

AMERICAN-MAP AND REPRODUCING  
COMPANY'S  
MAP OF  
**PORTLAND**  
AND  
VICINITY.

**INCENTIVES**

**EQUITY**

**HISTORIC  
RESOURCES  
INVENTORY**

**GENTRIFICATION**

**URM**

**DENSITY**

**State of the City Preservation Report 2018**

PORTLAND HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

September 2018

LEGEND.

## Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission PROVIDES LEADERSHIP AND EXPERTISE ON MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING PORTLAND'S ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE. The Commission reviews development proposals for alterations to historic buildings and new construction in historic districts. The Commission also provides advice on historic preservation matters and coordinates historic preservation programs in the City.

### *Current Commission Members*

**KIRK RANZETTA, CHAIR** – Commissioner Ranzetta is a PhD architectural historian. He has 24 years of experience with National Register properties and districts, local and National Register surveys, and review and compliance procedures.

**KRISTEN MINOR, VICE CHAIR** – Commissioner Minor has spent over 25 years studying and shaping the built environment. She practiced architecture for 10 years, then spent 10 as an urban planner, and now works exclusively with historic and older buildings.

**MATTHEW ROMAN** – Commissioner Roman has 20 years of experience preserving Portland's architectural heritage both as a designer and through involvement in nonprofit organizations like Restore Oregon, the Architectural Heritage Center, the Pittock Mansion, and the Preservation Artisans Guild.

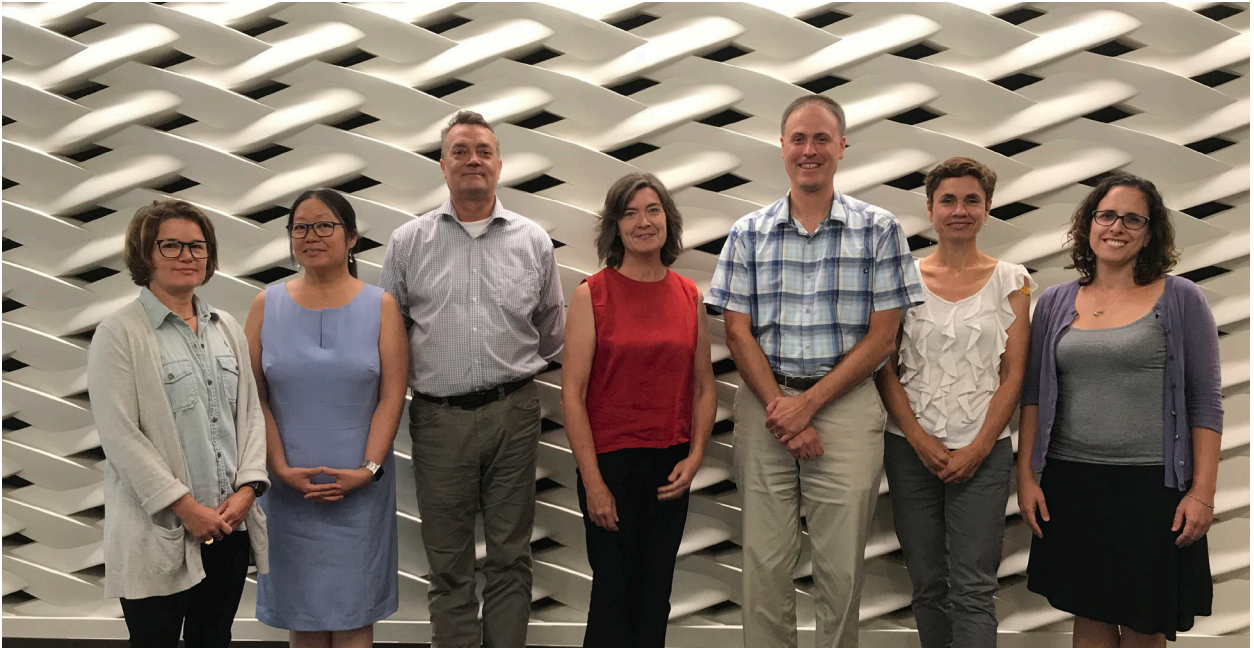
**WENDY CHUNG** – Commissioner Chung is an 18-year attorney who has donated thousands of hours of public service to support historic preservation in Portland and statewide. As an at-large member, she brings to her role as Commissioner the unique perspective of a neighborhood volunteer, as well as that of an attorney with significant experience interpreting regulatory codes when applying approval criteria to specific land use cases.

**ERNESTINA FUENMAYOR** – Commissioner Fuenmayor has a Master's Degree in Historic Preservation and spent the last 10 years working in historic preservation in the Pacific Northwest. She has written several National Register Nominations and local landmark designations, as well as historic building surveys. She has been practicing architecture for the last 16 years focusing in multifamily, government projects and historic resources.

**ANNIE MAHONEY** – Commissioner Mahoney is an architect who has worked on historic buildings and new construction over the past 19 years. She has served as chair of the Historic Resources Committee of Portland's AIA chapter and as a liaison to the Structural Engineers Association of Oregon's Emergency Response Committee.

**MAYA FOTY** – Commissioner Foty's experience includes numerous preservation projects on both the east and west coasts. With over 18 years' experience as a preservation architect working exclusively on National Register listed properties, she specializes in projects with complex seismic and material conservation issues.

The Historic Landmarks Commission is supported by **HILLARY ADAM**, primary staff to the PHLC and an expert team from the Bureau of Development Services, as well as **BRANDON SPENCER-HARTLE**, our liaison from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.



COMMISSIONERS 2017-2018 – Mahoney, Chung, Roman, Minor, Ranzetta, Foty, Fuenmayor

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## Message from the Chair

Dear Portland City Council Members,

History in Portland is an untapped asset. Did you know that every \$1 million invested in residential historic rehabilitation projects creates 36.1 jobs and adds, on average, \$783,000 to local household incomes? Compare that to 24.5 jobs generated by \$1 million in non-preservation residential construction projects (2008 Oregon Legislative Task Force on Historic Property). Additionally, a 2009 study for the U.S. Travel Association showed that travelers interested in cultural and/or heritage activities stay 53 percent longer and spend 36 percent more money than other kinds of tourists. But preservation is not just beneficial for business owners, contractors, and tourists, it also plays an important role in conserving affordable housing. Thousands of big “A” affordable units have been created through creative financing options offered by Oregon’s Special Assessment, Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and other tax programs.

Our past is a resource that benefits all Portlanders. The city’s built environment provides a wealth of information about its past. From the displacement of residents triggered by the large urban renewal projects and highways in the 1950s and 1960s to the florescence of the mid-twentieth century African American jazz scene, historic buildings testify to Portland’s unique character and embody important lessons for future generations. Yet, despite the economic and social value of conserving the built environment, Portland still lacks a comprehensive historic resource inventory that conveys a more inclusive historical narrative that meets the spirit of the State’s Planning Goal #5.

It is vital for City Council to make sound investments in the City’s future. Conserving the city’s built environment is one such investment. As the cover to this report illustrates, the historic resource inventory represents a critical first step to unlocking the City’s potential. As the exiting Chair of the Portland Landmarks Commission, it is my hope to impress upon this Council to make a change; to realize the potential of the City’s heritage and invest in a multi-year program to identify, evaluate, and plan for the city’s significant historical resources.

In the upcoming year, the Commission is committed to working with City Council to advance an historic preservation agenda that aligns with the City’s need for affordable housing, equity and inclusion, heritage tourism, Main Street development, and preservation of URM’s.

Thank you for affording the Commission the opportunity to serve the City of Portland. We look forward to working with you all in the near future.

Sincerely,



Kirk Ranzetta  
Chair of the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

# PRIORITIES AND GOALS 2019

## **A** ENSURE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BENEFITS ALL CITIZENS

As a City, we have often neglected to recognize those places and buildings that are associated with minority cultures, immigrants, and those of more modest means. The PHLC pledges to preserve and bring to light places and buildings that tell unique Portland stories. The PHLC must work with and encourage under-represented communities to help identify, advocate for, and highlight the preservation of these resources. These buildings or resources are often smaller, outside the downtown core, and not currently even identified, much less designated as significant. Specifically, we seek funding from City Council for Historic Resource Inventory update work to enable these communities to retain important places and to access historic funding mechanisms for their upkeep.

