



Jessica Vega Pederson
Multnomah County Chair

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Dear City Councilors,

I am writing to voice my support for Resolution 2026-106, advancing the Inner Eastside Area Planning Project. Place matters, and this is an opportunity to invest in a future where our most walkable, transit-rich areas with high-quality infrastructure and neighborhood amenities are accessible to more Portlanders.

Affordable housing has been a key issue confronting the City of Portland and Multnomah County, as rents and housing prices have skyrocketed over the past decade. Although rents have recently stabilized, the recommended draft of the City of Portland 2024 *Housing Production Strategy* estimates that the City will need an additional 120,560 dwelling units by 2045. To accommodate this growth, and prevent another unsustainable spike in housing costs, the City will need to permit more housing. This resolution helps the City meet this moment, allowing for more density in high opportunity neighborhoods that can accommodate the growth.

This resolution also supports sound climate policy. The City of Portland and Multnomah County have shared climate goals that cannot be achieved without a more compact and urban form that supports walkable neighborhoods and transit. Dense, walkable neighborhoods permitted under the zoning proposal would allow people to meet more of their daily needs without driving. Reduced vehicle miles traveled, in addition to energy efficiency gains of multifamily housing, would lead to reduced emissions. An analysis from the Rocky Mountain Institute found that zoning reform could deliver over a quarter metric ton of CO₂e per person per year.¹ Those are substantial carbon reductions.

These proposed zoning changes would also support public health. Multiple studies have found that when individuals can use their bodies in the course of daily

¹ Muralidharan, Raghav, et al. "Why State Land Use Reform Should Be a Priority Climate Lever for America." RMI, 16 Feb. 2024, rmi.org/why-state-land-use-reform-should-be-a-priority-climate-lever-for-america/

activities they live longer, healthier lives. Denser urban neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, uses, and transit access promote daily activity like walking and riding bikes. This resolution targets neighborhoods that already have access to health promoting amenities like parks, schools, and existing sidewalks and bike infrastructure.

Resolution 2026-106 confronts one of the key barriers to more affordable housing; the available supply of housing. Our shared [Homelessness Response Action Plan](#) underscores the importance of this, recognizing that we cannot address outflow – increasing the number of households leaving homelessness for permanent, stable housing – without increasing housing production and expanding availability at all levels of affordability.

We won't solve homelessness, or address the affordability crisis with zoning reform alone. Continued partnership on affordable housing, services for those transitioning out of homelessness, mental health and addiction treatment, and many other policies are needed to achieve our shared commitments. However, zoning reform remains a central lever in our ability to address these challenges, supporting more housing in high opportunity areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and for your continued partnership in service of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Vega Pederson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Vega Pederson
Multnomah County Chair