

**Written Testimony  
City Council &  
Planning Commission**

Received by  
City of Coburg  
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**From:** Martin Weissbarth <mweissba@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 31, 2020 3:46 PM  
**To:** EGBERT Sammy  
**Subject:** Appeal follow-up letter to Planning Commission, City Council, Anne Heath, Henry Hearly

We are grateful and relieved that the Wiechert plan is off the table for now, but are wary also about the future, because the code criteria regarding traffic quantity, traffic speed, road width and preserving “small-town character” remains unchanged and outdated. Coburg has grown and with it, the necessity has arisen to develop a “Refinement Plan” for the area around the park blocks and surrounding neighborhoods. (See “Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance Update,” Policy 3 and 4.) The current code criteria, because it is insufficiently specific in these areas, could allow city planning staff to again recommend approval of a design with flaws similar to the Wiechert plan, as it did twice in this recent case. It is imperative that the city planning staff and commission revisit, revise and amend the criteria so it will serve to more fully support the goal statements in the development code. Questions that need to be answered in additional criteria (in the Wiechert example) would include:

-What are the quantifiable aspects of small-town character referred to repeatedly in the code goal statements? How might city staff measure these to form recommendations to the Planning commission?

-What exactly is orderly development of residential streets? What constitutes disorderly development? How is this quantified?

-How much may traffic *quantity* be increased in an orderly development? Can traffic be doubled, tripled, or as in the recent plan, quintupled? Is our current traffic assessment accurate given the growth that Coburg has experienced even within the last two years? How are the park blocks districted differently?

-How much may traffic *speed* be altered in an orderly development of residential streets? Under what circumstances should traffic speed mitigation (stop signs, reduced speed limits, speed bumps) be required?

-Is a 20 ft. wide street really safe for 2-way vehicle traffic plus pedestrian use?

-Should a developer be *required* to meet with affected neighbors in the process of making a development plan? Currently, the code merely suggests this, leaving open the possibility for the developer to respond, as Wiechert's lawyer did in the public hearing, that such a meeting

was "just not practical". The "Comprehensive Plan" states as it's number one goal as "citizen involvement."

*"LCDC Goal 1: "To develop a citizen involvement program that ensures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process."*

-Should a developer's lawyer have the power to override our first community objective? Where is the structural language that would mandate such a collaboration upon submission of such a consequential proposal?

The code criteria are the specific tools that residents, planning commissioners and city council need to protect and preserve the interests of Coburg residents, and as we saw in this recent episode, they are currently not adequate. The language in the code goal statements about preserving the small-town character does not comprise enforceable requirements, so we need specific and detailed criteria to match the goals. Coburg residents spent hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars to prevent a development plan that would have seriously degraded our town. We need to move now to generate the code underpinning that will prevent a reoccurrence. As taxpayers, we already pay for city planning. We should not have to pay additionally for lack of city planning. I respectfully ask for City planning staff, Planning Commission, and Council attention to these concerns. The development code criteria are not, as we have seen recently, arcane technical issues, but rather, speak directly to the quality of life for current and future Coburg residents. Thank you for your consideration,

Analee Fuentes  
Martin Weissbarth

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