

# Discovering & Preserving Portland's Historic & Culturally Significant Places

PORTLAND LANDMARKS COMMISSION PRESENTATION | JUNE 9, 2025  
ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE CENTER & BOSCO MILLIGAN FOUNDATION

# AGENDA & DISCUSSION TOPICS



## 1. AHC & BMF Overview:

- Who we are & what we do
- resources we offer
- new directions in preservation and sustainability

## 2. Collaboration Opportunities

- Near-term Opportunities
- Future Opportunities

## 3. Preservation Advocacy

- Recent Legislation
- Preservation Watch List
- Top 3 Advocacy Issues

Architectural Heritage Center  
& Bosco-Milligan Foundation

**CONNECTING  
PAST  
PRESENT  
FUTURE**



John Liu  
BMF & AHF Board President

# Architectural Heritage Center & Bosco-Milligan Foundation

## Background & Expertise

- 25 years of experience as a professional urban planner and environmental designer
- Owner of Forage Design + Planning
- Co-founder and Director of PDX Main Streets
- Expertise in sustainability, zero energy buildings, revitalization and long-range planning, research, public involvement & education
- Two time DJC *Woman of Vision* Award Winner



Heather Flint Chatto  
Executive Director



# The Architectural Heritage Center

## OUR MISSION

We empower people to discover and preserve Portland's historic and culturally significant places.

## OUR VISION

Through our programs, people across Portland will embrace preservation and reuse as a key component in creating equitable, livable, and sustainable communities.



# We make it easy to see Portland and learn about our history

**WALKING TOURS** of our older neighborhoods – over 80 annually – to discover the people, stories and events behind the homes and buildings.

**EXHIBITS** in our 4 gallery spaces on our city's development, architecture (lost and saved), and cultural history.

**TALKS & EVENTS** illuminating Portland history, heritage, architecture, and restoration how-to's.

**ADVOCACY** for building reuse, density without demolition, built and natural landscapes, and cultural preservation.



# We make it easy to see Portland and learn about our history

- **Exhibits** Thurs-Fri-Sat 11– 5
- **Lectures & Workshops**
- **Walking Tours** : March – Nov.,  
Tuesdays and Saturdays at 10am
- **Private Group Tours,  
Walks**
- **Events & Classroom  
Spaces** (60 people seated, 150 in  
galleries and other spaces)
- **Research Library &  
Archives**





# BMF COLLECTION

One of the largest  
architectural artifact  
collections in the Nation

- Over 14,000 artifacts in our database even more in our image library
- Available online for the first time ever
- Resource for contractors and building owners, preservationists and architecture lovers



COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH



# Discovering & Sharing our Cultural Stories

Online Story Map:

## **A Forgotten Community**

A Tour of Portland's Lost Japanese American Community

Presented by the Japanese American Museum of Oregon & the Architectural Heritage Center



Merchant Hotel, ca 1930's

# CURRENT EXHIBITS

- History of Stained Glass Exhibit
- Cultural Photography - “Echoes of Transition”  
Alejandro IV Barragan, artist & cultural documentarian
- Community Stories -  
Beatrice Cannady, Black Rights Activist, Story Map digital Exhibits





# THE ADVOCATE: FIGHTING FOR EQUITY & EQUALITY

ONLINE EXHIBIT OF BEATRICE MORROW CANNADY & HER LONG HISTORY OF BLACK ACTIVISM IN OREGON





# Exhibits in 2025:



1970 Portland  
Downtown Model

## **Vision for the City: Envisioning Portlandia**

What are the tools we use to envision our City? Past and present, and what tools do we need for the future?

Together with a citywide tour and lecture series, a major exhibit will utilize a massive wooden model of the City of Portland and convene leaders and plan for the future.



