



Concordia Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 11194
Portland, OR 97211
landuse@concordiapdx.org

Re: Residential Infill Project

September 19th, 2016

Portland City Council
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Mayor Charlie Hales, mayorcharliehales@portlandoregon.gov
Commissioner Steve Novick, novick@portlandoregon.gov
Commissioner Amanda Fritz, amanda@portlandoregon.gov
Commissioner Nick Fish, nick@portlandoregon.gov
Commissioner Dan Saltzman, dan@portlandoregon.gov

Dear Council Members,

The City is at a crossroads. Our single family residential zones contain homes that have ceased to become affordable to the average Portland family. Demolitions in these zones mostly demolish smaller, older homes to construct larger, new single-family homes, as developers seek to increase the number of square footage to multiply by the cost per square foot of comparable nearby homes in order to make their profit from each deal. This results in more and more large, expensive homes that aren't affordable to most of the families who might be able to fully use their space, and generally are purchased by people of means who don't actually need all that space. Supply, in short, is not meeting demand. The decision point we find ourselves at is this: do we allow this situation to continue and worsen, or do we take steps to fix it?

After reviewing the staff proposal from the Residential Infill Project, as well as the Summary Report from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, and the Portland For Everyone and United Neighborhoods for Reform platforms, we find that the Concordia Neighborhood Association can only fully endorse and support the Housing Diversity Perspective (the Majority Position) that was supported by the majority of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. This proposal is the one that seems to make the boldest moves towards fixing the current supply and demand imbalance within our residential neighborhoods.

It is important for us to state that we agree with the spirit of the staff proposal, which we understand to be a grand compromise to reduce the scale of new development in single family neighborhoods in

exchange for allowing more Missing Middle housing types. Further, we support the efforts made by a wide range of community based groups to build a broad coalition of community members who favor this compromise and wish to see it implemented in all single family zones, not just those closest to centers and corridors.

However, we have an overriding belief that our neighborhoods should be regulated based on the form and scale of buildings, rather than limiting the number of units within a structure or on a lot by density regulations. Regulating based on form, rather than a numerical count of "units," will give the housing market the most freedom to respond to demand in the most appropriate manner for each time and place. This freedom will not only allow the market to react to the current housing shortage, but also to respond to whatever changes to market conditions that the future may bring.

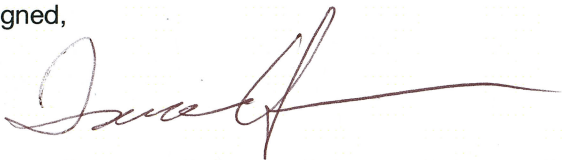
As the Housing Diversity Perspective is the only proposal that clearly states that form would be used to regulate the intensity of development, rather than density or a numerical cap on the number of units, this is the proposal that we endorse and encourage the City to adopt in the form of term sheets to guide code development over the coming year.

Our endorsement comes with three caveats:

- 1) In the R2.5 zone, minimum front setbacks shall be 10ft (15ft in R5), except where less is allowed due to the context of neighboring properties. The maximum allowable height in the R2.5 zone shall remain at 35 feet, with the height in the R5 zone remaining at 30 feet. The R2.5 zone is the transition zone between the lower-intensity R5 zone and adjacent centers and corridors; as such, it should have a more urban feel, including taller allowed heights, smaller allowed setbacks, and higher FARs.
- 2) Neighborhoods shall have the ability to work with City staff to devise and adopt, and have BDS regulate and oversee, neighborhood or area-specific design standards. This will allow neighborhoods to articulate their own vision for the character of development within their boundaries, and thus fine-tune elements of form for buildings developed there in order to incrementally achieve that vision.
- 3) We agree with the United Neighborhoods for Reform that the allowable FAR should be 0.9, not 0.5, in the R5 zone (and thus, it should be even higher in the R2.5 zone). This would allow for a full two-story house that covers 45% of a lot, which we understand to be the maximum allowable lot coverage.

With these caveats and adjustments, we feel strongly that the Housing Diversity Perspective will allow neighborhoods to determine their future destiny in terms of setting the terms of the character of future development, while allowing for the diversity of housing types that must be built in order for supply to come back into balance with the changing demographic demands of future generations.

Signed,



Isaac Quintero
Chair, Board of Directors

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