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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 new form of government promises to be more representative of the people of Portland, which is a good thing. The new council will have some rules of engagement, but this is also an opportunity to make changes in how the city does its work.

I imagine the new council will work within their districts part of the time, attending assemblies of neighborhood groups, school and community groups, and business districts, and in turn representing the city with those groups. The community work should be inclusive of all stakeholders in the district, council members should have an “empty office” policy, rather than an open door policy, recognizing that community members have less power and privilege. I would hope to create a sense of transparency and accountability to the residents who live here.

I would also hope to advise the city administrator on operational issues that are opaque, and result in outcomes that are not positive for Black and brown people in the district. As a policy development board, the council can and should have a say in creating more equitable outcomes in housing, transportation and climate change. We can do this with the right people at the table making policy.

I want residents to share in the creation of a Portland we envision together based on shared values (we won't know those values until we ask residents about Portland they want to create). I'd love to convene a District 2 community roundtable when I first start that seeks to learn from each other where our values intersect, and how we can move towards our value proposition together.

As a council member, my role is to listen, learn and then implement. This isn't the “Michelle show”, this is the Michelle representing 160,719 voters show!

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?

This is absolutely not a zero-sum game. We can both create housing *and* care for our planet, and we have to do both with some urgency. Capitalism gets in the way of our thinking here, because building green housing can be done, and has been done. The

city has a role in subsidizing affordable housing projects by buying down the delta in the costs to build versus costs to build to a standard that accounts for climate change.

I have a background in construction management, green building and energy efficiency program development, and developed the first Green Building program for the Homebuilders Association of Portland. That was not an easy task in an environment in which the home building members thought the world was flat, and climate change wasn't real. I also worked as a data analyst evaluating energy efficiency programs across the US, and I am committed to creating housing that includes energy standards that meet or exceed the building code, including building shell and window improvements, shading, and heat pump technology.

I currently work on a team that develops climate policy, and have been very disappointed in the cautious approach our current council has been in holding the line on climate friendly actions such as allowing Zenith oil trains, and using building requirements as an excuse for not building housing quickly enough. We are not building quickly enough because we are operating in a Capitalist system that values investment and dollars and ROI over the health of humans or the planet.

I have several priorities in terms of the natural environment. I'd like to complete the river clean up. There is a coalition of diverse groups who have been working to hold the Feds accountable for many years. They are doing great work, and doing it with Black and brown communities. We should envision osprey flying through the river downtown and nesting on the banks of the river, as a sign of good river health. We should also protect Forest Park, and our neighbors in Linnton, and in fact all of our parks should be maintained and valued as the assets they are. Portlanders highly value access to the outdoors, clean air and a pristine environment, and outdoor recreation being so close by. We need to do our part to protect these natural areas inside and outside Portland so I would prioritize this protection as values we share. We also need to value diversity in the built, human environment as much as we value biodiversity.

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?

I would love to see a mechanism that restricts cars in places, such as downtown where people gather, and I would love to bring back Fareless Square – that was innovative.

Having grown up in Caracas, and Guadalajara, I understand the "public square" as being one where people are prioritized over cars. Recently, as a school board member, I introduced the idea of limiting cars in front of schools. The idea is to block off each end of the street with mechanical bollards that allow traffic to flow or be stopped during the times students are being dropped off and picked up, it would reduce idling in front of

schools, and it would get parents out of their cars to walk with their students the few steps to the school.

It's a time when we can be a little (or a lot) more innovative than we have been in the past 2-3 decades. We used to be known for our green sensibilities, and we've lost our edge (and reputation).

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 math isn't mathing. The developers are being paid, and perhaps they are using prevailing wages, to build the housing which are required on city projects over a certain threshold. Maybe the requirements are too stringent to be financially economical. Having worked for the Portland Housing Bureau, PHB. PHB acts as the city's bank, loaning money to developers so they can complete projects. Sometimes the city doesn't get paid back. What's interesting is that when the city assists individual home owners, they put a lien on their homes for up to 30 years encumbering the equity in the home. The city states it wants to guarantee to the public, that their public investment is a worthy investment. I wish they would hold developers to the same standard,

I'm curious and will need to know more about why the costs to build subsidized housing are so high. But for housing to be built for such different costs, we can assume the builder and developer are getting paid, and perhaps the workers are not. I would need to know more, and would ask staff to provide a believable and transparent response to my questions.

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 love this idea, and in fact in my current role, tried to use this same approach in the planning department. It didn't go well.

A small group of retired Black professionals are seeking to look for land to site a Black History Museum. They thought that working with city planners working on the

Montgomery Park to Hollywood line might help them with a land acquisition on York Street, named for York, the man who was enslaved by the Lewis and Clark Expedition. During that planning process, planners defined “community benefits”. They define those benefits as affordable housing. The seniors, several of whom are retired planners tried to provide input saying “we don’t want more affordable housing, we want home ownership opportunities”. Those voices should have been included and incorporated. Community benefits should be defined by the community. In this case, city planners need to be reminded who they serve; it’s the people.

In the same way the Irish Assemblies sought out multiple voices to learn where there were shared values, I plan to work with community to define who we are, and who we want to be, It is a core tenet of my platform to let the people lead.

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

There is so much we should be looking to other cities for. In fact, we are so far from innovation here in Portland that we need to look to other cities who are more ambitious and audacious in their approach to urbanization, and solving big city problems.

I subscribe to a non-profit newsletter, Next City. Next City is an urbanist’s dream, writing stories such as this one

[Louisville’s Black Neighborhoods Want To End Publicly-Funded Displacement.](#)

This will not be popular, but imagine what it would look like if Prosper Portland’s city funding was cut off if they displaced residents through their urban renewal projects? What about if displaced residents did not have to pay the taxes that fund urban renewal?

Other ideas other cities are adopting is the idea of inclusive monuments, and questioning what the statuary in the community about our values. Do we still want statues of people who owned slaves or created other harms?

We can learn from transportation projects that honor the residents that were displaced, and how to plan and maintain healthy parks systems from cities as close as Bend, and as far away as Washington DC.