# Exhibits in the works for 2025:

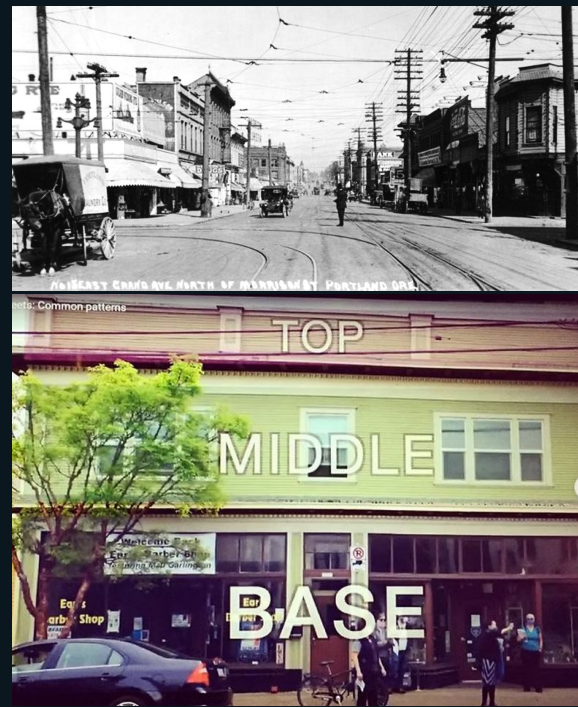


Left: Eric Ladd on the Ladd & Tilton Bank Building - 1955 | Image copyright the Oregonian | Right: Darcelle XV at Home - 2020 Exhibit | Image by Tom Cook

## LGBTQ Heritage:

Exhibit on - showcasing significant sites in Portland's LGBTQ history, spotlighting how members of this community have shaped Portland as early pioneers of the preservation movement.

# Exhibits in the works for 2025:



## Architecture of Portland's Streetcar-Era Main Streets

Exhibit showcasing the common architecture and character defining features of Portland's historic streetcar-era main streets that were the most significant land use pattern that shaped our city today. Highlighting the history, the common architecture patterns, and why these places matter now.



# Exhibits Planned for 2026:



Portland Urban  
Renewal | SUPR Lab

As a thought leader, we would love to have ZGF's support and insight for this exhibit!

## **Climate, Culture & Adaptive Reuse**

Repurposing buildings (instead of demolition and replacement) equates to taking thousands of cars off the road.

A “(Re)Habitation & Resiliency” exhibit and lecture series will highlight the impact of office-to-housing conversion strategies, and the carbon, climate, and resiliency benefits.

PAE Building 2021



Understanding local  
context for better infill

Adaptive Reuse  
for Housing

## NEW DIRECTIONS

Climate  
leadership



## Innovation & Leadership

Thought leadership &  
Education:

- Climate, Culture & Adaptive Reuse
- Design Literacy
- Convening leaders & designers

Demonstration:

