

Letter in support of one hundred foot height limits for new buildings.

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

My wife and I live near the South Park Blocks in downtown Portland, where we have lived since 2007 after decades in the suburbs. We are Oregon natives and long time Portland residents. We thoroughly enjoy living downtown, where our preferred mode of transportation is by foot. We enjoy walking all over town, from PSU to the Pearl, from Washington Park to the inner East side. We enjoy the parks, shops, businesses, theaters and restaurants we walk to and through. To us, and apparently to throngs of others including the many visitors we meet from around the globe, Portland is a great place to be.

We feel blessed to have such a livable city as our home. Whenever we have been away and we catch the first glimpse of downtown Portland as we drive in from the east side of town, we feel so happy to be returning to the city we love. The river, the bridges and the skyline of Portland with the West Hills behind is such a beautiful view. A postcard view. Portland is a city worthy of many postcard views: looking north towards the Fremont Bridge, the St. Johns Bridge, North Portland, Vancouver and beyond to Mt. St. Helens, looking east over the city, the volcanic buttes within this great city, to the sun coming up, or the sunset alpenglow on Mt. Hood. These views are a big part of what many people associate with Portland.

Part of what makes Portland so welcoming and worthy of these postcard views is the human scale of the buildings in the Central City and West End. The building sizes are people-friendly and tend not to block either the sunlight or the beautiful views we love. I am concerned about the scale of future developments that will occur in the West End, the Central City and other areas of downtown. If Portland allows tall towers to be constructed in these areas, they would have a negative impact on the neighborhood livability, and the beauty of our downtown. I support limiting new buildings to a maximum height of one hundred feet.

We have many significant and historic buildings in downtown, including the Pioneer Courthouse, the Performing Arts Center, the Portland Art Museum, the University Club, the Arlington Club, numerous nineteenth century churches, the Central Library, and countless other lower scale buildings that add to the character and livability of our city. The size of these and other buildings give Portland an open and expansively light feel that people love and that make Portland the livable city it is. Allowing the tall towers of Manhattan would only dwarf and obscure our important existing buildings

and create icy wind tunnels devoid of any sunlight. It would make the city feel inhospitable, dark, cold, and closed-in and Portland would lose the character that makes it so great.

As we are learning, we live in earthquake country. Major quakes are forecast which will be unlike anything we have seen in our lifetime. As a city, we are woefully unprepared. Our infrastructure is old and crumbling. Most buildings are not built to current earthquake standards. Our power, water and sewer would cease to function. Our emergency services would be unable to respond adequately. Most areas of Portland would face difficulty, but the downtown area would become an isolated island of disaster. Anyone in the downtown area would have difficulty evacuating because we would be trapped by the bridges and overpasses that fail. The more we increase density in the downtown area, the worse this situation would become. Building tall towers in the area between I-405 and the river would exacerbate this misery.

We have a great history and culture of long-term planning for livability and human scale that we are admired for far and wide. Please consider this while directing the future of Portland. Please do not ruin what we have with a forest of towers that do not belong in our great city. New building heights capped at one hundred feet would allow reasonable development and increase in density, while complementing our existing buildings and maintaining the beauty and character we enjoy and people from around the world envy.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to the city.

Sincerely,

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