

Written Testimony - Agenda Item 714

Agenda Item	Name	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
714	Doug Burges, Greystar	Support	<p>I have obtained seven large commercial building permits in the City of Portland and strongly support consolidation.</p> <p>•Thank you, Council members, for prioritizing permitting improvement as part of our shared goal of significantly increasing housing production. We must remove barriers to housing production to address our housing affordability crisis, reduce homelessness, and enhance our community's economic prosperity. Simply put, there's not enough housing for people in our communities, which drives up the cost of housing for all of us.</p> <p>Thanks to the Council's attention to this important topic.</p>	No	08/28/23 10:54 AM
714	Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)	Support	Letter from the Development Review Advisory Committee in support of Item 714, Unify permitting functions to improve City delivery of development review and permitting services (Resolution)	Yes	08/29/23 12:51 PM
714	Brian Hoop, Housing Oregon, Executive Director	Support	Verbal comments for Housing Oregon will come from Sarah Radcliffe, Director of Government Relations, Habitat for Humanity Portland Region. She is a co-chair of Housing Oregon's Portland Metro Policy Council.	Yes	08/29/23 3:11 PM
714	Anonymous	Oppose	I think unifying won't fix anything and I believe a big issue is that Bureau of Development Services is extremely dysfunctional	No	08/29/23 3:54 PM
714	Preston Korst / Home Building Association of Greater Portland	Support		Yes	08/29/23 4:22 PM
714	State Rep. Maxine Dexter, HD-33	Support		Yes	08/29/23 4:44 PM
714	Home Forward	Support with changes		Yes	08/29/23 4:45 PM
714	Ironworkers Local 29	Support		Yes	08/30/23 9:10 AM



City of
PORTLAND, OREGON
Development Review Advisory Committee



August 23, 2023

Portland City Council
1221 SW Fourth Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Re: August 30th Resolution

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners,

As the members of the City's **Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)**, we are writing for two purposes:

1. To express our support for the resolution coming before City Council on August 30, 2023 regarding the City's Permit Improvement Task Force and the establishment of a single permitting authority; and
2. To remind the Council of the DRAC's role as an advisory body and to express our interest in being engaged in current and future decision-making processes regarding development review.

Current Resolution

We support the central aims of the resolution:

- Outlining a workplan for the City's Permit Improvement Task Force; and
- Establishing a single permitting authority for the City of Portland by July 1, 2024.

The DRAC has been actively participating in the work of the **Permit Improvement Task Force**, both through discussions with Task Force staff at DRAC meetings and through DRAC Members participating on the Task Force itself. We have been greatly encouraged at the progress the Task Force has made in working collaboratively with the bureaus engaged in development review to streamline and improve existing permitting processes. This good work should continue, and we support the creation of a workplan to guide and direct the Task Force in the coming months.

We also strongly support the move to unify development review staff from multiple bureaus in order to establish a **single permitting authority** for the City. This act would address long-standing coordination and efficiency issues that cause unnecessary delays in development projects. For many years the DRAC has expressed support better collaboration and cooperation between the City staff engaged in development review, but efforts to make improvements have been hindered by the City's siloed organizational structure. Placing all development review staff under the authority of a single bureau and commissioner will help end the turf wars between bureaus with competing missions and code responsibilities that needlessly lengthen and complicate the permit review process.

Development Review Advisory Committee
Letter To City Council re: August 30th Resolution
August 23, 2023

We believe that creating a single permitting authority addresses structural, organizational issues that the Permit Task Force cannot resolve because it is operating within the existing system. This proposal will align permit review staff and will result in more predictability and consistency for customers and the community.

We recognize that the proposed timeframe for establishing a single permitting authority is short, but we believe that the potential benefits justify the effort and look forward to supporting it actively.

The DRAC's Role

The DRAC is the City's standing advisory body regarding development and the City's development review process. DRAC members represent significant design, construction, and neighborhood stakeholders and associations with interest in the outcome of City policies, budgets, regulations, and procedures affecting development review.

The DRAC has previously communicated to City bureaus and the City Council its eagerness to engage with the City early in decision-making processes and policy decisions around development review. We want to stress again the valuable experience and perspectives that we can bring to the table. We want to be a resource to the City, to be engaged in these discussions, and to work together to make a positive impact in our community.

