

Housing development not a property-rights issue

In his recent letter (April 16), Casey Carlisle incorrectly assumed that the residents of Table Rock and the Kendall-Cottonwood triangle feel "inexcusably entitled to the Bachtold property."

No one is trying to prevent Jon Bachtold from selling his land to a developer. The issue is not Mr. Bachtold's private property rights. It is whether the developer, Hayden Homes, will be required to build out the property in such a way that it does not detrimentally affect the rights of all the surrounding private property owners, such as the right not to have a development's grading and impervious surfaces increase your risk of flooding during significant storms.

And it is not just the property owners in the immediate vicinity who are likely to be affected. If the city can't recoup the entire cost of providing services to the new development from property taxes, and if new infrastructure is required north of the development to adequately cope with increased traffic and safety issues, who pays the shortfall or the project costs? Does the money come out of the general fund at the expense of other city services and projects? Or are everyone's utility fees (water, sewer, and stormwater) increased to make up the difference?

If the latter, then everyone will essentially be contributing to the costs of this development well into the future.

In the early 1970s, I worked for an agricultural economist who used input-output models to study the economic impacts of land use changes on communities. We know that Hayden Homes, an Oregon developer, will benefit from development of the Bachtold property.

It might be a good idea for the city to undertake an economic study to shed light on the true costs of this development, before assuming that this land use change will really benefit the community.

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