



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

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To the Staff and Stakeholders of PDC and BHCD:

We are pleased to announce the formation of a new City of Portland bureau, focused on housing, that will replace the current Bureau of Housing and Community Development, and will take over its initiatives to increase affordable housing choice and end homelessness. The new bureau will also incorporate the housing development and finance functions currently at the Portland Development Commission. We are charging this new housing bureau with the mission of meeting the housing needs of the current and future residents of our City, and we are vesting it with all of the tools, talent, and accountability to get the work done.

Mayor-Elect Adams has asked Commissioner Fish to lead this new bureau, and oversee the transition.

With this change the City enhances its ability to end chronic homelessness, protect our most vulnerable residents, preserve and expand our affordable housing supply, assure housing stability, promote homeownership, and connect our investments in housing to other strategies that support vibrant, equitable neighborhoods.

At the same time, the Economic Opportunity Initiative of the Bureau of Housing and Community Development will move to the Portland Development Commission. The highly-regarded Initiative will be strengthened by closer connection with PDC's community economic development and workforce development programs. Mayor-Elect Adams will oversee the integration of micro enterprise and workforce development programs into PDC.

Mayor-Elect Adams promised to tackle the challenges of education, prosperity and our region's growth. To do this, the City must align its resources strategically and effectively. Consolidating housing programs, staff and resources in one bureau, and workforce and business supports in the other, will eliminate overlapping and conflicting priorities, conserve taxpayer dollars, and create two powerhouse organizations, one dedicated to housing, and the other to economic development.

Portland's housing programs already enjoy a national reputation for innovation and excellence, but we can do better. For some time, community leaders have asked for fundamental reform of our fragmented housing system. Commissioner Fish pledged to bring about that change. By aligning City housing policy, capital, and human resources in a single housing bureau under the leadership of Commissioner Fish, the City will increase its capacity to deliver on a comprehensive housing agenda.

Council will adopt a proposal for the formation of a new housing bureau in mid-January, and will ask that Commissioner Fish work with PDC and BHCD to develop a transition plan and report back within 45 days. A core team of PDC and BHCD leadership, with direction from Commissioner Fish and the active participation of the City's Housing Policy Manager, Kate Allen, will engage PDC and BHCD staff and stakeholders in the development of the transition plan and

implementation timeline. We also intend to bring in a consultant to assist the team.

The transition plan will address critical issues including:

- Organizational Health & Productivity
- Governance
- Financial & Legal Structure
- Labor Relations and Personnel
- Compliance and Accountability
- Public Involvement

We recognize that this is a very ambitious undertaking. We are also committed to ensuring that both PDC and BHCD will remain productive during the entire transitional period, maintaining high standards of responsiveness and effectiveness. We are confident that we can reach these objectives because of the incredible talent, passion, and commitment of the staff at both PDC and BHCD.

Fifty years ago, John F. Kennedy said: “[c]hange is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” By taking the actions we are announcing today, we will not miss the future. We will lead it.

Sincerely,

Sam Adams
Mayor-Elect

Nick Fish
Commissioner