



February 21, 2018

Portland City Council  
1221 SW 4th Ave., Room 130  
Portland, OR 97205

Dear Mr. Mayor and Portland City Commissioners,

The organizations and individuals comprising Portland for Everyone are pleased to submit this letter in support of the Fremont Apartments project, and in opposition to the appeal request by the Pearl District Neighborhood Association.

The developers on this project actively engaged with the neighborhood, adapting plans that are allowed under Portland code on due diligence. Plans were amended multiple times to accommodate concerns, including pushing the tower to the northwest corner of the building to partially preserve the view of the Fremont Bridge from Fields Park. Plans were also amended to greatly enhance the public realm, including improved riverfront pedestrian and bike access, and a 60 foot wide plaza extending down to the riverfront.

As with all projects, some may not love it, but that should not enable a group residents to effectively block it. There were several view corridors established by the City during the Central City 2035 planning process, but views of the bridge as described during the hearing this afternoon was not one of them.

Current condo residents fighting apartment towers similar to the ones they live in, and that were allowed at the time they moved in, is ironic. As a City, we must choose to live out our values, and choose to prioritize housing our full community over the objections of a few individuals.

This is also a key point for those concerned with protecting Portland's most vulnerable residents in other neighborhoods from further displacement. As the Obama White House stated last year in its Housing Development Toolkit, **"When new housing development is limited region-wide, and particularly in neighborhoods with political capital to implement stricter local barriers, the new housing that does get built tends to disproportionately concentrate in low-income communities of color, causing displacement and concerns of gentrification in those neighborhoods."**<sup>[1]</sup>

We would be remiss, however, if we did not note that we would support the Fremont Apartments even more enthusiastically if the project team had opted not to include parking, and had instead opted in voluntarily to the City's new Inclusionary Housing program. That said, we need more housing of all

stripes, and **projects that meet all code and design requirements, and provide public benefits, must be allowed to be built.**

Portland City Council must be steadfast in demonstrating leadership and making decisions that will support our city's stated vision for the future. The City must consider this and all projects cumulatively, and in light of its stated long-range planning goals, namely the Climate Action Plan and the Comprehensive Plan Equity and Anti-Displacement goals -- all of which building the Fremont Apartments will support, and all of which delaying or killing the project will thwart. We must ensure the continued buildout of Portland's urban core while enabling walking, bicycling, and the use of transit.

A proposal to build hundreds of units in our downtown core - **on an empty parking lot** - accomplishes our policy goals for public health, climate mitigation, and affordability. Portland will remain a national leader on smart growth and climate change, and will begin to meet its housing targets for residents of all incomes, only if it expands capacity for housing in its best-connected places.

Portland is in a declared housing crisis, but we did not get here overnight. Part of the solution is strengthening tenants rights, part of the solution is securing more funding for affordable housing, and part of the solution is allowing enough housing of many different kinds to be built. **We must ensure that we do not continue to chronically under-build housing, especially in our best-connected places, if we are serious about addressing this issue.**

Every project delay, and the uncertainty that accompanies it, chips away at the housing stock that is necessary to construct if Portland has any chance of being home to middle class families in the decades to come. Please don't halt the construction of more desperately needed homes in our urban core.

Portland for Everyone will continue to support land use policy decisions that will:

- Provide plenty of affordable and diverse housing options in all Portland neighborhoods
- Prioritize housing for historically and currently underserved populations
- Prioritize housing for humans over shelter for cars
- Allow more people to live in areas with good access to transportation, parks, and services, and
- Create and maintain economically diverse neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time, and for your work to house all Portlanders affordably,



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<sup>[1]</sup> [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Housing\\_Development\\_Toolkit%20f.2.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Housing_Development_Toolkit%20f.2.pdf)