

Part of the charm — and live-ability of Oregon has been the gracious nature of established neighborhoods. This is not something to be tossed away lightly.

Already in Portland, you see developers squeezing in two single family homes, sometimes detached and sometimes attached, in the space that was formerly occupied by one building. The result — besides being ugly to the eye and often to the calming character of the neighborhood — is the loss of space for children to grow and play. Many of these dwellings, by my casual observation, have minimal outdoor space, and certainly not the minimum of ‘play’ space that children need. I remember growing up and having that kind of space. And beyond that, this closeness of dwellings promotes fences, further inhibiting any play space. And then there are the additional cars that will be parked on the streets. Already, many Northeast and Southeast Portland streets are nearly fully parked on both sides, allowing only a single lane of traffic, causing delays and jams when cars approach from opposite directions. This is more than an annoyance ... it’s a safety hazard to children, now forced to play “in the street” or near the street, when cars can’t easily see them in advance.

These comments do not apply so much to stretches of poorly built housing, as I have seen very nice “clustering” of new structures so long as the clusters leave adequate space on their ends, and are in keeping with a Northwest architectural aesthetic.

Simply crowding more and more people into a limited area will only produce crowded cities that bring a whole new range of problems, perhaps much more or worse than what the solution was trying to solve. Let’s be careful what we wish for.

Thank you for listening,
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