

# THE PLANNING POST



## FEATURED TOPIC:

### Portland's Infill Project Introduces Affordable Energy Efficient Housing

Portland's Concordia neighborhood debuted two new condo communities comprised of small, all electric homes with energy saving features like solar panels and heat pumps. Most of the homes are priced below market rate for first time buyers earning under 80% of the median family income. The developments aim to address Portland's housing shortage while promoting community vitality and environmental sustainability. Despite concerns over density and privacy, the projects have been largely well received.

## City of Columbus Plan Commission Noteworthy Decisions

### ANX-2024-009: Mickel Properties—Favorable Recommendation

A request by Mickel Properties to annex .39 acres into the Columbus corporate limits. The property is located at 5075 West Carr Hill Road, in Columbus Township. This request was subsequently approved by the City Council

### MP-2024-005: Tudor Second Addition Replat Minor Subdivision—Approved

A request by Kellen Otto to create 1 new lot, for a total of 2 lots over 15,795 square feet, including a request to waive the requirement to receive consent of at least 75% of the owners of property in the existing subdivision per Section 16.40.070(C) of the Columbus Subdivision Control Ordinance. The property is located at 3983 North 150 West, on the corner of 150 West and Paula Drive, in the City of Columbus.



### CMP-2024-006: Harrison Hills First Section 3rd Replat Minor Subdivision—Approved

A request by Marcelo Agudo to create 1 new lot, for a total of 2 lots totaling over 31,550 square feet including a request to waive the requirement to receive consent of at least 75% of the owners of property in the existing subdivision per Section 16.40.070(C) of the Columbus Subdivision Control Ordinance. The property is located at 541 Ridgeview Lane, in the City of Columbus.



## Bartholomew County Plan Commission Noteworthy Decisions

### RZ-2024-001: Force Holdings—Favorable Recommendation

A request by Force Holdings LLC to rezone 68.25 acres from AG (Agriculture: General) to I-2 (Industrial: General). The property is located north of 650 North/Tannehill Road, 1000 feet west of US 31, in German Township. This request was subsequently approved by the County Commissions.



# Development Review Report

Written by: Melissa Begley



AAA Striping

AAA Striping is located at 3906 N. Indianapolis Road. You may remember this site as the former Bowling Alley. AAA Striping has constructed 2 industrial buildings, a total of 27,520 square feet of space, partially for their use but also as space available for 3 additional industrial tenants. They received their initial Zoning Compliance Certificate approval, which allowed their construction to begin, on June 13, 2024.



Turnkey Warehouse Suites

Turnkey Warehouse Suites, located at 2690 Grissom Street, was recently completed. The site has two industrial buildings for a total of 24,192 square feet and 8 potential tenant spaces. They received their initial Zoning Compliance Certificate approval, allowing construction to begin, on June 24, 2024 and received their Project Completion Certificate on November 26, 2024.

**There has been a lot of conversation regarding housing over the last year and our last Planning Post in November highlighted several smaller scale housing projects. At this time, it is worth noting some new industrial projects that are under construction.**

Toyota is well under construction for a new facility at the northeast corner of Deaver Road and 225 West. This is for a 284,948 square foot manufacturing facility and the Zoning Compliance Certificate construction approval was issued on September 27, 2024.



Toyota

Finally, the new Grillo's Pickle manufacturing facility, located at 11900 North 200 West near Taylorsville, is well under construction at this time. The 154,042 square foot facility received Zoning Compliance Certificate construction approval on September 9, 2024.



Grillo's Pickle



## Floodplain Management Report

Written by: *Chelsea Cottingham*

As 2025 begins, it is once again time for the annual Recertification process for both the City of Columbus and Bartholomew County. This annual recertification is required from the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) Program. This NFIP provides federally backed flood insurance within communities that enact and enforce floodplain regulations. Participation in the NFIP is based on an agreement between local communities and the federal government, which states that if a community will implement and enforce measures to reduce future flood risks to new constructions in special flood hazard areas, the federal government will make flood insurance available within the community as a financial protection against flood losses. The CRS program allows property owners reduced flood insurance rates because of increased regulation and outreach activities completed throughout the year. As part of the recertification process, the floodplain manager submitted documentation of all additional local activities that earn the City of Columbus property owners a 15% reduction and Bartholomew County property owners a 10% reduction in annual flood insurance premiums. That documentation includes a copy of all elevation certificates/flood proofing certificates, a summary of outreach activities completed in 2024, and summaries of repetitive loss information. All of this information is gathered by the floodplain manager and then reviewed before being submitted to FEMA.

