

May 9, 2016

Name: Richard and Eileen Wallace

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Testimony: Regarding property located at: 6515-6519 SE Foster Boulevard, Portland, OR 97203, adjacent house located at 4536 SE 65<sup>th</sup> Ave, Portland, OR 97203, and nearby commercial property located at 6313-6317 SE Holgate Blvd, Portland, OR 97203 in regard to Portland's Comprehensive Plan

I am requesting that the Commission re-designate my commercial property located at 6515-6519 SE Foster Boulevard, small single family house that sits directly behind this building at 4536 SE 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and nearby commercial property located at 6313-6317 SE Holgate Blvd from its current designation of CS – Commercial Storefront to Mixed Use – Civic Center (CM2). One year ago, I received an initial notice that indicated that the properties would be designated as CM2. Recently, in April of 2016, I received another notice that changed the designation on these same properties from CM2 to CM1. I am requesting that the Commission restore the zoning on these properties to the original designation of CM2.

The 6515-6519 SE Foster property has two ground floor commercial tenants including a vehicle repair shop that has been in this location for 30+ years and a small tavern that has been in operation for over 25 years. There are also two apartment units above the tavern. The 6313-6317 SE Holgate property has two ground floor tenants including a barber shop and a community shared office space.

My father purchased these properties in the early 1980's. I grew up maintaining the properties, having my cars repaired at the auto shop, and over the years becoming close with the tenants. Since my father passed away in 2004, I'm now a second generation caretaker of the buildings. Because of my family history and love of Portland, I am strongly committed to the future of the heart of Foster and creating an area where you can live, work and play.

Background: On April 12, 2016, I met with a City Planner to discuss the recent zoning change. My property is located in a low-rise commercial storefront area, in what is called the "Heart of Foster," which is between SE Holgate Boulevard and SE 68th Avenue. Recently, the City Planner indicated this area was changed to CM1 in order to preserve the scale and characteristics of older main street areas. After talking with the city planners, I understand the City took a blanket approach of changing the CM2 to CM1 zoning throughout 15 areas in Portland to designate low-rise commercial storefront areas. To my understanding, this blanket change was based on citizen feedback from other neighborhoods such as Multnomah Village and SE Hawthorne, rather than the Foster-Powell neighborhood, where this property is located. After reviewing the 15 different areas, I understand and agree with this approach for neighborhoods with a stronger established neighborhood/cultural hub, such as Multnomah Village and SE Hawthorne where my family owns a few properties as well. In these neighborhoods it makes sense to balance growth and preservation with the associated zoning. However, this approach does not make sense for the Foster area. I met with the Land Use Chair for the Foster-Powell

neighborhood association to discuss the recent zoning change and my willingness to work together. The association is planning to meet soon. It is unique these days to find a family that has owned property for 30+ years and intends to pass it on to the next generation. I have also talked with other property owners that own 8 properties inside the heart of Foster who are in agreement with my position and will also be submitting supporting testimony. The following are the reasons the Commission should restore the zoning on the properties to the original designation of CM2:

Summary:

1. Heart of Foster is Not Yet a Core Commercial Area -- Lack of Anchor Organization/Commercial Activity
  - a) CM1 limits needed growth in Heart of Foster - not a core commercial area of center yet
  - b) I *support* the 'm' main street overlay with CM2 designation to establish and promote a core business area
  - c) I *support* the Foster Transportation and Streetscape Plan
  
2. Personally impacts my 30+ year tenant who operates a vehicle repair shop that services the community
  - a) Creates nonconforming use issues
  - b) Tenant will be 'grandfathered-in', but commercial improvement would be limited
  - c) Alternative mechanisms should be explored to balance growth, preservation and the tapestry of the city, rather than overly restrictive zoning
  
3. Foster Boulevard is designated as Mixed Use – Civic Corridor and is a Wide Street
  - a) Significant 95 foot street right of way supports a good relationship between building height and street size

Additional Support:

1. *Heart of Foster is Not Yet a Core Commercial Area – Lack of Anchor Organization/Commercial Activity:*

According to the City's Proposed Draft document, the CM1 zone with a Main street overlay "m", is designed to reflect these areas' roles as core commercial areas which are anchors to complete communities. I am in agreement with the "m" main street overlay for this area with requirements around minimum floor areas and ground floor windows; however, I am requesting the CM2 designation to allow for more commercial improvement flexibility that the CM1 designation does not provide. My concern is that the Heart of Foster is not a core commercial area of center yet as the Proposed Draft document suggests. It is a corridor that needs the spark of transit, cultural identity, and commercial business growth to revitalize the area. The proposed CM1 zoning may prompt businesses and residents to move to better improved spaces just a few blocks away from this area because of the higher development capacity and better zoning in those areas that are directly surrounding this area, rather than stay in the Heart of Foster.

Additionally, there is not an anchor building that draws people to this area as suggested in the City's Proposed Draft document, such as a community center, theater or grocery store, that establishes cultural and neighborhood identity. Multnomah Village, Hawthorne, and Sellwood, are clear established hearts of their respective areas and this approach makes sense for these



areas where space is already limited because it is already developed and has a strong commercial base. The Heart of Foster is not there yet, and the same zoning should not apply, which will restrict the goal of making this area a core commercial area.

