



PORTLAND HOUSING ADVISORY COMMISSION

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BAC Members:
Kim McCarty
Paul Stewart

Date: February 3, 2014

To: Mayor Charlie Hales
Commissioner Nick Fish
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Steve Novick
Commissioner Dan Saltzman

Re: PHB FY 2014-15 Requested Budget

The Portland Housing Advisory Commission's (PHAC) Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Portland Housing Bureau's (PHB) FY 2014-2015 requested budget. We are committed to PHB's mission, vision and values and support the Bureau's revised Strategic Plan. We endorse the Bureau's Proposed Budget and want to highlight the following considerations.

At this time in Portland, home continues to be at the center of a person's success. Included in our vision of a complete neighborhood are affordable homes, where residents have a safe and stable place to raise a family, positively contribute to our community and face the challenges of daily life. Those without a home struggle to address the mental and physical health challenges that bar access to the opportunities this great city has to offer. With ever-rising rents and purchase prices, removing barriers to housing underscores our community's values in protecting our most vulnerable residents and addressing decades of gentrification and inequities in housing for communities of color.

As the housing market rebounds and our region continues to grow, we advise PHB to maintain investment in trusted community partners with proven strategies to tackle our community's toughest challenges to stable housing. To do so, PHB proposes a stabilization budget that continues strengthening neighborhoods by preventing eviction, transitioning people experiencing poverty off the street and into homes, preserving and creating more affordable places to live and creating more homeowners within communities of color.

We know that this year presents an opportunity for PHB to do more to build complete neighborhoods. We support funding for the following five add packages:

- 1) Equity, Fair Housing and Title VI Programs in the amount of \$100,000 on-time-only funds to create a pool of funds for sub-contractors to translate material and institute a series of pilot Fair Housing Walk-In Clinics for renters around Fair Housing issues.
- 2) A Housing Investment Fund in the amount of \$1,000,000 in one-time-only funds to build in high opportunity areas with access to jobs, transportation, high performing schools and other amenities that our city has to offer and to preserve affordability in areas at

risk of gentrifying to prevent displacement of communities of color.

- 3) Increase impact in reducing homelessness among families, disabled adults and communities of color in the amount of \$1,000,000 in ongoing funds by expanding culturally-specific services, street outreach and leveraging public and private funds such as VA-funded services for veterans.
- 4) \$500,000 in ongoing funds to for homelessness and emergency preparedness, allowing for a full-time operation of the community's coordination of services and transportation during severe weather shelter events, natural disasters and other emergencies. This will also support ongoing coordination with public safety in identified "hot spot" areas.
- 5) \$500,000 in ongoing funds to reinstate funding for youth shelter and transitional housing programs.

PHB remains committed to addressing the barriers that cause housing disparities for communities of color. As an advisory body to PHB, we encourage Director Traci Manning and staff to adopt the locational policy to guide future investment in affordable housing that reduces gentrification and ensures equitable access to housing and prosperous neighborhoods.

We encourage the City Council to stand with PHB in its mission. PHB has revised its Strategic Plan to prioritize those most in need in our community. PHB invests in proven, cost-effective strategies implemented by high-performing community partners to combat issues of homelessness, the minority homeownership gap, foreclosure, housing discrimination, the lack of affordable housing and racial and ethnic inequity. Our challenge continues to be not a lack of solutions but in providing enough resources to combat barriers to stable and affordable housing.

Directed by the Mayor's priority to invest in place making, addressing housing and maintaining safety net services, we can move closer to ending homelessness and creating complete neighborhoods through partnerships and investments of private and public funds as well as a cross-jurisdictional governance structure.

Thank you for your commitment to addressing the unmet housing needs of the people of Portland and for your support of the PHAC and PHB. We strongly support fully funding the requested stabilization budget and ask that you support it as well.

Our city continues to struggle with too few resources and too many barriers to greatness. However, by placing complete neighborhoods with opportunities for affordable homes among our priorities, we are investing in a future where our residents can stabilize their health and their lives, raise families in homes that value service and education and create an equitable city that we are all proud to call home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse Beason", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jesse Beason
PHAC Chair