



Oregon Environmental Council



Interfaith Alliance on Poverty



April 7th, 2024

To: Portland Mayor, Commissioners, Planning Commission, and City staff:

Portland is struggling with several unprecedented challenges:

- A housing affordability and houselessness crisis;
- A displacement crisis;
- And a climate crisis.

Alongside its short-term crisis management, our city can take a long-term step to systemically address all these problems by re-legalizing small to mid-size apartment buildings throughout its close-in neighborhoods, not just along a handful of busy streets.

The "discussion draft" Housing Production Strategy released by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) says the city will "**explore** increasing housing capacity in high-opportunity neighborhoods to promote fair housing, address racial segregation, and expand affordable housing options." This language, though welcome, is insufficient. The city must clearly commit to launching and staffing a project with this goal in mind, so it can begin the essential work of analyzing the nuances involved.

Already, BPS has committed funds from the Department of Land Conservation and Development to determine whether the existing infrastructure in the Inner Eastside is sufficient to support increased density. This is an important, tangible action to support Inner Eastside upzoning. Far too often, however, we have seen reports such as these - which outline possible

deficiencies and recommend actionable solutions to remedy them - sit unused on Bureau shelves, ignored by future members of the City Council which commissioned them.

Upzoning the Inner Eastside is a project that should not be ignored. It is in fact a key component of Portland's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan in the Equity, Health, and Prosperity areas, with a stated goal to "Grow the supply of housing (affordable and market-rate) to keep pace with population growth," and a specific call that the "City Council adopts fair housing zoning policy to encourage development of multi-family/multigenerational housing in inner Portland."

We are calling on the city to:

- In the text of the HPS, commit to dedicating staff time and Bureau resources to considering an upzone of opportunity-rich areas - not just along corridors and centers, but across the entire Inner Eastside; and
- Put in place a timeline for an upzoning plan to be completed *and* voted on.

This commitment should form a core component of the "Increase Access to Opportunity" section of Portland's Housing Production Strategy, replacing milquetoast plans to explore possibilities. Portlanders love and expect to talk about the things our city needs before we take action. But we don't need more years of thinking about someday talking.

Portland: Neighbors Welcome and our fellow signatories:

1000 Friends of Oregon
APANO
Bike Loud PDX
Habitat for Humanity
Portland Region
Hacienda
Home Forward
Housing Land Advocates
Housing Oregon

Advocacy Team, Interfaith
Alliance on Poverty
Lloyd EcoDistrict
No More Freeways
Oregon Environmental
Council
Oregon Smart Growth
Oregon Walks
Portlanders for Parking
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Proud Ground
ROSE Community
Development
Sightline Institute
Strong Towns PDX
Sunrise Movement PDX
The Street Trust
Verde