



July 11, 2022

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability Historic Resources Program
1810 SW 5th Ave, Suite 710
Portland, OR 97201

Dear Chair Minor and Landmarks Commission Members,

The Bosco-Milligan Foundation/ Architectural Heritage Center (BMF/AHC) strongly encourages preservation and good stewardship of Portland's historic buildings, districts, and public landscapes. We generally favor the proposed draft of the South Portland Historic District Guidelines, while offering suggestions that could improve the document.

The document should include a map for the benefit of property owners and other interested citizens that shows district boundaries and current land-use zones. This is an oversight that could be easily corrected.

Overall, we compliment the draft report for identifying various historic building types in the district and emphasizing the importance of scale, context, and materials in relationship to the design of new buildings and renovations of historic fabric. In commercial areas, we believe it is vital for the district to continue its history of active storefronts that provide variety and interest to the pedestrian experience.

We appreciate the difficulty of figuring the best ways of adding three- to five-stories of height where zoning allows, given that development pressures are certain to occur. This importance is magnified given the prospect of an additional story being added for affordable housing. The final report should depict concept images that fit the district's context and building patterns. We are especially concerned that care be taken to assure that new, taller buildings, to whatever extent possible, do not overwhelm neighboring smaller, historic structures. Further, we believe that the appearance of a given building type does not have to dictate its use, thus offering opportunities for variety and creativity while respecting the district's context.

It is discouraging to think it has taken more than twenty years to promulgate design guidelines for the South Portland National Historic District. We encourage the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission and City Council to undertake creation of new historic district design guidelines where none exist and to update existing guidelines as needed. When a final draft is prepared, our Board of Directors will review it to prepare City Council testimony.

Once these guidelines are approved, we encourage the Landmarks Commission, Bureau of Development Services and the City Council to pay close attention to them. Nothing is gained if well-crafted guidelines are ignored or minimized in practice.

We appreciate the work of the consultants and the advisory committee involved in developing these design guidelines and we are confident that competent, talented help is available for comparable work in other historic districts as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denyse C. McGriff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue rectangular background behind it.

Denyse C. McGriff
President, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Whitlock". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Stephanie Whitlock
Executive Director