

April 10, 2024

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
1810 SW 5th Ave Suite 710,
Portland, OR 97201



Re: Portland's Housing Production Strategy

Dear BPS Staff,

The Executive Committee of the Southwest Corridor Equity Coalition (SWEC) would like to express our Coalition's appreciation of the presentation at the SWEC General Meeting on March 21, 2024. The Bureau's efforts to build the Housing Production Strategy (HPS) is a great attempt to respond to the rising demand for affordable housing in Portland, which has been a top priority and a big concern of the Coalition.

SWEC's establishment was to ensure equitable development in the Southwest Corridor and the main focus of the Coalition has been to prevent displacement through the work of our own Anti-Displacement Workgroup, as outlined in the [Southwest Corridor Equitable Development Strategy](#) and the [Southwest Corridor Equitable Housing Strategy](#). We believe that the eight (8) proposed strategies in the HPS align quite well with initial planning as well as the current and future needs of the community.

Despite the failure of the 2020 Transportation Measure, SWEC continued to organize and mobilize to strengthen the relationships with our communities residing in the Corridor as well as the government agencies working in the region. The development, refinement, and adoption of the [West Portland Town Center \(WPTC\) Plan](#) was a great achievement through the close partnership between SWEC and BPS. **The production and preservation of more affordable units remained the top goal in the SWEC Strategic Framework that was developed at the end of 2023.**

Southwest Portland, particularly the West Portland Town Center area, is one of the most racially and culturally diverse places in all of the Southwest Corridor. The low-cost apartments near Markham Elementary and the mosques are some of the last remaining affordable apartments in the city and they are fast disappearing. Thousands of our neighbors are paying far too much in housing costs, leaving little left over for food, healthcare, and other essential things.

Recognizing the gap between equitable planning and actual implementation, we emphasize the need for funding to preserve existing affordable units. According to BPS' estimates, there is a potential loss of 700 affordable units at over 20 sites in the area as unchecked development

proceeds over time. A similar scenario will impact many small businesses and retail storefronts. Equally important is to invest in building new affordable housing and commercial spaces to prevent displacement of many households and welcome new families who are choosing to move into the area.

As BPS continues to work on building the HPS, we want to share with you SWEC's top priorities advance key community priorities:

1. Creating a fund to help preserve existing low-cost housing and expand affordable housing options in the area to meet the stretch targets set in the Southwest Corridor Equitable Housing Strategy.
2. Investing in transportation and stormwater infrastructure improvements including, safe sidewalks and easy transit access. These investments not only improve safe transportation choices but support development of new affordable housing by lowering the development costs for individual projects. Beyond capital project funds, resources to develop a coordinated and supportive funding approach in consideration of housing and infrastructure challenges is needed.
3. Providing resources—including funds, technical assistance and capacity building— for community based organizations to support new and existing businesses that are owned/operated by BIPOC, immigrants, and refugees in WPTC and Southwest Corridor.
4. Supporting the establishment of a multicultural hub to bridge the cultural and economic divides in our neighborhoods and strengthen the relationships between people in the town center and the surrounding areas.
5. Providing resources for community-based organizations to engage and support civic capacity building for people who have been historically excluded from participating in decision making and benefiting from new developments across the city.

We appreciate the City's efforts to serve the community and we believe that we have a great chance to work together to center racial equity and ensure all residents of the area have access to stability and opportunities in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Executive Committee
Southwest Corridor Equity Coalition

- [APANO](#)
- [Centro Cultural](#)
- [Community Alliance of Tenants](#)
- [HAKI Community Organization](#)
- [Muslim Educational Trust](#)
- [Unite Oregon](#)