

HERMISTON IRRIGATION DISTRICT



366 East Hurlburt Avenue
Hermiston, OR 97838-2445
Office: 541-567-3024
Fax: 541-564-1069
Mobile: 541-571-7698
E-mail: Manager@hermistonid.org

June 23, 2025

City of Hermiston
Clint Spencer, City Planner
180 NE 2nd St
Hermiston OR 97838

**Re: Jaber Investment, LLC.
Annexation of Property – 4N2802BA 100**

Mr. Spencer,

I have reviewed the information regarding the request for annexation submitted by Jaber Investment, LLC for the map and tax lot listed above. My research has shown that this property is within the District boundary, however, there are no water rights on this property, nor is there any Federal easement or District facilities.

HID has no objection to the annexation. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this application.

Respectfully,

Karra

Karra Van Fossen
Water Right Specialist

July 9, 2025

Planning Commission
City of Hermiston
180 NE 2nd St
Hermiston, OR 97838

RE: Annexation 4N2702BA Tax Lot 100 Jaber Investment, LLC

Commissioners,

This is our response to the notice of land use action we recently received regarding the property south of E Punkin Center Rd to the west of NE 7th Street. **We strongly oppose the proposed annexation.**

It is our understanding that this annexation would bring currently zoned R-3 land within the UGB into the city limits, allowing city infrastructure to be built that would in turn enable medium-high density housing to be built on this lot. The lot in question is currently a bare, overgrown field, surrounded by:

- North: RR-2 farmland, in the form of our 40 acre family farm. We have owned this land for 95 years, and the driveway to and front lawn of our 1931 farmhouse are directly opposite the proposed accessway on the tentative site plan.
- West/South: County land zoned R-3 but currently built in a manner characteristic of RR-2 - single family homes on 2+ acre plots. Some of this land is currently used for grazing a few head of cattle.
- East: City land, zoned R-4 but partially built out as R-1 style single family homes on decently sized (7500 sqf / 0.17 ac) lots. The remainder of the unbuilt land is currently the subject of another planning decision to change the platting to allow a significantly higher density, but still lower than that planned for the parcel under consideration here.

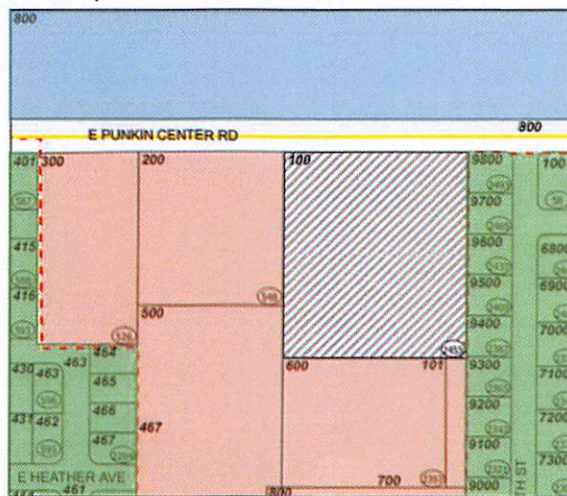


Figure A: Actual land use at present. **Blue:** rural residential/farming in RR-2 zone. **Red:** rural residential in R-3 zone. **Green:** Single family homes in R-3/R-4 zones.

We feel that the proposed use of this plot after annexation is contrary to the character of the surrounding neighborhood - it doesn't fit in with the revealed preferences of landowners in the area for single family housing, and it is far denser than anything short of Theater Lane or even further south. It creates an "island" of urban density at the edge of a sea of suburban/rural tranquility. Many who live in

this area would not have moved in had there been that kind of density nearby; our family has been here long enough that the choice was made by prior generations, but we have always enjoyed the quiet, spacious rural life (and expansive, uncluttered views) of this area and we do not want to see that change.

