

February 24, 2015

Chair André Baugh and the Planning and Sustainability Commission
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, City of Portland
1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 700
Portland, Oregon 97201

Dear Chair Baugh and Planning and Sustainability Commissioners:

My name is Eavan Moore, and I have volunteered with the Community Alliance of Tenants for about two and a half years. I've come to see that the protection of renters – like myself, and unlike myself – is essential to empowering and strengthening Portland's communities. Portland will grow and change over the next 20 years, we believe for the better. Let's make sure that growth and change will not benefit only certain communities, while negatively impacting low-income tenants, working families, communities of color, and our most vulnerable.

When CAT provided postcards to people in our network and asked them to write down comments on the Comprehensive Plan, we collected 158 cards. Everyone who commented supports the general goal of having more affordable housing, and the majority of them had specific concerns or suggestions.

One thing I noticed in reading the comments is that they trace the onward progression of a story we need to stop. One person wrote: "We need rent control. Because Home Forward cannot help us, and people are being made homeless, and are living on 2-4 food boxes a month."

Another person wrote: "Our friends and family are being displaced."

In the end, some of us are being priced entirely out of the city. One of our commenters says: "I used to be living in NE Portland, I became homeless. Now I am living in Washington County."

Our commenters had a lot of concerns, but also a lot of ideas. Here are some of their suggestions: Rent control. (Twelve people specifically suggested this, by my count.) Controlling water costs. Just-cause notices for evictions, instead of the no-cause evictions that are currently legal. Landlord certification and training. Better fair housing protections. Lifting the state ban on inclusionary zoning. I counted three comments stressing that affordable housing should exist in every neighborhood in Portland, not just low-income ones.

More housing, and specifically more family dwellings. More of a focus on housing that genuinely low-income people can pay for, as opposed to what the city calls affordable. More funding for groups like REACH and Rose CDC. And empowering tenants to have more of a voice. On that note, one tenant specifically asked you to support agencies like CAT, I'm for it.

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, whether through this Comprehensive Plan, or in other decision-making processes, can and will have an impact on affordability, rising rents, and displacement. At CAT, we look forward to working with this Commission and the BPS, to ensure that we identify and acknowledge how those decisions have an impact on our most vulnerable populations. We need to work with tenant leaders and policy and planning experts alike, to identify

the right solutions, so that everyone has a chance to live in the neighborhood of their choosing, and people aren't forced out of the communities that they helped to build.

Our contribution includes the request made by our anti-displacement coalition, which builds on the tenant commentary we've heard. I know that the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability has read every one of our comments. With this information, I ask that you support our plan for avoiding displacement.

Thank you,

Eavan Moore
Volunteer and board member
Community Alliance of Tenants