

March 10, 2015

To: Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission
Portland Planning and Sustainability Bureau

Re: Testimony on Proposed Comp Plan Regarding Affordable Housing

As a long term advocate of affordable housing, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Comprehensive Plan. The people who most desperately need affordable housing are unlikely to provide comments. Yet the need for affordable housing for very low income households and people with special needs is at a critical level. I appreciate the interest in affordable housing contained in the proposed language. I am writing to urge you to strengthen policies that support affordable housing production in Chapter 5. Please consider the following:

With respect to policies promoting a **diverse and expanding housing supply**:

- Add a policy that encourages mixed income housing, especially where high density housing is developed near public transit.
- Add a policy that promotes public/nonprofit partnerships with private/for profit development. These types of partnerships can facilitate affordable housing development.

With respect to policies on **housing access**:

- In Policy 5.13, replace "Encourage" with "Sustain and increase". Recognize that some mature neighborhoods with older housing stock provides affordable housing that needs to be preserved.
- Add a policy that promotes use of publicly owned land for affordable housing. For example, city-owned parking lots could be redeveloped to include both parking and affordable housing. New libraries or other community buildings could be redeveloped as mixed use buildings, combining affordable housing with the public resource.

With respect to **housing location**:

- Add a policy that continues support of accessory dwelling units. These expand housing density in single family neighborhoods and allow families to care for aging relatives or provide affordable lower-density living options.

With respect to **housing affordability**:

- Policy 5.24 needs to be strengthened! It should say "Improve and strengthen plans and investments that increase the supply of affordable housing."
- Add a policy that sets a goal to increase affordable housing units in proportion to increased overall residential density. For example, 20% of new housing units overall should be affordable to persons with incomes at or below 80% of Area Median Income. This can be implemented by maintaining a lower allowed base density while higher density is achieved through affordable housing bonuses. To achieve higher density, developers could either incorporate affordable units or contribute to an affordable housing fund. The Central City Plan currently provides such a "payment in lieu" option at PCC 33.510.210.C.15; similar provisions should be explored for other areas.

With respect to **homelessness**:

- Expand the list of affordable housing opportunities in Policy 5.39 to include "permanent supportive housing". Most of the accommodation types listed are transitional or temporary when the greatest need is for permanent settings that provide support.

I appreciate the City's emphasis on affordable housing and hope my suggestions help to strengthen the policies in a constructive way. Adequately addressing affordable housing is truly important.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicki Skryha". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Vicki Skryha
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