

## **CALL TO ACTION: Oppose high density development on Milwaukie Avenue**

Portland's Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge is bordered on the east by a steep escarpment composed of unstable gravels and other sediments deposited by the historic Columbia /Willamette floods. This slope is prone to landslides. In February 2011 over 2 inches of rain fell and consequently there were several landslides along the bluff. The entire slope of the house at 1433 S. Reedway was slipping away and the house had to be moved. The trail at Oaks Bottom, the Springwater Trail, and the feeder trail to the parking lot on Milwaukie (which gives bicycle commuters from Brooklyn, Sellwood and other locations access to the Springwater Trail) were closed for some time.

Now the owner of the commercial property at 5515 SE Milwaukie Ave., at the corner with Ellis and just a block north of the house that had to be moved, has requested a zoning change on several properties that would allow 75 ft. high apartments to be built adjacent to this slope and others are on the east side of Milwaukie. The city Hearing Officer has recommended approval, and now the application goes to City Council for a vote. The application is both a request for a change in the city's Comprehensive Plan Map well as a Zoning Map amendment to the high-density Residential Multi-Dwelling zone RM4.

Our neighborhood association, SMILE (Sellwood Moreland Improvement League) and Friends of Oaks Bottom are opposed. See [SMILE's testimony](#) for details. **The only way this will be defeated is if council hears from many opponents to it.**

### **There are several ways to oppose it:**

- 1) **Sign a petition.** Either a physical one, or the on-line one (not both).
  - On-line: <https://forms.gle/ziAwj4t22K9MDi7F7>
  - At the end of this is the physical petition that you can print out if you would like to collect signatures.
  
- 2) **Submit public testimony.** Comments can be submitted via email to [cctestimony@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:cctestimony@portlandoregon.gov), or mailed to the Council Clerk, 1221 SW Fourth Avenue, Room 130, Portland, OR 97204. Please include the case file number **LU 21 - 094203 CP ZC** and your name and address. A model letter follows that you can use, with bullet points aligned to the five guiding principles of the Comprehensive Plan. Every letter shouldn't be exactly alike. You do not have to use these bullet points. Make it your letter by putting things in your own words, or telling your experience.
  
- 3) **Provide oral testimony** via Zoom. **The Council Hearing will be on June 1 at 3 pm.** Pre-registration is required. Follow the instructions at <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/26997>. You cannot register until a week before the council meeting.

Sample Letter, and Petition to be printed, follow.

TO: [cctestimony@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:cctestimony@portlandoregon.gov),

RE: LU 21 -094203 CP ZC

Dear Council:

I support the Sellwood Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) and Friends of Oaks Bottom in their opposition to the proposed amendment to Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan and the rezoning. It does not meet approval criteria because it fails to adhere the Guiding Principles for Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan. I am concerned that:

- *It does not really support a low-carbon economy and foster employment growth.* High density housing should not be placed next to an environmentally sensitive area, but near to the central city, town centers, transit stations, frequent transit, and commercial services.
- *Placing high-density housing in a landslide zone endangers human health.* In 2011 there were landslides that closed trails at Oaks Bottom and caused a house, about a block from this site, to be moved so it would not slide down the hillside. The city needs to protect residents along the Sellwood bluff from future landslides, which will happen. Where landslides have occurred in the past is key to where they'll occur in the future
- *It is not good for the health of the environment.* The adjacent Oaks Bottom is the largest remaining natural area in the Willamette River's lower floodplain and is a natural gem within the city. Tall and high-density development on the steep slope next to Oaks Bottom threatens habitat as well as scenic resources. Many trees would have to be cut down at a time when the city's tree cover is drastically decreasing. Roots of these trees stabilize soil, and without them soils are more likely to slide.
- *Equitable management of landslide risk.* For safety, homeowners along the bluff are prohibited from building more than 2 housing units, even if a geotechnical report says it is OK, while apartment tenants would be allowed to live in a 7-story building adjacent to the bluff.
- *It does not reduce risk and improve the ability of individuals, and the natural and built environments to withstand, recover from, and adapt to changes from natural hazards, and climate change.* Due to climate change, extreme rain events will only increase, increasing the potential for landslides which could result in damage to property, humans, and animals. City staff incorrectly denies there is a connection between climate change and landslides.

Council must decide whether this change in the Comprehensive Plan and rezoning for more housing in Portland is worth the potential negative results of high density housing in this location. I do not think it is, and I urge you to deny this proposal.

Your Name & Address

**We, the undersigned, support Sellwood Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) in its opposition to an Amendment to the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, which would rezone 7 properties in North Moreland, some located above Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge and at risk for landslides.**

**Six of the properties in question would be Upzoned to RM4, allowing for development of a seven to ten story residential building directly above Oaks Bottom.**

**We petition that the Portland City Council deny approval for case file LU 21-094203 CP ZC / Hearings Officer Case #4220002, the above mentioned Amendment to the 2035 Comprehensive Plan.**

Name	Address	Signature
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
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Please mail completed petitions by June 23<sup>rd</sup> to Heidi Cropsey, 1216 SE Tenino, Portland 97202