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Sent: Friday, July 15, 2016 12:50 PM
To: Planning and Sustainability Commission <psc@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: Central City 2035 Plan Testimony

Please include the following written comment in testimony on the Central City 2035 Plan.

City staff have done a superb job working with the citizens, businesses and organizations to develop a 20-year road map for a vibrantly balanced urban environment. If anything, the Plan is a bit under-ambitious.

The City of Portland is the most populated urban center in Oregon, with the largest economic base within a 120 mile radius. As a primary regional hub, enhancing the Central City's density, infrastructure and livability are critical to maintaining regional competitiveness.

The City is unique and fortunate to have a major research university on the edge of it's downtown. Portland State University is an anchor institution, bringing over \$50M in research dollars into the downtown annually. The University serves over 35,000 downtown visitors weekly and is a major urban re-developer, . Over 60% of those visitors arrive by regional mass-transit, making the Urban Center at SW Montgomery and SW 6th the highest volume transit stop in the city.

The area between SW 4th and SW Broadway (east and west) and SW Market and the 405 Freeway (north and south) were zoned for maximum 6:1 FAR densities in 1995, when the University District was first conceived. The current plan proposes retaining this low downtown density cap until 2035. This would constrain downtown redevelopment and the Central City's competitiveness.

Since the University District was established with a 6:1 FAR, the Portland Streetcar system and the MAX light-rail system were installed, supporting greater trip volume. Since that time, land values in the district's urban core have increased on average over 300% and an Innovation Zone development assessment has been added. These factors support increasing the allowable FAR to both meet trip generation demand and the economic scale of development required in relation development costs.

The area north of SW Market is currently zoned 9:1 FAR and the depressed 405 freeway on the south serves as a scale buffer. The areas east of SW 4th Avenue and west of Broadway are 6:1 FAR and of different urban character. Zoning the area between Market, the 405 freeway, 4th and Broadway **8:1** would focus future development density along the transit corridor, stepping it down from the central business district (9:1), and further down to the park blocks on the west and the Willamette River on the east.

This is an important development node in supporting the Central City over the next 20-years. As an architect and urban planner involved in the early conception and implementation of the University District, I would like to encourage the city to envision greater local vitality by increasing the allowable base density in this zone to 8:1 FAR.

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