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October 28, 2016
Planning and Sustainability Commission
1900 SW 4th Ave, #7100
Portland, OR 97201

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

Hacienda CDC is a Latino community development commission that strengthens families by providing affordable housing, homeownership support, economic advancement and educational opportunities. Over our 25 year history, Hacienda has built a network of affordable housing communities in N and NE Portland, serving families earning 60% or less of area median income. We see firsthand the vital importance of a stable home to family success, and are dedicated to ensuring people of color have access to safe, dignified housing at all income levels.

We know that housing stability broadly impacts community wellbeing including educational attainment, community and public health, access to jobs and transit, business, and overall quality of life. Portlanders are already paying for our current housing crisis— in health care and direct service costs, and economic development and worker productivity lost. Fortunately, you have a proposal in front of you that introduces Inclusionary Zoning as a tool to solve our housing crisis. I ask you not to weaken this proposal.

The recommendation from Commissioner Saltzman and the Housing Bureau regarding Inclusionary Zoning is a positive step toward mitigating the hardships facing families in light of this housing crisis. It provides adequate flexibility to ensure developers will not be negatively impacted, while also encouraging positive housing outcomes for communities of color and low-income communities. As a developer ourselves, we provide evidence that low-income housing does not have to be a proposition that loses money. In fact, our properties are returning cash back to the organization, despite serving many families at or below even the 30% MFI threshold. Including more mixed housing in our development mix not only furthers the social and economic benefits of mixed-income neighborhoods throughout the city, it upholds our values as a community.

We urge the PSC and the City Council to support the Inclusionary Zoning Code proposal in front of you. Knowing the urgency of this crisis for many of our families, we are well aware that this is just one of many measures we must take to create an affordable, equitable and livable city. We thank you for your time and commitment for making Portland a better place to live, and look forward to your leadership on this vital housing issue.

Sincerely,

Catherine Kes,
Acting Executive Director

