

Portland Housing Bureau



Director's Message

December 2010

As many of our partners know, Portland Housing Bureau is getting close to final adoption of a three-year strategic plan. This plan will help us sharpen our focus and define the role of the new bureau going forward. One of the core functions that will be highlighted in our plan is our role in both stimulating and investing in the development and preservation of affordable rental housing in the City of Portland. We have and will continue to do this work through partnerships and the sound investment of local and federal dollars, with a keen eye toward areas and communities with the greatest needs.

MARGARET VAN VLIET

It's been a busy month for PHB, as we released two requests for proposals (RFP) totaling almost \$14 million. One solicitation focused on [citywide and Lents](#) Town Center URA projects, with \$7.9 million available for development teams. The other RFP focuses \$6 million of [Gateway](#) tax increment funds (TIF) for the development of the PHB-owned Gateway/Glisan site.

Proposals for both RFPs will close over the next month, and we anticipate making announcements about selected projects by February. Our open, competitive processes always involve a Selection Advisory Committee made up of community members and staff. We are delighted to partner with the City of Portland's Minority Evaluators Program. If you have an interest in housing issues, and would like to be considered to serve on a selection advisory panel, [go to this form](#).

Affordable Housing in South Waterfront

Today, the Portland City Council took an important step toward building affordable housing in the South Waterfront neighborhood. Over the past year, the Portland Housing Bureau has focused considerable review and analysis on the possibilities for Block 49.

We are thrilled to be working with REACH CDC, which was selected to develop and own the project through a competitive "Request for Qualifications" process. REACH emerged on top among a very strong group of nonprofit developers. REACH has a strong track record of delivering affordable housing opportunities in Portland, and is a strong partner and ally for PHB.



The work is far from over, but council approval of the development agreement brings us a step closer to realizing the promise of affordable housing in the neighborhood. The planned six-story building will have 209 apartments that will be affordable to people earning 50% of Median Family Income (\$25,000 for a single-person household). In addition, 42 of the units will be targeted to veterans earning less than 30% MFI.

We will have more to report on the progress of the Block 49 project in the coming months. [Bookmark the project page](#) to get updates.

Community Meetings on Resource Access Center



If you've been around Old Town or the Pearl District recently, you may have seen the "cranes in the air" next to Union Station. Construction of the PHB-funded Resource Access Center (RAC) is going as planned, and the building is expected to be completed in summer 2011. Many of you who have been following the city and county's work around the "Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness" know that the Resource Access Center is a vital piece of the plan. The RAC will have a day resource center and men's shelter operated by our long-term partner Transition Projects, Inc., as well as 130 units of apartments targeted for our most vulnerable. As the nonprofit developer and owner, the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) will manage the building on behalf of PHB.

On January 6 and 8, RAC partners will host two community meetings to share information about services and programs planned for the building. If you live close to the RAC or own a business in the area, this would be a good opportunity to join us for facilitated discussions on how RAC can be a good neighbor. [Click here](#) for more info on the RAC and get details about the community meetings.

Report on Affordable Housing TIF Set-Aside

As the city bureau in charge of implementing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Set-Aside for Affordable Housing policy and resources, PHB is delighted to report on the policy's fiscal year 2009-10 accomplishments. Four years into implementation, TIF Set Aside resources continue to prove to be an effective tool for affordable housing development and preservation.

At a time when the economic recession is drawing renewed attention to the lack of affordable housing in Portland and the nation, the Set Aside policy provided \$41.8 million for projects like the Martha Washington which rehabilitated and preserved 102 extremely-low and low-income rental units in the Central City; the Madrona Studios, which created 176 new extremely-low and low-income rental units by overhauling a blighted hotel in the Rose Quarter district; and The Glen, which is rehabilitating and preserving 40 low-income rental units in the Lents URA.

Read the entire [FY2009-10 TIF Affordable Housing Set-Aside](#) report

City Budget Process

PHB is developing its initial budget request for the fiscal year that will start on July 1, 2011. While it may seem early to already be budgeting for next year, we know that advance planning is necessary for our funded partners. As in previous budget cycles, we anticipate a decline in key sources of funds used by the bureau to deliver programs. To see current trends in our major sources of funds, [click here](#).

We continue to focus on ways that we can soften the effects of budget constraints on PHB-funded programs and services. We will be guided by the emerging priorities in our Strategic Planning process, and our [Portland Housing Advisory Commission](#) is looking at these issues closely with our staff. We invite you to attend our public meetings.

Mortgage Payment Assistance Deadline: January 14, 2011

The clock is ticking for distressed homeowners to apply for the State of Oregon's Mortgage Payment Assistance (MPA) program. Our counterparts at the Oregon Housing and Community Services have been hard at work at getting the program up and running. The MPA will help unemployed or financially distressed homeowners pay their mortgage payments for up to one year or a maximum of \$20,000 in total assistance.

To apply, eligible homeowners must submit an [MPA Application](#) online and follow up with all required documents by the January 14, 2011 deadline. After that time, applicants will be drawn randomly from the pool of eligible applicants. The MPA Application and related information are available online at OregonHomeownerHelp.org.

In Multnomah County, staff and volunteers from Hacienda CDC are available to help homeowners from learn about and apply for the program. For more information, call 503-961-6432.

Warm wishes,

Margaret S. Van Vliet
Director, Portland Housing Bureau