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August 15, 2012

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

Subject: Recommended Cully Main Street and Local Street Plan

Dear Mayor Adams and City Commissioners,

At the May 22, 2012 Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) meeting, staff presented the proposed *Cully Main Street and Local Street Plan*. The PSC supports rezoning proposals that increase the potential for local serving businesses that will lead to a vital main street along the Cully Boulevard area. The PSC also supports a local street plan that improves connectivity through the neighborhood, establishes community priorities for street improvements especially to key destinations, and allows alternative and more affordable options for improving local streets that enhance safety and accessibility for the Cully community.

This project implements key economic development and infrastructure facilities and services listed as priority actions in the City Council-adopted *Cully-Concordia Community Action Plan* (2008). It is also consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and implements many aspects of the *Portland Plan*, including Healthy Connected City, Economic Prosperity and Affordability and the Framework for Equity.

With a population of over 13,000 people, Cully is one of the most racially, ethnically and economically diverse neighborhoods in Portland. As a primarily residential neighborhood, Cully was not originally planned with enough commercial zoning to allow business opportunities to meet local needs for goods and services. There are also a significant number of nonconforming businesses zoned residential. The Cully street system lacks street connectivity and has larger blocks. There are 3.8 miles or 50 blocks of unimproved/gravel streets, and only 33 percent of the streets in Cully have sidewalks. These conditions lead to out-of-direction travel and disincentives for walking, rolling and bicycling.

At the May 22, 2012 hearing at Rigler School in Cully with about 50 people in attendance, the PSC heard testimony mostly supporting the main street rezoning proposals, including testimony from representatives of the recently established Cully Boulevard Alliance, one of the City's six new Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative (NPI) areas, the boundary of which was based on the Cully Main Street Plan's study/proposal area.

In our deliberations, the PSC concluded that Cully is a special place, rich with diversity and community organizations dedicated to addressing equity through programs that help create local wealth and stability. The PSC believes that Cully deserves to receive public and private investments to address its deficiencies and increase the quality of life for its community members. As this



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happens, property values can rise in the neighborhood and, in turn, can lead to gentrification and involuntary displacement of Cully's most vulnerable residents, especially communities of color, and existing business people. The City and local partners need to be proactive in developing and implementing actions that minimize the negative impacts of an improved neighborhood and provide widespread opportunities for all of the local community to benefit from these changes. They also need to monitor and evaluate demographic, housing and market data to determine and refine implementation actions.

In addition to the unanimous support of the staff recommendations, the PSC asked City staff to add language to describe equity and explain the context for gentrification and displacement in this unique neighborhood. The commission also recommends that City bureaus partner with interested community organizations to implement Portland Plan Action 97, using Cully as a case study for the City developing policies and strategies to proactively address the negative ramifications of gentrification and involuntary displacement.

The diverse Cully community deserves to be a more complete neighborhood. Due to the extent of deficiencies in the area, we acknowledge (as with the recommendations in the recommended report) that it will take time. However, this is a great start. We recommend that City Council:

1. Adopt the Ordinance;
2. Adopt the Resolution on *Use Cully as a Case Study to Address the Issues and Strategies Related to Gentrification and Displacement*
3. Adopt the Resolution on a *Cully Neighborhood Local Street Plan*
4. Direct staff to continue to work with community partners to implement the Cully Main Street and Local Street Plan recommendations; and
5. Direct staff to develop policies, implementation strategies, and monitor and evaluate baseline demographic, housing and market data to track changes related to gentrification and displacement.

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

Attachments

