



TO: Councilor Duson, Chair  
Members of the Housing Committee

FROM: Jeff Levine, Planning & Urban Development Director  
Mary Davis, HCD Division Director  
Victoria Volent, Housing Program Manager

DATED: November 1, 2017

RE: 2017 Housing Committee Report  
Goals, Work Plan, and Accomplishments

### **I. Housing Committee Priorities**

The City Council held a meeting on January 23, 2017 to develop key priorities and goals for the Council and its Committees. Listed below is the goal for the Housing Committee and its priorities for 2017.

**Goal: Increase access to safe, location-efficient rental and ownership housing that is affordable for working and low-income families.**

Safe, affordable and accessible housing remains a core element of the American Dream. The Housing Committee should focus on land use policies that help residents match their housing needs with appropriate options over a lifetime. Success is when we have a broad array of housing choices to serve evolving individual and family housing needs.

#### **Priorities:**

- Complete work on Short Term Rental Regulations;
- Assure timely implementation of the 2016 Landlord/Tenant policies;
- Pull together a Current Situation Report on Housing Policy, Availability and Affordability. This would include an update on the implementation of policies e.g. inclusionary zoning. Establish a dashboard for annual or semi-annual evaluation;
- Implement Policies to Capitalize the Housing Trust Fund;
- Identify a unique opportunity to demonstrate engagement of the city in partnership (policy, expertise, funding, zoning, public land, etc.) to leverage development of a unique mixed use project that includes work force and low income housing; and
- Housing Safety – Serve as the sponsorship committee for the city's housing inspection programs. Support program evaluation, identify enforcement challenges, the advocate for the budget resources.

## **II. Addressing Committee Priorities**

The Housing Committee met eleven times throughout 2017, including the meeting on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Outlined below is a brief overview of how the Committee addressed each of the goal and priorities highlighted by the City Council.

**GOAL: Increase access to safe, location-efficient rental and ownership housing that is affordable for working and low-income families.**

At the Housing Committee meeting on February 8, 2017 the Committee approved application criteria for staff to identify and recommend eligible development projects that were interested in applying for federal HOME Funding. The application went out to the public on August 1 and closed on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Two proposals were reviewed by the Committee at the September 26<sup>th</sup> meeting where the Committee voted to recommend to the City Council the award of HOME funds and Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing. The City Council is expected to act on the funding requests at its November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Committee allocated \$200,000 towards the Portland Housing Authority's 58 Boyd Street Project and \$300,000 to an Avesta Housing Development Corporation project called Deering Place which is located at 61 Deering Street and 510 Cumberland Avenue.

**PRIORITY: Complete work on Short Term Rental Regulations**

After a robust community process in 2016, the Committee finalized its short term rental regulation recommendations in the first three meetings in 2017. At the February 8, 2017 meeting the Committee voted 3-0 to forward recommendations to the City Council. The City Council voted 8-1 on March 27, 2017 to adopt the Short Term Rental Registration ordinance amendments.

**PRIORITY: Assure timely implementation of the 2016 Landlord/Tenant policies**

The Housing Committee reviewed the implementation of the 2016 Landlord/Tenant policies during its June 14 meeting. The Committee reviewed the revised Tenant Housing Rights Form and Brochure and suggested several edits. The Committee discussed the advisory committee and raised concerns regarding the role of the advisory committee. The Housing Committee Chair requested that staff come back to the committee with suggestions to address the concerns raised by the Committee; this request was placed on hold pending the outcome of the Rent Stabilization Referendum and possible overlap of duties with the Rent Board outlined in the referendum.

**PRIORITY: Pull together a Current Situation Report on Housing Policy, Availability and Affordability. This would include an update on the implementation of policies e.g. inclusionary zoning. Establish a dashboard for annual or semi-annual evaluation**

The Housing and Community Development Division of the Planning and Urban Development Department prepared the 2017 Housing Report which was submitted to the Committee at the October 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. The report was designed to give an overview of the current housing market and report out on the many policies and initiatives that the City has adopted to address the issues of

housing availability and affordability.

**PRIORITY: Implement Policies to Capitalize the Housing Trust Fund**

During the September 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, staff outlined several housing policy proposals for the Committee’s consideration. The proposals included several items that would contribute funding to the Housing Trust Fund. Additional options are being presented at this November meeting.

**PRIORITY: Identify a unique opportunity to demonstrate engagement of the city in partnership (policy, expertise, funding, zoning, public land, etc.) to leverage development of a unique mixed use project that includes work force and low income housing**

The concept of a City-initiated Land Trust may help implement this priority, and will be explored further. In addition, staff is exploring parcels of public land as possible locations at which to implement this priority, and will present identified and feasible options at a future Housing Committee meeting.

**PRIORITY: Housing Safety – Serve as the sponsorship committee for the city’s housing inspection programs. Support program evaluation, identify enforcement challenges, the advocate for the budget resources**

At the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting the Committee received an update and overview of the Housing Safety Office from Michael Russell, Department Director of the Permitting and Inspections Department.

At the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting the Committee received an update and overview of the Fire Department’s Inspection Program from Keith Gautreau, Assistant Fire Chief.

The Committee will continue to receive annual reports on these programs.

**III. 2017 Activities with Status**

**Housing Program Budget**

In February, the Housing Committee reviewed and approved the Housing Program Budget for HUD’s annual HOME allocation for Portland and Cumberland County. The budget divided the funds into four categories including administration, housing rehabilitation, Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), and affordable housing development.

**Short Term Rentals (Airbnb)**

The Housing Committee voted on February 8<sup>th</sup> to forward to the City Council a set of policy recommendations regarding short term rentals. At the May 10<sup>th</sup> and July 12<sup>th</sup> meetings, the Committee reviewed, and ultimately made a recommendation to the City Council, an amendment to the short term rental registration ordinance as it pertains to a disorderly housing designation. On September 18, the City Council voted 9-0 to adopt the amendments.

Additionally, at the June 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Committee reviewed the Short Term Rental Registration

Implementation Guidelines created by the Permitting and Inspections Department

### **Division 30 Amendments**

At the March 8<sup>th</sup> the Committee discussed amendments to Division 30 to support the creation of affordable housing. The Committee continued discussion on this item during the March 30<sup>th</sup> meeting and ultimately voted 3-0 to refer the amendments to the Planning Board for review. The City Council voted on September 6<sup>th</sup> to adopt the changes with amendments.

### **Additional Items**

Additional items on the Committee's schedule in 2017 included:

- Recommendation to the City Council to approve the 2017 Housing Trust Fund Annual Plan;
- Recommendation to the City Council to approve changes to the Housing Code re: Habitation of Recreational Shelters.
- Recommendation to continue participation in the Cumberland County HOME Consortium;
- Received an update on the Lead Safe Housing Program funded through a 2016 grant from HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes.
- Reviewed the FY 17 end of year report to HUD

### ***IV. Future Work***

The Committee made great strides this year to frame the most important issues while taking steps to help achieve the Council's goals for the Housing Committee. Listed below are a few items for the next Housing Committee to consider as part of their work plan for 2018.

- Housing First Incentives;
- Capitalizing Housing Trust Fund;
- Possible revisions to and the implementation of Section 6-225 (Rental Housing Advisory Committee) of the Tenant Housing Rights Ordinance.