

October 26, 2014

Planning and Sustainability Commission  
1900 SW 4th Ave, Suite 7100  
Portland, OR 97201

Re: 2035 Comprehensive Plan

As a 40-year resident of Portland, I write in support of the recommendation by Rose City Astronomers to require light pollution control in Policy 4.28.e, and to add to the 2035 Comprehensive Plan a new goal of becoming a dark sky community with wise use of outdoor lighting which promotes public health and safety, reduces energy waste, preserves and protects wildlife and our cultural heritage of the night sky both within and beyond City borders.

I also wish to wish to include in the Commission testimony my personal experience with light pollution and light trespass.

Growing up in Willamette Heights with a view of the river, I first became aware of light pollution at a young age during the OPEC oil embargo of the 1970's, wondering why, with a national energy crisis at hand, was there so much extra light coming from the rail yards along the Willamette river that one could read a newspaper at night with those lights alone.

Later, while I was living downtown in an apartment on Broadway Boulevard, the owner of a billboard across the street decided to put illuminate the billboard at night—with lights facing upward. This flooded my apartment at night to the extent that sleeping was difficult for me and for many of my neighbors. After six months of phone calls and letters, the owner relented and moved the lights to the top of the billboard, facing down. But even with this change, the overbearing glow of the billboard across the street greatly diminished my enjoyment of living downtown.

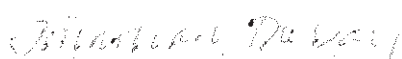
And recently, as an amateur astronomer, I have become keenly aware that in the City of Portland all but the brightest natural wonders of the night sky are hidden, and even viewing those in my own backyard is difficult due to my neighbor's high-intensity security light. Currently, it takes a 45-minute drive be far-enough removed from Portland's light bubble in order to see even some of the largest and brightest wonders of the night sky, such as the Andromeda galaxy.

By adopting "dark sky" lighting requirements and policies in the 2035 plan, as RCA recommends, Portland has a unique opportunity not only to reduce unnecessary energy consumption, but to return the natural beauty to our shared heritage—the night sky.

Recommendations for mandates to limit light pollution and trespass:

- Target-specific lighting in large open areas such as roads, parks, rail yards, parking lots and stadiums.
- On billboards, low intensity downward-facing lighting, or phasing out billboard lights completely.
- Eliminating architectural decorative lighting.

Thank you for your consideration,

  
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