

OLD TOWN CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

115 SW Ash Street, #400G
Portland, Oregon 97204

Motion on PDC Lease Renewal. Adopted Unanimously - 3/6/2010

The Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association is deeply concerned about PDC's evaluation of a new lease location and the apparent pressure from the Mayor's office and the City of Portland to relocate the agency.

Downtown Portland is only as strong as its weakest link. Right now that link is Old Town Chinatown. Economic development has been the best tool to further increase the livability of the neighborhood. PDC is the city agency primarily responsible for the progress made in Old Town Chinatown over the past decade. Their location and associated presence in the neighborhood has been a significant source of positive change in Old Town Chinatown and was integral to the relocation of University of Oregon and Mercy Corps into the neighborhood. Old Town Chinatown is at a crossroads. Today, our neighborhood has the best chance in the past quarter century at continuing to grow into a livable balanced neighborhood for daytime workers, residents, and nightlife. PDC's relocation would tragically jeopardize that opportunity.

1. Furthermore the City of Portland is ignoring a standing policy from 2004, Resolution No. 36267, that says city office locations should reside in historic buildings whenever possible. PDC's current location is the Mason-Ehrman building which is a contributing structure to the Portland New Chinatown Japantown Historic District and is covered by this binding city policy.
2. This board contends that any TIF increase or construction job gains from a PDC move will coincide with the erasure of 10 years of progress towards small business development and associated job growth in Old Town Chinatown, as well as the erosion of Old Town Chinatown property values. These damages appear to have been ignored and left unevaluated in all decision-making and informational meetings to date.
3. Additionally the City of Portland would be turning its back on the long term viability of two national historic districts in Portland should it choose to move PDC to a downtown location. There is nothing more sustainable than an adaptive reuse of a historic building that contributes to these districts, which is a true Portland value.
4. This board believes the decision process for moving PDC from its current location looks only at the short term and creates the impression that the City of Portland will choose to bailout ill-advised development projects, namely Park Avenue West. Given the trouble in the Portland commercial real estate market this development project is unnecessary.

Any attempt to relocate PDC is hereby deemed unacceptable by the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association. While the fate of a single new building may be on the line, the future of an entire neighborhood hangs in the balance.

The board calls upon the PDC and City of Portland Commissioners to put our neighborhood's livability and evolution ahead of developer bailouts, and keep PDC located at their current address inside Old Town Chinatown.

Sincerely,

Alexander Mace
Chair, OTCTNA