Thank you for listening. We look forward to continuing collaboration with the City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Delsman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Delsman, DRAC Chair

Development Review Advisory Committee Members

Member	Representing	Affiliation
Jill Cropp	Home Builders	Studio Cropp Architecture
Bobby Daniels	Design Professionals	Wenaha Group
Libby Deal	Neighborhood Coalition Land Use Committees	King Neigh. Assoc.
Paul Delsman	Large Construction Contractors	Howard S. Wright
Elizabeth Gomez	Home Remodelers	Bridge City Contracting
Steffeni Gray	Environmental Conservation & Green Building	All Hands Raised
Sean Green	Citywide Neighborhood Interests	NE Coalition of Neigh.
Holly Huntley	Frequent Development Review Customers	Environs LLC
Lauren Jones	Large Developers	Capstone Partners
Samuel Miller	Small Businesses	N/NE Business Assoc.
Peggy Moretti	Historic Preservation	Historic Preservation
Eric Paine	Low-Income Housing Developers	Comm. Dev. Partners
Maurice Rahming	Minority Construction Contractors & Development Professionals	O'Neill Const. Group
Jennifer Santhouse	Major Facilities Landowners	Portland General Electric
Eli Spevak	Planning Commission	Orange Splot, LLC
Martha Williamson	Public Works Permit Customers	Vega Civil Engineering



*Sheila Stiley, Board
chair – NW Coastal
Housing*

*Kymerly Horner –
Vice-chair - Portland
Community
Reinvestment Inc.*

*Rachael Duke,
Secretary -
Community Partners
for Affordable
Housing*

*Kristy Rodriguez,
Treasurer – Housing
Authority of Malheur
& Harney Counties*

*Wakan Alferes -
Homes for Good*

*Trell Anderson – NW
Housing Alternatives*

*David Brandt -
Housing Works*

*Rita Grady – Polk
CDC*

*Maria Elena Guerra -
Farmworker Housing
Development Corp*

*Brad Ketch –
Rockwood CDC and
Community Develop-
ment Corp of Oregon*

*Nkenge Harmon
Johnson – Urban
League of Portland*

*Erica Mills –
NeighborWorks
Umpqua*

*Shannon Vilhauer –
Habitat for Humanity
of Oregon*

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

Mayor Ted Wheeler
City of Portland
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 340
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City of Portland commissioners:

Housing Oregon supports today's resolution to unify permitting functions to improve City delivery of development review and permitting services. We believe the steps outlined in this resolution will go a long way towards creating a more easily navigable permitting system that will contribute to faster and increased production of affordable housing in Portland.

With over ninety member organizations, Housing Oregon is the statewide association of affordable housing community development corporations (CDCs) committed to serving and supporting low-income Oregonians across the housing needs spectrum – from homeless to homeowner. Housing Oregon's Portland Metro Policy Council members voted to support this proposal at their August 9 meeting.

Housing Oregon's members agree we need one permitting team under one authority to create the accessible, predictable system we need to build affordable housing. The kaleidoscope of bureaus our members must engage with to address normal revisions, adjustments, and corrections can take anywhere from 6-12 months or more just to get approval to begin building new housing.

With voter-approved charter reforms, we believe that now is the time to consolidate the city's fragmented permitting functions into one entity. We agree this resolution lays out a strong framework for a plan that can create a singular permitting office with adequate funding to get the job done.

Sincerely,

Brian Hoop
Executive Director
Housing Oregon

P.O. Box 8427, Portland, OR 97207



August 30th, 2023

To: Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Commissioners
RE: Support for permitting consolidation (Agenda Item 714 on 8/30/2023)

Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners:

We are writing on behalf of thousands of businesses and individuals seeking to address our region’s biggest issues by building the housing, infrastructure, and jobs that make Portland livable and economically vibrant. **In advance of charter reform implementation, we strongly urge council to approve a resolution that will unify the city’s fragmented permitting functions into a single entity.**

Builders working in Portland have long known that one of the biggest housing problems in the city is the City itself. At its most basic fault, permitting in Portland has been too disjointed to work well. There are no clear chains of command, no uniform technology, no singular payment processing system, and no authority to resolve disputes or conflicts in code. Accounting for normal revisions and corrections, it can take anywhere from 6-12 months just to get approval to begin building new housing.

Mirroring the city’s outdated commission-form of governance, these inefficiencies were compounded when new building code requirements were passed over the last decade. Among other things, the city passed new regulations for bike storage, tree removal, inclusionary housing, demolitions, parking, glazing, first-floor active use, and middle housing. Many of these are positive and important, but each added regulation has come with associated costs and fees, often leading to competing priorities and inconsistent decisions, making it difficult for staff and builders to determine an ultimate authority.

This is why we support both ongoing code-clean-up initiatives and efforts that will result in a single permitting entity. We’re confident that accomplishing both will result in increased housing production and economic development. If planned and funded well, we can ensure all permit types are processed in a timely and efficient manner, fostering a more equitable and productive building environment.

