



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

PORTLAND HOUSING BUREAU

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Chair Andre Baugh
Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission
1900 SW 4th Avenue, Room 2500A
Portland, OR 97201

Chair Baugh and Fellow Commissioners,

I wish to commend the Planning and Sustainability Commission and the leadership and staff of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability on your hard work in creating the 2035 Comprehensive Plan Update. The current Proposed Draft reflects the multitude of voices that make up our city. Listening to the comments and concerns of every community has helped draft a plan that will guide Portland toward greater equity, ensuring everyone has access to opportunity.

Portland has a big challenge in front of us in meeting the housing needs of the 120,000 new households expected over the next 20 years. Today we know that there are thousands of families burdened by housing costs that do not match their incomes. On any given night, about 4,000 people sleep on the streets or in shelters across Portland. As our population grows, the need for affordable housing and services directed to moving people off the streets and into permanent housing will grow as well. These growing needs will force us to come together as a city to think innovatively and invest proactively towards increasing affordable rental housing and moving families into stable homeownership.

Chapter 5 of the plan, "Housing" accurately describes the challenge and sets strong goals and policies for directing the city's future path toward meeting our housing needs. This plan focuses new housing development in centers and works to create Complete Neighborhoods, as called for in the Portland Plan. The Portland Housing Bureau has worked closely with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to map those areas that provide opportunity, where we want to focus the development of new affordable housing. And also to determine where the City should be investing in existing neighborhoods that have affordable housing but lack amenities. Portland is best served by fostering mixed-income communities where everyone benefits from public and private investments in their neighborhoods.

This plan also addresses the growing need to mitigate displacement of low-income residents as neighborhoods improve. Too often neighborhood investment means that our more vulnerable citizens (renters, people of color and the less educated) are unable to keep up with rising housing costs. PHB is working hard through our North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy to help people that have been displaced and have few choices in the current housing market to return to the neighborhoods they were priced out of. In the future, Portland can and should become more proactive in preventing displacement before it happens. I want you to know that the Portland Housing Bureau is committed to working closely with you and with BPS to make a difference.

I also commend you for including strong language regarding housing access. New rules from the Department of Housing and Urban Development have re-emphasized the requirement that we remove barriers to accessing housing and eliminate housing discrimination based on protected classes. Portland has come a long way in ensuring fair housing, as demonstrated by our leadership in passing state legislation to remove discrimination against Section 8 voucher holders. Enacting the housing access policies in this plan will help us move toward a community where no one is denied housing or forced to pay more because of historic racial and economic segregation, uneven public investment, owner bias or illegal discrimination.

Investing in safe, healthy, affordable housing in complete neighborhoods is a long-term investment in a crucial piece of our city's infrastructure. Where we live has a large impact on our futures. Thank you for recognizing the critical role access to affordable housing will play in Portland's success over the next 20 years. The Portland Housing Bureau looks forward to working with you to meet those challenges.

Sincerely,


Traci Manning
Director