

August 9, 2016

Planning and Sustainability Commission  
Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
By Email: [psc@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:psc@portlandoregon.gov)

RE: Prioritizing Families in the Central City 2035 Plan

Dear Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of prioritizing families in the Central City 2035 Plan.

While the City of Vancouver currently debates whether or not to increase its required set-aside for family-sized units from 25% to 35% of all units in new projects, I am disappointed and saddened that Portland's Central City 2035 Plan (CC2035) neglects - and arguably heads backwards - in terms of making our Central City a viable option for our families.

Families are important to the health, vibrancy, stability, and equity of our Central City. Kids are an indicator species – their presence signals that our public spaces, crosswalks, and parks are healthy, safe, and accessible to all. The social benefits of diverse, multi-generational communities have been well-documented, and the positive environmental and climate dimensions of having families live in our walkable, transit-rich Central City are real. Finally, half of all Portland school-age children are not white, and we will fail to be an integrated, diverse city open to all if we don't consider – and prioritize – strategies to accommodate families in the CC2035.

At a minimum, please revisit the proposed decision to remove density bonuses for daycare and affordable family-sized units. The current lack of affordable family-sized units is a significant barrier that forces young families out. In addition, please prioritize zoning bonuses for family amenities such as safe courtyards, recreation centers, and public schools.

My personal experience reflects both the greatness of our Central City for families and the challenges. For 16 years I lived in the Central City and met my wife there. We married (in the Central City right next to the Max), had children, and started raising our family there until this April when the lack of affordable family-oriented housing options led us to leave. Hopefully your work shaping the CC2035 can lay groundwork to break this common pattern.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I had hoped to testify in person, but the three hour wait to testify – combined with family needs back home – led me to submitting this written testimony instead.

Sincerely,

Mike Dennis  
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