

## Andra Vltavin

**1-The next Portland City Council will be unlike any that we've ever experienced in the past. How should Council operate and what will Council need to accomplish in the next two years to make the new form of government as effective and respected as it can be?**

First and foremost, the council needs to collaborate well. Already, I have seen amazing collaboration among candidates, even in the same district, on account of ranked-choice voting and the fact that there will be three winners. Additionally, I have led several efforts to align candidates around specific causes so we can hit the ground running when we take office. For instance, I led the charge on drafting a ceasefire resolution for Portland's City Council that 18 of the current city council candidates signed and took to the current city council. Some of us are also working to collaborate with the Portland Street Art Alliance to boost their ability to serve the community and keep Portland weird.

In addition to this proactive collaboration, we need to be connecting with our community. Community engagement improves support, resiliency, and overall feelings of well-being, which we need as we begin to face more and more crises. Part of this is streamlining how the public receives information from the City. Rather than signing up for a dozen different newsletters, we need strong and reliable access points for the general public to get information about how to get in touch with their officials.

**2-Current City Council members have suggested that we need to relax environmental and natural resource regulations in order to address the housing crisis. What is your perspective on this issue? What is your top natural resource and environmental priority?**

Having moved to Portland 10 years ago because I thought it was an environmentally friendly city, I have been very disappointed by the current City Council's approach to climate issues. I stepped into this race specifically to advocate for the communities working on dismantling the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub, which stores 90% of Oregon's oil and PDX's jet fuel. In the event of an earthquake, that oil, stored in a liquefaction zone, would all spill directly into the Willamette River, constituting the biggest US oil spill to date. As such, I would like to—at minimum—seismically retrofit the facility and put risk bonding in place so that, in the event of a disaster, taxpayers are not on the hook for the damages.

**3-Vehicles are Portland's largest source of emissions and continue to climb. For example, a number of cities have restricted downtown vehicle use. How should Council address this issue?**

Personally, I would love to see a version of Portland where there are no private vehicles in the city limits, but I know we are a long way off from that. One thing I would do as a member of the City Council is advocate for bike infrastructure while also steering Metro and other organizations away from expanding freeways. There is much research to show that expanding freeways only

increases the number of people who drive. If we keep driving and parking inconvenient and stop prioritizing cars, we can build healthier, more walkable cities that are actually appealing to live in.

**4-There are a number of new and recently built market rate apartment buildings listed for sale for under \$250,000 per unit. The Portland Housing Bureau is financing a number of affordable housing projects that are costing more than \$500,000 per unit. There are some extra costs associated with affordable housing financing and with building more 2BR and 3BR units, but not nearly enough to explain the difference.**

**What specifically would you do to more effectively use our limited resources for affordable housing?**

While it is important to create affordable housing that works for large families, affordable housing needs to actually meet people where they are. As such, I would like to look into rent control to help existing tenants stay in their locations while advocating for commercial conversions of the vacant office spaces. The State recently offered Portland money to do exactly that, which is especially important since Portland has the largest percentage of office vacancy, sitting at 30%. This would save us from having to use new building materials and make it possible to build community-centric models of mass housing. I like to think about floors where there are shared bathrooms and all the residential units are on the outside perimeter where the egress windows can be. Then, in the center of the floor, we can put in restaurants, shops, and social services, so people can work where they live.

Additionally, any time we are looking to build new structures, we need to make sure that we are looking into contractors who are paying their employees well and using sustainable building practices.

**5-Ireland used Citizen Assemblies to deal with difficult issues such as Abortion. Please watch this two minute video and let us know if you think Citizen Assemblies could help Portland come together**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKSgPtnN0s0>

I am part of Extinction Rebellion PDX, and we have already been exploring what it would look like to create a Citizen Assembly in Portland. It is a very exciting idea to me. I believe that any way we can provide more avenues for individual citizens to get involved enriches our ability to collaborate as a city. A citizen's assembly would be a tremendous amount of work and would require a lot of thought labor to ensure equitable participation, but I think it has the potentiality to provide perspective that City government struggles to maintain. And, in a city where people have many ways to participate and have their voices heard, citizens tend to be happier and more fulfilled overall. It is unreasonable to think, even going from four city council people to 12, that we can serve each of the 650,000 constituents in our city. We need neighborhood associations and citizens' groups to fill that gap.

**6-What is another City doing that Portland should replicate?**

I believe Portland should look into emulating cities with better environmental scores than we have, namely Copenhagen in Denmark. Copenhagen is on track to be completely carbon neutral in 2025 due to their upgrades to renewable energy and bike infrastructure.