

Dear Portland City Commissioners, Ms. Anderson and members of the Planning and Sustainability Commission, et al:

My husband and I are long time Portland residents; I grew up in northeast Portland and our children were raised here. My family and I are grateful for the remarkable quality of life that Portland encourages. My husband and I moved to the South Park Blocks in 2007 and appreciate all the amenities that come with living in downtown Portland. We enjoy our West End neighborhood, the surrounding park blocks, and we are frequent patrons of the shops, businesses, theaters and restaurants in the West End, Central City, Pearl District and inner East Side. We can and do walk almost everywhere.

I write to you with concern that high rise buildings could be constructed in the West End and Central City. Our Central City and West End neighborhoods, with the Central Library, First Congregational Church and other historic buildings, have a character that would be obscured or hidden altogether by any proposed tall towers.

I support a 100' maximum height limit for new buildings to allow development in the area that would more likely complement the existing structures and our beautiful park blocks. Taller towers, like those proposed to be over 100' tall are more appropriate to a city like Vancouver, B.C.

The Central City area showcases a Belluschi museum across the street from a nineteenth century sandstone church. These structures, with their more horizontal scale, add to the appeal of our downtown area. The museums, library, shops and the park blocks draw tourists and new residents to the area. It's the quality of life offered by a human-scaled environment that encourages bicycles and use of mass-transit, offers neighborhood necessities for area residents in buildings that do not dwarf older buildings, that will continue to make Portland one of the most attractive and livable cities on the west coast.

There are three thoughtful books that describe in detail the critical importance of building a vibrant and energetic city core geared to its residents; all three propose that the means of doing so is to carefully and consistently choose to build human-scale cities rather than creating concrete canyons. The oldest book of the three (a classic from the 1970's), *A Pattern Language*, describes urban neighborhoods where most every facet of daily life is accessible by foot. *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design* by Charles Montgomery, continues the thought by citing statistics showing that residents of urban areas are active, vote, and work to maintain their smaller footprint neighborhoods closely—because they are walking through it daily, rather than cruising through at 40+ mph. The final book I'll mention is *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America One Step At A Time*, by Jeff Speck. The book dedicates eight pages specifically to the city of Portland and all that it is doing right: spaces for city residents to gather, urban green spaces, short blocks, and again, speaking specifically about Portland, "a new city ambiance" where "creating a higher quality of life is the first step to attracting new residents and jobs ... the power of a great walkable urban place." Speck's praise of Portland is largely owed to your and your predecessors' vision and dedication to our city.

You would not be serving as city commissioner or working in the offices of the PSC if you didn't want the best for Portland, as I do. Please consider whether we want to continue to be a model of forward-thinking, resident-centric urban development and to be known as a city determined to embrace the character of a contemporary but human-scaled downtown, always considering what is best for pedestrians, local businesses and downtown residents, OR as a city arrogantly building ever-taller towers with thought only of the maximum price per square foot.

Thank you for your service to Portland and its residents.

Sincerely,

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