## **B** ENGAGE WITH OUR COMMUNITY

The PHLC will take an active role collaborating with our counterpart commissions, City Council, the development and design communities, advocacy organizations, and the general public to ensure historic preservation is part of the solution to the needs of a growing community. As code updates are developed and adopted in the coming year the PHLC will take a leadership role to ensure the historic preservation goals of the comp plan are implemented appropriately. We are committed to consistency and clarity in our process and look forward to opportunities to educate and be educated through briefings and invitations to industry experts.

## **C** ADVOCATE FOR LOCAL AND STATE INCENTIVES

Where historic preservation works well you most often find the state and local regulatory conditions have promoted it. Oregon still has a way to go to create the kind of environment where we can collectively decide what from our built past gets passed to our future. Portland has benefited greatly from historic preservation, though these efforts have been challenged lately. Supporting rehabilitation rather than demolition for example promotes the retention of Portland's heritage and character while reducing waste and meeting the City's sustainability goals. The PHLC will continue to seek ways to link financial and regulatory incentives aimed at the rehabilitation, seismic upgrade, and adaptive reuse of our historic buildings. Priorities include advocating for a state rehabilitation tax credit, supporting the Historic Resources Code Project, and advocating for local preservation programs that think outside the box such as energy retrofit grants, easements, fee waivers, and other construction incentives. On a state level the PHLC will seek the support of the City of Portland for policies that appropriately protect the few programs we have like National Register Program and Special Assessment.

## **D** SUPPORTING PORTLAND'S UNIQUE PLACES

Portland belongs to all of us, and all of us need to prepare for growth and change. The PHLC has advocated for keeping the places and buildings that provide an authentic sense of place in Portland, while simultaneously allowing for increased commercial and residential density throughout Portland. Developers are not always sensitive to what makes a neighborhood special, and we've unfortunately seen many new buildings that could have come from anywhere else inserted into older neighborhoods or districts. What makes a place recognizably part of Portland? From a special alleyway in Old Town Chinatown, to a sleek yet sensitive new commercial building in Alphabet, to a study of transit alignments in South Portland, context matters. The PHLC will continue to advocate for good design, and for protecting what makes Portland special.

## SIDENOTE: SURVEY L.A.

Los Angeles has taken an important step to protect its rich heritage by conducting a citywide survey, called SurveyLA, to identify and document significant historic resources. The field survey covered the entire city of Los Angeles - over 880,000 legal parcels within almost 500 square miles. This groundbreaking citywide historic resources survey serves as the primary planning tool to identify, record, and evaluate historic properties and districts within Los Angeles and forms the foundation for a comprehensive and proactive municipal historic preservation program. Uses of survey data include the following:

- **Community Plan Updates:** The Department of City Planning has initiated new Community Plans that provide specific, detailed guidance on potential land uses. Critical to the success of these plans is an inventory of historic resources to ensure that proposed changes carefully consider potential impacts to historic resources.
- **Zoning Decisions and Plan Approval:** It is critical that all staff with responsibilities for reviewing individual projects and development proposals have access to accurate information on historic properties.
- **Environmental Review:** The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires local governments to analyze the impacts of proposed projects on historic resources. The survey data provides a more objective, comprehensive basis for the City of Los Angeles' conduct of environmental reviews as they affect potential historic resources.
- **Cultural Tourism:** One of the fastest growing segments of the tourist market is in travelers who seek out culturally significant experiences in major cities. The survey enables a variety of users, including cultural organizations, and potential visitors to the city, to conduct their own searches for architecturally and culturally significant resources that may interest them.
- **Disaster Response:** After a major disaster, such as the 1994 Northridge earthquake, thousands of buildings and structures may be "red-tagged" or "yellow-tagged" due to unsafe conditions. When these assessments are made, it is imperative that the Department of Building and Safety's inspectors have ready access to detailed, accurate information on the locations and significance of historic properties, so that demolitions do not occur without appropriate review or consideration.
- **Film Locations:** The film industry is an important economic resource for Los Angeles. Location scouts are constantly seeking new and interesting places and buildings that can be used as settings for films, commercials and television. The survey data enables scouts to complete research online for particular property types by construction date, architectural style, location and other criteria.
- **Potential Designation:** The survey identifies potential historic districts and individual properties eligible for designation under the City's Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and Cultural Heritage Commission ordinances as well for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources. Designation, if pursued, enables property owners to take advantage of financial incentive programs which may include the City's Mills Act program, Conservation Easements, and Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits (for income producing properties).

# THE IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING THE HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY<sup>1</sup>

## A B C D

Maintaining cultural landmarks, heritage, and traditions defines the unique character of a city and its neighborhoods and fosters what psychologist Maria Lewicka calls, “place attachment”—or the emotional bonds we feel about particular places, which are a prerequisite of psychological balance and good adjustment. Place attachment gives us a sense of stability in an ever-changing world. It connects us across time to larger communities, past and future, and helps us feel like we belong. Without heritage, cities as vibrant life-spaces do not exist.

Jean Carroon, FAIA

**What is the HRI?** The Historic Resource Inventory (HRI) is the product of a citywide survey of potentially significant historic resources that have been documented for their eligibility for historic designation. Listing in the HRI is not a designation, but a determination of potential historic significance based upon initial research and documentation. Last updated in 1984, the HRI is a public resource that provides information about the city’s most important architectural, cultural and historic places.

**Why is the HRI Important?** The 2017 report funded by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) identified the following five primary reasons to update the HRI:

**1. Expand Historic Preservation Equity:** Portland’s existing inventory of historic resources, those included in the 1984 HRI and those that have been voluntarily designated since, are heavily weighted toward the central city and architectural landmarks associated with Euro-American Portlanders. An updated historic resource inventory with a new public database and mapping application could more comprehensively tell Portland’s story and provide plentiful opportunities for public education into the future.

**2. Inform Land Use Planning:** An up-to-date citywide inventory of significant historic resources would help both City decision-makers (top-down model) and neighborhood residents (bottom-up model) collaboratively plan for growth across the City of Portland while accommodating and honoring historic resources.

**3. Combat Gentrification:** A new HRI could help prevent and decrease gentrification and displacement by honoring the history of diverse communities, providing better public information about ethnic and cultural historic resources and empowering communities to focus preservation efforts on their most valued places. An updated and comprehensive HRI would furthermore provide a foundation for strengthening and creating new conservation and historic districts and provide funding information and links to other resources to aid in the preservation and rehabilitation process.

**4. Prepare for Resilience:** An updated HRI database would strengthen the City’s ability to communicate with FEMA, preservation partners and other stakeholders which historic resources have been identified as significant. The presence of this information would greatly expedite state and federal environmental compliance, support local preservation efforts and improve post-disaster outcomes. An

In 2000, the City of Seattle began a systematic and comprehensive effort to survey and inventory historic resources in the City. To date, surveys and inventories of eight neighborhoods have been completed as well as neighborhood commercial districts and residential properties built prior to 1906. Additionally, the State of Washington is currently undertaking an inventory of all suspected URM Buildings in the State of Washington. The work will be produced utilizing existing survey and data sources, with the intent that in the future all of this information will be input into one database.

updated HRI could reasonably serve as the host system for post-disaster assessment, as well as directly support disaster preparedness and post-disaster resilience plans.

**5. Comply with Local, State and Federal Requirements.** Since 1996, the City of Portland has been a Certified Local Government (CLG) participating in the National Park Service’s network of local jurisdictions committed to preserving significant historic places. While it is a federal program, the CLG program in Oregon is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), with Portland’s participation managed by BPS. As a participating local government, Portland is eligible to receive modest biannual grant funding to pay for a defined preservation project, such as a National Register nomination or neighborhood survey. Participating local communities are expected to assist with the survey of historic resources to inform the State’s master database of historic resources. The City would better meet its expectations as a CLG by advancing an update to the HRI. The recently revised Land Use Goal 5 rules allows jurisdictions to survey and inventory historic resources without receiving owner consent or allowing for owners to voluntarily remove their property from an inventory, which was a key obstacle in moving forward with an updated HRI previously .



