



Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association

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East Portland Neighborhood Office, 1017 NE 117th Avenue, Portland, OR 97220

October 27, 2014

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

The Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association wishes to voice strong support for the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's proposed "downzoning" in our neighborhood. Ever since our area was zoned incredibly densely during the 1996 Outer Southeast Community Plan, our neighborhood has struggled to adequately support the growth that has occurred within our boundaries. Our schools are over capacity, we have a woeful lack of appropriate infrastructure to support current zoning, and a large percentage of the land within our area is subject to seismic instability due to steep slopes and the highly liquefied soil.

During the last couple of decades the combination of increased density and lack of investment in infrastructure has caused the quality of life for most of our residents to plummet. While we seek more investment in our area, the basic resources in our area have not historically kept pace with the increased population that we have been asked to sustain. We believe that it makes sense to shift some of our designated density to other parts of Portland that more easily have the capacity accommodate this growth at less cost.

During our last PGNA meeting we voted unanimously, albeit with one abstention, to support the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's downzoning within our neighborhood. This said, many of our constituents voiced a desire for even less density than is being proposed by BPS, some asking for zoning to be reversed back to 1995 levels. Our main concerns include:

- The schools within our neighborhood do a wonderful job with the resources that they are given, but the number of school aged children in our area has burgeoned in the last couple of decades, and there has been a significant increase in the percentage of students who receive free or subsidized lunches because of their income levels.
- We appreciate having new contiguous sidewalks along 122nd and 136th, but Powell Boulevard and most of our side streets still lack safe passage for our children. The connectivity within our neighborhood is lacking, and most of our constituents lack good accessibility to parks, grocery stores, commercial establishments and other community resources.
- Some of the areas that the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability wants to downzone have environmental considerations such as steep slopes. We believe more attention should be paid to the highly liquefied soils between Powell Butte and Gilbert Park Elementary School, as identified by the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, since this ground would become liquid in the event of significant seismic activity.

For these reasons the Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association strongly encourages you to support less density in our neighborhood, and to follow through with the downzoning proposed by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Richard Dickinson
Board Member, Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association