

March 2, 2020

To: Portland Design Commission

From: Jeanne E Galick

**Re: LU 20-102914, DZM ADGW Alamo Manhattan River Blocks 41 & 44 and Greenway**

Chair Julie Livingston and Design Commissioners,

I strongly urge the commission to deny this project.

The Alamo is a significant development. With the addition of 1200 units and 1500 or more people, it will increase South Waterfront's community by nearly 40 percent. It's critical that all design standards and guidelines are met or exceeded. This proposal fails to do so, especially in regards to the greenway.

Building 41 & 45 are just too large and too close to the greenway setback. Ironically, the extra height and FAR is achieved largely by implementing the greenway bonus. But instead of achieving a larger setback as in the rest of south waterfront, their bonus footage is fragmented and tucked into nooks and crannies. Much of it is hardscaped. It neither functions nor appears to be public. Such application undermines the intent of the bonus and certainly does little to enhance or enlarge the "natural, scenic and recreational quality of the lands along the Willamette River."

The greenway not only provides important habitat and recreational opportunities, but it also is an important transportation corridor. This will connect the Sellwood Bridge to South Waterfront. The expected increase in users is another reason to use the greenway bonus as it was intended – to increase the width, not fill in corners.

Dense development to the north offset their impact by providing a generous setback – 100-150 feet *after* the bank was laid back. Elevated patios and swales clearly define private from public space. In contrast, the Alamo has a 55' greenway after the bank has been laid back. No swales or clear elevation changes signal private property.



*Context for most of South Waterfront includes generous setbacks, swales and clear definition between public and private spaces. It follows the greenway master plan.*

The applicant proposes a heavier layered planting area between private spaces and the trail. Our experience in South Reach is that residents will radically cut vegetation to protect personal views. With unnervingly close proximity to the trail, how is it possible to have enough vertical and horizontal plant growth that provides habitat and a user-friendly trail experience as well as privacy and views? (does not meet C6, Develop transitions between buildings and public spaces, B-5 Making Plazas, parks and open space successful.)

Failure to meet even minimum landscape standards continues to be troubling and reason enough for denial. Proposed vegetation is largely non-native and there is a lack of trees. If the city's goal is to promote a healthy river and better habitat, native vegetation and more trees, especially tall trees, are needed. (33.851.100 b.2., section 3, #6)

Perhaps AstroTurf is a shout-out to their Texas roots, but on a rooftop, it's just greenwashing. It fails to meet A4-1 (incorporating ecological components into development design).

Following the Greenway Master Plan in this critical link would provide physical and visual consistency with development to the north and much improve the natural resource values of their planting scheme. Prosper Portland and Portland Parks have offered funding to Alamo to achieve this. Unfortunately, their offers were declined.

This project fails to meet guidelines. It fails to "better enhance the natural, scenic, historical, economic and recreational qualities of the greenway." It needs to more fully recognize and honor its important river location.

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