

DECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

NAME (print)	ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE	Email
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I'm Margaret Davis with United Neighborhoods for Reform. I'm also on the board of the Beaumont-Wilshire and Rose City Park neighborhood associations.

The above picture was taken Friday and shows a demolition at 3558 NE 44th Ave., two doors away from me. If you lived nearby, your home, any play structure or barbecue in your yard, and your vegetable garden would be covered in the dust emanating from this demolition. It was a breezy day so I could clearly see the clouds billowing across the block. Federal studies have shown this toxic dust travels up to 400 feet. The house was under 600 square feet, but the dust kept coming all day long and continued this week.

What was in that dust? No one knows. We do know that it is nearly certain that any home built before 1978, as this one was, contained many coats of lead paint. Each can of lead paint contained 15 pounds of lead. Asbestos also could have been part of the toxic clouds. Again, we don't know.

Based on public health concerns, this council recently banned smoking in city parks. The health effects of lead and asbestos also are well-known, with the Centers for Disease Control stating that no amount of lead is safe in children. I saw the dust from this demolition coat the swingset my neighbor keeps for her granddaughters. If public health is as important to this council as you say it is, then I urge you to tackle the uncontrolled release of lead and asbestos with as much seriousness as you did the smoking hazard.

The toxic drift launched by mechanical demolition can be avoided through deconstruction. The careful dismantling of homes, coordinated with certified abatement activities, helps contain hazardous materials and sends them to the appropriate facilities. It does carry a small additional cost, but safeguarding our air and Earth are worth it. We are worth it.

I understand the council doesn't want to touch the toxic issue of hazmat control and enforcement, but Portland needs to address it as the city enters its third record-breaking year for home demolitions. The voluntary measures recently instituted by BDS clearly will not protect Portlanders from exposure to lead and asbestos as developers pursue business as usual with wasteful mechanical demolition that sends lead and asbestos into our air, bodies, and lungs.

You don't have to directly touch hazmat control to fix this problem. You can make deconstruction the safe sustainable solution.

As our elected leaders, you have the opportunity—even the responsibility—to prioritize public health and safety over the profits of a small group of players.

If deconstruction was made mandatory in a timely manner, as opposed to the voluntary program proposed in the document today, and if the costs of deconstruction were assumed by those profiting from demolition instead of taxpayers, UNR could readily support the proposal at hand.

The Deconstruction Advisory Group has done fine work, and it would be a shame if its efforts were made moot by tenuous timelines, voluntary status, and payouts to developers to do the right thing.

Make deconstruction mandatory and fast-track its implementation. And in so doing, you will put a stop to the toxic clouds no one should have to ingest.

6/3/2015
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PANEL TESTIMONY FOR CITY COUNCIL HEARING ON DECONSTRUCTION June 3, 2015

Barbara Kerr, United Neighborhoods for Reform representative on Deconstruction Advisory Group

The list of benefits of deconstruction over mechanical demolition is long as you know. It meets goals of the Climate Action Plan, affordable housing, economic development, and most urgently, reduces the public's involuntary exposure to hazardous materials. When UNR met with Portland's neighborhoods, 43 formally signed on to our resolution. But in none of all of the meetings was deconstruction controversial. If a house must be removed and cannot be re-sited, the public feels deconstruction is a given.

UNR appreciates the City moving forward on making deconstruction the way Portland demolishes buildings. We would gladly support the resolution if it were amended to:

- 1) direct all public funds for a deconstruction program to go to training, education, and certification for deconstructionists, including the existing industry, and not incentivize contractors and developers; and that these efforts maintain the standards set by the existing deconstruction industry.
- 2) shorten the time before deconstruction is required by
 - taking immediate actions to train, inform, and educate to support voluntary deconstruction as soon as possible, and
 - set an endpoint, measurable goal in terms of full deconstruction. Plus, in order to meet the goal, setting a date for when the DAG committee will determine if a given amount of progress in full or partial deconstruction has been made, which if not reached will require making deconstruction mandatory.

We recommend that if the proposal cannot be amended as such today, then it be sent back to DAG.

In the DAG meetings we discussed the following concerns related to these requested amendments:

Relating to our first amendment, INCENTIVIZING DEVELOPERS was an issue.

We feel paying developers to deconstruct or paying deconstruction companies to help lower their bids creates two major problems:

- 1) it misleads the building industry and public into thinking deconstruction is not a viable business model, a premise that deconstruction industry in Portland has been disproving for the last 18 years.
- 2) it further incentivizes demolition of our affordable homes, our homes of character that make up our most desirable neighborhoods, and our historic homes.

Relating to our second amendment, OBJECTIONS TO SHORTENING TIME were

Time for developers to transition

- It is not like outlawing plastic bags or Styrofoam containers; there is no inventory to use up; there are professionals ready, willing, and able to bid new jobs .
- I started selling used building materials when we founded Rejuvenation in 1977. The public response was hugely enthusiastic from day one. We, including the building industry, have had decades to see that deconstruction is where we are going – where we have to go. There has been plenty of time to transition and some have done so very successfully.