- Solar on the AHC's 1883 historic building
- Education & Exhibits



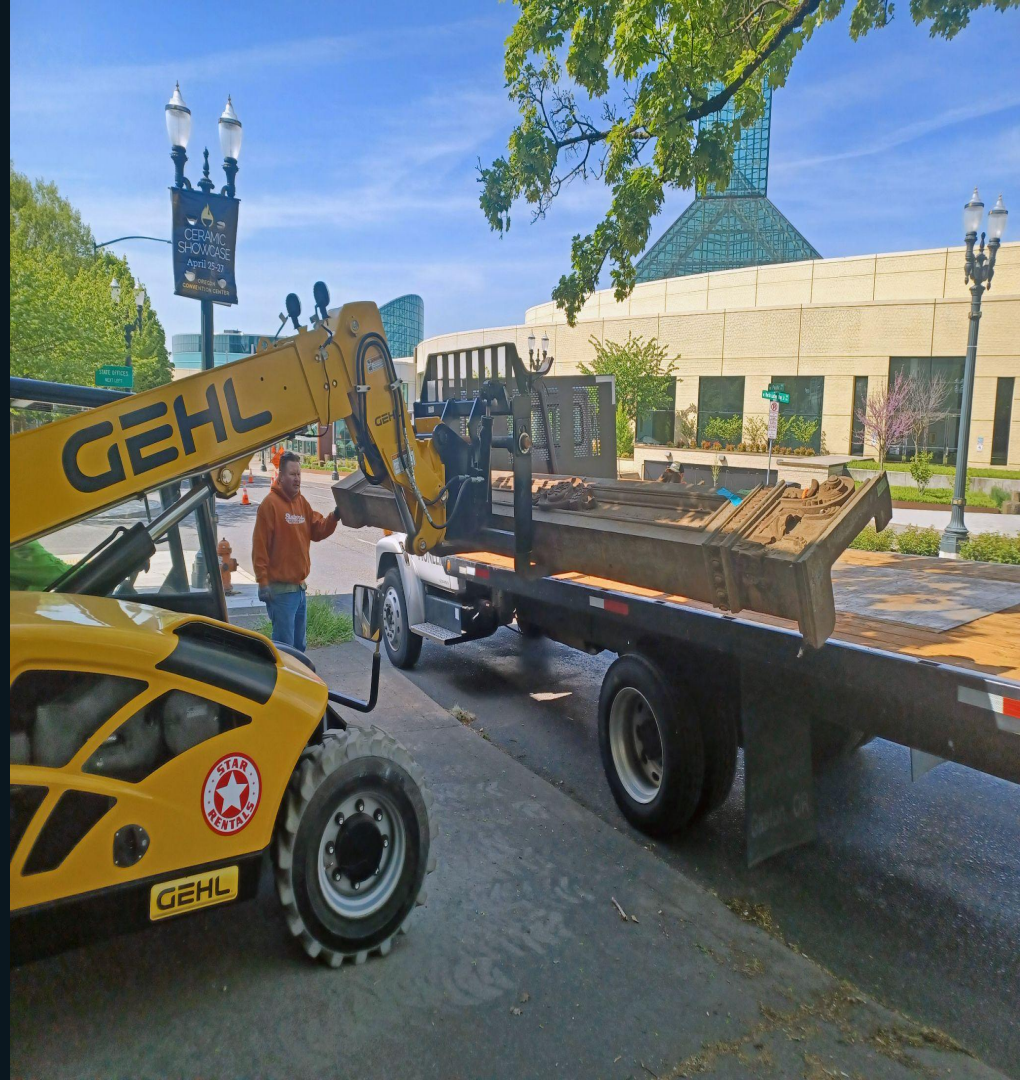
# Opportunities for Collaboration



# Opportunities for Collaboration

## Recent/Current Opportunities

- Cast Iron installation in Darcelle XV Plaza in partnership with Parks Department
- Model of Downtown Portland
- Central City Design Charrette 6/27-6/28, public sessions & reception





# FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- Legacy Business Program
- Commercial Deconstruction Program
- Character Statements
- Story Windows
- Leveraging AHC Collection
- Walks/talks/programs/events/education
- 2026 Exhibits: “Culture, Climate & Carbon” and “Hidden Density”

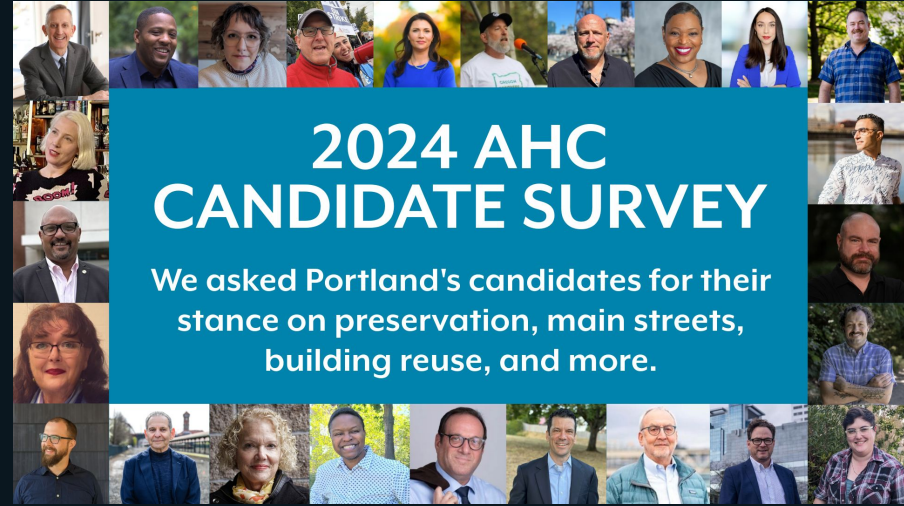




# ADVOCACY

**Tackling advocacy issues** ranging from:

- State Policy: Special Assessment just passed! 100's of advocacy letters
- Advocating for housing needs and a State rehabilitation tax credit
- Joined the OR Cultural Advocacy Coalition
- Thought leadership around policy and design
- Advocacy Watch:
  - Burnside Bridge Operator Towers: Opportunities for Reuse on the waterfront?
  - Proposed Demolition of Cleveland High School
  - PSU Historic Residence Halls (Demo Delay ends 7/2)

