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3. What policies would you pursue so that there is sufficient affordable housing and employment opportunities in order for low-income families to continue to live in the city of Portland?

Charlie Hales: I'm running for mayor because I want to make Portland an affordable place to live for all Portlanders in every neighborhood.

That includes working to ensure more affordable housing, like I helped create in the Development Agreements with the Pearl District and the South Waterfront neighborhood, requiring at least 25% of housing to be affordable housing.

But that also includes ensuring that people have access to good family-wage jobs, that our transit system is affordable, that our streets are paved, that our water and sewer rates are lower, and that every child has access to a quality education at a great public school.

As mayor I will focus on the basics so that the opportunity that's now available to some is shared by all Portlanders, regardless of who they are or in what part of town they live.

Jefferson Smith: First, keep the 30% set aside in place, and make it a floor, not a ceiling. I'm open to the current policy of averaging the spending across districts, as it helps us to avoid adding to the growing imbalance between East Portland and inner Portland neighborhoods. There should be flexibility in housing type. We should work to ensure needed services and amenities are in place so that neighborhoods are healthy.

New forms of housing need not be scary. We are in the midst of structural changes in our economy, and it makes sense to look at new housing types, like courtyard-style family housing, or dormitory-style, with shared amenities like kitchens and bathrooms.

When it comes to publicly invested money, we should do more to ensure that local contractors, especially women and minority owned businesses, get a healthy share of the work. We also need a workforce that better reflects Portland's diversity.

And I wouldn't support getting rid of systems development charges. The fees developers pay for basic services like sewers, streets, and parks.

Amanda Fritz: Homeownership is one of the best ways to keep families in Portland living in stable neighborhoods rather than being displaced to outer suburbs.

I will continue to support General Fund assistance for homeownership programs.

Well-paying jobs are necessary for both mortgage and rental payments.

I will continue to support job training, college scholarships, and small business development programs.

We need to promote a wide range of job choices, for entrepreneurs and expansion of existing businesses, for those wanting to pursue higher education, and for folks who prefer more technical/hands-on work.

Language translation services are often crucial to publicize good jobs and encourage everyone to apply. The City can help by publicizing opportunities, with translation into multiple languages.

I will continue to support and promote the Office of Neighborhood Involvement's Diverse Civic Leadership program. In my second term, I will coordinate an Alumni organization for graduates of DCL trainings, further engaging diverse communities in sharing the riches of our city.

Mary Nolan: It's important that we keep Portland welcoming and affordable for a diverse and culturally rich population.

To do that I've been visiting with dozens of community leaders in the affordable housing movement as well as scores of business managers to talk about what would be most helpful to meet this objective.

The first priority I hear is regulatory certainty, so they know the rules and whether their project will meet standards before they invest money.

Second is prompt responses from the city for land-use changes, permit requests and licensing applications.

Third is a fee structure that allows affordable housing projects to stay affordable.

Finally, I'll bring together competing interests to reach common ground, prioritize the most promising opportunities and implement them as quickly as possible.

Measuring up

Street Roots weighs in on relevant local and state measures before voters this year. All conclusions were reached by a consensus of Street Roots staff, volunteers and vendors, with consideration on how the laws will affect people experiencing poverty

Portland Public Schools

Yes! Our schools need our help, but let's face it, the improvement proposal floated in the spring was too much and too haphazard to galvanize real support from the community at large. This proposal brings it more down to size, with public involvement and a more equal distribution of assistance for long-neglected facilities. Education is so critical for the wellbeing of future Portlanders, and we hold a responsibility to getting all students on an level course toward success.

Fire, police retirement

Yes! The last line says a lot. The majority of the savings come in curbing the manipulation of final-year income measures, meaning — like the rest of us — benefits are based on the actual final year of pay. And it shifts payments for injuries incurred during probationary periods to the Oregon workers compensation program. We want our firefighters and police taken care of in the event of a disability, and this measure lets us continue to do the right thing without expensive loopholes.

Libraries

Yes! Libraries are one of the last resources for public knowledge, research and cultural enrichment that are universally accessible to the public, regardless of income, stature or resources. But such an asset does not come without the community's investment. This measure will also replace the patchwork levy process that exists now. It will dedicate funding for this valuable resource, freeing up other dollars for social services for families experiencing homelessness and poverty.

Restore school arts

Yes! Art is everywhere in Portland. It's at the core of our city's personality. But in our core institutions, particularly for children and the poor, art is either nonexistent or out of financial and social reach. The benefits of arts training — on math skills, cognitive processing and simply our joie de vie — are well documented. For \$35 per person, we can fund not only public school programs but also programs generating community involvement among people who are social and economically marginalized.

There are caveats, to be sure, and the administration of this new tax has to ensure that it does not become a burden to the very people it is intended to help.

Inheritance tax

No! If you inherit an estate worth \$1 million or more, you have acquired a measure of great wealth and you should pay taxes on it. The argument of double taxation, that opponents of estate taxes often use, holds no water here. Value and wealth change hands every day, for the advancement of many, and property is no exception. Moreover, property can accrue "unrealized" capital that is never taxed unless it is sold. Taxes are the responsibility of every citizen of means to support the local and national wellbeing, including feeding the hungry and educating our children. We can't afford to write in yet another loophole for the wealthy to skirt that responsibility.

Casinos

No! Indeed, gambling can be fun, and there's nothing wrong with that. But there is a reason that vice is best kept in check. The proliferation of gambling centers is a regressive model for extracting tax dollars from middle- and low-income Oregonians. This is a service no one is clamoring for, so it is being sold as a jobs package with a bonus pay-off for the state. In exchange, we get low-wage service sector positions and millions of dollars siphoned out of Oregon's economy. Oh, and a constitution that now says we're OK with that, so everybody join in!

Oregon has its share of gambling facilities, and we have a practical system in place to keep this vice under some measure of control. We cannot afford to expand this poor man's taxing industry further in our state.



Marijuana cultivation/sale

Yes! It's time Oregon pushed the envelope on the issue of hemp production, marijuana use and government oversight, and this bill will do just that. It's far from a panacea on the nonsense of our war on drugs. But it is a starting point that can draw out new ideas on the matter of managing a long-distorted crop that has potential in many markets.

Real estate transfer tax

No! We do not want a private, national trade organization spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in our state to rewrite our constitution under the fog of false necessity. We have a statewide ban on real estate transfer taxes. We have a system that allows for the people of Oregon, our elected officials and due public process to both keep it that way and reserve the right to consider our options for the future.

Likewise, real estate transfer fees are not the taxation boogie men they have been made out to be. They can be constructed to provide relief to first-time homebuyers, lower-priced homes and long-term homeowners. And they can be directed to support real community needs, right here in Oregon, in ways that benefits all residents.

This measure isn't something Oregon wants or needs.

Corporate kicker

Yes! Measure 85 will not solve the state's education funding issues — the state's tax system is broken far beyond one or two simple repairs. This measure is hopefully the first of many to begin working on fixing that system — something that the leadership in Salem has been unable or unwilling to do.

Street Roots supports the passage of Measure 85, not because we think it will fix the broken tax system and result in proper funding for education. We support the passage of this measure as a first step in tackling a seriously broken tax system. It is our hope that with the passage of Measure 85 many more steps will be taken to ensure that education, social services and other things that we count on the state to provide are properly funded.