Increase cost to developers was a concern.

- It has been shown that the difference in cost, depending on the building, is in the \$5,000-7,000 range on average – a small amount compared to what is being paid to buy a house just to tear it down.
- Developers would have to pay for the abatement of materials that deconstruction will expose. But first, abatement costs have greatly decreased. And second, they are going to have to abate as we move forward with SB705 and further increased control of hazardous materials exposure. As stated in the DAG meetings, 80% of the time a house goes through initial abatement before deconstruction, the abatement company has to be called back to remove hazardous materials that were hidden but then found as the deconstruction progressed. These materials would not be found if the house were mechanically demolished after the first abatement. The abatement companies just do sampling. You have to take the house apart to the studs in order to expose all possible hazardous materials. As we move to not allowing hazardous materials to be released into the air, mechanical demolition, except for the concrete foundations, will not be feasible. It will be done by deconstruction. The City is doing the building industry a favor by supporting them to quickly make the transition to deconstruction.

Can market handle the influx of materials?

- The deconstructionists said yes. The Rebuilding Center sells 700-1000 doors a month locally. Besides condition, volume determines the price of used materials. More of the materials on the market lowers prices. Lower prices fuel an even larger market for reuse.

The deconstructionists ability to respond to the increased workload was a question.

- They say yes, they can. When they first began to get publicity, the Rebuilding Center grew from 6 employees to 33 in a year and a half. It might be tough, but these are our pioneers; they want to see it happen. There are organizations already in the business of training deconstruction laborers and companies.
- Deconstruction warehouses and yards are simple. Space can be rented.
- Existing companies would come from out of state; existing businesses, such as abatement companies and mechanical demolition companies would expand into deconstruction; small businesses would spawn.

TIME FOR CITY TO DEVELOP STANDARDS AND TRAINING was a concern.

- The deconstructionists in Portland have established standards that they have time tested for many years and are anxious to share. They could be adapted and adopted.
- BPS is already planning a deconstruction training for the preferred contractors list this September. With the grant from Metro they could expand it to more individuals and companies wanting to be trained and certified.
- Earth Advantage has an accredited training already and the local deconstructionists would be available to inform the process.
- The city could help sponsor information events for builders and developers to gain access to the deconstruction industry from deconstructionists to reuse sales. Include house movers. Showcase projects. The Rebuilding Center has a standing invitation for mechanical demolition contractors to job shadow them.

TIME FOR THE CITY TO BE ABLE TO ENFORCE DECONSTRUCTION REGULATIONS

If the criteria is full deconstruction, or partial in the short run, the definition (Full is complete removal to the foundation and partial is removal down to the studs and joists.) is easy for both the City to enforce and for the neighbors to be the watchdogs.

Deconstruction greatly reduces the need for the City or any agency to enforce public safety laws for hazardous materials. It is difficult for deconstructionists to avoid following the rules in terms of safety even if they wanted to. For one, they have more workers involved and two, the extra time allows for more time to get caught. So enforcement of hazmat regulations will be easier and more thorough relieving the City of a major issue to address.

WE NEED LEADERSHIP

We don't need transition or more debate. We need leadership. We need the Council to announce that Portland is committed to deconstruction because of all it does for the City. Then:

-Set the goal now. Let the building industry know now what the City is going to require and why. If we are beginning the training in the next few months and stating the commitment to deconstruction now, the transitioning can move forward and give DAG a head start on working out the needs that arise.

-Follow through on getting the facts rather than debating. The deconstructionist industry locally, nationally, and internationally has history and studies. There were other cities sitting in on the DAG meetings by phone to see what we are doing. When Portland moves to deconstruction rather than mechanical demolition, we will attract national and international interest and help. We are not alone and do not need to start from scratch.

-Order an economic study done by an economist to describe the costs and triple bottom line benefits for the City. If it takes a year for the study to be done, it will also serve as an assessment of the success during that year to report back to the public.

The TIMELINE we would find acceptable is:

Public education starting with immediate announcement that the City is committed to deconstruction and why, and publicizing efforts such as the training.

September 2015 - Training for laborers and contractors leading to certification.

March 2016 - DAG review of progress of voluntary constructions. If not on track to meet end goal, full deconstruction becomes mandatory as of September 2016.

We need leadership and we need it now. With an average of a demolition a day we need can't wait any longer. We have known for decades that it is what we need to do. UNR does not want to see this proposal go back to the DAG without a strong and responsible resolution. We are asking you to amend it to require the use of funds only for training and education, maintain the high level of standards of the existing deconstruction industry, and take immediate action in starting the transition with a set, measurable, and short timeline for the goal of deconstruction being the way Portland does demolition – if a building must be demolished.