The Hermiston Comprehensive Plan's Policy 6 discusses conversion of urbanizable to urban land, which this annexation would seem to fall under¹:

If the property being considered for conversion contains less than 10 acres, the city will add sufficient additional surrounding property to equal at least 10 acres. The 10 acre area to designated should consider major natural or manmade features in setting boundaries. This will assure that the planning of newly converted areas will not occur in a piecemeal fashion. In designating residential uses, the city will strive to maintain the following acreage balance: 71% low density residential (R1 and R2), 16% medium density residential (R3), and 13% medium density residential/mobile home (R4).

The property within city limits surrounding the proposed annexation, going far beyond 10 acres, is on the order of 75% R-3 and R-4, though even within that area there is nothing built or proposed that approaches the density in this plot's tentative site plan. Enabling the construction of the highest density permissible by right in R-3 on this plot makes a situation that is already failing the acreage balance specified in Policy 6 worse, which is itself a clear (and potentially reversible²) error in application of this Policy.

Another significant concern is the ability of infrastructure in the area to support medium-high density residential use. E Punkin Center Rd is signed for 45mph, but as a major artery of US 395 is frequently driven at speeds 10mph over that or worse. It is already congested - just today we observed a backup of cars waiting to turn left onto US 395 that was at least 100% past the allotted turn lane, at 6:30PM on a Tuesday. The traffic analysis submitted to the commission suggests that 512 trips per day will be added by the planned use, and that this will have no substantial impact. It even explicitly states that in the worst likely case, with the new development and other growth by 2028, that exact left turn lane will rarely if ever overflow. Based on what we currently see on this road daily, we believe this traffic analysis is highly optimistic.

Worse, this is not the only proposed addition of density on this small section of Punkin Center. Only 500 feet east, there is another review in process to build medium density row housing on the remainder of the R-4 parcels zoned past 8th street, which would allow for 210 more units of housing to be built, all of which would use Punkin Center as its primary entry and exit. Oregon DOT submitted testimony to the commission regarding that application and requested a traffic generation report, which was done and which shows 1,573 additional trips per day, meaning that we now have proposals to add over 2000 trips per day³ to a road which is arguably inadequate for the usage it currently sees. Moreover, the north half of Punkin Center is in county land and under Umatilla County jurisdiction, meaning any improvements the City compels developers to build will only apply to half of the roadway (while the increased traffic uses both halves and the north half continues to deteriorate absent any action from County).

Certainly these two traffic analyses should not be considered in isolation from each other, and potentially a joint full analysis should be done that accounts for the total density to be added by both projects within substantially the same small area.

¹ Hermiston Comprehensive Plan Policies, page 9:

https://www.hermiston.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/community_development/page/2781/comp_plan_policies_sept_2024.pdf

² Kine v. City of Bend, 72 Or LUBA 423 (2015). <https://www.oregon.gov/luba/Docs/Opinions/2015/12-15/15068.pdf>

³ Realistically, this constitutes >2 additional cars per minute on Punkin Center during the hours most people are awake. Anecdotally, this could easily double the road's traffic at most hours of the day.

The same concerns can be raised regarding the city water pressure issues that residents on 8th have discussed with the commission. Adding another 76 + 210 units of housing in this area, connected to city water, seems likely to exacerbate these issues.

It is worth noting here that there is no need for additional density in this area - many housing units nearby are vacant and more are being built already. This is the outer edge of the City; density matching the highest existing anywhere in town should be built centrally, not on the rural outskirts of our agricultural town. Policy 23 of the Comprehensive Plan⁴ states:

THE CITY OF HERMISTON WILL PLAN FOR THE TIMELY AND EFFICIENT PROVISION OF A FULL COMPLEMENT OF URBAN SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN ALL DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING AREAS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. TIMELY MEANS A POINT WITHIN THE 20-YEAR TIMEFRAME WHEN THE CITY DEEMS DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATE FOR A GIVEN PROPERTY BASED ON FACTORS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY AND THE EXTENT OF UNDEVELOPED OR UNDERDEVELOPED LAND BETWEEN THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND THE SUBJECT PROPERTY.

