

Deconstruction Requirement Recommendation **DRAFT**

January 26, 2016

Background

In Portland, there are over 300 single family homes demolished each year. This produces many thousands of tons of waste – a majority of which could be salvaged for reuse. Deconstruction is a method for removing structures that keeps valuable materials out of the landfill, protects health, creates pathways to construction careers and generates affordable reusable building materials. Currently, less than ten percent of houses that are removed use deconstruction.

For the past several years, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) has been working to increase deconstruction activity through outreach, education and grants. BPS convened a Deconstruction Advisory Group (DAG) in April 2015 that includes representatives from the community, development firms, builders, demolition contractors, historic preservation agencies and the salvage industry.

Recommendation

Based on the DAG input, BPS will bring a resolution to City Council for consideration on February 17, 2016. The resolution would direct BPS to develop code language that:

Requires projects seeking a demolition permit for a one or two-family structure (house or duplex) to fully deconstruct that structure if:

1. The structure was built in 1916 or earlier; or
2. The structure is a designated historic resource

Provisions for exemptions would include structures that are determined to pose an immediate safety hazard or unsuitable for deconstruction/salvage (e.g., too much rot, mold, or fire). The requirement would take effect on October 31, 2016.

Benefits

- Diverts 8,000,000 pounds (4,000 tons) of materials for reuse (annually)
- Creates job opportunities that act as a pathway for construction careers
- Increases likelihood of discovering materials containing lead and asbestos for safe removal and disposal
- Triples the amount of deconstruction activity in Portland

Considerations

- Time – deconstruction takes longer than mechanical demolition (10 days vs 2 days)
- Cost – deconstruction can cost more than mechanical demolition (up to 40%-60% more)
- Industry capacity – deconstruction is an emerging industry
- Quality of materials – deconstruct the homes with the richest materials (i.e., older or historic)
- Supply and demand – consider what the market can safely transport, store and sell

Actions to be taken before the requirement takes effect

- Draft and approve new code language, including penalties for non-compliance
- Develop certification and training for deconstruction contractors
- Update permit database for tracking and enforcement

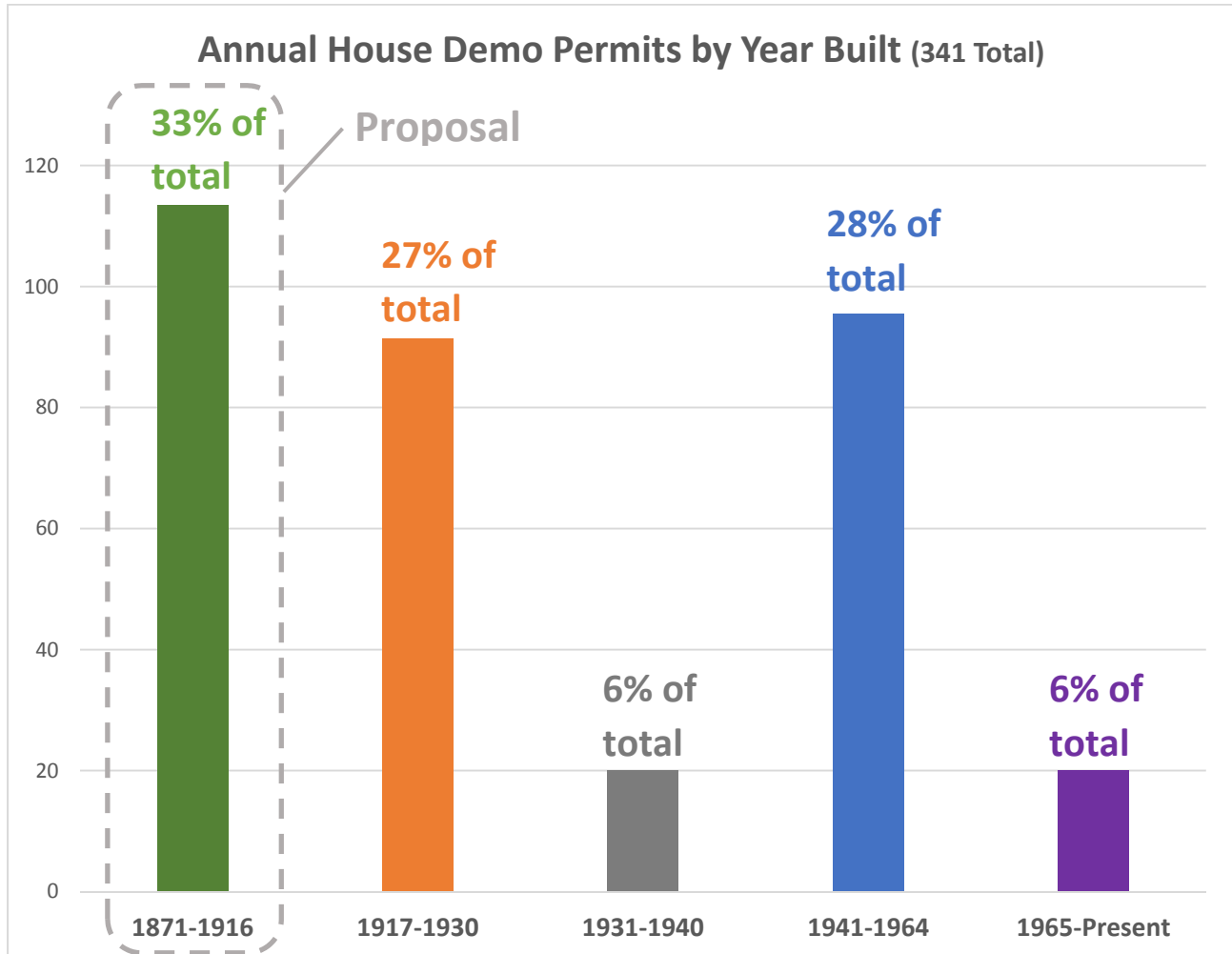
Potential program additions in the future

- Adjust the year built threshold to include more decades
- Include major remodels and commercial structures
- Provide an option for partial (non-structural) deconstruction

Timeline

Task	2016	2017	2018
Resolution at City Council	February 17 th		
Develop code language, training, certification, permit intake, compliance	March-October		
Return to City Council with code language	May		
Code requirements become effective	October 31 st		
Report back to Council on progress		October	
Review/revise requirements			October

Supporting Data



Policy impact

- Based on the last two years of permit data, there were 341 demolition permit applications annually
- If this policy is approved, approximately 114 houses (33%) would be subject to the deconstruction requirement a year
- Historic designation represents less than 1% of demolitions