



Oregon

Public Defense Services Commission

Office of Public Defense Services

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April 25, 2016

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission
1900 SW Fourth Ave.
Portland Oregon 97201-5380

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

Dear PSC Commissioners,

Please accept this testimony in support of a height increase from 200 to 325 feet on Block 8 to accommodate the proposed MCCCH. As the Executive Director of the Office of Public Defense Services, a co-located state agency within the planned MCCCH, I would like to convey the importance of the new courthouse and its design. In the current courthouse, public defense lawyers meet clients in crowded, public hallways where private, confidential conversation is almost impossible. The lack of dedicated, calm space for clients to connect with their lawyers creates unnecessary complications, risks contact between defendants and victims, and delays case resolution when the lack of meeting space prevents lawyers and clients from discussing settlement options. Additionally, poor security, long lines upon entry, and the potential of collapse in an earthquake, puts hundreds of people at risk each day.

The new courthouse promises a solution to the challenges, and more. The location improves accessibility to the building as well as to the space inside. Clients will have a safe space to wait before and after their case is heard, and to have confidential communications with their lawyers. I urge you to amend the minimum height limit on Block 8.

Sincerely,

Nancy Cozine
Executive Director