

From: Mary Rondthaler [<mailto:maryrondthaler@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2016 7:09 PM
To: Planning and Sustainability Commission <psc@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: SE Belmont St

To the Planning and Sustainability Commission:

The below are not my words but these words express my feelings about this issue.

I urge the Planning and Sustainability Commission to keep the livability of the SE Belmont Street neighborhood by zoning the 3300 - 3356 SE Belmont Street block CN1 (3 story maximum). I am very opposed to a CN2 designation (5 story), which will ruin this historic block and negatively impact the livability of this wonderful Portland historic neighborhood.

This area is also important as a regional destination for locals and tourists alike because it exemplifies the best of what a vintage Portland neighborhood has to offer. As a regional destination it is important now and in the future for the greater Portland metropolitan economy.

Some of the Reasons why keeping the current zoning of 3 story maximum is important for Belmont Street-

- 1) Incentive to demolish every building on the block is very high if so much money can be made from every property if the zoning is changed from a 3 story maximum to a 5 story maximum. That means that every property will be worth more as an empty lot than what is currently there.
- 2) With every building and house on Belmont worth so much money to a developer of apartment buildings, all of the businesses that are located on Belmont that do not own the building they are in are in danger of being displaced or put out of business. This means that the reasons why Belmont is cool, a great place for local business, and a fun place to visit and hang out will cease to exist. Belmont will lose any character that it has that makes it a special place. This is bad for our local entrepreneurs and businesses. This is bad for our local and regional economy. Tourism in Portland depends on visitors seeing places that are unique to Portland. Every city in the U.S. has new apartment buildings with a Chipotle on the first floor. If Portland becomes just new apartment buildings it will cease to be a tourist destination. Billions of dollars are put into our local economy by visitors that want to "experience Portland". Belmont is the poster child of what Portland "is".
- 3) A new retail space in a new building is more expensive than one in an existing building. This is why you see mostly corporate chain stores in new buildings.
- 4) A series of tall buildings that are very similar to each other will shade the street for most of the day because Belmont is a narrow street. Five story buildings are too high for a narrow street like that. On a sunny day do you want to walk down a shady, dark street? The reasons to walk down Belmont will cease to exist if it is mostly in shadow throughout each day. In Phoenix or LA this might not be a big deal, but in Portland it is.
- 5) Traffic will get worse and there will be multiple times during the day that parking and traffic will be hard to deal with. People that are moving here and have the money to rent a new apartment are bringing their cars with them. That's reality. Let's deal with reality not the fantasy that people will sell their cars and just ride bicycles when they move here, especially in the rain.

6) Belmont Street is important. Culture is important. Portland history, OUR story, is important. We should add to the story not erase the past stories of Portland so some people can make a quick profit now. Some things in this life and some places should be sacred. Portlanders should be proud of what an awesome neighborhood Sunnyside is and what great streets Hawthorne and Belmont truly are. Belmont was the end of a streetcar line and was built in Victorian times (Victorian era was 1837-1901). They built buildings to last and out of great materials. They believed in adornment. They had pride in what was built. We can learn from that era. We need to keep this era alive in our city. Nowadays with such a thirst for authenticity these places shine as real, actual, beautiful places that make you feel alive and happy to be in our city. Belmont street and all it has to offer in terms of character, history, and choices of local businesses is what makes a place great. Other cities would kill to have a street with so much great architecture, interesting businesses, and overall cool vibe that Belmont Street has. This street exemplifies the best of what Portland is and what it should be striving to be in the future. Please don't let it get thrown in the garbage and erased from the story of Portland forever. And remember, once a great place is gone, it can never come back.

Please don't let Belmont St turn into another Division St!

Thank you,
Mary Rondthaler
5624 SE Bush St Portland, OR 97206