Portland 1963 (Photo: <https://vintageportland.wordpress.com/2014/03/13/portland-aerial-view-1963/>)



Portland Current (Photo: GoogleMaps)



# IN SUPPORT OF A MANDATORY URM ORDINANCE

## C D

7 principals from a 1994 FEMA handbook:

1. Never forget that you will have an earthquake.
2. A retrofit will save lives, including possibly your own.
3. Any amount of retrofit is an advantage. The more you do the better. Even minor improvements can make the difference between repair and ruin.
4. A community unwilling to accept small architectural compromises of historic purity (through retrofit) risks major irreversible loss of historic character.
5. The disruption and cost of retrofit are minor compared to the catastrophic cost of doing nothing.
6. Recovery happens sooner when there is retrofitting.
7. Don't wait.

The PHLC strongly supports a mandatory URM ordinance and we commend City Council for taking steps for its' thoughtful implementation. A large number of URM buildings are historic, either on the National Register or are local landmarks. Publicly-owned URM buildings, including Pittock Mansion and Union Station, are some of the most iconic structures Portland has. While all are unreinforced masonry, only a few have been upgraded to meet current seismic standards.

Many buildings listed on City's URM database are culturally significant and highly crafted buildings. For example, the database includes 40 churches. First Baptist Church, First Congregational Church, St. James Lutheran Church and First Presbyterian Church, each with their own unique masonry steeple or bell tower, are all sited within downtown. Highly crafted URM buildings like these are located throughout the City of Portland.

A brief review of the City of Portland URM list includes over 200 apartment buildings, some of which represent the finest architecture our city has. Admittedly many are not worthy of historic designation, but those that are also provide lower cost housing than any new housing stock that would replace them. Moreover, they represent a large amount of embodied energy in their materials and structure which we should endeavor to preserve.

We have a responsibility as stewards of these buildings and subsequently the PHLC would like to show support for a URM Ordinance, but also to share some suggestions to ensure the outcome, where appropriate, is structural upgrade, and not demolition, of historic buildings.

**1. Update Historic Resources Inventory and Prioritizing Retrofits:** An updated Historic Resources Inventory is an essential tool required for any long-term planning which aims to account for historic resources. Without it, planners have no understanding what resources the City actually has.

**2. Provide Incentives:** PHLC is in support of any tax credit or incentive programs that can be created to help URM building owners offset the cost of structural upgrades. A seismic retrofit tax exemption program would be highly beneficial to property owners who may not want to have their property designated as a historic landmark. Additionally, the PHLC has long been a proponent of a State Historic Rehabilitation tax credit and encourages the City Council to support the creation of such a tax credit via its legislative agenda. It is a financial incentive that will be unfettered by the federal requirements tied to the federal version, this tax credit could be tied to just the retrofit of URM buildings.

# SIDENOTE: URM INCENTIVES

What incentives do other cities offer for seismic upgrades of URM buildings? When St. Helena, CA implemented a mandatory upgrade of their URM buildings, in addition to offering various incentives including waiving permit fees for seismic retrofits, the City adopted the Mills Act, which provided for an up to 50% reduction in property taxes. The Mills Act is the single most important economic incentive program in California for the restoration and preservation of qualified historic buildings by a private owner. Enacted in 1972, the Mills Act legislation grants participating local governments (cities and counties) the authority to enter into contracts with owners of qualified historic properties who actively participate in the restoration and maintenance of their historic properties while receiving property tax relief.



Downtown St. Helena, California Photo: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>

Many buildings listed on the City's URM database are culturally significant and highly crafted buildings.

**3. Research Non-Prescriptive Seismic Upgrade Options** to allow more flexible and lower cost upgrade options.

**4. Create a URM Panel:** Create a panel or review board of people to help building owners through the process and offer tools. The panel would be empowered to allow alternatives at each stage of the process, similar perhaps to a building code appeal body.

**5. Develop Standard Details for Typical Conditions:** The City of Portland should develop a toolkit for building owners which includes typical seismic retrofit details similar in nature to the Residential Seismic Strengthening program.

**6. Encourage a Higher Level of Retrofit:** For class 3 URM buildings that are historic provide incentives for a higher level of retrofit beyond code to save the building and maintain its use and functionality. The benefits of this can be seen in the aftermath of the earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand. Only 2 buildings fully collapsed during the earthquake but 70% of the buildings in the area that were designed to code to minimize loss of life required demolition because they were damaged beyond repair.

## SIDENOTE: ALBINA- A MEMORY LOSS

The recent years have seen rapid growth in Portland, where people from everywhere have been attracted to the city's livability, weather, culture, and job market. This boom has impacted the most vulnerable neighborhoods, including the areas where Portland's most culturally diverse communities now live and is erasing the history of these communities. Albina is one of the most culturally diverse and most affected communities. In 1978, the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission was worried about the loss of identity in the area, and included Albina among the potential historic districts in Portland in a report that paved the way to the Historic Resources Inventory of 1984.

The modern history of Albina started in 1869 when William W. Page, George H. Williams, and Edwin Russell, all prominent Portland businessmen, purchased for \$5,600 the area that would later become the city of Albina. Industries were gradually introduced to Albina in 1873 and the community grew rapidly until its incorporation into Portland in 1888. Until the turn of the century, Albina architecture contained the full range of buildings, from simple Pioneer farmhouses to ornate Victorian mansions to brick hotels, stores, and industrial buildings. This industrial growth translated to a diversifying community dominated by working class immigrants. Predominantly Irish and Germans in the early years of city, these early immigrants were soon joined by Russian and Scandinavian laborers. Most of the 3,000 Scandinavians that lived in Portland at the time resided in Albina.

As the Albina railyard expanded further in Albina, the middle and upper middle-class communities moved to other areas, and these building were then occupied by immigrant communities that could afford the lower rents of housing directly involved in the railroad yards. Shortly before World War I, the largest influx of African Americans migrated to Albina. In 1906, the majority of the 1,200 African-Americans citizens that lived in Oregon lived in Albina, since it was one of the few places they were allowed to live and rent houses due to discriminatory housing policies. The early black community lived on the west side of Albina, near the railroads and closer to the Portland Hotel, which housed many of Portland's Pullman car workers. As a result of this concentration of Blacks in Albina, racial discrimination and the small size of the community, created the necessity for a self-contained black system of social and business life." By the 1950s, however, the City of Portland and Oregon Transportation Department wanted to redevelop the area, with the construction of the Memorial Coliseum, Interstate 5, the Fremont Bridge, and lastly in the 1970s Emanuel Hospital Urban Renewal Project. These redevelopment proposals effectively destroyed the cultural heart of Portland's black community.

Today, the area of Albina includes the neighborhoods Eliot, Boise, Humboldt, Irvington, King, Woodlawn, Overlook, and Piedmont. The actual large influx of people to the city of Portland and the relative affordability of Albina has made the area attractive to young families, however developers have demolished already over 2% of the neighborhood's houses that existed over the past 15 years. This has also triggered displacements of these neighborhood's minorities. In Woodlawn alone, the U.S. Census revealed that 915 black residents left the community between 2000 and 2010 and were replaced by 840 white residents. This displacement has been accompanied by the demolition of many resources associated with Albina's black community and a loss of a sense of place. Without an updated Historic Resource Inventory, it is difficult to protect the historic buildings and to respect the populations who built and/or used these culturally significant resources.

Aerial photo of the Emmanuel Hospital redevelopment looking north in 1974 showing the hospital complex, I-5, Fremont Bridge off ramp, new roads, and surface parking. It also shows the vestigial remains of the area's housing and commercial enterprises that formed the core of Portland's African-American community. Photo City of Portland Archives.



