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January 28, 2019

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Members of Portland City Council  
Portland City Hall  
1221 SW Fourth Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204

### **Subject: Neighborhood Contact Code Update Project**

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners:

The Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) forwards our recommendations on the Neighborhood Contact Code Update Project. The proposal builds on existing code requirements to make more information available to more people.

On August 14, 2018, the PSC held a hearing on the staff proposal and took testimony from members of the public, including several representatives of neighborhood associations. We followed this with a discussion of PSC suggestions at a work session on August 28, 2018. The PSC voted 5-1 to recommend the amendments. In general, the PSC expressed support for the regulations, with some minor changes to provide more specificity around meeting requirements and to add requirements for making information about development available electronically.

Concerns were raised during the discussion that the requirements might create barriers to development in Portland and also have the potential to create confusion in the public about non-discretionary vs. discretionary proposals. These concerns are weighed against the opportunity for the public to talk with developers in an informal context.

### **Issues and context**

The implementation of the proposed changes will be dependent on strong support from the Bureau of Development Services to help project developers and the public to communicate with each other effectively. We hope that BDS will be able to dedicate resources to making the neighborhood contact work as well as possible. For example, we would like to see BDS encourage developers to work with local community organizations – neighborhood associations, business associations, community-based non-profits, and others – to help host required meetings.

This project is also an opportunity for the City to implement its goals and policies around transparency and availability of information. The PSC amendment specifically calls out the need for BDS to make the



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neighborhood contact information available online to the general public. We would like to see more of this kind of transparency, allowing everybody to find information about development that they feel is relevant to their lives, rather than providing it only to designated groups.

Because this proposal is about process, it is particularly important that BDS evaluate how well the changes are working after implementation. We would like to see an evaluation of the changes about 18 months after the changes become effective.

### **Recommendation**

The PSC recommends that City Council take the following actions:

1. Adopt the *Neighborhood Contact Code Update — Recommended Draft*, dated January 28, 2019; and
2. Amend the Zoning Code (Title 33) as shown in the Recommended Draft.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the review of this project and for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Chris Smith  
Vice Chair