We fully support Resolution 714 which will lead to the unification of permitting functions in Portland. Having an integrated source for permitting information, expertise, and authority will improve Portland’s ability to meet the needs of our businesses and communities.

Thank you for your thoughtful work in developing this proposal and for your commitment to supporting pro-housing initiatives such as this.

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Co-signed:

Carmen Castro
Executive Director
Hispanic Metro Chamber

Dana Shephard
Executive Director
Portland Housing Center

Dominique Merriweather
Executive Director
Proud Ground

Ellen Wax
Executive Director
Working Waterfront Coalition

Jon Issacs
Vice President, Public Affairs
Portland Metro Chamber

Michele Gila
Director, Realtor Advocacy
PMAR

Preston Korst
Director of Government Affairs
Home Building Association

Sarah Radcliffe
Director of Government Relations
Habitat for Humanity

Tom Rinehart
Executive Director
Oregon Smart Growth

Traci Manning
Executive Director
Housing Development Center

Michael Anderson
Senior Housing Researcher
Sightline Institute

Ernesto Fonseca, Ph.D.
CEO
Hacienda CDC

George Carrillo
Executive Director
LatinoBuilt

Todd Mustard
Executive Manager
NECA, Oregon-Columbia Chapter

John Killian
Executive Director
Associated Wall & Ceiling Contractors of Oregon



To: Portland City Council

**From: Oregon State Representatives: Maxine Dexter (HD 33), Rob Nosse (HD 42),
Khanh Pham (HD 46), Dacia Grayber (HD 28), Mark Gamba (HD 41)
Oregon State Senators: Elizabeth Steiner (SD 17), Michael Dembrow (SD 23)**

Date: August 22, 2023

Subject: Support for Commissioner Rubio's permitting reform plan

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City of Portland Commissioners,

As Oregon state representatives whose constituents include city of Portland residents, we reach out to you in strong support of Commissioner Rubio's permitting reform plan and urge you to vote to adopt this plan as soon as possible.

Our city is in desperate need of affordable housing and we understand, as do you, that our current permit process is time-consuming, cumbersome, expensive and is overtly disincentivizing much-needed development in our city. Each of us has heard directly from developers, individual homeowners and builders alike that the lack of central leadership and accountability in our permitting process is a core concern that must be addressed. The existing organizational structure, where multiple bureaus are involved in any one project and no single entity has primary accountability or authority, must be addressed urgently to help our city effectively build the housing we so desperately need. A reliable system with predictable outcomes is critical to rebuilding developer trust and Commissioner Rubio's proposal for reform includes many of the elements we have heard to be foundational for desired change to come to fruition.

Core components of the plan that we support include:

1. Establish a single permitting agency
2. Centralize authority under a single decision-maker
3. Provide additional resources for technology projects
4. Effective date: July 1, 2024

The current organizational structure has been in place and notoriously ineffective since at least the 1990's. With our city facing a profound housing crisis, we have no time to wait to implement what we know are strategies that have proven to be effective in other cities both inside and outside of Oregon. As part of this restructuring, we hope to elevate a distinct need for cultural change at the city, particularly those who work with the public through the permitting process. A focus on customer service and collaborative problem-solving will help build trust in our city's ability to effectively partner with contractors and developers to meet Portland's housing needs.



Building back investor confidence in Portland is critical at this time, not just for the future of our city, but our state as a whole. Please take action urgently to adopt this plan.

Sincerely,

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.
House District 33 (NW and Downtown Portland, Linnton and Cathedral Park)

Representative Rob Nosse
House District 42

Senator Michael Dembrow
Senate District 23

Representative Khanh Pham
House District 46

Senator Elizabeth Steiner
Senate District 17

Representative Dacia Grayber
House District 28

Representative Mark Gamba
House District 41



July 29, 2023

Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Commissioners
City of Portland
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Re: Support for Permitting Consolidation Resolution
Agenda Item 714
Wednesday, August 30, 2023

Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners:

I write on behalf of Home Forward in strong support of permitting reform within the City of Portland. Specifically, Home Forward is in support of consolidation of the existing permitting processes under a single agency with authority held by a single decision-maker.

Home Forward is a Public Housing Authority (PHA) and the largest provider of affordable housing in the state of Oregon. We serve more than 15,500 Multnomah County low-income households by providing affordable housing, administering rent assistance, and providing supportive services. Our mission is to assure that the people of our community are sheltered. We own and manage over 6,500 homes throughout Multnomah County. We also provide households with services which range from youth support to health and wellness. Meanwhile, we fund rent assistance for thousands of households residing in private unregulated housing that we do not directly oversee. We administer emergency rent assistance programs that benefit landlords and tenants alike, including Short Term Rent Assistance, the Landlord Compensation Fund, and the Landlord Guarantee Fund.

