



CITY OF PORTLAND

Office of City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero

Auditor's Office of the Ombudsman

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MEDIA RELEASE

May 27, 2015

Auditor's Access to Administrative Justice Ordinance Passes with Unanimous Council Vote

PORTLAND, OREGON – CITY HALL – On May 27, 2015, City Council voted unanimously to pass legislation ensuring that all Portlanders have meaningful access to administrative justice.

The City's administrative justice system is comprised of the many different appeal avenues the public has to challenge agency decisions. Agency decisions involve important rights and interests that affect individuals and businesses every day, ranging from permit denials, property exclusions, vehicle tows, water shutoffs, property maintenance violations, sidewalk repair assessments, collection actions, utility bills, and contract awards, among others.

"The two key pillars of access to administrative justice are knowing about your right to appeal and being able to afford the cost of admission, which topped \$1300 in some instances. With this legislation, the Mayor and Council members codified their commitment to accountability and equity in City government," said Auditor Hull Caballero.

"I want to thank City Council for their partnership in this endeavor and for recognizing the important principles at stake. I also want to acknowledge the input and support my office received from Dante James, Director of the Office of Equity and Human Resources, as well as a cast of all-star community advocates, including Debbie Aiona and Mary McWilliams of the League of Women Voters, Barbara Dudley and Kristen Chambers of the National Lawyers Guild, Janice Thompson of the Citizens' Utility Board, and former Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder, among many others who supported our efforts along the way," said Hull Caballero.

The legislation was prompted by a series of complaints to the Ombudsman's Office, a division of the Auditor's Office that is empowered to investigate the public's complaints against City agencies. The Ombudsman also recommends policy changes toward the goals of safeguarding the rights of persons and promoting higher standards of justice in the provision of City services.

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