



2788 SE 82nd. Ave. Ste 203  
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[www.jadedistrict.org](http://www.jadedistrict.org)

October 27, 2015

City of Portland  
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
1900 SW 4th Ave, Suite 7100  
Portland, OR 97201

Re: Employment Zone in Southeast Portland

Dear Commissioners:

The Jade District is a Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative (NPI)—located in East Portland along SE 82<sup>nd</sup> Ave. between SE Harrison and SE Franklin, along SE Division Ave. between 81<sup>st</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup>—and coordinated by the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO). The District is composed of 432 businesses registered inside its one square mile and the most diverse resident demographic profile in the state, with nearly half of the district's 14,000 residents being people of color.

The Jade District Steering Committee supports the change from General Commercial to General Employment zoning on SE 82nd, from SE Alder to SE Mill, provided it includes more living wage jobs, a greater variety of jobs, meaningful engagement of impacted residents and businesses, and robust health and safety measures taken.

As East Portland residents have demanded in the past, the area needs more living wage jobs. The Jade District's Strategic Work Plan notes that, "There is a history of displacement among communities of color to East Portland and beyond. The primary challenge before us now is to build the social capital of our communities to better resist involuntary displacement of our residents and small businesses in the face of rapid gentrification."

Beyond more living wage jobs, we believe the area needs a greater variety of jobs, with intentional support from the city and Portland Development Commission to support a healthy and diverse economy in this area. Although we believe this change in zoning has the potential to offer meaningful employment to people residing in East Portland, we do not believe this can happen without early engagement, follow-through, and commitment from the city. We demand that the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability work with the Portland Development Commission to recruit employers that offer living wage jobs and can provide workforce training opportunities to access quality jobs to local residents, particularly young workers in the area.

We support this change only if the City includes implementation strategies outlining how this plan will create actual living wage jobs. We look forward to seeing the City adopt this implementation plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Our Steering Committee is composed of a variety of stakeholders, employers, and residents and we expect meaningful engagement going forward.

Additionally, if the plan moves forward and industrial businesses relocate to this area, we expect that the City will implement adequate health and safety measures, such as proper air filtration systems to ensure that people living nearby are protected from toxic or noxious sounds and fumes. The growing



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concentration of people of color and low-income people in Outer SE Portland, facing disproportionate risk of exposure from air toxics and a host of other health impacts is the result of the intersection of poor land use planning and decades of inequitable infrastructure investment. The area has a higher preponderance of mixed-use zoning and auto-centric transportation infrastructure, resulting in a close proximity between residents and heavy commercial and auto/freight use. Future development in this area must be predicated on improving quality of life and stability for its current residents and economic opportunity for its businesses.

Members of the Jade District Steering Committee look forward to working with the City and other stakeholders for a more resilient, healthy, and promising future.

Sincerely,

Jade District Steering Committee