# THE YEAR IN CITY POLICY, FUNDING, AND THE ZONING CODE

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## Historic Resource Inventory (HRI)

City Council was asked to provide very minimal funding to update the HRI, a task specifically requested by the PHLC in every State of the City report for the past decade and required under Policy 4.52 (requiring the City to regularly update and maintain the HRI) and Policy 4.46 (which requires the City to identify, protect, and encourage the use and rehabilitation of historic resources) in the recently-adopted 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The funding request was for \$80K and yet was not supported in a recommendation from the City Budget Office, like every other project requested by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. The HRI, completed in 1984, is a relic. In order to inform historic and cultural resource preservation strategies, we need to obtain survey information and, until we can begin to do so, we continue to operate from a position of ignorance. Portland decision-makers will not understand, much less be able to support, historically marginalized communities. We will not know what is being lost, or what should be preserved in many areas of Portland. Still, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability has been able to make some real progress towards getting the database application PortlandMaps ready to accept new survey data, so that the City may ultimately move towards capturing and updating critically needed information. The PHLC strongly urges the City Council to provide at least \$80K in 2019 for this work.

## Code Improvement Projects

Both the **Residential Infill Project (RIP)** and **Better Housing by Design (BHBD)** are code improvement projects aimed at single-family and multi-housing sections of the Portland Zoning Code, respectively. PHLC generally supports both of these projects, though with some concerns.

Regarding the **RIP**, we applaud efforts to create more diverse and affordable housing types and support recommendations limiting the height and scale of new infill housing in single family residential neighborhoods. We also support the elimination of parking requirements in single-family residential zones. Yet the only incentive in the current version of RIP to preserve existing housing (10 years old or older, so not necessarily historic) is to offer a small increase in density on a lot. This is certainly not enough to prevent demolitions of small, existing, affordable houses and the result will be the loss of many of these character-defining older homes (the type identified as being most needed in Portland). We also fear that compatibility requirements for new construction have been stripped out of RIP. For instance, it is troubling to note that the

average house size in Portland is 1500 sf, yet the RIP as currently recommended by the PSC would allow up to 4,000 sf triplexes. Further, most new projects are likely to have flat roofs, due to changes in height measurements. Overall, the PHLC seeks much stronger language and incentives moving us toward reuse and additions rather than demolition. Preserving older homes is better from a standpoint of sustainability, of affordability, of neighborhood compatibility and sense of place, and of preventing gentrification. Further, any preservation incentives would still allow for growth through additions and internal divisions.

The **BHBD** project does offer some new incentives to preserve historic resources, including that parking requirements may be waived on small sites, and a provision that FAR may not be transferred into historic or conservation districts. The PHLC also supports the way FAR will now be measured by actual bulk instead of by “unit.” The BHBD also, however, has the potential to result in increased height allowances in three historic districts: Irvington, Alabaster and King’s Hill. This could exacerbate PHLC’s challenges when reviewing and applying adopted compatibility guidelines on proposals in these areas. Finally, as in RIP, we also are concerned with the lack of meaningful incentives to create new units via construction without encouraging demolition.

Finally, the **Historic Resource Code Project** is a joint BPS and BDS project intended to update the historic resource provisions of the zoning code for the first time since 2013. The proposed changes are expected to include significant revisions to the review process for demolition of contributing garages, procedures for updating the HRI, regulatory incentives afforded to landmarks, and new exemptions for minor alterations in historic districts. The code project will create a framework for new inventory work and will update and define designations and protections for individual resources. The PHLC would like to see a process for creating and defining new locally-designated districts as well, though it is unclear in this early phase whether that will be politically supported. The PHLC expects to see a public draft of proposed code changes in November.

### **A Serious Concern**

Rather than “right-zoning” historic districts as required under Policy 4.49 of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, City Council recently approved increasing maximum FAR and height in nearly half of New Chinatown/ Japantown over levels that had been publically vetted and agreed to during the long study and comment periods. We do recognize that the mandated maximums at the north end of the district are less than the zoning code allowed previously, but Council’s last-minute increase to a 10-block district whose historic design guidelines were approved just months prior, without any real input from the public, sets a very troubling precedent. In addition, a single block was spot-zoned for additional height and bulk over its neighbors and over its previous allowances. The decision was made in disregard of PHLC’s prior testimony regarding the Central City 2035 Plan, and without studying its impact on the historic district. It is difficult to see this increase as anything but placing a private interest over the public interest and undermining the viability of this small, but important piece of Portland’s history. We remind City Council of the importance of our City’s process and to its commitment to equity and inclusion.

# PROMOTE LIVABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

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In the confused rush to “fix” the affordable housing crisis, we as a City have lost sight of what we have, and what we value. Our built environment is part of our shared capital, part of its livability, its feel, its reflection of our community and its people. Not everything that is already built is important, of course. But we need to reaffirm the reasons why historic preservation is a part of our adopted Comprehensive Plan and our strategies for growth. Yes, historic preservation is part of a strategy for growth. The following four topics all relate to livability, affordable housing, and their relationship to historic preservation.

- Preserving Historic Multifamily Housing
- Gentrification and Historic Preservation
- Equity and Inclusion
- Historic Preservation Can Increase Density

### Examples of Historic Multifamily Housing



1918 SW Elm St. (Photo: M. Roman)



734-2740 SW 1ST (Photo: BPS)



2555 NE Glisan St. (Photo: M. Roman)



1314 SE Salmon St. (Photo: M. Roman)

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## PRESERVING HISTORIC MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

### A

Preserving Historic Multifamily housing in Portland helps maintain the affordable rental units already in the city while furthering Portland’s comprehensive goals for inclusion, equity and diversity. Historic multi-family units come in many forms. Garden apartments, courtyard apartments, bungalow apartments, tenement houses and apartment buildings are some examples. Built to meet the needs of previous growing populations in Portland, they are a model for building types fitting the livability and environmental goals we have set.

Portland has a poor record with regard to rental unit availability for extremely low-income renters with a ratio of 25+/- units per 100 extremely low-income families in need.<sup>1</sup> At or below 50% of AMI renters in the Portland area can expect to find 42 units per 100 needed. While multifamily housing projects are being built at a rapid pace, most are being built for the higher end market and not serving the needs of lower income residents. Even if rents taper off as capacity increases, the gap for lower income residents will not be filled. Should we consider trying to maintain some of our historic building stock in order to fill the need for affordable housing? Older units are by their very nature more affordable than new construction and they are already here.

Almost 72% of Portland’s building stock is older than 50 years.<sup>2</sup> In addition to being more affordable than new construction, studies by the Preservation Green Lab have shown us how important our older smaller building stock is in terms of neighborhood livability. Their May 2014 study, *Older, Smaller, Better: Measuring How the Character of Buildings and Blocks Influences Urban Vitality*, compared older neighborhoods to newer ones using spatial statistics to define high and low character-score areas in terms of their density and diversity, inclusiveness, and economic vitality. That study looked at three American cities: Seattle, San Francisco and Washington D.C. On almost every metric the older smaller buildings of mixed ages performed better than the newer larger developments. Streetscapes with a mix of old and new buildings provided more population density and more commercial businesses per square foot. They have higher walkability scores, support more local businesses, provide more jobs in small businesses than streets with large new buildings. The same study methodology applied to Portland through the Atlas of ReUrbanism project shows similar findings. Older mixed-use neighborhoods have more than twice the density of newer neighborhoods, two times the number of jobs in small and new businesses and two times the number of women and minority owned businesses.<sup>3</sup>

Older mixed-use neighborhoods have more than twice the density of newer neighborhoods, two times the number of jobs in small and new businesses and two times the number of women and minority owned businesses.

