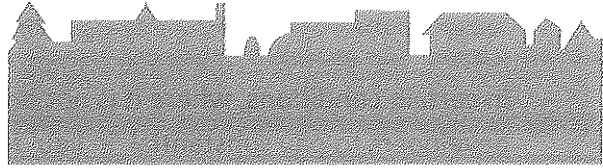


May 10, 2016

Planning and Sustainability Commission  
1900 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, OR 97201-5380



RE: Testimony on Mixed Use Zones

Thank you for the opportunity to present comments today. It was a great experience to serve as a member of the Mixed Use Zones Policy Advisory Committee. I would like to commend the work of staff in taking on a very complicated project and proposing a much improved zoning scheme for mixed use zones.

The advisory process included committee members visiting various mixed use areas to experience these environments first hand. We heard presentations from various experts and consultants. City transportation staff discussed parking and traffic issues that interface with mixed use development. Economists analyzed the financial feasibility of proposed bonuses. Members of the public had the opportunity to share comments at the end of each meeting. Committee members engaged in much discourse and provided feedback to inform the staff's work. The result is a much more streamlined and improved mixed use zoning scheme that should improve development in the City's centers and corridors. There is more work to be done, but there was a thoughtful and well implemented process with much give and take.

My professional background is in affordable housing, and particularly housing for very low income persons with special needs. I also live in a historic district in Northwest Portland and have observed how insensitive infill development can adversely change the character of areas that should be preserved as part of our City's heritage.

Based on my background and experience on the committee, I would like to highlight three areas:

1. Affordable Housing. The proposed bonuses to provide additional density in exchange for affordable housing units are a key component. They provide an opportunity and a challenge. The greatest need is for affordable housing for the lowest income populations (those at 0-30% of AMI). It would be a shame if the bonuses only create housing for persons at 80% of AMI, as proposed. As these bonuses get implemented, I encourage incentives that enable affordable housing units for persons at 0-60% of AMI to be included in new development. For example:

- Consider providing gradations of bonuses where the greatest bonuses are allowed for the provision of the lowest-rent units;
- Encourage new business models where private developers can partner with nonprofit housing providers who can manage the affordable units; and

- In certain conditions, where it is not practical or desirable to include affordable units, allow developers to pay substantial 'in lieu' fees and use these fees to subsidize units for the lowest income populations (0-30% of AMI).

2. Preserving Portland's Sense of Place. There has been much tension in Portland around demolitions and increasing density. In considering mixed zone criteria, there was considerable discussion about preserving neighborhood character and providing for transitions between mixed use and lower density residential zones. I applaud proposed provisions that help preserve historic districts. These include (a) not allowing the transfer of development rights from historic buildings to new development within a historic district and (b) not allowing bonuses to apply within historic districts. These measures help to implement the historic preservation goals in the new Comprehensive Plan. It's easy to forget that preserving older buildings often means preserving affordable housing units. Preserving our City's heritage is important. Maintaining historic areas helps to retain Portland's sense of place as our city grows.

3. Overlays and Plan Districts. Zoning schemes are very complicated. I personally learned much about the various zoning mechanisms that govern the location of various uses throughout our community and the characteristics of new development. The new mixed use zones create some inconsistencies, or maybe confusion, for areas where there is an existing plan district and/or historic district. Staff did a remarkable job of responding to questions and concerns. Overall, there is an assurance that the plan district criteria are retained. However, there is still work to be done to sort out how the new zoning scheme specifically applies to areas where there are plan districts and overlay zones (such as historic districts). In some cases, a plan district may have had "placeholder zoning" (such as EX in NW Portland). I encourage the Commission to consider the need for further clarification and refinement. In NW Portland, where I live, there is a plan district and an historic district. You will be hearing from representatives of the Northwest District Association and other neighborhoods. I urge continued attention to the voices of people who live in Portland's many wonderful neighborhoods as the new mixed use zones are implemented.

Respectfully submitted,

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