



SUNRISE MOVEMENT PDX

Dear Planning Commission,

Sunrise Movement PDX is a youth-led climate justice organization fighting to end the era of fossil fuels, to ensure everyone has access to food, healthcare, and housing, and to build millions of good and meaningful jobs in the process. We know that when our communities are organized, a Portland that is healthy and affordable is possible. We are writing today to demand the commission dedicate staff time and resources to studying an upzone of opportunity-rich neighborhoods in Portland.

Our city is experiencing the worst housing crisis in its history, with more Portlanders lacking shelter than ever before. Portland's historic underdevelopment of housing since the 1980s has left renters fighting for limited units. Inadequate tenant rights have allowed rents to skyrocket and forced evictions upon people with nowhere else to go. During this crisis, where new housing is desperately needed, development has stalled due to high interest rates, overly-restrictive zoning laws, and a missing public housing sector.

In exchange for our past mistakes and present dysfunction, we're given record-high evictions, impossibly high rents, and immense suffering that reverberates across the city. Based on the 2022 State of Housing Report, published in March of last year, no neighborhood in Portland is affordable for the average Black household. Based on the same report, half of all Portland renters are rent burdened and 1 of every 4 renters pay more than half their income on rent. Portland has become a city where families cannot find a place to raise their kids and low-income workers are forced to the edges or outside city limits all together. We need to change course.

Sunrise is encouraged by the Housing Production Strategy draft plans to "explore increasing housing capacity in high-opportunity neighborhoods to promote fair housing, address racial segregation, and expand affordable housing options." We are concerned, however, that this plan will only explore the idea of increased capacity and ignore the work of implementing it. Restrictive zoning laws, coupled with weak tenant rights and limited public housing, has led us into the housing crisis we are in today. Legalizing apartments in more of our high-opportunity neighborhoods is an essential step to resolving our crisis. It cannot be treated as merely an idea.

Sunrise Movement PDX is calling on your commission to:

- In the text of the HPS, commit to dedicating staff time and resources to considering an upzone of opportunity-rich areas - not just along corridors and centers, but across the entire Inner Eastside.

- Put in place a timeline for an upzoning plan to be completed and voted on.

Additionally, Sunrise Movement PDX is calling on the commission to:

- Fund homeownership options that are affordable to Portlanders making less than 80% of the median income.
- Identify publicly owned land that can be used for affordable housing rather than just selling it.

Since the initial housing state of emergency declaration in 2015, Portland's housing crisis has only escalated in intensity. We need all hands on deck to ensure that every Portlander has a roof over their head, that housing is affordable to all, and that we can choose where we want to live. Legalizing apartments across many of Portland's high-opportunity neighborhoods is one step of many to ensure this vision.