

Block 7 Testimony by Daniel Salomon, December 3, 2014 (Portland City Council)

My name is Daniel Salomon. I am an environmental writer, Goose Hollow resident, and GHFL member. I am a Neurodiverse human on the Autism Spectrum. I hold a Master of Arts in Theological Research from Andover Newton Theological School and a Graduate Certificate in Science and Religion.

I relocated cross country from the East Coast to Portland to be close to the environmental and animal movements and live in a city with accessible public transportation because I live in Section 8 Housing Voucher program. (Goal 8.1, Goal 8.4)

I am against the proposal to rezone Block 7 from residential to commercial which would allow Block 7 to be turned into a parking garage and apartment high rise. I respect Portland as an ecological success story but commercializing Block 7 would be environmentally devastating (Goal 8.9, Objective G).

As a Neurodiverse citizen, the stakes could not be higher. I need safety from violent crime to be able to live independently and a lower stress environment to manage my serious anxiety symptoms. This is not to mention the influx of additional air, water, noise, light, electromagnetic chaos, carbon and nitrogen dioxide pollution caused that would result from building a four story underground parking garage underneath and a nine story high rise apartment building. This project would negatively impact my already fragile nervous system if Block 7 were to be rezoned from residential to commercial.

I testified at the public hearing on Block 7 May 21, 2014 (LU 14-105474 CP ZC) specifically stating the challenges that a person with my disability would face should the Block 7 rezoning proposal be allowed.

Public speaking is a challenge for anyone. I overcame my fear to help others like myself and my neighbors alike.

Yet the “Recommendations of the Hearings Officer’s” report excluded any mention of my Neurodiverse Autism. The applicant and the report itself failed to uphold Goal 9. We, too, are citizens.

Goal 9 Citizen Involvement (see below):

Improve the method for citizen involvement in the on-going land use decision-making process and provide opportunities for citizen participation in the implementation, review and amendment of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Medical-scientific research on the human health benefits of preserving and restoring natural areas supports my concerns and those in the general population. A recent collaborative interdepartmental study conducted by the Department of Environmental Science and Management, the Department of Biology and the Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University is contending that within 400m of 144 different test sites around the City of Portland with 20% tree canopy (total 10 ha radius) experienced in 2013 .57 ppb decrease in nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in the City of Portland. This study also contends using the BenMAP and a 200 m resolution NO₂ model that NO₂ reduction associated with trees in

Portland could result in significantly fewer incidences of respiratory problems, providing a \$7 million USD benefit annually. These in-situ urban measurements gathered right here within the city limits of Portland, predict a significantly higher reduction of NO₂ by urban trees in improving air quality than do existing models.

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is a byproduct pollutant produced by a variety of sources including vehicles. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is linked to both global climate disruption and local air pollution problems which can cause respiratory illnesses like asthma. Hence, this study found the greatest concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) closest to freeways, major arteries, secondary arteries and streets in the City of Portland. This study also found that rails produce the least amount of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution of all the transportation systems in the City of Portland. This means that most nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution from vehicles comes from automobiles in the City of Portland.

This study also encompassed collecting data in Goose Hollow including around Block 7. The lowest levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution from vehicles in Goose Hollow is found around Block 7 and in Kings Hill at 2.4-6.5/14.7-23.7 NO₂ (ppb) while the highest levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution from vehicles in Goose Hollow are found around the Vista Bridge at 11.8-12.8/14.7-23.7. This is because Block 7 and surrounding areas, as well as Kings Hill, currently have a decent urban tree canopy cover. The Vista Bridge is where two major arteries and a secondary artery overlap because of the Vista Bridge which is devoid of nitrogen dioxide fixing trees.

This means that rezoning Block 7 from high density residential to high density residential/commercial would mean more nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution from vehicles because of more automobile traffic in a currently residential neighborhood and excessive deforestation of the urban forest which would put additional environmental stress on Portland's urban forest as a whole and the local forest canopy system by creating a nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) disposal problem.

The current zoning will still allow for a low-impact development on Block 7, while containing automobile traffic and deforestation.

These findings were presented at a recent academic colloquium and published recently in a peer reviewed scientific journal.

(Goal 8.14, Objectives A, B, C, E, H)

Block 7 is home to many native mature trees and shrubs: three elder Oregon ashes (all with circumferences between 7-11 feet), one elder Pacific Dogwood (with a circumference of over 4 feet), one mature Pacific Yew (with a circumference over 4 feet), three mature big leaf maples (with circumferences around 7 feet) and three mature Oregon white oaks (with circumferences between 6-8 feet), all native to Oregon.