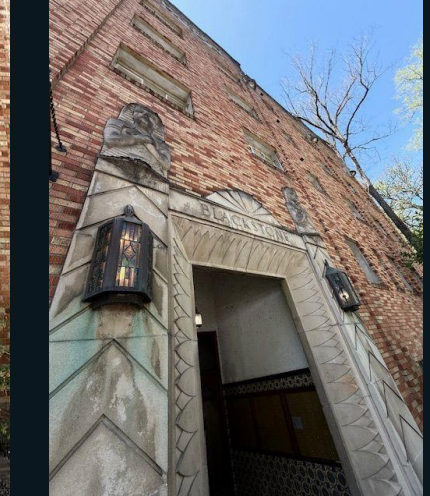


# ADVOCACY WATCH

## PSU Historic Residence Halls

### Black Stone & Montgomery Ct

- 200 units of Existing Housing
- Significant Architectural, cultural and women's History
- Major climate Impacts
- Un-necessary demo: PSU has existing land to build on now
- Both buildings eligible for national register designation. PSU is our largest landowner in downtown, what is their responsibility? *(torn down 5 other historic buildings and parcels are still vacant)*



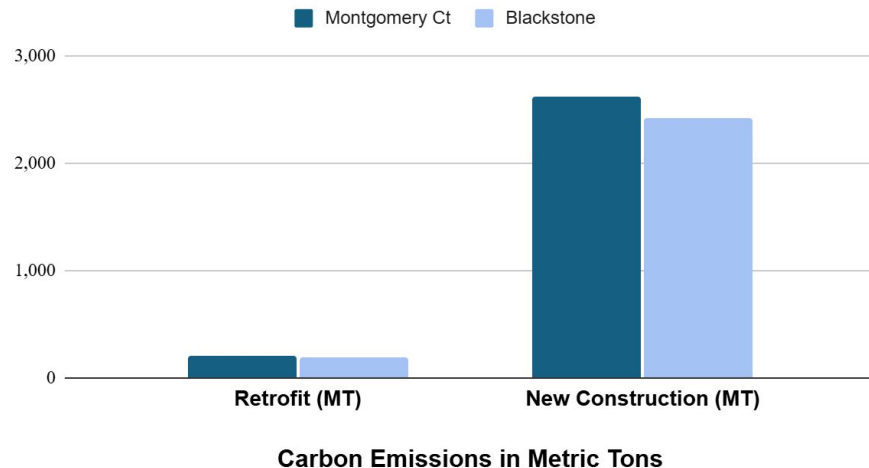
# ADVOCACY WATCH

## PSU Historic Residence Halls

### Black Stone & Montgomery Ct

- **Appreciate Landmarks for your leadership and advocacy letter! 1,000 community members agree and have signed our online petition** (*more info & upcoming webinar on 6/18 here: [visitahc.org/save-historic-psu-housing](https://visitahc.org/save-historic-psu-housing)*)
- **Climate impact:** Retaining the core and shell of these buildings would be a **savings of 72 to 89% of carbon emissions** vs. building new residential
- Combined for both buildings this is equivalent to:
  - **5 million pounds of coal burned**
  - **1,084 gas powered passenger vehicles** for a year
  - **Energy use of 624 homes**
- **Response to PSU Cost Letter:** still significantly cheaper to retrofit, they can still build new on other vacant parcels

PSU Climate Impacts of Retrofit vs. New Construction



*Using data from the Carbon Leadership Forum (CLF), estimate retaining the core and shell of these buildings would be a **savings of 72 to 89% of carbon emissions** vs. building new residential on the same lot. More if including demolition waste.*



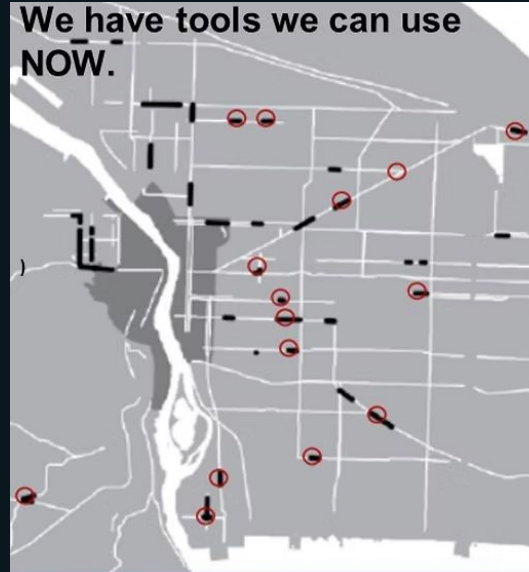
# ADVOCACY AHEAD

## Top 3 Priorities

1. **State Rehab Tax Credit:** Commercial
  - a. 39 other states have this tool for adaptive reuse
  - b. Could help with housing conversions, seismic/URM's, energy upgrades
2. **Incentives & Financial Tools for Adaptive Density:** Existing Residential - Density without demolition!
  - a. Need the package of tools: Technical assistance, low interest loans, fast track permitting, fee waivers, tax abatement



