

October 6, 2014

Planning and Sustainability Commission  
1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 7100  
Portland, OR 97201

RE: Comprehensive Plan Testimony for Green Thumb (6801 SE 60th Avenue)

I support the proposed change in the zoning of the 12.8 acre urban agriculture and education site known as "Green Thumb" (6801 SE 60th Avenue) from Low Density Multi-Family Residential with an Alternative Design Density Overlay (R2A) to a designation that best reflects its actual use: Open Space (OS). As the Director of Portland Community Gardens from 1975 to 2011, I worked on the designation and development of the Brentwood Community Gardens, and the teaching gardens and the orchard since 1995. For the past two years, I have been on the Board of the Friends of Portland Community Gardens, and am currently Co-Chair of FPCG.

The Friends of Portland Community Gardens was founded in 1985 to support and expand community gardening opportunities for all Portland-area residents to grow healthy food and build community through gardening. The 12.8 acre Green Thumb site provides the Brentwood neighbors this opportunity. Portland Parks Community Garden Program operates the Brentwood Garden, with goals that align with the FPCG. Green Thumb also functions as a prime regional teaching space for PSU students, OSU Master Gardeners, and Portland Public Schools. The site offers a unique place for this collaboration to flourish.

Green Thumb was never intended to be "vacant land" It has functioned as a vibrant, well-used garden and orchard since the 1970's, when it was established as a Portland Public School Horticultural Program. The Friends of Green Thumb worked hard to preserve it as a community garden and teaching site in the 1990's, and it serves thousands of children, teens and adults year-round. Portland Parks realized the value of such a programmed space, and purchased most of the site to protect this unique asset, and sees to its operation and maintenance.

Further protection of Green Thumb will ensure the continued benefits of food security that community growing, learning and farm business activities at this traditional urban green site will provide for the Brentwood Darlington Neighborhood and the City of Portland. Therefore, I request that Green Thumb at 6801 SE 60th be designated and re-zoned from Low Density Multi-Family Residential to Open Space.

Sincerely,

Leslie Pohl-Kosbau

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c. Brentwood Darlington Neighborhood Association