



September 9, 2020

Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Commissioners Eudaly, Fritz, and Hardesty
1220 SW Fourth Ave.
Portland, OR 97201

RE: Support for Alamo Manhattan South Waterfront Development (Casefile #LU 20-102914 DZM GW AD), and in Opposition to the Appeal

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners,

Oregon Smart Growth (OSG) urges you to support the Alamo Manhattan Blocks housing project (LU20-102914 DZM GW AD) and reject the appeal by nearby condo owners (Project Opponents). OSG is a coalition of developers, investors and allied professions that supports policies encouraging walkable, compact development that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. Development of dense mixed-income housing close to critical services is core to our mission. The Alamo Manhattan (AM) Blocks project is consistent with these policies and we urge you to support the AM Blocks project and reject the appeal by Project Opponents.

Project's Public Benefits.

Increase Housing Supply, Including Affordable Housing. The AM Blocks is a five-building project with approximately 1,200 housing units, 10% of which will be affordable at 60% AMI through the Inclusionary Housing program. There is a pre-existing design approval currently on the property. These pre-existing entitlements were vested prior to Inclusionary Housing requirements and therefore do not require any affordable housing to be constructed as part of the project. Alamo Manhattan elected to forgo this pre-existing approval in order to provide more much-needed housing overall and to also create a mixed-income community. Under the new entitlements being appealed, Alamo Manhattan not only increases the number of overall units but also will be complying with Inclusionary Housing and providing a significant number of affordable units. *As planned, it is our understand that project will provide the largest affordable housing component of any single private project in the city since the implementation of Inclusionary Housing requirements.*

Multi-Modal Improvements. The AM Blocks project fills in a four-block gap in the South Waterfront that is critical for the connectivity and continued success of that area, consistent with smart growth principles. The mixed-income and mixed-use AM Blocks project contributes to the urban form and includes significant multi-modal transportation improvements, including a missing link of the greenway, gracious pedestrian accessways, a completed street grid and the off-site South Portal improvements that address existing traffic congestion. These public benefits improve the South Waterfront area and the City as a whole. The AM Blocks is was approved by the Design Commission after seven meetings where the design was refined to create an ideal project for the City and the neighborhood.

Appeal Motivated by Private View Protection Should be Rejected. We are disappointed to see yet another group of nearby multifamily tower residents asking this Council to prioritize their interests in protecting private views over housing projects that meet allowed height under the current code standards and design guidelines—including this one where there are benefits of a mixed-income housing project with significant public contributions. In fact, the South Portland Neighborhood Association (SPNA) declined to file this appeal after finding that the Project meets the Code standards and design

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guidelines. SPNA found that any appeal would result only in delay since it has no legal merit. Given this decision, and the fact that all relevant concerns were considered during the Design Commission's seven meetings on this project, we must assume the Project Opponents are proceeding with an appeal in order to delay and add costs to the project.

OSG strongly urges the Council to prioritize housing in areas with strong services and transit to meet the full range of needs in Portland over the objections of a few individuals.

Baseless Appeals are Contrary to the City's Interest and Policy Objectives. As the Council knows, extraordinary effort and thoughtfulness goes into the City's crafting of the Code and design guidelines. Developers and project teams work diligently to create projects that comply with regulations and fulfill the City's policies. The Design Commission and public participation that focuses on the applicable criteria, in turn, ensures design excellence. This detailed and deliberative public process is an investment of time and resources, with the dividends being high quality projects that contribute to the public realm and public good.

Baseless appeals undermine the public process, add unnecessary costs and delays to projects, and create unpredictability that discourages housing production...all of which means that housing becomes more expensive and the City's policy objectives are not met.

OSG appreciates your consideration of this matter and urges you to support the AM Blocks project and reject the appeal by Project Opponents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gwenn A. Baldwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gwenn" being more prominent.

Gwenn A. Baldwin
Executive Director

CC: Commissioner-elect Dan Ryan