We have tools we can use  
NOW.



w-rise Storefront Commercial – Analysis Areas



# ADVOCACY

## Top 3 Priorities

### 3. Streetcar-era Main Streets Conservation

- Portland's undesigned historic main street commercial centers are vulnerable without tools
- DOZA policy process identified priorities for additional work
- Mixed use Zoning Commercial Storefront Analysis has excellent mapping and research already for 13 areas.
- Related historic buildings inventories and/or character statements to leverage

**We'd love to come back and discuss with LC.**



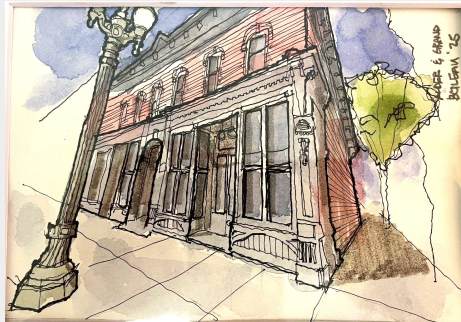
Source: *Low Rise commercial Storefront Analysis*.  
[https://caae028b-7104-4d26-9257-a3db5f2b08da.filesusr.com/ugd/d34969\\_ef0409cf654e44779b93fa81fc453dc8.pdf](https://caae028b-7104-4d26-9257-a3db5f2b08da.filesusr.com/ugd/d34969_ef0409cf654e44779b93fa81fc453dc8.pdf)

**Existing City Research:** City has already done extensive mapping of key areas of important main st. centers that could be small commercial conservation districts

# APPROACH

Engaging people in conservation leadership and education in new and creative ways:

- Integrating Advocacy: exhibits, programs, and education
- Walk & Sketch Programs
- New Education Talks & Webinars: historic and culturally relevant people and place
- Leadership Forums
- AHC in the streets
- Upcoming Design Charrette w/ City Club



**Main Street Sketch  
Project**  
Artwork by Bob Boileau



**Portland Design Thinkers  
Special Event with AHC**



# VISION

FRI 6/27 - SAT 6/28

## *for Central City*

**Free Webinar: Resilient City Making (In an Era of Climate Change) with Dr. Vivek Shandas**

Thursday, June 12, 12:00-1:00 pm

**Design Charrette Public Review Sessions**

Friday, June 27, 4:00-5:00 pm

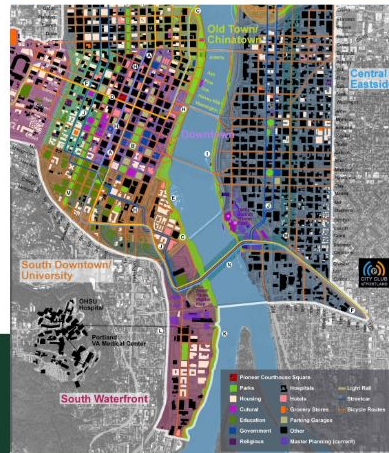
Saturday, June 28, 4:00-5:00 pm

**Public Reception - “Dots & Drinks”**

Saturday, June 28th, 5:30-7:00 pm

**Learn More + Register Now:**

**Visit [AHC.org/DesignCharrette](http://AHC.org/DesignCharrette)**





# The Vision Ahead: Thought Leaders, Culture Bearers, Storytellers, and Innovators

- Convening important conversations
- Cultural hub of an Arts District
- Showcasing our collection
- Fostering the next generation of preservationists to carry on this important work
- Expanding community design literacy and helping connect people with place and leveraging our existing resources for more housing and reinvestment in our city



# How to get involved:

- Subscribe to our [Newsletter](#) to learn about all of our walks and events
- Join a talk or walk
- Follow us on Facebook and Instagram
- Become a [member](#)
- Support the initiatives ahead!

Learn more at [visitAHC.org](https://visitAHC.org)

Contact us: [Heather@visitahc.org](mailto:Heather@visitahc.org)