To a reasonable observer, this proposed development, at this time, does not meet the definition of "timely" given here. In the absence of need and the presence of much lower density land surrounding this plot, allowing this plan to proceed would be an error.

Ultimately, we do not see a set of requirements that the City could impose which alleviate our concerns with this land usage. It is our impression that if the annexation is approved, development is allowable by right under the R-3 zoning without public input or comment. Thus, while proposed use is not a criteria for annexation approval, the annexation represents our only opportunity, as nearby residents with standing, to express our concerns to the city government. The proposed use, without which the annexation serves no purpose, would destroy the rural character of the area, deeply affect our quality of life, tax the existing infrastructure without adequate remedy, and create an incongruous and undesirable-to-all arrangement of housing densities. **We urge the commission to deny this annexation, and would support a reconsideration of the zoning of outside-of-City urbanizable UGB land in this entire area to conform with the land use balance specified in Policy 6 of the Comprehensive Plan.**

Sincerely,



TJ Knight
Brenda Knight
Peter K Cawley

535 E Punkin Center Rd
Hermiston, OR
97838

⁴ Hermiston Comprehensive Plan Policies, Page 34 (see footnote 1).

Ami Little
2409 NE 8th St
Hermiston, OR 97838

7/9/2025

Hermiston Planning Commission
180 NE 2nd Street
Hermiston, OR 97838

RE: Public Hearing Comment – Proposed Annexation & Multi-Family Development at 2455 NE 7th St (Tax Lot 100)

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I am writing as a homeowner whose property directly borders the proposed annexation site at 2455 NE 7th Street. I recently received notice of the proposal to annex this property into the City of Hermiston, with the intent of designating it as Medium High Density Residential (R-3) and developing a multi-family apartment complex. I would like to formally submit my concerns.

While I understand the importance of housing development, I have serious concerns regarding the safety and livability impacts this project may have on our neighborhood.

1. Safety and Traffic Concerns – High-Crash Corridor, New School Zone, and Incomplete Road Infrastructure

The proposed development would add approximately seventy new apartment units, directly increasing daily traffic along East Punkin Center Road and through the intersection at Highway 395 and Punkin Center, one of the most dangerous intersections in Hermiston.

- According to the City of Hermiston's own Safety Action Plan, this intersection ranks as one of the highest in crash severity across the city.
- Multiple fatal crashes have occurred at this location.
- The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has recognized this danger and has approved plans to install a roundabout, but construction is not expected until 2028.
- In the meantime, traffic from the proposed apartments, including residents, guests, and delivery drivers, will be funneled through this high-risk intersection daily.

Even more concerning is the fact that a new elementary school is now located at East Punkin Center and NE 10th Street, just blocks from the proposed development. This school brings increased pedestrian activity, school bus traffic, and family vehicles into a zone that is already struggling with safety.

It should also be noted that East Punkin Center Road is not fully developed for safe pedestrian use:

- There are no sidewalks, bike lanes, or paved shoulders.
- The posted speed limit is 45 mph, which is unusually high for a residential and school-adjacent streets.

These conditions raise real concerns about whether the neighborhood can safely handle the increased traffic, school zone activity, and pedestrian use that would come with this development. Without thoughtful planning and improvements, the risk to children, families, and other residents could grow significantly. I would request a formal Traffic Impact and Safety Study that includes crash history, projected traffic volume, and pedestrian use before any decision is made.

2. Loss of Privacy

As a direct neighbor to the property, I am concerned about how the height and layout of the apartment buildings may affect privacy. Multi-story buildings with windows or balconies facing residential backyards will significantly diminish the sense of privacy we currently enjoy.

3. Noise and Increased Activity

Apartment complexes naturally generate more foot traffic, noise, and vehicle movement than single-family neighborhoods. This would mark a major shift for those of us living on quiet residential streets and could affect both quality of life and safety.

