

From: [Claudia Butler](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: 145th Subarea Rezoning Proposal
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2015 6:48:10 PM

Shoreline City Council
17500 Midvale Avenue
Shoreline, WA

March 22, 2015

Members of the Shoreline City Council:

I am resident of the Ridgecrest Neighborhood and have lived in this area for the last 27 years. I moved here specifically because this was not Seattle and at the time I had been tired of the ongoing development in Seattle. And now, it appears Shoreline is choosing to emulate Seattle with massive rezoning plans for both the 185 and 145 Light Rail subareas.

Of note, your massive rezoning proposal for the 145th area sounds nothing like your goals in the 2010 Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea plan where there are statements about the value of maintaining the character of the neighborhood when planning for future development. Given the dilemmas of how to accomplish that goal it was noted that “the City wants to preserve existing aspects of these neighborhoods. The single family character, friendly atmosphere, natural amenities, and other characteristics are all of paramount importance.” It goes on to say that although change may be inevitable, “it can be channeled to provide amenities and improvements and be prevented from negatively affecting the quality of life” that is the reason we the residents have chosen to live in Shoreline. The major up-zoning being proposed for the 145th subarea does little to prevent negative impact on quality of life. And all these decisions are being made at a very fast pace; it is time to reconsider and slow the process down to allow for more discussion with residents and evaluation of recommendations made by the Planning Commission.

We already have major traffic problems with 145th and 5th Avenues especially during the commute hours. The Planning Commission has recommended holding off on a decision about a preferred plan to study until after the 145th Corridor Study is completed. The Light Rail station is only going to increase traffic in the area in addition to the continued traffic volume that is naturally occurring. The Planning Commission recommendation is the sensible approach and hopefully you will listen to them. Why not work on determining what the problems are and what mitigations need to be put in place before implementing major rezoning?

I am also concerned because I have yet to see any specific budget numbers for the rezoning plans. All I hear is that 88% of the funds for the Aurora Corridor Project were obtained from grant money. Ok, but that is past history and Federal and State budgets have tightened over the last few years. So. How much money will this be costing the City and its residents and how much of that do you believe will be obtained from which grants? I understand that Sound Transit and developers are going to be responsible for a portion of the costs for mitigations for storm water management, parking and other items but again, how much? Developers will be receiving a tidy tax break for twelve years but I am not convinced they

will be covering the costs necessary to alleviate citizens of increased taxes/fees related to the major development proposed for our neighborhoods. They are not even required to provide parking for 100% of the housing units they will be building. Into the neighborhood goes the rest of those cars.

I am having a difficult time believing there is adequate attention being paid to environmental issues. It is one thing to want to help preserve the Cascade foothills from encroaching development but on the other hand what about protecting the environment here in Shoreline? What about Thornton Creek and our open spaces? When I look at the maps and presentations of the MUR-85 or MUR-65 which then drops down to areas of MUR-45 and MUR-35, I see trading in Shorelines valued tree canopy for roof canopy. The tree canopy does have a major impact on filtering air and maintaining air quality. Can't say all those rooftops will do the same. Developer landscaping, what there will be of it, will not be the same and it will take years for any trees they do plant to reach mature heights to be able to replace what we have currently. Also, replacing single family residences and paving over properties that support trees and other vegetation also seems environmentally unfriendly. There are no places in the proposed maps showing where the new open spaces and public garden areas will be located. Nor does one building complex after the other tend to enhance continued support of the biodiversity we currently enjoy.

The huge amounts of increased density also mean a need for more schools and other services like increased Police and Fire support. Again, how is all of that to be paid for? And how will the schools accommodate increased numbers of students when many of them already are at very high volumes? Our excellent school system is another reason families choose to settle in Shoreline. It seems we are racing into rezoning a major area rather than taking a more moderate approach of rezoning a smaller area while continuing to study the implications of what is being proposed. We need to have more done to determine what infrastructure needs to be improved and then actually do it before creating a denser population the current infrastructure does not support.

Residents are aware that population density will increase and support the arrival of the Light Rail. But at none of the community planning meetings that I attended did I ever hear any residents suggest anything over a 55 foot height limit; the City feels we can do with nothing less than 65 to 85 feet (or possibly even higher) in many areas and is not open to any further discussion. It makes one wonder what the Council did with the information provided by those of us most impacted by these decisions. Residents suggested slow to moderate growth, not this extensive rapid rezone for 145th. I also did not hear residents suggest that the majority of single family housing needs to be converted to apartment and town house developments. I live in a neighborhood that has completely turned over from residents of retirement age to young couples who value single family homes with yards that provide safe places to raise their children and allow families to be part of a community where people know and support each other. Those are strong appealing characteristics of Shoreline that massive rezoning contradicts. It is why people want to move here. It is why those of us living here want to stay and I believe is a trend that will continue.

Improved transportation to get to and from cities is positive but when it seems to be the reason to allow for major rapid rezoning it makes little sense. Sound Transit indicates a need for 700 units and yet the City wants to allow for five times the amount. No one really knows how much or in what ways the arrival of Light Rail will impact the local area so why not slow down the process, start with a small area of rezoning closest to the station, follow the

Planning Commission recommendation to complete a 145th Corridor study, see what the Sound Transit FEIS tells us, study the impact of increased traffic on our major arterials like 5th, 15th, 185th and Meridian then decide about increased zoning? At this point, any decision about a preferred alternative for 145th needs to be put on hold until those above items are considered.

Even with the phases you propose, Phase One includes the majority of the area being rezoned rather than a smaller area closer to the station. And with the proposed phases, why did the areas for MUR-65 and MUR-45 increase as in the Connecting Corridor plan for example? Is there no reason why the original MUR designations could not remain the same as on the prior "un-phased" map? I believe this also happened on the Compact Community map. It leads one to believe the focus is on more and the sooner, the better. Again, what is the rush?

Thank you all for accepting this commentary and in particular thank you to Council members Eggen, McConnell and Roberts for their willingness to listen to citizen feedback, efforts to slow this process down, to consider starting with smaller rezone areas in the 185th subarea and their efforts to be the voices of reason.

With regard to the 145th subarea hopefully Council will listen to the recommendations of the Planning Commission, Neighborhood Associations and residents. Please include this letter in the public record.

Claudia Butler
Ridgecrest resident

Sent from Windows Mail