Block 7 is also home to a stand of adult paper birches and bitter cherries, a younger black cottonwood, two younger Alaskan cypresses, a younger Lodgepole pine and a native, mature Pacific Rhodendron which is the state flower of Oregon, all native to Oregon.

Not to mention, two native, declining, edible, fruit producing Black Huckleberries, an American Holly, a stand of Camellias and a hedgerow of Leland cypresses. (Goal 8.3, Goal 8.9 (Objective G), Goal 8.11, Goal 8.14 (Objectives A, B, C, E, H), Goal 8.16 (Objectives B, C), 8.17 (Objectives A, B, C), 8.20)

This means that the mature trees and shrubs of Block 7 are irreplaceable to the health, safety and well-being of the people of Goose Hollow. This is not to mention that some experts contend that even “big, old and isolated” Oregon white oaks, like the three in Block 7, are even ecologically important, providing a “stepping-stone” for wildlife displaced by habitat fragmentation and climate disruption. (Goal 8.1, Goal 8.2, Goal 8.23, Goal 8.24)

When I see Block 7, I see Block 7 interconnected to my historic Goose Hollow neighborhood and to the City of Portland, to the Columbia River watershed and to the Earth’s watershed. I also see Block 7 interconnected to my temperate rainforest bioregion, to an underground stream and the ruined foundations of a floodplain and interconnected to Earth’s atmosphere, the global climate justice struggle and the global sustainability strategy.

When I see Block 7 remaining zoned as residential, I see less parking for MAC members as an economic incentive for more MAC members to take full advantage of Portland’s renowned public transportation system, to carpool, to bicycle and to walk, helping to reduce the MAC’s carbon and nitrogen dioxide automobile emissions. When I see Block 7, I see Mill Creek possibility building around the mature native trees of Block 7.

(Goal 8.13)

For these reasons, I need Block 7 to remain zoned as residential. (Goal 8.1, Goal 8.2, Goal 8.3, Goal 8.4, Goal 8.96 (Objective G), 8.11, 8.14 (Objectives A, B, C, E, H), 8.16 (Objectives B, C), 8.17 (Objectives A, B, C), 8.20, 8.23, 8.24)

Even if a low impact, middle density, nine story high rise or a low-impact, middle density housing development were built on Block 7 under current residential zoning, residential zoning will lower the likelihood of a major increase in traffic in Goose Hollow. (Goal 8.1, Goal 8.2, Goal 8.3, Goal 8.4, Goal 8.96 (Objective G), 8.11, 8.14 (Objectives A, B, C, E, H), 8.16 (Objectives B, C), 8.17 (Objectives A, B, C), 8.20, 8.23, 8.24)

Block 7 is irreplaceable to the Goose Hollow neighborhood, the City of Portland and Planet Earth. (Goal 8.1, Goal 8.2, Goal 8.3, Goal 8.4, Goal 8.96 (Objective G), 8.11, 8.14 (Objectives A, B, C, E, H), 8.16 (Objectives B, C), 8.17 (Objectives A, B, C), 8.20, 8.23, 8.24)

I am open however to a low impact, middle density, nine story, high rise apartment without the four story garage allowed under the current residential zoning with provisions to protect the mature native trees. (Goal 8.1, Goal 8.2, Goal 8.3, Goal 8.4, Goal 8.98 (Objectives G), Goal 8.11, Goal 8.13, Goal 8.14 (Objectives A, B, C, E, H), Goal 8.16 (Objectives B, C), Goal 8.1 (Objectives A, B, C), Goal 8.20, Goal 8.23, Goal 8.24)

Rezoning Block 7 from residential to commercial in a residential neighborhood which also includes cutting down mature native trees, betrays the spirit of Goal 8, where the goal of Goal 8 is to make the City of Portland more sustainable, just, communitarian and in harmony with the Earth, for everyone. The current zoning of Block 7 is compatible with both the livability and

scalability for vulnerable populations in Goose Hollow and sustainably for the planet as a whole (Goal 8.1, Goal 8.2, Goal 8.3, Goal 8.4, Goal 8.98 (Objectives G), Goal 8.11, Goal 8.13, Goal 8.14 (Objectives A, B, C, E, H), Goal 8.16 (Objectives B, C), Goal 8.1 (Objectives A, B, C), Goal 8.20, Goal 8.23, Goal 8.24)

Thanks very much!