4. Impact on Property Values

The close proximity of a high-density development may negatively affect the resale value of nearby single-family homes, especially if the development is not designed with thoughtful integration into the surrounding neighborhood.

I also want to highlight concerns specific to my own street. I live on NE 8th Street, which has increasingly become a cut-through route for drivers trying to avoid delays on Punkin Center Road. We already see vehicles speeding through our residential area, and with the addition of seventy new apartments, that problem is likely to worsen. This creates real safety concerns, especially for families with children or pets. I respectfully request that NE 8th Street be included in any traffic impact study and that traffic-calming options be seriously considered.

I want to be clear: **I do not support rezoning this property for multi-family use.** While I understand the city's housing needs, I believe this location is simply not suited for high-density development. It directly borders single-family homes, contributes traffic to a high-crash intersection, and sits within an area that lacks the infrastructure to safely absorb this scale of growth.

I respectfully urge the Planning Commission to deny the rezoning request and preserve the land's current designation. Any future development should reflect the character, safety, and capacity of the surrounding neighborhood.

Thank you for considering the voices of nearby residents. I truly appreciate the work you do for our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ami Little', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ami Little



HERMISTON SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Appendix



Intersections

Intersection crashes were matched to the nearest intersection within 250 feet of the crash. The annual crash severity score was calculated for each intersection. The number of FSI crashes and other injury crashes that occurred at the intersections with the highest number of crashes are summarized in Table 4. Intersections are ordered by the annual crash severity score. ODOT's Social Equity Index is recorded for each intersection in Table 4. The Social Equity Index aggregates demographic data and indicates the level of disadvantage in each census block group, a 'High' Social Equity Index indicates greater disadvantage. The Social Equity Index is described in greater detail in the Equity Assessment section of the memo.

Intersections where there was at least one crash resulting in an injury between 2018 and 2022 are shown in Figure 14 by the annual crash severity score. There were more injury crashes between 2018 and 2022 at intersections with a higher annual crash severity score. The 11 intersections with the highest number of crashes (shown in Table 4) are shown in Figure 14 as a red circle.

Table 4: Intersections with Highest Crash Severity Scores

Rank	Intersection	Traffic Control	Jurisdiction	Social Equity Index	Annual Crash Severity Score	FSI Crashes	Other Injury Crashes
1	US 395 & E Punkin Center Rd	Signal	ODOT	High	64	2	12
2	US 395 & E Gladys Ave	Signal	ODOT	Med./High	58	2	9
3	US 395 & E Elm Ave	Signal	ODOT	Med./High	56	1	18
4	US 395 & E Main St	Signal	ODOT	Med./High	40	1	10
5	OR 207 (W Elm Ave) & N 1st Pl	Signal	ODOT	Med./High	40	1	10
6	US 395 & E Theater Ln	Signal	ODOT	Med./High	32	1	6
7	OR 207 (11th St) & W Orchard Ave	Signal	ODOT	High	30	1	5
8	US 395 & Kelli Blvd	Stop	ODOT	Med./High	28	1	4
9	N 1st Pl & W Harper Rd	Stop	City	High	28	1	4
10	SW 17th St & W Highland Ave	Stop	City	High	28	1	4
11	US 395 & W Harper Rd	Stop	ODOT	Med./High	26	1	3

KEY FINDINGS

Based on the crash conditions analysis, the location specific analysis, and the systemic safety analysis, the following key findings have been identified, and are depicted geographically in Figure 21. The Emphasis Areas for the Hermiston SAP are defined based upon these key findings.