## Transportation Planning Report

Written by: *Ashley Beckort*

CAMPO staff have been working with Andrew Beckort (City Engineer) and Danny Hollander (County Engineer) on changes to local projects that require balancing and redistributing the federal funds to be provided for local construction projects over the next several years, as included in the CAMPO Policy Board's adopted 5-year work plan (the Transportation Improvement Program or "TIP"). The Talley Road reconstruction (originally programmed in FY 2026) needs to move back a year to allow additional time for right-of-way acquisition. Lowell Road improvements (originally programmed in FY 2027) will also need to shift back a year as the County was informed the also-planned Lowell Road bridge replacement must be built before the road improvements to accommodate floodwater requirements for the adjacent Driftwood River. As CAMPO has a comparatively small federal funding allocation, only one project can be accomplished in a year. CAMPO staff have been working on the necessary documentation to shift these projects to their new fiscal year and add any additional funding to address project cost increases. As an option for addressing changing project timelines and costs, CAMPO staff has been working on coordinating funding trades with other Indiana MPOs. CAMPO staff will notify the Policy Board of any such trades at their next Policy Board Meeting.

In addition, Bartholomew County is asking for funding assistance from the MPO for a new project in FY 2026. CAMPO staff have, therefore, also been working on updates to the TIP and MTP (Metropolitan Transportation Plan) in anticipation this new project, adding a traffic light at Bear Lane and US 31. Bartholomew County has already worked with INDOT and determined the traffic light is warranted and is looking for CAMPO to help pay for the construction of the light. But, to be eligible for federal funding through CAMPO, this project must first be added to the MTP and TIP. The MTP (Metropolitan Transportation Plan) is the long range plan adopted by the Policy Board that identifies future improvement projects and makes them eligibility for federal funding and inclusion in subsequent TIP 5-year work programs. The area around Bear Lane has recently been developing, which wasn't the case when the current MTP was developed (it was adopted in November 2021). The traffic light was therefore not a priority project. The Proposed MTP and TIP amendments to include the Bear Lane / US 31 traffic light will be heard at the February 10<sup>th</sup> CAMPO Policy Board meeting. If approved, the Policy Board will add the traffic light as a project in Fiscal Year 2026.



# Long Range Planning Report

Written by: Jessie Boshell



The Planning Department staff has been busy working on potential updates and concepts for the zoning ordinance that reflect the results of the Columbus Housing Study. Items such as density, housing types, and lot size are being explored. At the January 8, 2025 Plan Commission meeting, staff presented initial development standards, use standards, and definitions for Plan Commission discussion. The staff will next work on incorporating the comments

into the standards, as well as further on developing the proposal to take before Plan Commission for public hearing, and subsequently City Council at a future date.

The Planning Department staff has also been busy working on updating the strategic growth study. Staff attended the Ohio Kentucky and Indiana Regional Planning Conference in late November 2024, and gathered great examples on how other communities have packaged this information to make it more readable for all audiences, as well as increasing the efficiency of the document. Staff is working to take what is existing, as well as the updates, and develop a format that is more user friendly with a broad summary of findings.

At the November 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Team (BPIT) meeting, The Planning Department led a charrette- like exercise to determine initial People Trail sign locations as well as future needs, with hopes of beginning a larger sign installation campaign in the spring of 2025. The focus thus far has been on key decision points at which bicyclists and pedestrians have to make a choice on which way to go, and locations where signage would provide clarity. Staff is working on updating a sign installation map to reflect the charrette findings, and will be partnering with the Engineering, Parks, and the Public Works Departments to begin the installation campaign.



In other Bicycle and Pedestrian news, The Planning Department received confirmation that the City of Columbus renewal with The League of American Bicyclists was approved. The City of Columbus is re-designated as a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community. This designation will run through 2028.



# 6 townhomes replace single house on a Portland corner lot

Updated: Jan. 10, 2025, 7:09 p.m.  
Published: Jan. 09, 2025, 12:45 p.m.



**By**  
**Janet Eastman | The Oregonian/OregonLive**

Portland urban planning consultant Jennifer Shuch embraces the changes she's seeing in her Concordia neighborhood, especially new multi-family housing that wasn't legal until recently.

Two new communities near her exemplify the shift, each consisting of six all-electric townhome-style condos on a corner lot where previously a single family house stood.

Shuch, who serves on the board of Portland: Neighbors Welcome that advocates for safe, stable and affordable housing, said energy-wise homes enable more people to enjoy the amenities of the neighborhood where she has lived for close to eight years. "New infill projects make the community more vibrant and diverse and help to support the small local businesses we all love," she said. "Just look at Concordia Commons on a Saturday morning."

The nonprofit Proud Ground, which finances lower-cost homes, and the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund selected Concordia as the area for their first affordable and Net-Zero condo communities.

Nine of the 12 homes will be sold to first-time buyers earning less than 80% of the median family income, and operating costs should remain low in the condos with less than 1,000 square feet of living space.

The nine homes for first-time buyers come with a rooftop PV solar system, sized to offset the annual electricity bill. And all 12 of the new condos have double-pane windows, walls and roofs insulated beyond code requirements and other energy-saving features like heat pumps.

Another first: These are the first six-plexes built on single-dwelling lots, newly allowed by Portland's 2022 Residential Infill Project if half are affordable. This is one example of infill housing now sanctioned statewide by House Bill 2001, which Oregon's Legislature passed in 2019 to reduce the longstanding housing shortage.

Construction of infill housing units in an established neighborhood tap into existing utilities and services like roads, sewers and schools, while enabling more people to live near employment, retail centers and transit corridors, say advocates.

