

James Armstrong

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?

The strength of our new form of government has to come from the districted representation. Portlanders have been demanding accountability from their local leaders on issues that matter to them. I want to be a part of a council that has a collaborative work environment. We should be identifying issues that are important to our districts and working together to solve those problems. Over the first two years of this council, that will mean establishing committees and council leadership that prioritize problem solving over ideology. We will need to solve the question of how the council interacts with the local neighborhoods and current established community groups. Overall, I favor members that come in with the desire to serve their community, versus a predetermined policy they wish to see the city establish.

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?

I don't agree that we are anywhere near the point of needing to compromise our environmental priorities for housing policy. Within the current urban growth boundary, there are still many underutilized opportunities for housing. Specifically, in the small business commercial districts such as Alberta and St. Johns, there are many neglected commercial buildings that the city should prioritize for development. That will require taking a more aggressive stance against absentee landlords, which I support.

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?

The fastest and easiest option for this would be to re-establish "fareless square" in the central city. Looking back to my first years in Portland, the ability to hop on and off Tri-Met while in the downtown core was certainly an incentive to use public transit. In the long-term, I would explore opportunities for reduced car traffic in certain neighborhoods. For example, the idea of a pedestrian or one-way only

Alberta Street has been proposed since we've owned our business on that street. As a council member, I can provide a valuable voice from the small business community on the pros and cons of such policies.

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?

I would push back on the narrative that the downturn in commercial real estate is a panacea for affordable housing. For one, the purchase of a market-rate apartment complex does not equate to automatic affordable housing, as many residents are under contract and do not qualify for affordable housing. My priority is addressing a comprehensive plan for utilizing housing dollars to best combat our crisis of unsheltered homelessness and addiction. While the State has been a key player in incentivizing low and middle income housing development, our city needs to prioritize fully subsidized and supportive housing solutions. We cannot rely on the County to lead this endeavor, as their governing structure does not incentivize collaboration. We have an opportunity in this new city council to work together in our communities to make a plan that brings us out of this current crisis.

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 certain that any attempt to increase the involvement of citizens in their own governing will produce better results for the electorate. However, similar to my current views on the participatory budgeting campaign, I believe Portland needs to focus solely on successfully establishing our new form of council government. I do not believe that we are guaranteed a smooth transition through this new process, and it will be paramount for our new council to develop a level of trust that we can build on for the future.

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

The constant complaint from service providers and advocates for homeless support services is that Portland has no coordinated plan for the vast amounts of money we spend. We know about the challenged relationship between the city and county, but silos also exist between the various service providers that are contracted to provide services throughout the continuum of care. In discussing these issues with stakeholders, I was reminded of the 2016 conversation we had in our city about the Haven for Hope campus in San Antonio, TX. At this centralized campus just outside of the downtown area, H4H provides a wide range of services in one location, including low barrier shelters, subsidized housing, and many other support services for the entire community. I recently travelled to San Antonio, along with some local support service providers from Portland, where we met with leadership at H4H and toured the facility. While H4H is a separate non-profit, they act as a de-facto coordinator of all the service providers in the area, working closely with the city to implement their homeless outreach strategies. I would like to see Portland take the same type of centralized approach to our local homeless crisis. Not only can it provide more efficient service and reduce silos, it can save a significant amount of money by centralizing duties that are currently being duplicated throughout our region.