



CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
MULTNOMAH COUNTY COURTHOUSE
1021 S.W. FOURTH AVENUE
PORTLAND, OR 97204-1123

NAN WALLER
PRESIDING JUDGE

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Planning and Sustainability Commission
1900 SW 4th Ave.
Portland, OR 97201-5380

April 20, 2016

Re: Multnomah County Central Courthouse (MCCH) Project:
Amendment to Minimum Height Limit on Block 8, Portland

Dear PSC Commissioners,

The purpose of this letter is to provide testimony in support of the requested building height increase from 200' to 325' on Block 8 to accommodate the proposed MCCH. I write to you as the Presiding Judge of the Multnomah County Circuit Court to convey the importance of the construction of a safe, new courthouse for our community as well as our court.

The current Multnomah County Central Courthouse simply no longer meets the needs of our court or the community. A strong community requires a well-functioning justice system and fundamental to a well-functioning justice system is a safe and sound courthouse. Every day more than a thousand members of the public as well as hundreds of court staff, judges and lawyers enter the courthouse. The current courthouse is both structurally and functionally unsafe. The building is vulnerable to collapse in an earthquake and the layout of the building requires that defendants in shackles share the same hallways as victims, judges, lawyers and jurors.

The court has outgrown the size of the current building. The building lacks sufficient space for core court functions and cannot be modified to meet the current demands of the court let alone the demands that come with projected future growth in the community.

The site for the new courthouse was selected because of the need for the building to be in close proximity to the jail and Justice Center as well as centrally located for the legal community. The new courthouse, overlooking the Willamette River, will be a visual statement of our community's commitment to the justice system. The site, however, cannot accommodate the space needs of the courthouse without increasing the height limit. I urge you to approve the requested increase of the height restriction for the new courthouse.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nan G. Waller
Presiding Judge