



City of

PORTLAND, OREGON

Development Review Advisory Committee

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DRAFT

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Members of the Planning & Sustainability Commission,

Thank you for taking the time to review this testimony provided on behalf of the Portland Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) regarding the Residential Infill Project (RIP). As the appointed citizen committee responsible for reviewing issues related to development in Portland, there are two particular aspects of the RIP that are of concern to DRAC members.

Our first and foremost concern is the departure of the current RIP proposal from the original draft put forward by the Residential Infill Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee (RIPSAC). This group consisted of members of DRAC, the community, neighborhood advocates and City planners. The original proposal was the product of countless hours of discussion and compromise, resulting in a fair and balanced proposal that seemed to strike the right balance of preserving the character of existing neighborhoods while providing more options for new housing construction in Portland. Unfortunately, many of the changes in the current proposal actually serve to limit or remove available types of housing. In light of Portland's current housing emergency, members of the DRAC are concerned that eliminating housing types (such as historically platted narrow lots, for example) will have an adverse affect on the availability and affordability of housing in Portland.

Second, we share concerns expressed in testimony provided by the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) regarding the technical aspects of these proposed code changes. As the bureau tasked with implementation of this code, BDS has shared several areas of concern with the PSC regarding the interpretation and enforcement of the code. As a general rule, the easier the code is to understand, the easier it is for the development community to design to it and for City staff to enforce it. However, many aspects of the proposed new code are very complex, and residential applicants as well as owners will face confusion in trying to meet its requirements.

Of particular concern is the addition of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirements on top of all the other regulations that apply to projects. While we understand the desire to limit the scale of houses, we agree with BDS's position that there are less complex means to address this issue, such as reducing allowable heights or applying square footage maximums based on zone.

We acknowledge that it is important to consider the design of new homes and try to blend them into existing structures. However, it is important that we do this without losing sight of the families who need affordable housing choices.

Sincerely,

Justin Wood, Chair
Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)