

TESTIMONY TO THE PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION CENTRAL CITY PLAN

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August 9, 2016

I'm here to speak regarding FAMILY HOUSING and COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS. Both of these are listed in the goals and policies of the comp plan, but I see few if any specific strategies in the Central City Plan to implement those goals.

When I started planning for the Ramona Apartments in 2007, many people in city government – including elected officials – didn't believe that families with children would live in the central city in Portland. We now have more than 130 children living in the Ramona and we have a waiting list of more than 400 households wanting to move in. 40% of our initial residents moved from the suburbs or from other cities.

The Abigail Apartments just opened next to the Ramona and another affordable building will open next to us in 2018. In two years, there will probably be 350 children living on those 3 city blocks.

There are a large number of births in other housing in the Pearl District – way more than in most neighborhoods of the city. Some of those families stay, but it seems that some of them leave because they outgrow their apartment or condo and there aren't larger units available or they leave because the closest public school is more than a mile away.

We should be serious about making complete neighborhoods in the central city. Here are just a few reasons:

1. **Equity** We invest a large amount of resources into these neighborhoods and we should make sure that all Portlanders have the option to live there. We've done a good job of that with affordable housing, but not with housing for families.
2. **Economic Development** - If we want to attract and retain bright young creative workers (and the companies that employ them), we have to make sure they can stay in the city when they start to have children.
3. **Sustainability** - If we want Portland to become a city that isn't reliant on cars in the future, shipping our young kids to the suburbs probably isn't the best way to prepare them to be urban dwellers when they grow up.

So what can we do?

- **Incentives for Family Housing –**

- I suggest retaining the FAR bonus for family housing and the exemption of the square footage of ground floor community facilities from the calculation of FAR. These two provisions became part of the North Pearl Plan in 2008. I recommend that these be retained and that they become applicable to the entire central city area.
- In addition, I recommend that community spaces inside the building should be excluded from the FAR calculation for buildings using the family housing bonus.

- **Schools and Public Spaces–**

- I recommended strengthening the action items regarding schools in the central city and getting creative about solving that problem. The kids at the Ramona take a 40 minute bus ride to Chapman. PPS needs a lot of kids to justify building a new school, but without a school the kids being born in the city might not stay there.
- I recommend helping PPS by letting them close off all or part of lightly used streets so they have a place for kids to play. The Central City Implementation Plan recommends using public rights of way for public open space and recreation.

I have attached some additional information.

- **Children in the Pearl** – This is a memo I did for PPS last year describing the current number of children in the neighborhood, the number of births, and the new development. . It is mostly focused on the area with a 10 block radius of the Ramona.
- **Chapman Attendance Area** – This is a map of the Chapman attendance area in 2013-14. The shaded semi-circle is the area within a 10-block radius of the Ramona. For reference, that shaded area is about the same size as the entire attendance area for Irvington School in NE Portland.
- **# of Births 2008-13** – This is a chart based on data from BPS staff. As you'll see, the number of births in the River District was greater than many eastside area combined.

CHILDREN IN THE PEARL DISTRICT – August 2015 notes

The following data focuses only on the children in one small part of the very large Chapman attendance area - the area near the PPS Early Learners Academy at the Ramona at 1550 NW 14th – with an emphasis on children under 7 years.

- Children In Low-Income Households – We estimate that there will be 392 children in Pearl District affordable housing by fall of 2017 or 2018.
- Births in the Pearl District – 378 children were born in the Pearl District in the 6 year period from 2008-13.
- New Development – Current new development will bring more children and 35 or more births per year.
 - By 2017, there could be more than 4,000 housing units added in a 10-block radius around the Ramona.

Children in Affordable Housing – By 2017 or 2018, PPS could probably fill a K-5 facility with these children alone.

- Current Affordable Housing – Approximately 258 children in households qualified for reduced lunches
 - The Ramona and the Sitka (3 blocks away) have 147 children. Based on the best data we have, there are about 91 children in other nearby affordable buildings.
 - Of those children, about 119 are under the age of 7 (75 in the Sitka and Ramona and an estimated 44 children in the other affordable buildings).
 - 10 of the 11 buildings are at least 1 mi. from Chapman and require up to a 42-minute bus ride each way.
- New Affordable Housing – 154 more children expected by 2017-18
 - The Abigail, under construction next to the Ramona, will have a large number of 2 BR and 3BR units. It will be open in May 2016. Based on the lease-up of the Ramona, we project that the Abigail will have 104 children (71 children under the age of 7) when school starts in September 2016.
 - The city of Portland is developing family housing for very low-income households (0-30% MFI) on a ¼ block directly north of the Ramona. This could be open by the start of school in 2017. We project that this building could have 50 or more children (34 under the age of 7) by September 2017.
- Stability in Affordable Housing – Tenants stay a long time in the Sitka and the Ramona. Between the two, about 11% of tenants move each year. This means the average tenure is about 9 years.

Births in the Pearl District – Based on the number of births in existing housing around the Ramona, PPS could have about two more classrooms of children coming every year. This assumes those children stay and it assumes no other children move in. Even if only ½ stay and no new children move into existing buildings, there are nearly enough kids coming for another classroom every year.

