

Sarah Silkie

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 council will need to set up committees to address the pressing policy issues needed for the City to function more effectively. In addition the new council will be setting the precedent for how to interact with the mayor and the executive team. Voters clearly wanted power to sit with the council, more than with the mayor and it will be critical for the council to do independent analysis and not just rubber stamp what is proposed by the mayor. One priority that I will champion is to take a deep-dive on the City budget and get a more clear picture of where our resources are going. The current system is not transparent or consistent in how the various programs and bureaus report their expenses. For example, some programs (e.g., fire) include the operating costs of their facilities, and other programs (e.g., police) have their facilities listed under the general facilities program which presents a distorted view of the costs of each program.

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?

We do not need to relax our environmental and natural resource regulations, but we do need to clarify and streamline our code so that it is not so confusing to navigate. I am a civil engineer and have been working for the Water Bureau reviewing permit applications for the last two years, and I can say that the current system is so cobbled together and has so many exceptions that even the employees don't know all the rules and how they should be applied in each case. We need the new council to sit down and take a comprehensive look at our codes and their intentions and then make it clear for both applicants and staff what the priorities are.

My top environmental priority is treating climate change like the emergency that it is. We need to both dramatically reduce carbon emissions and enhance the resiliency of our systems to survive the already happening effects, from wildfire smoke and high temperatures to ice-storms and falling trees. One example of this is the Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub in NW Portland. Over 90% of the state's fuel passes through this one area which is sited on liquifiable soils and susceptible to catastrophic failure from earthquakes, floods, or fires. To solve this, we need to

reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and create alternative systems so that a failure in this one area doesn't devastate the entire region.

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 fully support reducing our greenhouse emissions. However, restricting the use of vehicles without providing adequate alternatives just harms our most vulnerable people and makes small businesses suffer. We need to make public transit available, and until we have regional transit systems in place, we need to have places around the perimeter of the city where people can leave their vehicles and get on public transit for the more dense areas. I love biking and active transit, but we should not penalize people who do not have the ability to ride a bike and walk long distances. In order to effectively reduce emissions, we need to come up with a plan that accounts for the mother with toddlers and groceries as well as the single able-bodied folks.

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?

See the answer to #1 above - we need to do a deep dive on the budget. We could also just ask employees in the Housing Bureau what is driving up the costs. One of the committees that will be sure to get support from other council members is one on housing, and that committee should compare the costs for the low-cost market rates units vs the Housing Bureau units. I see a lot of letting the perfect be the enemy of the good in Portland, and we need to be laser-focused on getting affordable units on the market quickly.

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>

Citizen Assemblies could play a wonderful role in expanding dialogue and helping people hear directly from others with different lived experiences. We also need to really think about who has the time to participate in these assemblies. As a working mother, I have to say that when my children were younger it would have been nearly impossible to participate in something like that and I don't trust that the people who are currently willing and able to show up truly represent the diversity of our population.

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

New York just introduced Climate Budgeting, which essentially requires that decision-makers apply a climate lens to all major decisions. Elements of this concept were part of Portland's Charter Reform phase 2, which went to the current City Council who decided against implementing it. I will be advocating that the new Council consider the climate implications of all legislative and funding decisions. Done right, this can be a way to stimulate a stronger green economy and provide more jobs in our region.