

December 6, 2023

To: Portland City Council

Re: Item 1015 SUPPORT Housing Needs Analysis

Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners:

I am a current resident of the Richmond neighborhood, a board member of Portland: Neighbors Welcome, and would like to voice my emphatic support of upzoning the entire Inner Eastside in the creation of the Housing Production Strategy. I would also like to voice my support for approving the Housing Needs Analysis.

As a service worker, I spend roughly 50% of my income on rent in order to live in a neighborhood which I cherish and that has amazing access to public transportation, parks, and other amenities which make a huge impact on my quality of life. My job downtown is a 15-minute bus ride away. There are three grocery stores within a 5-minute drive of my apartment. Countless times, I have weighed the consequences of breaking my lease and moving further east, where rent is cheaper but amenities are more sparse.

I used to live in the Buckman neighborhood in a beautiful, old four-story quadplex. Under current zoning, a building of that size could not be rebuilt on that lot. It was also the cheapest rent I've ever paid in my life. Since then, I have been unable to find anything near that price in the same area. If there were more buildings like that in the Inner Eastside, I and other low-income individuals could continue to live comfortably in some of the highest opportunity areas in Portland.

Even if all of Portland has the "zoned capacity" to meet its housing goals, most of the Inner Eastside is still zoned as low-density residential. Many multifamily buildings in the Inner Eastside's low density zones are aging, and as they become obsolete, they cannot be replaced by new multifamily housing under current zoning. If multifamily supply continues to wane in the Inner Eastside, the burden of new housing development will be pushed to other neighborhoods, like those in North and Outer East Portland, where residents are at a higher risk for displacement.

I believe that everyone, regardless of income, deserves access to the same amenities that make the Inner Eastside so special. I urge you to approve the Housing Needs Analysis and consider upzoning the entire Inner Eastside in the Housing Production Strategy, so that I and other rent-burdened individuals can continue to have access to the amazing amenities in this area.

Sincerely,
Laura Fleming