

# Will Mespelt

**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 inaugural group of 12 council members will have a vital role that will impact the future of how Council operates in a number of ways including: instituting how council will do business, how council will take up legislation, how members will choose to balance Portland citywide vs each person's local district, and holding the government to account. This initial council needs to be mindful and intentional in the creation of a new framework for how Portland Government will function with all the new people and roles moving forward. A framework that is transparent, easy to understand, and accessible to empower citizens and their just demand for accountability.

**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?**

Any regulation that impacts the environment and natural resource management should be very carefully reviewed before being altered. Voters, myself included, should expect to see the exact pros and cons of a given policy change in this area to determine if it can help with both housing and climate goals. I would be open to adjusting specific policies after careful review. A specific example would be stormwater treatment through eco or green roofs on new construction. I would be supportive of case by case changes to requirements for housing specific projects if they help meet housing goals. The biggest impact we can have as a city on climate issues is to reduce our emissions and use of natural resources by increasing housing density and prioritizing waste reduction during new development. This will reduce cars on the road, reduce energy use/cost for homes, and reduce natural resource use during construction. I would also support policies that promote longer lasting and natural products for construction rather than petroleum based products and cheap materials that will need replacement.

**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?**

Portland needs to adopt policy and advocate tirelessly for funding to increase and provide high quality public transportation along with safe and easy options for bikes and other transportation options. There are some specific ways to increase light rail and bus options that would allow more commuters to take transit. As a peacemaker I would prefer to provide better options for our citizens rather than making life more difficult for people who use vehicles. We should have amazing transportation options before any restrictions on vehicles are implemented.

**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?**

Absurdly high housing development costs are one of the primary reasons I want to serve Portland on City Council. As a licensed and active member of the real estate industry I see many ways we could improve our use of funding and stop getting ripped off. I see 2 major options moving forward along with some policy changes that are smaller in scale but have a big impact on development.

Option 1 would include depending on private developers to increase housing supply by incentivizing new construction of new housing units in high demand, but low supply. This could be done by streamlining permitting, allowing case by case exemptions for change of use and other common permitting delays, and by waiving permitting fees and rapidly approving permits for qualifying projects. This method would forfeit many thousands of dollars of permitting income, however it would save the city many millions of dollars in development costs.

Option 2 would be to continue to City development of affordable housing and change the way the housing bureau requests bids for projects and to have full audits of bids/contracts from developers, contractors, and architecture firms. Often the cost is increased greatly upfront when the developer and architects are not provided a clear mandate and expectation of cost at the beginning of the project. The cost also is more because private partners are forced to charge more for their time due to how difficult it is to operate with the City of Portland on projects. Projects move slow and require more time and money for completion across the board. The City of Portland has to remember that Portlanders expect good stewardship of the time and tax dollars entrusted with them.

**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>

Yes! Portland Government will always need to hear from 'regular' people to make sure they are heard and that the goals of government align with the will of the people. I intend to regularly host meetings and sessions for people in district 2 and Portlanders in general.

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

Portland desperately needs to follow the example of a city that has meaningfully addressed helping our homeless neighbors such as Boise. Boise has set some great examples on methods we can utilize that help and house our neighbors living in the street. We should borrow ideas that work and adjust them to suit Portlanders.