

Block 7 Testimony by Daniel Salomon, 1/6/2014

My name is Daniel Salomon. I am a professional environmental writer.

I recently relocated cross country from the East Coast to Portland to be close to the epicenter of the environmental and animal movements and live in a city with accessible public transportation (Goal 8.1, Goal 8.4).

I am a resident of Goose Hollow and I am a member of the Goose Hollow Foothills League (GHFL).

I am against the MAC proposal to turn Block 7, a Goose Hollow open green space and community pocket park on MAC land into a parking garage and apartment high rise because the MAC's proposal is ecologically devastating (Goal 8.9, Objective G).

Medical-scientific research on the human health benefits of preserving and restoring natural areas conducted by Portlander forester Dr. Geoffrey Donovan and other specialists in connection with the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the Pacific Northwest Research Station, shows a positive correlation between preserving older trees and shrubs in cities and human survival and the ability to flourish in cities. These findings were presented at academic conferences in peer reviewed scientific journals. (Goal 8.14, Objectives A, B, C, E, H)

Donovan demonstrated through three different controlled scientific experiments:

- Affluent neighborhoods that had older trees and shrubs experienced a reduction in crime. But affluent neighborhoods that had younger trees and shrubs experienced an increase in crime. This is because according to Donovan criminals can easily hide in small trees and shrubs. (Goal 8.1).
- Affluent neighborhoods east of the Mississippi who lost their native and/or non-native ash trees of any species because of the emerald ash borer also experienced an increase in mortality due to cardiovascular disease. Donovan contends that the ash stands for all mature trees. All mature trees in affluent neighborhoods only (there are other mediating factors at work in low income neighborhoods) reduce stress connected to the immune system and improves local air quality. (Goal 8.3, Goal 8.9 (Objective G), Goal.14 (Objectives A, B, C, E, H), Goal 8.20)
- In Portland neighborhoods (both affluent and economically diverse) that had more extensive tree canopy cover, women experienced greater reproductive success, while Portland neighborhoods that did not have as much of a tree canopy experienced higher reproductive failure. For the same reasons---mature trees reduce stress, strengthen the immune system and improve local air quality. (Goal 8.3, Goal 8.9 (Objective G) Goal.14 (Objectives A, B, C, E, H), Goal 8.20)

Block 7 is home to many mature trees and shrubs: a pair of mature Oregon white oaks, an elder Oregon ash, a couple of elder Pacific Dogwoods and a stand of adult paper birches and bitter cherries. All of these trees are also native to Oregon. Not to mention two native, declining,

edible, fruit producing Black Huckleberries, a native, mature Pacific Rhodendron which is the state flower of Oregon, as well as non-native yet mature Asian Yew, English Holly, American Holly, a stand of Camellias and a hedgerow of Leland cypresses. Not to mention Block 7 also being home to a giant Big Leaf Maple, as well as a younger Lodgepole pine, a younger black cottonwood and two younger Alaskan cypresses, all native to Oregon. (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, an affluent neighborhood which has the most to lose in terms of our health and safety from ecological destruction. The mature trees and shrubs of Block 7 cannot be mitigated through the MAC replanting seedlings. This is not to mention that some experts contend that even “big, old and isolated” Oregon white oaks, like the two 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)

As a neurodiverse human on the autism spectrum the stakes could not be higher. I need physical safety from violent crime to be able to live independently. I need a lower stress environment to manage my serious anxiety symptoms. This is not to mention the possibility of additional air, water, noise, light and electromagnetic chaos pollution caused by the MAC construction project negatively impacting my already fragile nervous system. I need to live in the city because I am in the Section 8 Housing Voucher program. (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)

When I see Block 7, I see Goose Hollow’s community pocket park. When I see Block 7, I see open green space. When I see Block 7, I see beauty, wonder and solitude. 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. (Goal 8.13)

For these reasons and more, I want and need Block 7 preserved in its current state as an open green space and as Goose Hollow’s much needed, long awaited Community Park as compensation for Goose Hollow being hit particularly hard during urban renewal in the mid-twentieth century. I also need and want Block 7 to continue to remain zoned as residential and not be rezoned for commercial. (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 “smart growth” development proposal of the Block 7 green space and community pocket park. (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)

I also see a small playground, a small ball field, picnic tables, park benches and a dog park in Block 7. I see motion sensitive security lights and cameras installed to detour crime and speeders around Block 7 placed strategically. I see an annual trash clean-up and invasive plant removal in Block 7. I see the oldest trees of Block 7 becoming champion trees. I see a rain garden with a fountain in Block 7 to help with storm water runoff pollution. I see a couple of nesting boxes for birds and a native plant garden in Block 7. I see a community garden in Block 7 for Goose Hollow residents and MAC members. I see Block 7 preserved and restored, as an elegant, historical setting for MAC fundraising events and MAC private parties. (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)

Turning Block 7 from a Goose Hollow neighborhood community pocket park and open green space into a parking garage and high rise apartment betrays the spirit of Goal 8 at many different levels, 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. (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)
- Western grey squirrel (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)

Trees: All native trees

- Lodgepole Pine (child)
- Alaska Cedars (child)
- Big Leaf Maples (youth)
- Black Cottonwood (baby)
- Paper Birches (adult)
- Bitter Cherries (adult)
- Oregon White Oaks (mature)
- Oregon Ashes (elder)
- Pacific Dogwoods (elder)

Shrubs: Native and non native shrubs

- Black Huckleberries (native) (declining) (fruit producing)
- Pacific Rhodendron (native) (state flower) (mature)
- Asian Yew (non-native) (mature)
- Leland Cypressses (non-native) (mature)
- English Holly (non-native) (mature)
- American Hollies (non-native) (1 mature, 2 babies) (good food source for native birds)
- Camellias (non-native) (mature)

Native Wildflowers: Important for preserving biodiversity and food for wildlife

- Palmate Coltsfoots (native) (locally common)
- Queen's Cups (native) (abundant)

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

- Saint John's Wort (non-native) (good for wildlife) (ornamental and medicinal value)
- Snow Drops (non-native) (ornamental value)

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

- Flat-Leaved 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 belonging to Chinese immigrants dating back to possibly the end of the nineteenth century.
- 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 well here and are present in extraordinary numbers, including planted ones 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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