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May 12, 2016

Portland City Council
City Hall
1211 SW 4th Ave
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Mayor Hales and City Council Members:

On April 26, 2016, the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) voted unanimously to forward the *Multnomah County Central Courthouse Project* to City Council for approval. This project proposes to raise the maximum building heights on Block 8, Portland Addition, in the Downtown subdistrict of the Central City to accommodate a new County Central Courthouse.

The PSC received testimony in favor of the proposal, which involves increasing the existing height from a maximum of 200 feet to a maximum of 325 feet. Multnomah County staff discussed how the additional height is necessary to accommodate the 460,000 square feet of programming proposed for the building, including a significant amount of courtrooms that require an average floor to ceiling height of 18 feet, which is much taller than the average office space in the Central City.

The Commission, as well as City Council, previously approved a recommendation to increase the maximum height at this location to 325 as part of the West Quadrant Plan. However, rather than wait for final action on this proposal as part of the Central City 235 Plan, the Commission recommends increasing the height on Block 8 now to ensure that critical funding for the project from the State Legislature can begin this project by the first quarter of 2017.

Thank you for considering our recommendation.

Sincerely,

Katherine Schultz, AIA
Chair



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