Another positive outcome of retaining historic multifamily building stock is the value of socioeconomic diversity in neighborhoods. With increased real estate values lower income residents are being pushed out of the city. One strategy

for keeping our city from becoming divided into rich inner neighborhoods and poor periphery neighborhoods is to retain the older affordable multifamily housing we already have. The units are often integrated well into well established neighborhoods. Current zoning in single family residential neighborhoods would prohibit many of the historic smaller units from being constructed today. The one and two-story courtyard apartments and similar scale apartment buildings are arguably more suitable in a juxtaposition with single family residential buildings than the larger 4 and 5 story ¼ block developments. These lower scale developments are a great example of the type of architecture that integrates extremely well into the single-family residential zones. Examples include buildings like the Salerno Apartments. (Photo by M. Roman)



Moreover, these older buildings are often designed with smaller units which were more prevalent 50 years ago making them more affordable. These prototypical efficiency units were built because they filled a need for middle to low income housing.

We agree that new high-density developments are needed to meet the demands of population growth. However, we need to recognize that these new developments are not going to meet the needs of everyone. While not the entire solution, historic existing multifamily housing in Portland is providing lower priced units that, when replaced, are inevitably replaced with less affordable units. Additional analysis and surveys of this historic building stock, achieved by updating Portland's Historic Resources Inventory, would demonstrate the value it has to meeting our city's comprehensive goals. The retention of existing older multifamily housing should be incentivized and implemented alongside other strategies to increase density across the City.

## GENTRIFICATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION - A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP

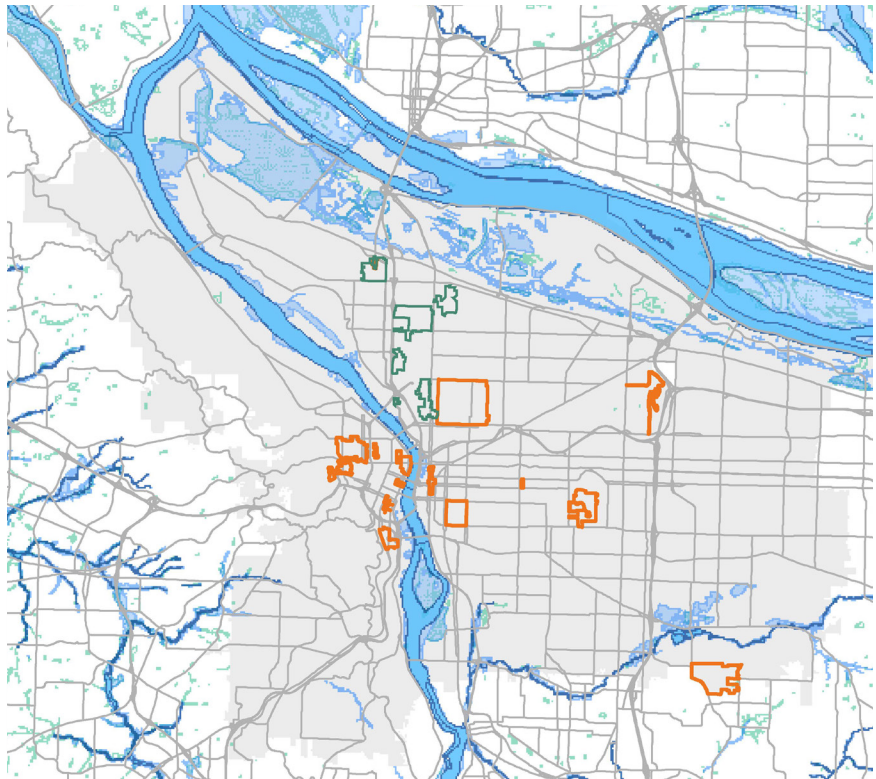
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Among the many themes in the citywide discourse about growth and development in Portland this year are competing arguments about the relationship between historic preservation and gentrification. This discussion is particularly important given recent nationwide attention to Oregon's history of systemic racism and displacement of populations of color and the effect of that legacy on how Portlanders view the identity of their city today.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, recent violent protests in Portland have highlighted deep divisions among those with competing views about immigration and other racially-sensitive topics.<sup>2</sup> Those seeking to combat a narrative of exclusion in Portland often inappropriately assign undesirable exclusionary motives to historic preservationists seeking to ensure that important stories of the city's past continue to be told as the city grows.<sup>3</sup> This is not a new criticism, nor is it unique to Portland. Historic preservationists have long been assailed as elitist and exclusionary and resistant to change.

However, the confluence of Portland's explosive growth and resulting housing crisis casts local historic preservation efforts in a particularly harsh light among those who argue that preservation restricts the development of new homes to the current supply and thus exacerbates rising costs as demand increases.

Only about 2% of the city is actually designated as historic and enjoys any protection at all.

Image: City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability Historic Resources Map



Even critics of historic preservation in Portland acknowledge that “protecting a few buildings is unlikely to have much effect on a region’s housing supply.”<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, vitiating protections on historic resources may destroy the very thing drawing newcomers to Portland who seek unique character and historic charm.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, data suggests that historic preservation and housing affordability objectives are often congruent - in fact, gentrification of historically affordable neighborhoods has an inordinate effect on low-income and minority populations who are driven out of their communities to less-expensive, outlying areas where fewer services are available.

Again, this is not a problem unique to Portland. The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) published an in-depth study in 2013 describing recent gentrification of Chinatowns in Boston, New York and Philadelphia, concluding that although such communities had provided immigrants with support networks and affordable housing for over a century, the white population in these Chinatowns has increased faster than the overall population in each city, especially over the last decade, with the number of white residents doubling in Boston and Philadelphia’s Chinatowns.<sup>6</sup> Asian residents have been so displaced that they number fewer than half of the residents in these cities. Meanwhile, the percentage of Asians in poverty increased from 39 percent to 44 percent, the highest poverty rate for any racial group in Boston.<sup>7</sup>

Sadly, Portland’s Chinatown, the 7th oldest in North America, and the only historic district in Portland designated for its cultural significance in addition to its architecture, has even fewer Asian residents. Recent changes to the Zoning Code within the tiny district will only exacerbate gentrification there. Arguments that the central downtown area needed up-zoning to stimulate economic activity in a blighted area, though unavailing, won the day. As the AALDEF observed after careful study of the effect of commercial, residential, and industrial development patterns in Chinatowns, “The gentrification that threatens to transform these areas is not just the natural result of market forces or the general evolution of these cities. They are a very direct result of local policies of neglect, demolition, and redevelopment that local governments have perpetuated for decades.”<sup>6</sup>

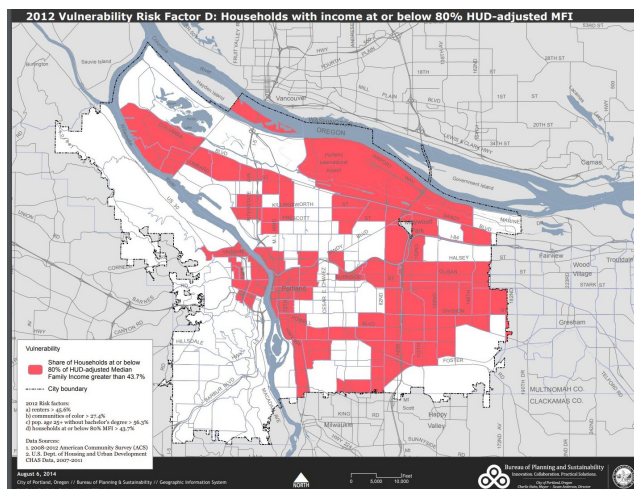
Recently, Albina’s painfully familiar story was raised by opponents of the up-zoning of Chinatown. Skeptics argued that in contrast to Albina, which was a thriving African American enclave, Chinatown is blighted and in desperate need of economic incentives for development. This is a common narrative among often well-meaning white politicians, as they support policies that in practice harm, rather than hurt, the vulnerable populations they seek to protect. Some residents, however, remember Albina’s history differently. “As the neglected and decimated neighborhood declined in the 1990s, Portland officials, under pressure from the black community, started another urban renewal process that ended up pushing out even more residents. White folks swooped in to buy

Victorian homes for less than the price of a used car. Black residents, priced out, left. A decade after urban renewal began, black residents owned 40 percent fewer homes in the community while white folks owned 43 percent more.”<sup>8</sup>