- Census Tracts – The data uses census tracts 50 and 51, all of which is closer to the Ramona than to Chapman.
- 6 year totals - From 2008 through 2013, there were 387 children born in these two tracts.

New Development in the Pearl District – Within a ten block radius of the Ramona, there could another 35-42 births per year by 2017 in 4,200 new housing units. This assumes the same birth rate as in the existing housing in census tracts 50 and 51. It does not count any children that might move into the new units, only those that might be born there later.

- Completed Units – 798 units have been completed since mid-2011, more than 450 in the last 12 months.
- Under construction – 2,046 units are currently under construction within 10 blocks of the Ramona. Of the buildings for which we have details, 1/3 of those units are 2BR or 3BR.
- In Predevelopment – An estimated 1,511 units are proposed within 10 blocks of the Ramona, most of which are in some stage of public approval.
- Vacant/Undeveloped Sites – There are another 25-30 acres slated for development in future years.



**Portland
Public
Schools**

**2013-14
Attendance
Area :**

Chapman

Legend

PPS School Sites

- High School
- Middle School
- K-5/K-8
- Special Programs

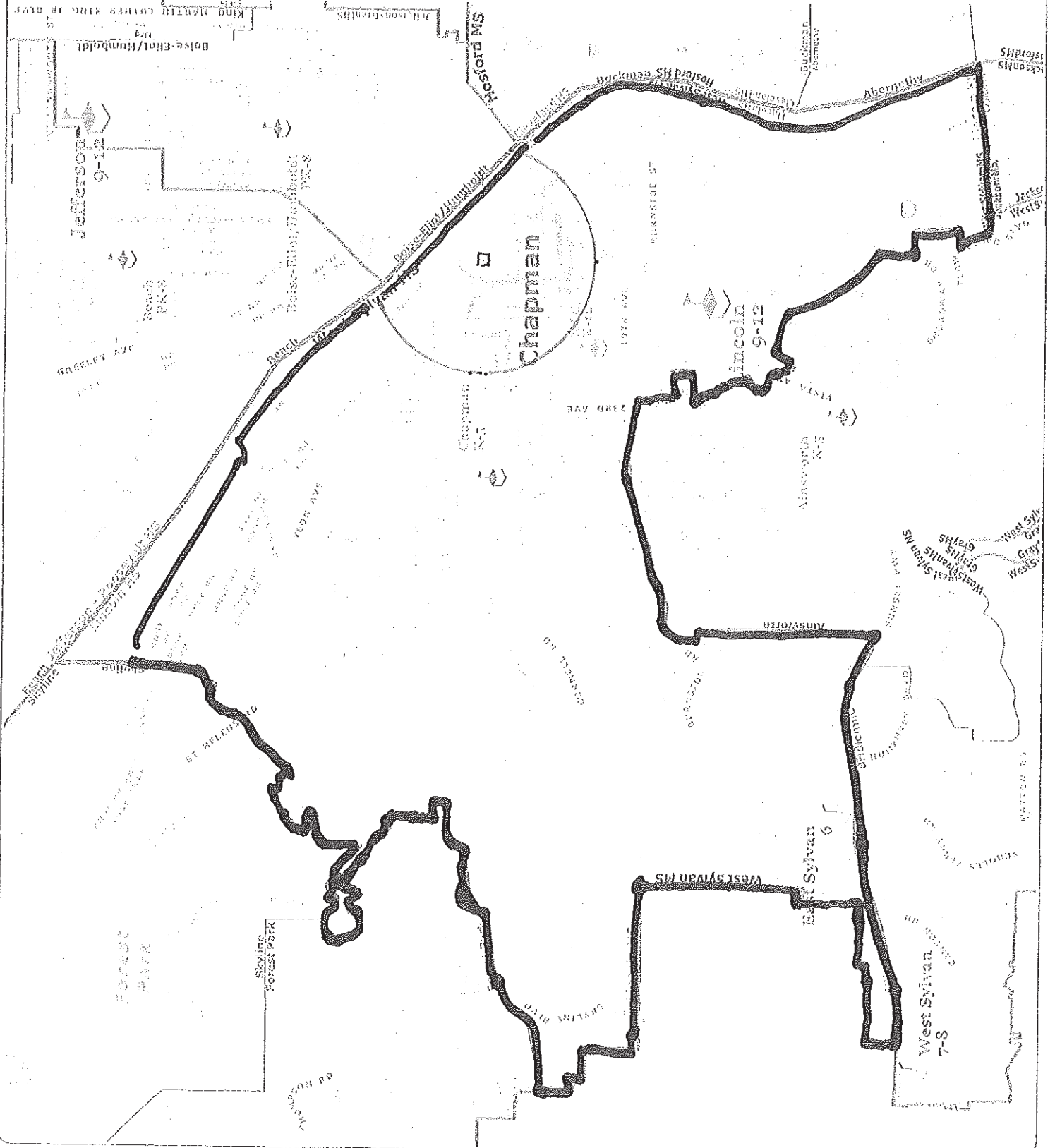
Boundaries

- K-5/K-8
- Middle School
- High School

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Miles 0 0.8



of Births 2008-2013