Parsons, Susan

From: Parsons, Susan
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2015 2:29 PM
To: 'Rachel Loftin'
Cc: Dave Nielsen; Paul Grove; Jon Kloor
Subject: RE: Letter in support of voluntary deconstruction program

Received and forwarded to Council.
Thank you.

Susan Parsons
Assistant Council Clerk
City of Portland
susan.parsons@portlandoregon.gov
503.823.4085

From: Rachel Loftin [mailto:Rachelloftin@hbapdx.org]
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2015 1:27 PM
To: Parsons, Susan
Cc: Dave Nielsen; Paul Grove; Jon Kloor
Subject: Letter in support of voluntary deconstruction program

Hi Susan,

I'd like to submit the attached letter to the record for the City Council meeting tomorrow. Please confirm receipt.

Thank you,

Rachel Loftin
Executive & Government Relations Assistant | Home Builders Association of Metro Portland
t 503.684.1880 ext. 109 | hbapdx.org

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Home Builders Association
of Metropolitan Portland

May 28, 2015

Portland City Council
City of Portland
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Rm. 140
Portland, OR 97204

Re: Deconstruction Resolution

Mayor Hales and Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the Home Builders Association of Metro Portland (HBA) as well as our many individual members who are active in building within the City and in issues related to infill and redevelopment, we'd like to express our support for the resolution before you as proposed by the City's Deconstruction Advisory Group (DAG). This proposal creates a voluntary deconstruction program that provides training, technical assistance and incentives to help better understand and address an issue that impacts housing and our communities.

The DAG, convened by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability under the direction of Shawn Wood, proved to be a productive forum where diverse stakeholders could engage on strategies and incentives to advance deconstruction, as well as identify potential barriers and address misconceptions on the issue.

As discussions unfolded, the need became evident to further quantify and refine information on demolitions and deconstruction, including efforts already in place with demolitions that reduce impact to landfills, requirements already in place to mitigate health issues, understanding the market for salvaging and reselling materials, as well as quantifying the costs involved and the many factors that determine which buildings are more effective to deconstruct versus demolish. The recommendations and resolution before the Council help ensure we correctly identify the problems, determine the appropriate solutions, and achieve the best possible outcomes for our communities, our industry, and for housing affordability.

The HBA has already taken a leadership position on both waste and health issues related to residential construction through our sustainability education programs and our successful lead based paint certification classes. We will continue to be an active partner and examine ways to improve upon the work already being done in this area. The reuse of materials and decreased impact to landfills are goals we support.

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide meaningful input on this important issue. We look forward to continuing this dialogue and being a partner in the education, training and incentive efforts as the City moves forward with the program.

Home Builders Association of Metro Portland
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503-684-1880 • Fax 503-684-0588

Respectfully,



Dave Nielsen
CEO



Eric Thompson
Oregon Homeworks



Bruce Howard
Everett Custom Homes



Jeff Fish
Fish Construction NW



Richard Kassebaum
Bluestone Homes



Vic Remmers
Everett Custom Homes

TERRY PARKER
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371 27

Subject: Testimony to the Portland City Council on the DAG resolution June 3, 2015.

When a home is to be torn down, it must be done with respect, responsibility and a high level of sustainability.

On December 14th of last year, I testified before you stating that "Portland is in the rears when it comes to managing home demolitions" and that "private property becomes a public problem when 75 percent or more of a single family home is sent to the landfill, and when dust and potentially hazardous materials are spread to and trespass on neighboring properties." Kudos, in that a conversation is now taking place within the Deconstruction Advisory Committee

However the actual pace of progress is moving way too slow. How many more single family homes will continue to be torn down using an excavator? How much more dust, dirt and hazardous materials will be spewed into residential neighborhoods and into the lungs of children at play? The estimate on track is that over 400 vintage single family homes will be torn down this year - most of those tear downs by mechanical demolition clawing at, ripping apart and crunching up what was once somebody's family home.

The resolution timetable can be likened to a local milk run just drifting along on a bumpy branch line railroad when the need and the public demand is for high speed rail.

To pick up the pace on the route towards better air quality and deconstruction becoming the norm, any financial incentives in the form of taxpayer dollars must be directed towards growing the deconstruction industry through training, education and certification. The money should not be going to developers to subsidize the eco-friendly tear down option.

Accompanying any taxpayer funding must be an accelerated timetable towards a policy change due date that includes regular progress reports along the way to you the City Council. At the end of the line, the goal must be that with deconstruction, a significant percentage of materials from any home tear downs are preserved for the reusable market. Ultimately when the train pulls into the station and the people arrive at their green inspired destination, deconstruction and the reuse of building materials becomes the standard in Portland if and when a single family home is torn down.

Finally, the city already has a hammer it can use to start pulling nails - even those stubborn nails. Make deconstruction mandatory as a component of the Climate Change Acton Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Parker
Northeast Portland
UNR Steering Committee