

From: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
To: [Aiten, Herico](#); [Bradley, Derek](#); [Carrillo, Yesenia](#); [Eale, Ocean](#); [Pierce, Meeseon Kwon](#); [Washington, Mustafa](#); [Williams, Tia](#)
Cc: [King, Lauren](#); [Rees, Linly](#); [Monroe, Staci](#); [Jeter, Michael](#)
Subject: Testimony for LU 20-102914 DZM AD GW – Alamo Manhattan Blocks.
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 4:47:06 PM

From: Karl Keener <karl.keener@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 4:29 PM
To: Council Clerk – Testimony <CCTestimony@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: LU 20-102914 DZM AD GW – Alamo Manhattan Blocks.

To the Honorable Members of the Portland City Council:

My wife and I are current residents and property owners in the South Waterfront.

As a concerned citizen and resident of this city, I attended virtually the last two Design Commission hearing related to the Alamo Manhattan Blocks project. While I am not an outright opponent of the project I do object to the Design Commission's failure to compel the applicants to adhere to the graduated building heights requirements moving from the western boundary towards the river as set forth in Guideline D2. And the Design Commission's lack of any recognition or appreciation for the "design values" of this area and the adjoining structures.

The Commission appears to have ignored or disregarded Guideline A5 which calls for enhancing and embellishing the design character of the area and its natural environment. The river's shoreline which is a major controlling character of this area encroaches in a westerly direction as it moves to the south. The Atwater and the Meriwether structures were required to establish eastern set-backs in conformance with the curvature of the west banks of the river. The Design Commission failed to require similar setbacks for the Alamo Manhattan Blocks project. In essence the Design Commission's approval provides a 100 foot setback in some locations but allows them to encroach on the Greenway space by up to 50 feet in other areas. To permit such intrusions would be to condone the taking of Public Greenway space for the sole and exclusive benefit of a private apartment building developer. It is hard to believe that such a taking, or in this case, give-away could be ethical or legal.

The Commission also failed to recognize the basic entitlement of the existing residents to air and light when they approved the Block 41 and 45 towers. Those towers will present to the community massive and overwhelming high-rise walls extending the full width of the properties from S River Parkway to the river. The existing structures within the South Waterfront are narrower and less overwhelming allowing for far more public access and enjoyment with water features and public art. Buildings like the Atwater and Meriwether are setback with large planted park-like open spaces surrounding the public walkways. While they are large they do not overwhelm the area or the public who are welcome and enticed to enjoy the areas.

The Alamo Manhattan project as approved by the Design Commission would be far more suitable and in keeping with the concrete jungle of downtown Manhattan than the beauty of Portland, OR.

While there are certain members of this Council who have a history of tone deafness when it comes

to concerns about views, traffic congestion and safety, it would be remiss of the Council as a whole to fail to recognize The Alamo Manhattan project as approved by the Design Commission will have a substantial negative impact on traffic congestion and safety in the South Waterfront. That same congestion will adversely impact existing and future South Waterfront commercial tenants and their potential customers.

For all of the above reason I urge this Council to reject the Design Commission's approval of the Alamo Manhattan Blocks project and remand it back to the commission with express instructions to significantly downsize the project in order to protect the character of this community and the integrity of the public Greenway.

Respectfully submitted,

Karl Keener

3601 S. River Parkway, Unit 403
Portland 97239