“Even well-intentioned policies can exacerbate inequities without a racial/ethnic justice lens. For example, ending mortgage redlining in a predominantly black neighborhood can result in new homebuyers, but without specific supports for African-Americans, the residents who experienced deprivation of access may not benefit. Given the racial wealth and credit gap, the infusion of capital goes to those immediately prepared to purchase a home –predominantly white households—and has the effect of substantially increasing white homeownership and increasing the racial homeownership gap.”<sup>6</sup>

Adaptive reuse, creative ideas for the preservation of historic resources in ways that help to tell the very important stories of Portland’s past can help to combat gentrification, rather than accelerating it. Indeed, this is where some critics are mistaken in characterizing all historic preservationists as those seeking to cast neighborhoods in amber. As Stephanie Meeks, President and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation stated, preservation is not about stopping change, but instead “about managing change and helping ensure a smooth continuum between past, present and future.” In order to stem continued gentrification and to avoid squandering the potential for any return to Portland of people of color this continuum must include the stories of people of color and their special places. “Preservation is about ensuring that our urban landscape reflects more than just profit margins or the whims of developers and real estate speculators – that they address the real needs and concerns of communities. It is about working to see that we honor and reflect the full contours of our past, including the complex and difficult chapters.”<sup>9</sup> Portland deserves no less, and as it continues to grow, historic preservation will play a key role in ensuring affordable, equitable opportunities for housing for all of its residents, new and existing, of all cultural backgrounds and ethnicities.

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability’s maps in its 2012-2014 report on Gentrification showed that the majority of areas vulnerable to displacement of low-income residents and residents of color overlap with the oldest residential and commercial areas of the city.



## SIDENOTE: NEIGHBORHOOD CULTURAL LOSS

The Corbett and Lair Hill neighborhoods both face changes with the proposed new MAX line along Barbur Boulevard. In 1978, these neighborhoods were recognized by the Landmarks Commission as once the oldest and strongest ethnic communities in the city. Jewish and Italian families were the predominant communities, but today the descendants of those communities are mostly gone. Today, the last remnant of that Jewish community, the Jewish Shelter Home and the synagogue in Barbur Boulevard, designed by John Storrs, share an uncertain future due to the MAX line.<sup>1</sup>

Corbett and Lair Hill are located in South Portland, established when Elizabeth Caruthers filed a Donation Land Claim in 1847, and James Terwilliger shortly after. By 1880, streets were laid out in the 200 by 200 foot grid pattern. Farms turned into houses, sawmills and factories. The railroad was built in 1868, connecting the Tualatin Valley with South Portland where Barbur Boulevard is today. In 1887, the Portland and Willamette Valley Railroad opened a line along the Willamette River, parallel to Macadam Avenue.<sup>2</sup>

Shops and businesses were established within walking distance of homes. Electrified street railways aided the formation of strong ethnic populations; attracting East European Jews and Italian Catholics. The lumber industry attracted migrants including French, Turkish, Sicilian, Asian, and African Americans.<sup>3</sup> The built environment was as diverse as the population's, with austere pioneer houses placed next to elaborate Victorian buildings.

After WWI, families began to migrate to residential neighborhoods on the periphery of downtown such as Laurelhurst. This movement was perpetuated by the automobile, which led to systematic physical changes in the neighborhood and which led to its near total demise. Transportation projects from the 1920s to the 1950s such as the Ross Island Bridge, U.S. Highway 99, and Front Avenue as well as the removal of the streetcar led to significant demolitions and a split between the two neighborhoods. These changes destroyed the core and soul of the neighborhood.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1960s, the construction of Interstate-5 and Interstate 405 and the South Auditorium Urban Renewal project effectively isolated Corbett and Lair Hill from downtown. In 1968, Lair Hill neighbors successfully fought the proposal to extend the South Auditorium district and in August 17, 1977, City Council designated Lair Hill as a Historic Conservation District.<sup>5</sup> "Preserving the historic homes of Lair Hill was one of the sparks that led to the development of Portland's venerable neighborhood association system."<sup>6</sup> The Lair Hill Conservation District was later listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 31, 1998 with an expanded boundary. As Portland continues to develop without an updated HRI an increased loss culturally and architecturally significant resources is assured. New zoning proposals must be mindful to not repeat the mistakes of the past.

1938 photograph showing the South Auditorium Urban Renewal area and Interstate 405 before construction. Almost all of the homes, churches, and businesses depicted in this image were demolished.  
Photo: City of Portland Archives.



## EQUITY AND INCLUSION

### A C D

As Portland's housing prices reveal, affordability is extremely limited. The pressure to create new housing must be borne across the City and not pushed out to the outer rings or outside of Multnomah County.



705 NE 79TH (Photo: BPS)

The PHLC continues to be concerned that preservation, especially of older residential properties, is being viewed by many affordable housing proponents as the enemy. This perception is partly tied to two factors, one of which is the historic ownership of older houses, which was vastly more likely to be by white people. The other factor is that developers have perpetuated a story that the only way to increase density across residential areas of the City is to demolish older homes and replace them with new structures, rather than add to or retrofit an existing house or duplex. Yet it is precisely this fine-grained, additive strategy that creates the most variety in new housing, which is precisely what Portland needs. Developers dislike these types of small projects because they cannot simply replicate a single development type over and over again. What is efficient for them represents a loss of character, affordability, diversity, and equity for the rest of us.

#### Background

Portland has a shamefully racist past. The practices of red-lining, deliberate racial exclusion through zoning covenants, and other discriminatory practices against people of color occurred in many single-family Portland-area housing developments of the 1900s through the 1940s. Discrimination in other forms persisted (and still persists) long after the 1948 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court striking down the constitutionality of racial exclusion covenants. Yet these older neighborhoods are worth preserving for their quality of overall design, for the energy and resources represented in all of the construction, for the beauty and handiwork of the structures, and for the mature tree canopy. To allow these older neighborhoods to be destroyed in the name of equity is not addressing the problem. Rather, we must be looking at how to change older neighborhoods to bring in more residents and more diverse residents.

#### Equity

Given the background of many of the oldest single-family neighborhoods in Portland, solving the City's housing inequity issues will not happen overnight. It will happen slowly, as ownership moves from older white folks to younger and hopefully more diverse Portlanders. How can we improve diversity in older neighborhoods? One method is to ensure that older neighborhoods do offer more of the "missing middle" housing option represented by ADUs, smaller duplexes, apartments, and condominium units. Not only will these new housing options allow for people of more varied income levels to move into a residential neighborhood, but it could entice retirees in houses too large for them to move into smaller places that are still in their own neighborhood.

#### Why older neighborhoods matter

Portland is well-known for its beautiful, close-in, residential neighborhoods. These older neighborhoods are worth preserving for their quality of overall

design, for the embodied energy and resources represented in all of the construction, for their “walkability”, for the beauty and handiwork of the structures, and for the mature tree canopy. Close-in east-side neighborhoods were often developed to be more middle-class than those on the wealthy west side, where public transportation is hard to reach.<sup>1</sup> The east side is also where the City is focusing its RIP efforts, predominantly due to transportation options which are already available. This strategy does make sense, but also jeopardizes the oldest, most “walkable,” smallest, and most affordable housing stock in the City. Our east-side residential neighborhoods often were developed during a time when people were less reliant on cars and were more apt to know their neighbors. These neighborhoods are highly in demand as their qualities become valued again. Policies at the government level need to also value and preserve these neighborhoods.

#### Why older neighborhoods need more density

As Portland’s housing prices reveal, affordability is extremely limited. The pressure to create new housing must be borne across the City and not pushed out to the outer rings or outside of Multnomah County. Some of the reasons this is so important include climate change and the need to reduce car trips, the concern with rising economic inequity, and the preservation of farm land outside of the urban growth boundary.

