

## Mariah Hudson

**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 next Council will indeed be unlike any we've seen before and it must be functional—with 12 members we will need to create coalitions, have liaisons to bureaus and use influence to make progress. As a legislative body, collaboration is key, but it's equally important to be responsive and proactive in addressing the unique needs of our districts.

My experience as a state legislative lead for a non-profit with 11,000 members has equipped me with the skills to build coalitions and secure the necessary votes for impactful legislation, including a pioneering bill for postpartum mental health coverage. On the Council, I'll leverage this experience to ensure that everyone has a stake in the solution, enabling us to make progress on our city's most pressing problems.

As the chair of the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods and an advocate for kids and teachers with PPS, I've built deep connections within our communities. I've worked alongside neighbors for years to solve local problems in coordination with the city. Our council must also maintain strong functional relationships with the county, which I already have with both staff and several commissioners.

Respect is built on trust. As a communications leader, I strive daily to build trust through transparency and accountability. I aim to make budgets not just public but understandable, using tools like dashboards. Additionally, being responsive is crucial—my team and I will work diligently to respond to every call and email. By fostering collaboration, transparency, and responsiveness, we can make the new form of government effective and respected.

**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?**

As a city council member, I know it is a false choice between housing and our environment. Both are essential to our future as a city. While the legislature has recently relaxed environmental regulations concerning housing and the urban growth boundary in an effort to address our housing crisis, it is crucial for our city to remain vigilant and committed to our core environmental priorities.

I take pride in my role as the former chair of the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, where I helped develop the Residential Infill Plan. This plan is a testament to our city's dedication to thoughtful, sustainable growth. We must not compromise our environmental standards in the name of expediency. Building in areas prone to flooding, such as wetlands, is short-sighted, especially with the increasing threat of climate change and variable weather events.

In District 2, we have substantial opportunities for infill and redevelopment. The Lloyd Center and the Albina Vision project are prime examples of how we can meet our housing needs without sacrificing our environmental priorities. Additionally, making the process for infill housing, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and single-unit conversions, simpler and more accessible is essential. According to the Portland buildable lands inventory, up to one-third of single-family home lots could support such developments. While this won't entirely solve our housing problem, it offers a solution with significantly less environmental impact.

Moreover, the current average permitting time for large residential complexes is over 500 days. This is unacceptable and must be addressed. We need to reduce this timeline by cutting through bureaucratic red tape, not by lowering our environmental standards. Swift and efficient permitting processes, combined with our commitment to sustainable development, will help us achieve a balanced and prosperous future for all Portland residents.

Together, let's build a city that respects our environment while addressing our housing needs.

**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?**

Addressing vehicle emissions, Portland's largest source of emissions, requires a multifaceted approach. While our city boasts a great bicycle network, the rise in traffic deaths and the still-limited use of active transportation compared to single-car trips signal a need for more action.

First and foremost, we must make it friendlier, safer, and easier to use alternatives to cars. This involves ensuring our streets are clean, well-lit, and safe across the city. Enhancing the connectivity of our transportation network is crucial for encouraging more people to walk, bike, or use public transit.

I fully support extending downtown parking hours to generate additional revenue and exploring the creation of more parking districts. Additionally, I advocate for public funding of Biketown to lower the cost for everyone, making e-bikes a more attractive option than ride-sharing services like Uber. As Portland recovers, now is not the time to implement congestion pricing, which can be challenging to do equitably.

In the long term, capping freeways and incentivizing public transit use will be vital in reducing pollution in inner neighborhoods, particularly in North and Northeast Portland, where air quality and health outcomes, such as asthma, are disproportionately poor. By focusing on these measures, we can make meaningful strides in reducing emissions and improving the overall quality of life in our city.

**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?**

The Portland Housing Bureau's approach to building affordable housing projects is well intentioned, but has proven inefficient and slow, given the high costs of their units compared to market-rate developments. Particularly in my district, N and NE Portland there are

We also need to look seriously at the many requirements—such as dedicated secure bike parking for multifamily development, which costs \$11,000 per unit and drives up costs. I am a daily bike commuter and agree there should be bike parking, but simple staples (developers have the option to gate) would meet the needs of most cyclists and dramatically reduce the cost.

If elected, I would employ the following strategies to more effectively use our limited resources for affordable housing.

- **Utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts:** Instead of overly relying on the Portland Housing Bureau, the city could strategically use TIF districts to encourage the development of affordable housing. This method leverages future property tax revenue increases to finance current projects, potentially speeding the development of needed housing.
- **Continue Streamlining the Permitting Process:** Reducing barriers in the permitting process and implementing policy for a fast-track design approval system (such as was recently approved for qualifying ADUs) is vital. Streamlining and reducing time to build will reduce costs and increase units for all income levels.
- **Collaborate with Developers and Neighborhoods:** I will urge city entities like Prosper Portland and the Housing Bureau to collaborate with developers, community development corporations, and neighborhoods to locate and build housing projects. This cooperative approach will enhance our capacity to meet housing demands.
- **Ensure Living Wage Jobs and Training:** Integrating living wage jobs and training into all city projects is essential. Doing so will help address the root causes of housing instability by ensuring that residents have the financial means to afford their homes.
- **Reconsider development fees:** Reducing fees that raise the cost of housing is crucial for maintaining economic stability and preventing long-term homelessness. For example PBOT street/ curb improvement fees can be exorbitant. We should look at the triggers for these fees and whether upgrades are really necessary when the existing infrastructure is serviceable and a property owner is making improvements.

Addressing the high cost of housing and creating jobs that pay a living wage are both essential to achieving housing stability for Portlanders. As a city council member, my focus will be on implementing these strategies to ensure that all residents have access to safe, affordable, and stable housing.

**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>

Speaking with the residents of District 2, I've learned that many feel unheard—drowned out by a small number of loud people. Granting these regular citizens temporary power through a Citizen Assembly or similar initiative could help them come together with other Portlanders and finally have their ideas heard. As a council member I would actively engage with citizen assemblies and neighborhood associations and coalitions in my district to listen to voters.

After all, it can be immensely frustrating feeling like your only opportunity to directly impact local government comes from an occasional ballot. I wholeheartedly support giving everyday Portlanders more opportunities to connect, listen, and collaboratively develop solutions for our city.

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

I'm so glad for this question! Eugene has a fantastic "quick build" ADU program that significantly increased permits for this critical type of infill from 6 units a year to over 100 permits applied for in just two years. I've been advocating for this since learning about it and am thrilled that our City Council and Development Services have taken the first steps to make this a reality.

Bend and Salem have already adopted this model, which cuts months off the permitting process and saves thousands of dollars for homeowners. This streamlined approach reduces bureaucratic delays and makes it easier for residents to contribute to our housing stock. The next move for Portland will be to adopt more designs that can be preapproved for our historic districts. This will preserve the character of our neighborhoods while facilitating much-needed development. Additionally, we should work with CDCs or community banks to reduce the cost of financing for ADUs, which is typically several points above standard mortgage rates. Making financing more affordable is crucial to encouraging more homeowners to consider building ADUs.

Seattle is also doing impressive work with preapproved designs for tiny homes and skinny lots, providing a model that Portland can learn from. By adopting similar strategies, we can expedite development and make it more affordable and accessible for our residents. This approach will not only increase our housing supply but also support our goals for sustainable and inclusive growth. Portland has the potential to lead in innovative housing solutions, and by learning from the successes of Eugene and Seattle, we can create a robust program for quick build homes that meets the needs of our diverse community.