

# Jonathan Tasini

**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?**

We have to recognize that the challenges in the city are not going to be addressed if we think that this is simply about kumbaya, better communication, getting along and helping “small business”—which is the mantra of roughly 90 percent of the City Council candidates who don't want to offend anyone by talking about real issues. We have to recognize that virtually every challenge we face comes down to people not earning enough money. Our city is no different than cities nationwide where the rich and the powerful are protected, the working person bears a disproportionate burden of the costs to create a functioning society, and our valuable tax dollars are squandered. An old saying is relevant: you can't eat respect.

The debate about the future of downtown Portland is a concrete example. The primary question that should be asked is: what vision do we have for downtown that serves working people? That could mean, for example, that we value continuing to embrace remote work, which has positive environmental aspects (reduced car commuting) and local community benefits (people get to spend more time with their families and neighbors, and spend their dollars locally). It could open up the conversation of one of my core proposals: a four-day work week (which is being successfully implemented worldwide in the private and public sector). We should look at converting empty office space into housing and arts-related uses. There's a robust conversation to be had.

Instead, the current City Council snapped back to a typical, failed response: throw tax breaks at businesses with very little rationale and virtually no evidence that using the city's precious financial resources in such a way made any sense. Indeed, most tax breaks for businesses are colossal wastes of money. As a City Councilor, such tax breaks would be the first order of business for review to end.

In sum, in the next two years we have to reorient our policy agenda with a focus on raising wages and putting more money in peoples' pockets.

**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?**

On its face, the idea that we have to ravage the environment in order to house people is pure madness. We have ample options to create housing within the current city boundaries. We should not have to play housing off against a healthy environment. We are the richest nation in human history—we can, and should, house people, provide decent wages and have a livable environment. I would cite two top resources and environmental priorities: bolster, advance and protect the Portland Clean Energy Fund and pass my proposal for a risk bonding requirement for fossil fuel companies

(<https://www.jonathantasini.com/issues/big-oil-not-you-should-pay-the-bill> )

**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?**

Restricting downtown vehicle use is a sound option. However, I would focus on three other paths: expand public transportation so people have more robust options; strengthen remote work to cut down on weekly travel; and implement a four-day work week for the same pay, as I’ve proposed mirroring frameworks now underway around the world, which would reduce travel and, in fact, enhance community participation

(<https://www.jonathantasini.com/issues/a-four-day-work-week>).

**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 think the answer is two-fold. If we are focusing on home ownership, we need to develop more public social housing; in other words, stop handing affordable housing projects to private developers which drains financing into private pockets. Second, as a life-long renter, I have endorsed, and support, a Renters Bill of Rights, which, among other provisions, calls for “home rule” for our city to determine rent standards and would allow us to regulate rents so that working-class people can afford to live in the city.

**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 familiar with Citizen Assemblies and support the concept. However, as I mentioned earlier, I don't think the problem we face is a lack of "coming together". A Citizen Assembly would be a great step forward if it was empowered to shift the balance of economic power in the city.

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

I would cite two ideas that are part of my existing agenda (<https://www.jonathantasini.com/issues>). First, raise the metro minimum wage, in stages, beyond the July 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, poverty level, \$15.95-per-hour (yes, because we lack home rule, we have to push the issue statewide). Second, build a robust public broadband system to provide every Portlander with the access and affordability of a basic tool needed in today's economy, and, as a nice benefit, dismantle the cable monopolies that are gouging every Portlander with obscene prices. My plan is slated to be unveiled by Labor Day.