Ecological Survey of Block 7

Mammals:

- One bat sited (native) (declining)

Birds:

- Townsend's Warbler (native) (seasonal) (migratory to open habitats like Block 7)
- Ruby Crowned Kinglet (native) (seasonal) (migratory to open habitats like Block 7)
- American Robin (native) (seasonal) (migratory to open habitats like Block 7)
- American Crow (native)
- Steller's Jays (native) (seasonal)
- Western Scrub Jays (native) (resident)
- Song Sparrows (native) (resident)
- Spotted Towhee (native) (migratory) (neotropical)
- Northern Flicker (red shafted) (native) (migratory)
- Red-breasted Sapsucker (native) (seasonal)
- Anna's Hummingbird (native) (expanding range) (resident)
- Black Capped Chickadees (native) (resident)
- Bushtits (native) (seasonal)
- Cedar Waxwings (native) (seasonal)
- American Goldfinches (native)
- House Finches (native)
- Oregon Juncos (native)

Trees: All native trees

- Lodgepole Pine *Pina contra* (child)

- Alaska Cedars *Chanaecyaris nootkatensis* (child)
- Big Leaf Maples *Acer macrophyllum* (youth)
- Black Cottonwood *Populus balsamifera* (baby)
- Paper Birches *Betula papyrifera* (adult)
- Bitter Cherries *Prunus emarginata* (adult)
- Oregon White Oaks *Quercus garryana* (mature)
- Oregon Ashes *Flaxinus latifolia* (elder)
- Pacific Dogwoods *Cornus nuttallii* (elder)

Shrubs: Native and non native shrubs

- Black Huckleberries *Vaccinium membranaceum* (native) (declining) (fruit producing)
- Pacific Rhododendron *R. macrophyllum* (native) (state flower) (mature)
- Pacific Yew *Taxus brevifolia* (native) (mature)
- Leland Cypress *Cupressus leylandii* (non-native) (mature)
- English Holly *Ilex aquifolium* (non-native) (mature)
- American Hollies *Ilex opaca* (non-native) (1 mature, 2 babies) (good food source for native birds)
- Camellias *Camellia* (non-native) (mature)

Native Wildflowers: Important for preserving biodiversity and food for wildlife

- Palmate Coltsfoots *Petasites palmatus* (native) (locally common)
- Queen's Cups *Clintonia uniflora* (native) (abundant)

Exotic Wildflowers: Positive role of providing food for native wildlife and ornamental value

- Saint John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* (non-native) (good for wildlife) (ornamental and medicinal value)
- Snow Drops *Galanthus nivalis* (non-native) (ornamental value)

Primitive Plants: All native, extraordinarily biodiversity and sign of good air quality and ecosystem health

- Lung Liverworts (native) (locally common)
- Hard Scale Liverworts (native) (uncommon)
- Magnificent Mosses (native) (locally common)
- Oregon Beaked Mosses (native) (locally common)

- Slender Beaked Mosses (native) (locally common)
- Twisted Ulota(s) (native) (locally common)
- Curly Thatch Mosses (native) (abundant)
- Lover's Mosses (native) (locally common)
- Yellow-Green Peat Moss (native) (abundant)
- Licorice Ferns (native) (locally common)
- Sword Ferns (native) (locally common)

Lichens: All native, high biodiversity, sign of good air quality and ecosystem health

- Dust Lichens (native) (multiple species) (common)
- Bark Barnacles (native) (common)
- Cladonia Scales (native) (common)
- Peppered Moons (native) (abundant)
- Pimpled Kidneys (native) (abundant)
- Ragbags (native) (two different colors) (common)
- Sulphur Stubble (native) (abundant)

Historical:

- Traces, yards, staircases, gardens, plants and property lines of demolished Queen Anne's houses.
- One possible original outdoor staircase still useable today.
- Definitely in the watershed of Goose Hollow.
- Seed bank from an earlier floodplain Douglas fir lowland temperate rainforest has survived, explains presence of both wetland and rainforest plants, as well as why many wetland trees like the paper birches grow which well here and are present in extraordinary numbers, including on surrounding streets.

Other:

- Extraordinary mushroom and fungous diversity including the Turkey Tail.
- Can see the moon and some stars in Block 7 on clear nights.
- "Dark space"----little to no light pollution in this area after dark.
- Fairly quiet after dark too.
- Not much in the way of litter, compared to more urban places in Goose Hollow.
- Used primarily as a dog park, communal social space and for informal athletic events.

- Home to a native bee colony.
- Saw at least two orb spider webs.
- Saw one migrating dragonfly.

Bibliography for Further Reading:

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- Esther M. Sternberg, M.D., *Healing Spaces: The Science of Place and Well-Being* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2009 2010). Pay particular attention to “Chapter 11. Healing Cities, Healing World” 253 and “Chapter 12. Healing Gardens and My Place of Peace” 280.