I am also in agreement with the \$3.85M Foster Transportation and Streetscape Plan, which will slow down traffic, make the street safer, improve pedestrian/bicycle accessibility and contribute toward making the heart of Foster a thriving commercial hub. However, I believe the new CM1 zone will have the opposite affect and limit the use of business activities, in an area that needs more investment. This plan provides the infrastructure necessary to create a core commercial hub of activity and the zoning should create more commercial improvement flexibility with the CM2 designation.

*2. Personally impacts my 30+ year tenant who operates a vehicle repair shop that services the community:* As a result of the CM1 zoning, my 30+ year tenant who operates a small vehicle repair shop will be considered nonconforming use under the CM1 zoning. If I decide to make changes to the building down the road, I understand I will need to remove my 30+ year tenant and will even be further limited with this zoning change.

*3. Foster Boulevard is designated as Mixed Use – Civic Corridor and is a Wide Street:* The proposed Comprehensive Plan policies provide support for larger-scale buildings located along wide streets, supporting a good relationship between building height and street size. Foster Boulevard is designated a civic corridor street in Portland and has a significant 95 foot right of way. This is even wider than MLK and very different than Multnomah Village and SE Sellwood where streets are significantly narrower. Grouping the Heart of Foster with Multnomah Village and Sellwood does not make sense since the infrastructure is so different.

As a local long term property owner who is invested in the community, I want to thank you for considering my proposal to change the proposed CM1 zoning to CM2 zoning for these properties.

Sincerely,

Richard and Eileen Wallace

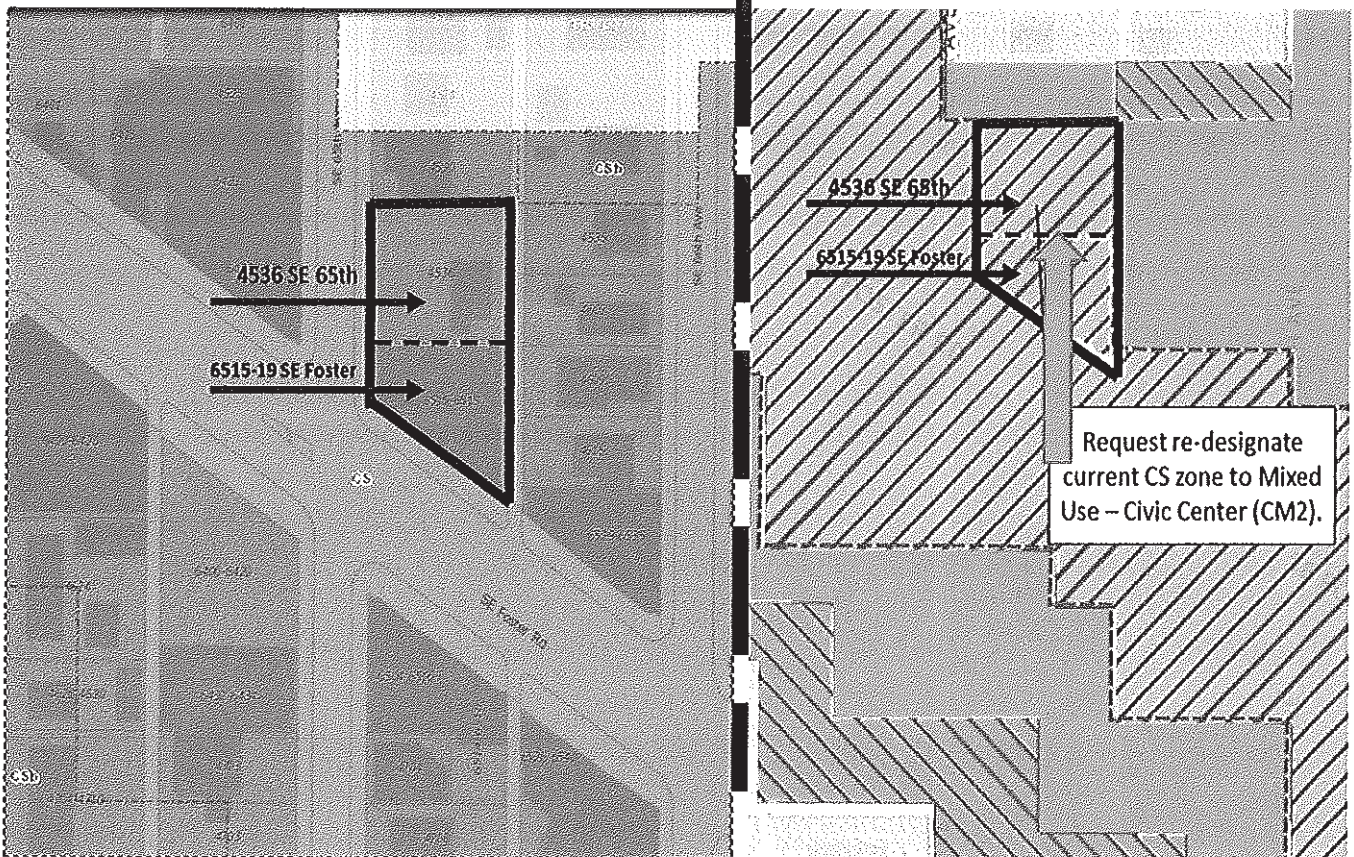
Enclosures:  
Exhibit A



6515-19 SE Foster Boulevard and 4536 SE 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue

**Current**

**Proposed**



6313-6317 SE Holgate

**Current**

**Proposed**