#### Inclusion

Portland is a global city. We declare ourselves a “sanctuary” city, march in support of immigrants’ rights, and yet we are still discriminating against people of color or different ethnicities on some very basic levels. One of those aspects is where historic preservation is concerned. Preservation is about maintaining those places that mean the most to us, whether that is because of a place’s high artistic value or its association with an important person or significant event. Yet we have neglected stories of cultural importance, of the lives of immigrants and ethnic communities, and the places that are important to these Portlanders and by extension, to us all. The Historic Resource Inventory, completed in 1984, has almost zero representation of such places. We need to identify these places and celebrate them before they are gone.



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION CAN HELP INCREASE DENSITY

### D

Portland generally embraces demolition as a strategy for creating more density. The Buildable Lands Inventory, for instance, which is relied on for public policy data assumes that adding density can only come from a complete redevelopment of any given parcel (teardown and replace). Yet what are we getting in place of the buildings removed? Sometimes we get new, denser, but vastly more costly, multi-family developments or towers. Sometimes we get single family homes on steroids, representing not only a loss of character in an older neighborhood but also a loss of opportunity for density and affordability which could be achieved by adding units to an existing structure. The PHLC would like to see preservation incentivized over demolition. We strongly support internal conversions, additions, and construction of new ADUs in residential districts; adaptive reuse and additions to warehouse and other types of older buildings; new multi-family housing in historic districts.

The City declared a housing emergency in October 2015 and since then, has instituted a number of policies to address the problem of housing affordability, including passing ordinances to require Inclusionary Housing and Renter's Protections. The housing emergency continues and has actually worsened over the past three years, despite a number of efforts to spur the development of more housing units and to increase density in our city core. Further, the volume of construction waste is projected to double globally by 2025.<sup>1</sup>

Since the crisis was declared, rents have increased dramatically, and while there have been significant numbers of new rental units in multifamily buildings coming online in the Portland metro region, “[i]t is apparent that new buildings tend to be the more expensive buildings with high quality ratings...[but] the pre-existing shortage of rental housing for lower income households has not been directly mitigated by these new units of luxury rental housing, where rents are not affordable for incomes at or below 80 percent of area median income,” according to a Portland State University study from November 2017.<sup>2</sup>

While historic multidwelling buildings often offer more affordable rents than those sought in new developments, density advocates often mistakenly point to historic preservation as part of the problem. To the contrary, historic preservation may be an essential part of the solution to Portland's density needs. As the National Trust for Historic Preservation has observed in a 2014 study of cities across America, there is a “clear, statistically significant link between blocks of older, smaller, mixed-age buildings and heightened levels of population density. It turns out that older buildings are remarkable in their ability to comfortably and inconspicuously fit incredible densities of residents,

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jobs, and businesses into relatively compact spaces. Perhaps the so-called “original design intelligence” of older buildings—a phrase coined by Cheryl Widell but evidenced in writings by Stewart Brand, Carl Elefante, and others—can be applied to space-saving strategies for housing more people just as it can be applied to passive heating and cooling solutions that bolster energy efficiency.”<sup>3</sup> In fact, the study showed that historic neighborhoods had a “hidden density” with more people and businesses per square foot than areas with new buildings. Equally important, such neighborhoods often had “more small business jobs, more creative jobs, more new and women-and minority-owned businesses...and more diversity in housing costs, meaning more opportunity for families of all incomes.”<sup>4</sup>

Such is the flaw in the argument that density and historic preservation conflict. To the contrary, to increase density in Portland, we need to embrace our historic neighborhoods, which are often more dense than other areas, and offer more naturally affordable housing. We also need to seek ways to make use of the enormous number of centrally-located, close-in historic buildings that could be adaptively re-used to produce additional density in an environmentally-sustainable way while preserving important parts of Portland’s history with stories yet to be told. Many of those buildings, however, have not been surveyed for their historic significance because the Historic Resource Inventory, which itself was sorely limited in geography and scope, has not been updated in nearly 35 years.

Cities such as Baltimore have formed coalitions including leaders from community development, architecture, planning, historic preservation, sustainability, and construction to promote building reuse that favors historic buildings.

Other similar-sized cities, such as Baltimore, have focused on adaptive reuse of historic buildings by establishing coalitions such as the “Partnership for Building Reuse” in 2013 which worked with over 90 community leaders in various industries, including real estate development, affordable housing and community development, architecture, planning, historic preservation, sustainability, and construction to develop creative projects that increase density, and affordability, while preserving historic structures and taking advantage of real estate trends favoring historic buildings by spurring significant tourism and economic activity.<sup>5</sup>

Portland’s public and private planning and historic preservation organizations could work together on a cross-industry project that spurs real estate development while taking advantage of the benefits of preserving historic buildings, both from an economic standpoint as well as an environmental one. After all, “[t]he greenest building is...one that is already built.”<sup>6</sup> We have ample evidence that the densest buildings are also the ones already built. Let’s let historic preservation be part of the solution to our housing emergency by inviting historic preservationists to discussions about increasing density through adaptive reuse and other creative ideas to boost our housing stock while maintaining Portland’s special historic character.

SIDENOTE: WATCH LIST

The following are at-risk resources that the Historic Landmarks Commission is actively championing. It is our hope that inclusion in the list will raise awareness and will serve as a catalyst for preservation efforts and greater stewardship. Our goal for each of these resources is to see them removed in future State of the City Preservation Reports and featured as success stories of rehabilitation and reuse.

1. NEW CHINATOWN / JAPANTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. EAST PORTLAND / GRAND AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
3. PORTLAND'S CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
4. 20-MINUTE NEIGHBORHOODS / STREETCAR-ERA COMMERCIAL HUBS
5. FACILITIES IN PORTLAND PARKS
6. PORTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT ENGINE HOUSE #2
7. MULTNOMAH COUNTY COURTHOUSE
8. THE ORIGINAL BLANCHET HOUSE
9. VETERANS MEMORIAL COLISEUM
10. CAST IRON COLLECTION
11. UNREINFORCED MASONRY BUILDINGS
12. WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD
13. BURNSIDE BRIDGE
14. RESOURCES IN THE SOUTHWEST TRANSIT CORRIDOR



Burnside Bridge 1926  
photo from ENR.com

## CELEBRATING THE VALUE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

A  
D

Historic preservation adds value to our city over time by maintaining the architectural richness that makes Portland a unique and desirable place to live. The total measure of that value is difficult to define in economic terms but clearly preservation is having a huge impact on the quality of life in Portland. Despite our inability to properly inventory and protect our historic resources, what we have managed to maintain over time is notable in its diversity as well as overall quality. Many cities have lost their entire historic downtowns and older residential neighborhoods to urban renewal and transportation projects. Portland has a reputation around the world for quality urban design, both new and old. Many of those admirable qualities are related to livability, walkability, the 20-minute neighborhood, all ideas Portland neighborhoods accommodated before the car became the prevalent transportation system. And now these old ideas about how to design a city are relevant again. We need to celebrate the role historic preservation has played in Portland's growing reputation as a world class city while also recognizing our responsibility as stewards of a rich architectural heritage passed down to us from previous generations.

The loss of buildings and places erodes the diversity and uniqueness of our architectural heritage.

Social and environmental values are part of Portland's identity and among those values is a conservation ethic which has given us a great appreciation of the natural environment. Historic preservation advances this same ethic to the built environment. The goal is similar, a built landscape protected and maintained over time with the type of diversity and richness we cherish in the natural landscape. Like an extinct species we know buildings and places lost to demolition are not coming back. This erodes the diversity and uniqueness of our architectural heritage.

Washington High School is an example of a successful reuse of a historic building. Photo Washington High School website



The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission wants to highlight projects that not only preserve our unique “Portland brand” but also provide housing, jobs and increased tax base for the city and county. The **Towne Storage Restoration** for example, reviewed by PHLC in 2016, sold this year for 62.75 million dollars making it the most Valued office space on a per square foot basis in the entire city. The repurposed **Washington High School** reviewed by PHLC in 2013 is now an amazing music venue and hub of creativity in the central eastside. That project was recognized by Restore Oregon in 2015 with its DeMuro Award, a fitting and well-deserved tribute considering the late Art DeMuro’s legacy with the project. Projects like the **White Stag** building renovation brought the University of Oregon to establish a satellite campus in Old Town, reinvigorating one of the most important historic districts in the city. On a larger scale think of developments like the **Brewery Block’s** project along with the **Armory Theater...** These are neighborhood character-defining buildings which are not easily reproduced with new construction. The old stuff is what makes these projects so interesting, desirable and ultimately valuable to us all.



