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Education and Leadership for our members and our community*

April 20, 2016

Planning and Sustainability Commission  
City of Portland  
1900 SW Fourth Avenue  
Portland, OR 97201-5380

Re: Multnomah County Central Courthouse Project: Amendment to Minimum Height Limit  
on Block 8, Portland

Dear PSC Commissioners:

On behalf of the Multnomah Bar Association Board of Directors, I am writing in support of the requested building height increase from 200 feet to 325 feet on Block 8 to accommodate the proposed downtown courthouse for the Multnomah County Circuit Court. The construction of the new courthouse is one of the MBA's top priorities. Building a new downtown courthouse has been on the county's agenda since 1968, but for a variety of reasons the project stalled in the past. It is imperative the project be completed now. If the height limit is not increased, the courthouse could not be built at the current site.

The current courthouse is drastically outdated and presents a safety risk to the hundreds of employees who work in the courthouse and the thousands of people who visit it every week as jurors, witnesses, litigants and observers. The current courthouse also is functionally obsolete in terms of technology that is needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and is no longer large enough to meet the needs of Multnomah County's growing population.

The MBA Board of Directors believes it is important that the courthouse be downtown because of the practical need to be near the Justice Center and jail, to be near public transportation, and to be near the existing downtown infrastructure that supports the legal community. It is also important that the courthouse, as one of the key symbols of our system of justice and one of the figurative centers of the community, be in the center of the community. The current site has the added benefit of being a "gateway" into downtown; having such an important community building at such a prominent site helps showcase the community's commitment to justice.

Very truly yours,

Eric L. Dahlin  
Multnomah Bar Association Secretary, and Chair of MBA New Courthouse Committee

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