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Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

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May 7, 2012

Mayor Sam Adams and Portland City Council
Portland City Hall
1121 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Subject: Urban Food Zoning Code Update

Dear Mayor Adams and City Commissioners,

The Planning and Sustainability Commission is pleased to forward our recommendations on the *Urban Food Zoning Code Update*. We support the primary goal of this project—to increase access to affordable, healthful food for all Portlanders, especially those with limited access—and think this proposal is a significant step towards achieving that goal.

This project also supports our overall desire to be a more equitable and sustainable city: the health and equity "lenses" were used throughout this process. Funding from Multnomah County's Community Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) Initiative allowed a unique and valuable partnership between BPS and the Oregon Public Health Institute (OPHI).

At our public hearing on April 24, 2012, we voted unanimously to support amendments to the Zoning Code that support neighborhood-scale community gardens, market gardens, farmers markets, food buying clubs, and community supported agriculture (CSAs). The regulations are clear and provide flexibility while protecting the surrounding neighborhoods from potential negative impacts.

We heard a great deal of positive testimony from people involved with these food production and distribution activities. We were impressed with the variety of these activities occurring throughout the city and think it is timely to update our zoning regulations to reflect and encourage these activities. Some of the testifiers talked about the uncertainty of operating in a legal gray area under the current regulations and saw the proposal as a means to protect their operations.

Much of the testimony came from members of the Code Development Advisory Group (CDAG) for this project. We agree with staff that the participation of the CDAG was critical to the success of this project: the CDAG members were knowledgeable and experienced in each of the areas addressed by the regulations. Several of the members spoke highly of the interactive process of developing these proposals and noted staff's willingness to modify initial ideas as they learned more about the activities. We think this collaboration with the community has resulted in well crafted, workable proposals.

Testimony also addressed the importance of following through on this project with a number of suggested "next steps" and we agree. These steps include getting the word out about the expanded opportunities for food production and distribution in Portland and helping people learn how to take advantage of these opportunities. Our community health partners can provide culturally appropriate information and education to communities with limited access to affordable, healthful food, and ensure that the materials are available in multiple languages. Again, we agree that this is important.



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In summary, we found this project to be valuable and well worth forwarding to you for adoption. We recommend that City Council:

1. Adopt the Ordinance;
2. Adopt the *Urban Food Zoning Code Update: Recommended Draft*;
3. Amend the Zoning Code as shown in the *Urban Food Zoning Code Update: Recommended Draft*; and
4. Direct staff to continue to work with community partners to provide information and education to community members about healthful food access through existing BPS programs such as District Planning and Residential Education and Outreach.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the review of this project and for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Andre' Baugh, Chair
Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