734 E Burnside (Photo: BPS)

# LOOKING BACK AT 2017-2018

## Stats

21 public hearings  
 7 Type III Cases reviewed  
 7 Design Advice Requests  
 2 National Register nominations  
 20 Briefings  
 1 Retreat

Staff Level Reviews  
 54 Type I Cases reviewed  
 40 Type IX Cases reviewed  
 93 Type II Cases reviewed

## Commission Outreach in 2018

Collaborated with the Portland Design Commission on several proposals, including the Portland Art Museum DAR and the Wells Fargo and PacWest Buildings.

Received briefing and provided input to PBOT and BPS staff concerning Vertical Infrastructure in the Public Right-of-Way (ROW) and Cellular Antennas. One Commissioner served as liaison to PBOT to stay involved with developments of the project.

Reviewed the preliminary Burnside Bridge project and SW Corridor Transit project and provided input on the proposed project scope.

Reviewed and provided input on several BPS-led Code projects, including CC2035, RIP, BHBD, and the DOZA Process Code Changes.

Wrote a letter on behalf of the URM ordinance and attended Portland City Council hearing to provide testimony.

Provided assistance on the development of the Historic Resources Project, including formation of a subcommittee to work with a subcommittee of PSC members to stay informed about the project and provide guidance.

Collaborating with the U of O to create a studio for graduate architecture students set in the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District to study in-depth the complex design challenges of this important neighborhood.

Liaison to Regional Arts and Culture Council to review and consult on proposed sites on Historic buildings for art murals.

## Project of the Year

### 500 NW 23rd Avenue Building

The proposed four-story mixed-use building was designed on the site of the Alfred C.F. Burkhardt house, which was a contributing resource to the Historic Alphabet District and was destroyed in a 2016 gas explosion. While design of the new building was contemporary, the PHLC unanimously agreed that the building was carefully scaled and thoughtfully detailed with regard to the historic district and will provide a nice example of how to design a small corner contemporary building that is compatible with the historic district. The project team included: Dan Koch and Rebecca Wood of Allied Works with A&R Development as the owner, represented by Robert Sacks. Rendering by Allied Works.





## REFERENCES

### The Importance of Funding the HRI

<sup>1</sup>Majority of this section as taken from the following report: City of Portland. Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. (2017). Updating the Historic Resource Inventory. Retrieved from: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/675769>

### Sidenote: Albina - A Memory Loss

<sup>1</sup>Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and Portland Bureau of Planning. Special Projects Section, “Potential Historic Conservation Districts,” 7.

<sup>2</sup>Comprehensive Planning Workshop, “History of the Albina Plan Area,” 39–40.

<sup>3</sup>Comprehensive Planning Workshop, 42.

<sup>4</sup>Comprehensive Planning Workshop, 42.

<sup>5</sup>Graves, “Portland Home Demolitions.”

### Preserving Historic Multifamily Housing

<sup>1</sup>Rachel Monahan, “These 6 Cities Are Smarter Than Portland About Housing,” Willamette Week, December 6, 2017. Online at <http://www.wweek.com/news/city/2017/12/06/6-cities-smarter-than-portland-about-housing/>

<sup>2</sup><http://iqc.ou.edu/2015/02/10/60yrswest/>

<sup>3</sup>M. Powe, “Report: Atlas of ReUrbanism: Buildings and blocks in American cities” (<https://forum.savingplaces.org/viewdocument/report-atlas-of-reurbanism-buildi>).

### Gentrification and Historic Preservation – a Complicated Relationship

<sup>1</sup> See PSU graduate student research with examples of racist covenants in deeds throughout Portland <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/677593> (most in neighborhoods not designated as historic).

<sup>2</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/04/us/portland-protest-patriot-prayer-rally.html>

<sup>3</sup>J. Cortright, “Historic Preservation: NIMBYism for the Rich?” June 2017 <http://cityobservatory.org/historic-preservation-nimbyism-for-the-rich/>

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>The New York Landmarks Conservancy noted in its April 2016 report that more than half those surveyed as to where residents would most like to live chose historic neighborhoods, citing interesting streets, character, and the presence of appropriately scaled and historic buildings as more important than new building construction activity and the presence of recently constructed high-rise buildings.

<sup>6</sup><http://aaldef.org/Chinatown%20Then%20and%20Now%20AALDEF.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup><https://www.northeastern.edu/thescope/2018/02/09/faced-housing-crisis-chinatown-residents-note-absence-media-coverage/>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.portlandmercury.com/feature/2017/08/23/19263182/how-portland-is-driving-away-new-residents-of-color>

<sup>9</sup>S. Meeks and K. Murphy, *The Past and Future City: How Historic Preservation Is Reviving America’s Communities* (Island Press, 2016).

### Equity and Inclusion

<sup>1</sup>(The wealthiest Portlanders live predominantly on the west side rather than the east side. One online source lists 8 of the top 10 wealthy neighborhoods in Portland as being on the west side. (see <https://www.homesnacks.net/richest-neighborhoods-in-portland-129008/>).

## Sidenote: Corbett and Lair Hill

<sup>1</sup>Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and Portland Bureau of Planning. Special Projects Section, “Potential Historic Conservation Districts” (City of Portland, Oregon, August 1978), 45, Fuenmayor Personal Library.

<sup>2</sup>Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and Portland Bureau of Planning. Special Projects Section, 45–46.

<sup>3</sup>Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and Portland Bureau of Planning. Special Projects Section, 46.

<sup>4</sup>Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and Portland Bureau of Planning. Special Projects Section, 47–48.

<sup>5</sup>Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and Portland Bureau of Planning. Special Projects Section, 48–49.

<sup>6</sup>Kristin Belz, “Walk through the Victorian Era in Lair Hill,” [www.PDXmonthly.Com](http://www.pdxmonthly.com), August 12, 2011, sec. Architecture & Design. Out and About, <https://www.pdxmonthly.com/articles/2011/8/12/walk-through-the-victorian-era-in-lair-hill-august-2011>.

## Historic Preservation Can Help Increase Density

<sup>1</sup>Adam Redling, ed. “Construction Debris volume to surge in coming years,” *Construction & Demolition Recycling*. March 2018. Online at <http://www.cdrecycler.com/article/global-volume-construction-demolition-waste/>

<sup>2</sup>“Preserving Housing Choice and Opportunity: A STUDY OF APARTMENT BUILDING SALES AND RENTS,” (November 2017) S. Sung and L. Bates, Ph.D. Toulon School of Urban Studies and Planning Portland State University. See more at: [www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/equitablehousing](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/equitablehousing)

<sup>3</sup><https://forum.savingplaces.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=b73e8fc7-7fb2-0fc7-202c-d0ed58ff3089&forceDialog=0>

<sup>4</sup>S. Meeks and K. Murphy, *The Past and Future City: How Historic Preservation Is Reviving America’s Communities* (Island Press, 2016) at p. 47. And see: S. Meeks, “Density Without Demolition” <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/06/historic-preservation-density-demolition/529821/> (June 2017)

<sup>5</sup>See discussion about Baltimore’s Columbus School, which was converted into affordable housing: L. Bailey, *Affordable Housing Finance*, “Turning Older Buildings Into Great Places to Live,” [https://www.housingfinance.com/news/turning-older-buildings-into-great-places-to-live\\_o](https://www.housingfinance.com/news/turning-older-buildings-into-great-places-to-live_o) (January 2018)).

<sup>6</sup>C. Elefante, AIA, LEED AP: <https://forum.savingplaces.org/viewdocument/the-greenest-buildin-1>