

March 13, 2015

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Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability
1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 7100
Portland, Oregon 97201

Re: Proposed Comprehensive Plan Update and Mixed Use Zones

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commissioners:

New Buildings Institute (NBI) is pleased to comment on long range planning priorities in the Comprehensive plan regarding energy efficiency and requirements for new and renovated buildings. NBI is a national nonprofit think tank focused on high performance buildings. We provide policy research, tools and design guidance to support utilities, state agencies and cities as they work to advance codes and policy for greater energy efficiency in buildings. As the City of Portland considers updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Mixed Use Zoning requirements, we respectfully request your consideration of the following testimony.

With the knowledge that increased density allows protection of the urban growth boundary and provides great efficiencies in land use, transportation and overall sustainability, we support infill development, adaptive reuse of existing buildings and higher density development goals. Greater development returns can result from meeting these goals, but they may also result in greater impacts to existing neighborhoods and adjacent properties that are not fully documented or analyzed. These impacts may include increased traffic and carbon emissions, and loss of solar access, which reduces the capability of adjacent properties to independently generate energy through onsite renewables.

Several paths to increase energy performance can be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan to minimize impacts associated with increased development intensity, balance the interests of developers with that of surrounding landowners and residents, and help meet long-term city climate goals.

Home of:



NBI suggests the following four policy recommendations be considered:

- 1) *Require Higher Energy Performance Requirements for up-zone requests from Comp Plan Designation to a Higher Intensity Zone Change.* Any voluntary request to rezone a property to a higher intensity zone should meet higher energy performance requirements, including one of the following:
 - a. Require compliance with the Energy Trust of Oregon's Path to Net Zero Building Program as demonstrated by completion of the program enrollment and Early Design Application, and submittal of energy modeling documentation demonstrating that proposed design/construction of the building is in alignment with performance targets and strategies on the Early Design Application.
 - b. Meet Oregon "Reach Code" energy requirements (18% better than OR Base Code demonstrated by energy performance modeling).

- 2) *Development projects requesting a bonus for greater FAR, square footage or height limits should meet higher building energy performance requirements including one of the following:*
 - a. Require compliance with the Energy Trust of Oregon's Path to Net Zero Building Program as demonstrated by completion of the program enrollment and Early Design Application, and submittal of energy modeling documentation demonstrating that proposed design/construction of the building is in alignment with performance targets and strategies on the Early Design Application.
 - b. Meet Oregon "Reach Code" energy requirements (18% better than OR Base Code demonstrated by energy performance modeling).

- 3) *Mitigate impacts from new development that substantively reduces solar access on adjacent properties and public rights-of-way.* To balance goals for increased density in the Comprehensive Plan with the potential impacts from loss of solar access, all new development projects over 10,000 s.f. or over 35' in height should include a solar shading and impact analysis as well as a recommendation for mitigation of any substantive impacts on solar access. Mitigation measures should include at least one of the following:
 - a. Transfer of solar development credits
 - b. Compensation to impacted individuals
 - c. Development of (or contribution towards) shared community solar or other renewable projects.

*If solar access impacts are de minimis, then no mitigation would be required.

- 4) *Encourage more shared community solar resources and zero net energy buildings in public and private development.* To support increased resiliency and meet Climate Action Plan goals, NBI recommends City of Portland planning staff coordinate with the Oregon State Legislature on pending or future legislation to enable more shared community solar

resources. The City should also consider further incentives to support more high performance and zero net energy buildings. Incentives might include:

- Fast-track permitting,
- Reduction or waiver of System Development Charges (SDC)
- Bonus of additional square footage
- Fee waivers for pre-application meetings
- Low-interest loan programs
- Technical support for modeling and integrated design

We appreciate your consideration of these issues to further Portland's legacy of innovation, sustainability and planning for livable communities., and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Ralph DiNola, CEO, LEED Fellow
New Building Institute
1600 Broadway, Vancouver, WA

CC: Jim Edelson, Director of Codes & Policy
Heather Flint Chatto, Project Manager