

# The time is now for the city to act on affordable housing

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**BY DEBORAH KAFOURY AND DAN SALTZMAN**  
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Portland is experiencing an unprecedented housing crisis. Rents are up nearly 15 percent over last year, and low vacancy rates are making it harder to find a place to live.

These forces are being driven by a strong local economy that is producing many new job opportunities for people who live here and for those who are moving to our city seeking out our reputation for a high quality of life.

But for too many Portlanders, wages aren't keeping up with the cost of housing. And thousands of Portlanders struggle to find a safe place to sleep at night.

On any given night, about 4,000 people — including women, children and seniors — will sleep on our streets, in a car or in a temporary shelter.

Locally, we have responded to this housing emergency by investing in supportive services that help people get into housing. But every day our service providers run into the same obstacles that anyone looking for a safe, affordable home in Portland faces: they are very hard to find.

Nearly half of families with low incomes (less than \$37,000 a year for a family of four) can't find a home they can afford because we lack 25,000 affordable homes in Portland. We need to act now to create affordable housing for people who live and work in our communities.

We want Portland to be a place where everyone can afford a home. And with thousands of residents living without access



to a safe, affordable home, we must do more.

We believe that the majority of Portlanders agree. And later this month, the Portland City Council will consider sending an affordable housing bond measure to the November ballot, giving voters an opportunity to invest in urgently needed housing for those who need it most.

A \$250 million investment in affordable housing would put thousands of families into stable, safe housing over the life of the bond. And it would enable our community to help those who made this place what it is today afford to live here during retirement.

The need is real and now is the time for us to act.

We hope that you'll join us in this effort. And we hope you'll join the Welcome Home Coalition — over 140 organizations strong —

which has done the research and outreach to develop community support for new affordable housing funding.

There is no single cause for this crisis — and there isn't a silver bullet solution. But for too many people, a home they can afford to live in simply doesn't exist. And in order to turn that around, we need to act now to close the gap before we become like San Francisco — overcrowded and overpriced.

Together, we can make Portland different. The Portland City Council will consider referral of the affordable housing bond at 2 pm on Thursday, June 30, at Portland City Hall (1221 SW 4th).

Sign up for updates at [yesforaffordablehomes.com](http://yesforaffordablehomes.com), and LIKE the campaign at [facebook.com/yesforaffordablehomes](https://www.facebook.com/yesforaffordablehomes)

*Above: The Welcome Home Coalition collected hundreds of postcards from the community calling for action on affordable housing solutions. Recently, members from Asian Family Center, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, REACH, JOIN and APANO presented the postcards to Commissioner Dan Saltzman and Chair Deborah Kafoury.*

Did you **serve** in the **Armed Forces** and are experiencing or at risk of becoming homeless?

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