- **Crash Characteristics:** Crashes with several characteristics tend to be more common or more severe in Hermiston.
 - **Crashes at Intersections** occur more often than crashes along segments. 60% of injury crashes in Hermiston between 2018 and 2022 occurred at intersections.
 - **Turning Movement and Rear End Crashes** make up most of the crashes in Hermiston. Turning movement related crashes (including angle crashes) and rear end crashes account for 79% of injury crashes in Hermiston between 2018 and 2022.
 - **Seatbelt Usage** in Hermiston is a notable characteristic of crashes resulting in deaths and serious injuries. 21% of crashes resulting in a death or serious injury in Hermiston between 2018 and 2022 involved an unrestrained occupant.
 - **Crashes Involving Pedestrians and Bicyclists** tend to result in more serious injuries and deaths than crashes involving only vehicles. Considering all injury crashes:
 - 20% of crashes involving a pedestrian resulted in a fatality or serious injury.
 - 27% of crashes involving a bicyclist resulted in a fatality or serious injury.
 - **An Impaired Person** was involved in 23% of the crashes that resulted in a fatality or serious injury.
- **Crash Locations:** Several roadways and intersections have historically had a greater number of crashes resulting in an injury or fatality. These roadways and intersections are listed below and shown in Figure 21 using orange lines (for segments) and orange circles (for intersections).
 - US 395, north of Hermiston Avenue to the urban growth boundary, including intersections at:
 - US 395 & Punkin Center Road
 - US 395 & Hermiston Avenue/Gladys Avenue
 - US 395 & OR 207 (Elm Avenue)
 - OR 207 (11th Street), between Joseph Avenue and Elm Avenue
 - Orchard Avenue, between OR 207 (11th Street) and US 395
 - W Highland Avenue, west of OR 207 (11th Street) to the urban growth boundary
- **Roadway Characteristics:** Following methodologies from Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) certain characteristics of roadways and intersections are correlated with more intersection, pedestrian, or bicyclist crashes. Intersections and segments with characteristics correlated with the greatest risk for intersection, pedestrian, or bicyclist crashes are shown in Figure 21 using teal lines.

July 9th, 2025

Jeff Stroben & Brandi Sinner

544 E Punkin Center Rd

Hermiston OR. 97838

509-948-6736

Brandi and I strongly object to the Annexation 4N2802BA Tax Lot 100 Jaber Investment, LLC
2455 NE 7th St.

We always knew that this property would be developed some day and expected it to be similar to the homes recently built on 8th & 5th streets. Single family dwellings.

We were unaware of the M or R3 zoning designation. Had we known this we would have lobbied to have it changed to R2 or R1 for future development.

This annexation will severely diminish our quality of life and the rural nature of our property and the surrounding properties. The proposed development of a 3 story apartment complex will have a detrimental impact on our property and way of life.

The increased noise, light & air pollution from vehicles so close and densely packed only feet from our property will negatively impact our quality of life and take away our privacy that we enjoy now. Would you want everyone in the 2nd and 3rd story to be able to watch everything you now do in your yard and observe all you have in your buildings and property?

I have a great concern with the storm water that will now run off the entire property and is to be directed to swales and catch basins that butt up against my property. I believe this threatens the safety of my well which is only 99 ft away. Should these overflow onto my property there is a great chance it could contaminate my well with chemicals, gas, and oil from the asphalt and cement of the complex.

Traffic safety is of great concern and after reading the Transportation Impact Analysis I believe some of the data is outdated and does not take into account the recent added traffic from 100 new homes on 5th and new homes built to the East of 7th. Example – Traffic safety study using data from 1-1-2019 to 12-31-2023.

Punkin Center has seen a substantial increase in traffic and noise in the last 3 years and with the addition of 512 projected daily trips from this development there will be even more of a safety hazard on an already dangerous road.

“The proposed 76-unit apartment development generates 512 daily, 30 AM peak hour, and 39 PM peak hour trips.”

We are not in opposition to the development of this property, but are opposed to the annexation with the intention of building the proposed 3 story apartment complex. This is not in character with the rest of this rural community and reduces our privacy, increases traffic unreasonably without providing for adequate road safety improvements, increases noise air and water pollution.

Jeff Stroben & Brandi Sinner