Mike Westling, who lives near the new Concordia projects and watched the progress of one building from his front porch, said, "neighbors have been curious about construction on that corner, but I've heard nothing but positive comments about the new addition to the block."

As with most new developments, some residents worried density would result in parking issues, as well as a decrease in gardens, trees and creature habitats. Privacy can be intruded upon when single- or second-story windows look into a neighbor's house or backyard.

"I have heard the concerns some folks in the neighborhood have about privacy, but I live in a duplex across from an apartment building," Shuch said. "My block is the kind of block I've always wanted to live on, one where people recognize and help each other as neighbors."

Morgan Tracy, the Portland planner who led both the Residential Infill Project (RIP) and the update, called RIP2, sought neighborhood feedback to code changes.

"A common theme we heard during our extensive public outreach was concern that small houses would be demolished and replaced by a single large expensive house," Tracy told The Oregonian/OregonLive. "This practice does nothing to address Portland's housing shortage or affordability crisis."

Instead, "RIP allows new middle housing types on single-dwelling zones with caps on building size, creating opportunities for multiple smaller homes at lower price points," he said. "As a result, more households will have access to Portland's great neighborhoods."

Portland allows six-plexes to have larger building footprints than would typically be allowed in residential (R5) zones, as long as half the units are affordable and the height is two stories rather than three.

Eli Spevak of Orange Splot in Northeast Portland teamed up with Proud Ground to develop the side-by-side, attached Concordia condos, using this provision to make the homes fit in better with other two-story homes in the neighborhood, he said.

The University Row community at Northeast 27th Avenue and Northeast Holman Street rests on a 50-foot-by-100-foot lot where a house had long been removed. Mature trees were preserved along both frontages of the corner lot.

Across the street is the University of Oregon's Northeast Portland campus and at the intersection are two designated bikeways.

Neighbor Westling said, "It's great to have energy coming back into the neighborhood from the University of Oregon and small infill projects like this."

The University Row homes have 950 square feet of living space, in a mix of two- and three-bedroom configurations, and private front and back yards.

"Half of the homes have sold and families have moved in," Spevak told The Oregonian/OregonLive.

There are still two homes available for \$285,000 to first-time homeowners who qualify for Proud Ground grants and one remaining for sale at the market rate of \$394,000, said Spevak.

The second community, Pollination Station at Northeast 36th Avenue and Northeast Alberta Court, replaced a house in rough shape that Spevak deconstructed.

The name Pollination Station was inspired by the longstanding Bridgetown Bees beekeeping operation across the street, and landscape plants were selected to support bees, butterflies, birds and other pollinators.

The two-story, attached Pollination Station condos have 976 square feet of space and are priced around \$285,000. Buyers of the affordable Proud Ground homes must meet income requirements (\$66,100 for a household of one to \$102,000 for a family of five) and agree to cap their profit at 25% if they sell the home so it remains affordable for the next buyer.

“We listed the six Pollination Station townhomes just before Christmas break,” said Spevak. “One is now in escrow and we expect another offer next week, so there will be four left at that point.”

The sidewalk along Northeast 36th Avenue and corner ramps are accessible for people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices. As required by zoning, two of the homes have a no-step entry and a fully visitable ground floor bathroom, said Spevak.

Each home has a fenced private back patio or side yard. Inside are three bedrooms, including one at the front of the ground floor that could also serve as a home office.

For two decades, Spevak has been building what he calls community-based housing in North and Northeast Portland. The owner of the small-scale development company Orange Splot says he’s creating old-fashioned neighborhoods in a new-fashion way.

Spevak is a forward-thinking developer, nationally recognized as an energy advocate who produces sustainable housing to reduce the middle-income housing crisis. Locations are selected near work hubs, public transit routes, bike corridors and other ways to help residents not be reliant on cars.

His developments are also distinctive in their appearance. He selects bold paint colors like yellow that “break through the gray skies” and installs outdoor art.

Each of these new townhomes has a custom art panel over the main entry.

At University Row, aluminum art panels inspired by Oregon ecosystems were created by Dallas A. Swindle IV. The panels depict a coastal, mountain, prairie, conifer forest, slough scene or the Columbia Gorge and are arranged on the building “from west-to-east, naturally,” said Spevak.

At Pollination Station, each panel reflects a pollinator-plant pairing.

The homes have kitchen quartz countertops, tile backsplashes and stainless-steel appliances, including a top-line Miele dishwasher and LG induction range.

Polyphon Architecture and Design designed the two communities, and brothers Simon and Rion Lyle of Born and Raised Construction in Southeast Portland were the general contractors for both projects.

Minority-owned companies with specialized expertise installed heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems as well as siding, insulation, drywall and fencing, and did the concrete flatwork and painting.

Woman-owned subcontractors performed excavation, electrical and roofing work, said Spevak. “A Portland Clean Energy Fund priority is to work with minority- and woman-owned subcontractors,” he said.

The homes received a 10 out of 10 Home Energy Score and the locations have a high score on walkability, biking and bus access.

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