At a time when Portland is experiencing some of the highest rates of homelessness in our City's history and are entering the 8th year of the City's declared housing state of emergency, we need bold action to resolve our long-standing affordable housing supply challenges. The State of Oregon's Housing Production Advisory Council has identified outdated permitting systems, like the City of Portland's, to be one of the barriers to housing production that meets our community's need. In addition, Home Forward knows from experience that the City of Portland's permitting system is not working. Under the current permitting system there is a lack of central leadership and organizational accountability resulting a confusing, cumbersome, and at times contradictory patchwork of policies and regulations created by multiple siloed bureaus. This causes unnecessary delay and increases pre-development costs making development of much needed housing that much harder.

We urge you to establish a single permitting agency with a single decision-maker. Such a structure would allow for consistent policies, practices, and services that would greatly streamline and accelerate process improvements for developers and City residents. Unlike our current disparate and scattered permitting system, the much-needed evaluation and refinement of permitting policies, services, and systems from a customer service and housing production perspective will be possible under a single agency/single decision-maker model. Internally, this structure would better serve the City of Portland and it's staff by allowing for holistic decision making around staffing, workloads, and budgeting. Also, staff under a

centralized permitting system will be better held accountable to the City's Racial Equity Goals and Strategies to work collaboratively to meet the needs of underserved BIPOC community members.

As part of permitting consolidation, we would recommend the continuation and expansion of the fast-track permit processing for affordable housing development as recommended and adopted by the GATR (Government Accountability Transparency Results). Under the current fast-tracking, only affordable housing that receives City of Portland money are eligible. As the need for affordable housing remains highest amongst our renter households and communities of color, we should expand this fact-tracking to the development and preservation of all affordable housing, regardless of the inclusion of City funds.

We also urge the City to adopt these changes under a timeline that reflects the urgency of these long needed changes. We ask that these changes go into effect on July 1, 2024 to coincide with the City's fiscal year calendar and the effective date of other organizational changes through the Charter Reform Citywide Transition Project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this resolution. Please contact Christina Dirks, Director of Policy and Planning at (503) 348-1196 or christina.dirks@homeforward.org regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Dirks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christina Dirks
Director of Policy and Planning
Home Forward



August 30, 2023

To: Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners

RE: Support for Permitting Consolidation – Agenda Item 714

Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners,

The Ironworkers Local 29 are writing on behalf of our membership and signatory contracting partners in support of Commissioner Rubio's proposals to reform the permitting process in the City of Portland. The success of projects, both public and private, are heavily impacted by permitting and losing projects equates to lost jobs, tax revenue, and opportunities to train the workforce we need for the future. We urge the council to streamline the permitting process and make it easier to build much-needed housing and critical infrastructure in Portland.

Local 29 represents more than 1,700 Journeyworkers and registered apprentices across Oregon and Southwest Washington. The majority of our members live and work in the Portland Metro region and have built many of the iconic projects in Portland such as the Tilikum Crossing Bridge, OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital, and the Ritz Carlton Portland.

The permitting process impacts the entire construction industry, but the impacts of a flawed permitting system are especially impactful on apprentices and training opportunities. Registered apprenticeships are a pathway to a career with living wages, full family healthcare, and the ability to retire with dignity. Additionally, apprenticeships are hugely beneficial for historically marginalized communities. We currently have more than 250 apprentices, and 39% of our apprentices are women, people of color, members of historically disadvantaged communities or some combination of these groups. However, apprenticeships require on the job training to complete and reach Journeyworker status. When permitting is slow and unpredictable, it becomes harder and harder to get apprentices to work, and this has an especially negative impact on women and people of color.

We support Commissioner Rubio's proposals to unify permitting under one roof. Simplifying and streamlining the process will make it easier for the City of Portland to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and workers in the construction trades. If passed and funded adequately, Portland has the opportunity to ensure that permits are processed in a timely and efficient way.

Thank you for your consideration of Commissioner Rubio's plan to resolve Portland's permitting problems. We urge your support of Resolution 714.

Portland City Council Meeting - Wednesday, August 30, 2023 9:30 a.m.

Agenda Item	First Name	Last Name
714-1	Jill	Cropp
714-2	Eli	Spevak
714-3	Allison	Reynolds
714-4	Jonathan	Clay
714-5	Rachel	Whiteside
714-6	Christina	Dirks
714-7	Justin	Wood
714-8	John	Gibbon