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**To:** Planning and Sustainability Commission <psc@portlandoregon.gov>  
**Subject:** Central City 2035 Plan

My husband and I live in the American Plaza Towers Condominiums at 1st Ave and Lincoln. It is a beautifully planned area, part of the 1970s urban renewal project that includes the historic Halprin Sequence. There is quite a lot of density already, but it is a nice mix of complementary residential and commercial buildings, mostly low rise with the exception of the exclamation marks that are the American Plaza Towers. Much of this area is currently covered by a design overlay zone designation which “promotes the conservation, enhancement, and continued vitality of areas of the City with special scenic, architectural, or cultural value”. It meets these goals well.

In the Central City 2035 plan the city runs the risk of disrupting this equipoise by allowing for construction of high rise buildings on 1st Ave south of Lincoln, an area currently low rise buildings. We understand the current zoning isn't proposed to be changed but that bonus heights will be allowed up to 250 feet, which would permit 25-story buildings to replace 4-story buildings. As they probably will once the process starts. The area density would increase dramatically, becoming perhaps intolerable—as could well happen soon in the Pearl District. It also flies in the face of the “stepping down height to the Willamette River” concept in your draft plan.

We know the city wants increased density OVERALL and that there is a need for affordable housing, but both the density and affordable housing should be spread across the city and downtown area. We stopped by the meeting room today at 4:00 but couldn't stay long enough, as it turns out, to testify in person. But we did look at the model of the central city and there is a lot of room for higher buildings and increased density in other parts of the city, that could use the economic stimulus. All the development does not have to be along the river, potentially choking and the area along the city's primary asset.

We used to live in Evanston, Illinois, a inner ring suburb of Chicago that tried for years to stimulate development. Finally older suburbs with real downtowns caught on and the development started, much to everyone's joy. Then it continued and expanded and got out of control, literally, with overdevelopment and huge, high rise apartment buildings that were changing the nature of the city. Only the great recession and citizen lawsuits slowed it down. Evanston provides a cautionary example.

One lesson we keep learning is that developers get their way everywhere and cities keep getting steamrollered by them. This is one thing that worries us about these bonus heights for buildings. I wouldn't be surprised if a developer already has a plan for the 1st Ave. area. Growth is difficult to manage well and the city absolutely has to do a good job of it. Portland does not have to make itself into a huge city and is under no obligation to accommodate developers. Growth involves more than buildings—things such as roads. Portland has some strangely designed roads and highways that were designed for another era.

So while we love living in downtown and applaud the concept of planning ahead, please do not overdevelop and destroy what makes the city livable, attractive and welcoming.

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