of the residents, both current and future.

I've explained the reasoning for my issues in detail and I hope the City Council takes the appropriate necessary steps to ensure equity, fairness and good sense prevail for the betterment of our beloved city of Salem.

Issues with the development on 2527 Robbins Lane

- 1. Congestion and traffic movement** – Robins Lane is going to be the single point of access to the proposed development. During the construction phase, a construction lane is to be constructed from Robins Lane SE as part of Phase 1 and all construction vehicles and equipment shall utilize this entrance for entering and leaving the site. There are no improvements proposed as part of Phase 1 to Robins Lane.

As part of Phase 2, Robins Lane is proposed to be widened starting from Robin Hood Street, but no improvements are proposed from the Commercial Street junction. This will result in a huge bottleneck from the entry onto Robins Lane, past all the current residential neighborhoods, compounded by the fact that large, heavy construction vehicles have only one point of entry into the development. Further, it is completely inconsistent with planning standards that one part of a street is expanded to collector standards, while the existing, most heavily used part of Robins Lane remains unimproved.

This goes completely contrary to the principles of safety and livability of the residents of the neighborhood and in fact, dilutes the value of the new homes proposed via the development. I don't believe new home buyers would be attracted to a development that has a constrained entry point from the city's main thoroughfare. I'm not sure whether the developers are ready to face the possibility of unsold homes due to bad street design going into the development, and I wouldn't want to encourage bad street design in our neighborhood as well.

Recommendations:

- a. Widen Robins Lane from the Commercial Street junction onwards, all the way to the start of Robin Hood Street, to make it compatible with collector street standards
- b. Add exclusive right and left turn lanes from Robins Lane to Commercial
- c. Investigate usage of the blocked connection to Brentwood for construction vehicle access only

2. Vehicular Speed and People Safety: Robins Lane currently serves more than 300 homes and apartments, with more than 2500 vehicles entering Robins Lane daily. More than 85% of traffic is starveling at speeds over 30 MPH. This is per the report of City of Salem Traffic Engineer, Mr. Tony Martin. Robins Lane is categorized as a collector street – yet, in terms of the width of the street, it does not meet the standards of a collector street. As defined by the Salem TSP, the standard for this street classification is a 34-foot-wide improvement within a 60-foot-wide right-of-way. According to the planning department documents published for this development, the existing condition for this street is an approximate 20-foot improvement within a varied 40-to-50-foot-wide right-of-way.

We have also been told by the Traffic Engineer, Mr. Tony Martin, that as a collector, Robins Lane is not eligible for traffic bumps. So we are facing a weird situation where Robins Lane is categorized as a collector but does not have the attributes of a collector street; yet, the restrictions placed on a collector street in terms of traffic bumps are being imposed on it. This is highly illogical, absolutely impractical, and can even be termed as being discriminatory towards the current residents of Robins Lane, especially since the width of Robins Lane is being widened near the new proposed development but not on the existing stretch. Clearly, we need the city to revisit the situation on Robins Lane and correct it, before the new development goes in. We recommend that the city councilors take a drive through the Robins Lane neighborhood to understand the gravity of the situation.

We also believe this will be a deterrent to new home buyers for the proposed development since those families will be compelled to use Robins Lane to exit their homes to get to the city for work and/or leisure. In fact, we believe, this will become a mandatory disclosure item from a consumer standpoint so that buyers are aware about the safety hazards of buying and living in such a development.

Recommendations:

- a. Widen Robins Lane from the Commercial Street junction onwards, all the way to the start of Robin Hood St., to make it compatible with collector street standards
- b. Add exclusive right and left turn lanes from Robins Lane to Commercial Street
- c. Add traffic bumps on Robins Lane to slow down traffic
- d. Investigate usage of the blocked connection to Brentwood for construction vehicle access only

3. Emergency vehicle access: We believe that the entire new development will be served for emergency access (Fire and Medical) via Robins Lane and likely Misty Morning Avenue.

However, neither of these streets are appropriate for emergency vehicle navigation, especially maneuvering around the tight corners of the narrow inside streets of the neighborhood. Even though Robins Lane is designated as a collector, it is not up to the standards of a collector street. As defined by the Salem TSP, the standard for this street classification is a 34-foot-wide improvement within a 60-foot-wide right-of-way. According to the planning department documents published for this development, the existing condition for this street is an approximate 20-foot improvement within a varied 40-to-50-foot-wide right-of-way.

This will create huge safety issues for residents of existing and new neighborhoods, if emergency vehicles cannot serve the needs of the residents.

We also believe this will be a deterrent to new home buyers for the proposed development since those families will be equally impacted if emergency vehicles cannot access the neighborhood in a timely fashion. In fact, we believe, this will become a mandatory disclosure item from a consumer standpoint so that buyers are aware about the safety hazards of buying and living in such a development. We also believe insurance costs for that development will increase, since the risk profile of that neighborhood would be significantly higher compared to other neighborhoods in South Salem.

Recommendations:

- e.** Widen Robins Lane from the Commercial Street junction onwards, all the way to the start of Robin Hood St., to make it compatible with collector street standards
- f.** Add exclusive right and left turn lanes from Robins Lane to Commercial
- g.** Add Traffic bumps on Robins Lane to slow down traffic

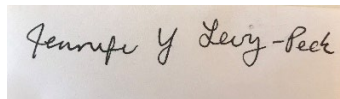
We believe that all these issues will cause a negative impact on safety and livability of both, current and future, residents of Robins Lane, including the potential homeowners of the proposed development.

It is incumbent on the City Council to ensure that future developments do not compromise the safety of current residents and the livability of our neighborhood. It is also incumbent on the City Council to ensure that, while zoning regulations may allow for a development, these developments do not impose an unreasonable and inequitable burden on the existing residents of the neighborhood, because of the lack of necessary improvements to the access streets and other infrastructure. We are not against the new development; we just want to ensure that the infrastructure is appropriately sized to meet the needs. In this specific case, upgrading only one section of Robins Lane to meet collector standards, while letting the existing sections of Robins Lane remain at their current levels, is clearly discriminatory, myopic, and completely against all notions of a practical approach to residential development. This will come back to bite the neighborhood and the residents will pay a heavy price, unless suitable measures are taken to mitigate the effects of this development. It will also be an undesirable legacy for our beautiful city, if the development is allowed to continue in the current form, without improvements to Robins Lane and other neighborhood streets, resulting in a development is not attractive to buyers due to the poor quality of surrounding infrastructure.

To quote the Salem Transportation System Plan, Jan 13, 2020, *“Providing mobility is the key to how we shape our future community. Mobility is the ability to travel safely within our neighborhoods, our city, our region, and beyond. A vibrant community such as Salem should not strangle in its own congestion. Mobility is the result of careful community planning that prudently builds needed infrastructure, respects the livability of neighborhoods, reflects fiscal realities, and realizes that the development of land uses and our transportation system are forever linked.”*

We request the Salem City Council to act on the Salem TSP and ensure that appropriate safeguards and guardrails are incorporated in the approval for this proposed development. The City Council must provide for the future of this community by ensuring Robins Lane is brought up to collector standards, ensure congestion is avoided in the narrow local streets of the neighborhood during construction, ensure proper access to emergency vehicles, and promote safety and livability of the current and future residents of the neighborhood. This can be done by implementing our proposed recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck".

Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck