

PHB 2013 Strategic Plan Update: How We Got There

2013 Strategic Plan Workgroup

To capitalize on the diverse staff knowledge and experience at Portland Housing Bureau (PHB), we formed a cross-functional workgroup led by Daniel Ledezma and composed of members from six different work teams:

- Equity, Policy, and Communications: David Sheern, David DiMatteo
- Business Analysis Research Section and IT Team: Antoinette Pietka
- Neighborhood Housing Team: Dory Van Bockel
- Housing Access and Retention: Ryan Deibert
- Housing Investment Production and Preservation: Marlo Medellin, Barbara Shaw
- Housing Finance and Accounting: Paul Stewart

Review of Dashboard Performance Analysis and Market Data

The team began by critically assessing the existing Strategic Plan (SP) to see what has worked and what could be improved. To help inform their decisions, they looked to the data.

An extensive review of performance and market data helped to ensure that any decisions would reflect current trends in the housing market and take into consideration past program performances, as well as changing demographics, community needs and priorities.

The housing crisis, in combination with an ongoing national recession, has significantly changed people's attitudes towards homeownership. Portland continues to struggle with low vacancy rates, leading to inflated prices and limited availability of affordable housing—which constitutes a rental crisis for low and moderate income Portlanders and contributes to the growing number of individuals and families left with few options but to sleep on the streets.

These crises have manifested with particular intensity in Portland's communities of color, which have long been challenged by a history of discrimination and institutional racism. In response to this reality, the workgroup began to explore new ways to highlight racial inequities in housing and to develop specific goals and metrics to address them.

Workgroup SWOT Analysis

Taking into consideration current market data and community needs, the workgroup analyzed the plan, identifying real and potential *strengths*, *weaknesses*, *opportunities* and *threats*. The group recognized our relationships with community partners as both a *strength* and an important *opportunity*—in order to continue our work with community based organizations and seek new ways to deepen those partnerships we will need to bring a greater focus on equity, and make it the constant lens through which we view our work.

Staff Survey

PHB staff took a survey designed to draw on their expertise and help inform the SP update. The survey captured the priorities of the dedicated people who are on the ground every day, in the community, partnering with contractors to deliver services and help us fulfill our goals. The survey was just the first of many opportunities for staff to help in the formation of this guiding document.

First Draft

The completed first draft of the SP update was based on considerable input from PHB staff and incorporated their concerns, community needs and the current economic climate. It also reflected the harsh realities of the housing market and racial inequities, distilling them into a concrete and specific set of goals, priorities and strategies designed to address Portland's housing needs. Then it was time to bring the work back to staff for further critical assessment.

Staff Retreat

PHB staff gathered together, devoting a full day to picking the plan apart, piece by piece. The retreat allowed each staff member the chance to weigh in on the SP update, to provide guidance and direction, to bring questions, concerns and comments to the table. The result was an extensive list of recommendations and criticism from staff. This criticism helped to inform the next round of edits, which would further improve, refine and focus PHB's stated goals.

Revised Draft

After much deliberation and editing, a revised draft was created for presentation to the Portland Housing Advisory Commission (PHAC). This was a chance for representatives of the community to offer feedback and criticism, to ensure that PHB's priorities and the community's needs were in alignment and moving toward a shared set of outcomes.