

Land Use and Design Review Committee Old Town / Chinatown Community Association

August 8, 2016

Planning and Sustainability Commission
1900 SW Fourth Ave., Ste. 7100
Portland OR 97201

Attn: CC2035 Testimony

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing on behalf of the Old Town Chinatown Community Association's Land Use and Design Review Committee to support proposed height reductions in the New Chinatown Japantown Historic District. Historic districts typically have lower height restrictions to help preserve the historic aesthetic of the area. For example, the 75' height restriction in the Old Town Skidmore Historic District is important to maintaining the character of that district.

New Chinatown Japantown does not currently have a 75' restriction. Rather, this district currently allows heights ranging from 100' to 325'. We support reducing these heights to 100' and 125' as proposed by BPS staff. These heights strike a balance between historic preservation and pragmatism, as our neighborhood embraces both preservation of our historic assets and redevelopment goals.

There is one other proposed change that has raised questions of equity within our association's members. There is a swath between 5th Avenue and Broadway, north of Burnside, where BPS is recommending reducing maximum height from 460' to 250'. This change makes sense to us, as 460' would be out of scale with the immediately adjacent historic district and it seems unlikely that any development in that area would need 460' to be successful. But we have had members question why a six-block portion of that swath (between Burnside and Everett) is not allowed to bonus up to 325' when adjacent blocks to the north are allowed to achieve bonus heights up to 325'. We do not have consensus around whether we support this change, but we also do not fully understand why the six blocks closest to Burnside should be treated differently than neighboring blocks to the north.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Zach Fruchtengarten, Co-Chair
Land Use and Design Review Committee



Sarah Stevenson, Co-Chair
Land Use and Design Review Committee