

10/24/2014

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
1900 SW 4th Ave, Suite 7100  
Portland, OR 97201

Dear Commission Members,

My name is Kathie Leck and I have been a homeowner in the Brentwood-Darlington neighborhood since 2009. I live only a few blocks away from the Green Thumb/ Learning Gardens Lab site at 6801 SE 60th. It is one of the reasons why my partner and I chose to live in this neighborhood. How unique to have 12.8 acres of beautiful gardens open to the public for growing food and learning about science, sustainability, and urban farming! Lane Middle School students, Portland State University students, developmentally disabled young adults in the Community Transition Program and others all benefit by the various learning programs offered here. This wonderful place also provides pesticide-free habitat for birds and pollinators. Furthermore, we have many important community events here like the Earth Day celebration, the Harvest Festival, plant sales, and the annual neighborhood clean-up. It is simply a beautiful place in which to decompress from life's pressures and to just enjoy!

The Green Thumb/ Learning Gardens Lab is truly a gem that should be celebrated by Portland, a city that prides itself on sustainability. Instead, I was SHOCKED and DISMAYED to learn that the city planners decided to keep this treasure zoned as **multi-dwelling residential R2A** instead of changing it to the more appropriate Open Space designation. To add insult, the Commission did not even consult with the Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood Association to ask for input when determining proposed changes for our neighborhood in the Comprehensive Plan.

Honestly, hasn't this neighborhood suffered enough? We pay higher property taxes in proportion to neighborhoods with more amenities in inner Southeast and Northeast Portland and yet we have triple the regional average (approximately 17%) of residents living in poverty. We already have more property zoned as R2A when compared to nearby neighborhoods like Woodstock, Mt. Scott-Arleta, and Eastmoreland. Yet many of our roads are still unpaved and lack sidewalks and, thus, do not support the level of density allowable by the R2A designation. We are now in the midst of having to watch developers chop down our majestic Douglas firs, divide lots, tear down good housing stock and replace all of that with inappropriately large houses that do not fit the character of our neighborhood. Consequently, preserving the Green Thumb/ Learning Gardens Lab by properly zoning it as Open Space is truly an **issue of equity**.

We are all going to have to live with the Comprehensive Plan updates for the next 20 years. Do we really want to see the Green Thumb/ Learning Gardens Lab – a shining example of Portland sustainability and defined as a **community resource** in the 1996 Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood Plan – DESTROYED by improper zoning? Do we really want to see these acres of trees, flowers, native habitat and lovingly tended food beds and orchards leveled by developers? I don't! So PLEASE recognize the historic use of this wonderful place and re-zone it as Open Space.

Sincerely,  
Kathie Leck  
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