



Portlanders share a desire for our city be a place where all are welcome and everyone's interests matter, regardless of background, income, or age, whether renter or homeowner. An essential part of achieving this aspiration is to provide a wide array of housing options throughout our community. The Residential Infill Project arrives just in time, as Portland faces a housing crisis that is making increasingly large areas of our city unaffordable for middle class and lower income residents. Our hope is that the RIP will open the doors to new market-based and more affordable housing options, nestled within all of our neighborhoods and harmonious with surrounding homes.

Right now, Portland's housing options are not diverse. Forty-five percent of Portland's total land area is zoned for single family homes and only 10% is zoned for multi-family housing (most of which would arrive in the form of larger apartment buildings). A choice among downtown high-rises, 5-story apartment buildings along certain corridors, and only traditional (and larger) single-family homes misses the housing needs of many Portlanders. It is time to bring our zoning code more into line with the needs of our families – today and tomorrow.

Almost 2/3 of Portland households are 1-2 persons, and both millennials and baby-boomers are seeking accessible, affordable, smaller housing options. The "Housing Choice" portion of the Residential Infill Project Concept Report would re-legalize some of them, including duplexes, triplexes, rowhouses, accessory dwelling units, and cottage clusters. Smaller, residential-scale housing allows more tree canopy. It is also more affordable to construct per square foot than higher density forms of multi-family housing that require elevators, sprinkler systems, and adherence to commercial building codes. Finally, these housing options support population densities necessary to foster vibrant, walkable neighborhoods – as evidenced by older Portland neighborhoods built out with a mix of such housing types.

In general, we feel the recently released Project Concept Report is heading in the right direction by increasing housing choices and scaling back allowable home sizes.

I. What the Residential Infill Recommended Concept Report does well:

- **Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone.** We support the broad notion of a "Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone," that recognizes two things. First, that "opportunity" is not only being within ¼ mile of transit, but also whether one can walk to school, neighborhood stores, or a park, or if there are employment opportunities nearby – and those can happen even if transit is not within a ¼ mile. Second, it recognizes that we should not freeze "opportunity" areas based on today's transit service or sidewalks; this is a long-range plan that must be accompanied by complementary infrastructure investments throughout the city.
- **Smaller housing options** (duplexes, triplexes, cottages, multiple ADUs). Providing the opportunity for smaller housing options in many neighborhoods allows families of all sizes and ages to live in the same neighborhoods; enables aging in community; provides opportunities for schoolteachers, first

responders, and other middle-income people to live in the neighborhoods they serve; and supports population densities necessary to foster walkable neighborhoods and pedestrian-oriented commercial districts – all within residential buildings *smaller* than allowed under current code.

- **Reduction in the size and height of new housing and larger setbacks:** These measures ensure compatibility with existing neighborhoods, enhance the walking experience, and provide the opportunity for more trees and vegetation.
- **Reduces teardowns.** Significantly, the independent economic analysis accompanying the RIP proposal shows the reduction in the size of houses will also lessen the likelihood of demolitions of single-family homes.
- **Preserves existing housing.** The RIP provides flexibility in some areas to preserve existing houses by increasing possibilities for reinvestment and renovation through conversion to smaller internal units, thereby allowing them to be used in ways that reflect that families come in different sizes, ages, and configurations.
- **Incremental change.** RIP allows incremental changes to meet our changing housing needs, integrated into the fabric of existing neighborhoods.
- **Smaller lots.** Providing for the rezoning of historically narrow lots to R2.5 (Recommendation 8) will encourage construction of smaller housing more affordable to middle-income families.
- **Improvements to the R2.5 zone.** Recommendation 9 will encourage better use of a scarce resource while maintaining compatibility with single-dwelling neighborhoods.

## II. How the Residential Infill Recommended Concept Report can be better:

- **Affordability Incentives.** To provide incentives for affordable housing the RIP should be changed to allow the following:
  - An additional unit and modest FAR bonus when it meets affordability requirements, and
  - Allowance for one extra affordable unit for each Cottage Cluster.
- **Housing choice.** The Housing Choice options (Recommendation 4) should be allowed in all neighborhoods, not only in the Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone. This should include the David Douglas School District. School capacity and funding should be addressed directly rather than through the zoning code. Neither East Portland nor other areas should be denied the benefits of walkable neighborhoods and housing choices.
- **Accessibility.** The RIP should encourage adaptable and accessible housing for all ages and abilities in housing through:
  - Regulatory and incentive policies related to accessibility, and
  - Flexibility in reducing or waiving system development charges.
- **Internal conversion of existing houses.** The City should undertake the steps outlined in the Conversion Report to make internal conversions of single dwelling homes the easier and more economical choice. The added flexibility for retaining existing homes (Recommendation 7) should apply citywide to encourage house retention everywhere.
- **Tree preservation:** Flexibility in the siting of houses should be encouraged when it will allow for the preservation of significant trees.

Portland for Everyone supports abundant, diverse, and affordable housing options in every neighborhood, that are compatible in scale with the surrounding community. The Residential Infill Project goes a long way to achieving this, and we look forward to remaining involved in the process as it shifts from concept planning to code writing in the coming year.