



Regional Housing Coordination Strategy: Executive Summary

The causes of the housing crisis that greater Portland faces are entrenched and complex, requiring a response that is both urgent and robust. Market conditions, zoning limitations and other obstacles have resulted in years of underproduction across both regulated affordable housing and market-rate housing. The result is a severe housing shortage that has driven up consumer costs and pushed more people into unstable living situations. Direct consequences of this housing shortage have become ubiquitous: more than a thousand evictions are filed each month, homelessness is rising and highly visible across many communities, and disparities among who can and cannot afford housing continue to grow. But with a collaborative regional approach, Metro has identified pathways to creating more housing of all types and at all price points.

Demographic shifts such as an aging population, an increase in smaller, one-and-two-person households, and an increase in rent-burdened households mean that a broader variety of homes is needed. More deeply affordable, accessible and family-sized rental units are needed, as is a broader range of homeownership opportunities. Additionally, coordination and alignment across housing and homeless services systems must improve to ensure that individuals and families exiting homelessness are able to access housing that is designed and operated to meet their needs.

While housing production in greater Portland picked up after the Great Recession, it never fully caught up with population growth and today it is slowing again. Market conditions, including high costs for labor, materials, land and borrowing, as well as negative perceptions of the region among outside investors, continue to depress housing production. These dynamics have particularly hampered the production of large, complex projects like apartment developments. Additionally, the new pipes, roads, parks and schools that are needed to support housing growth push housing prices up even more.

Local governments have responded. Some have reformed zoning to allow for a greater variety of housing types and these changes have begun to show results. But more work is needed to overcome the unprecedented challenges facing the housing market and to ensure that good intentions translate into real housing outcomes.

The regional affordable housing bond voters passed in 2018 serves as an example of where coordination has been effective. On track to provide 5,600 new affordable homes — 1,700 more than initially projected — the bond has supported housing investments that are distributed evenly across the region rather than concentrated in the urban core.

These homes are also designed and operated in partnership with community organizations. In many cases, wraparound services funded through another regional measure, the supportive housing services tax, help to meet a range of needs. More than half of the bond-funded homes are sized for families, and about 40 percent are deeply affordable for households earning a third or less of the area’s median income. However, with these bond dollars — and the Portland affordable housing bond dollars — almost completely spent, greater Portland is approaching an affordable housing production cliff.

Metro’s current estimates show that greater Portland still needs 27,000 more homes to support its existing population and an additional 151,000 homes to keep up with forecasted population growth over the next 20 years. Meeting that overall need for 178,000 more homes will require the construction of an average of about 9,000 more homes every year. About two-thirds of those homes need to be affordable for households with low or very low incomes. Overcoming these challenges will require sustained leadership, collaboration among every level of government, and a collective commitment to building more homes of all types and at all income levels.

The Regional Housing Coordination Strategy provides an overview of the region’s housing shortage and the barriers that are impacting housing production. It also provides a summary of results from engagement and the evaluation that Metro conducted to identify and prioritize recommended actions that Metro will undertake to address the shortage.

Regional Housing Coordination Strategy background

Directed by new requirements under the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA) program, jurisdictions around Oregon are developing Housing Production Strategies that are intended to address housing production targets set by the state.¹ Metro, with its unique role as an elected regional government, has a new responsibility under the OHNA program to adopt a Regional Housing Coordination Strategy (RHCS) every six years. This RHCS identifies the actions that Metro will take over the next six years to advance housing production, access to opportunity, affordability, and choice in greater Portland. These new actions build on Metro’s long history of working to create thriving communities, and more recently, its success in large-scale affordable housing development and supportive housing services investments.

Consistent with the theme of coordination, two Metro departments — the Housing Department and the Planning, Development, and Research Department — collaborated to develop the RHCS. The actions identified in this RHCS reflect the diverse expertise and areas of focus of those two departments, the Metro Council’s leadership, and extensive input from local jurisdictions, housing developers, owner/operators, and industry leaders, as well as coalitions and organizations engaged in housing advocacy.

Purpose of the RHCS

This strategy emphasizes Metro’s critical role in advancing regional solutions and supporting the efforts of cities and counties in accelerating housing production. Though Metro does not zone land or build homes, Metro plays an important part in helping to create the conditions for success, addressing gaps in capacity and resources, and supporting coordination and alignment at the state and local level and across public,

¹ The state referenced Metro’s 2024 Urban Growth Report assessment of housing needs when setting these targets for Metro area jurisdictions.

private and nonprofit sectors. This RHCS aims to encourage the production and preservation of housing that addresses the following goals, as defined in statutory language related to the OHNA:

- Diversity of housing types and affordability levels
- Housing that is high quality and physically accessible
- Housing with access to economic opportunities, services, and amenities
- Promotion of fair housing

Equity considerations

Equitable access to affordable, accessible, well-located housing is central to people's prosperity, stability and quality of life. This project worked to keep racial equity front and center throughout by applying Metro's Racial Equity Framework, in alignment with Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The Framework guided project scoping, data collection, engagement, identification of actions in this RHCS, and evaluation of those actions.

Engagement

Because this RHCS is intended to coordinate and support the work of other jurisdictions and partners, the actions included in this document were identified in close collaboration with an Implementers Work Group consisting of local planning and housing staff, focus groups with industry and community leaders, and Metro's standing committees, including the Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC), the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), and the Metro Committee on Racial Equity (CORE).

Types of actions in this RHCS

Actions included in this RHCS fall into several general categories, including:

- Communications and engagement
- Convening
- Data and analysis
- Emerging best practices and innovation
- Funding and investments
- Legislative advocacy
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Regulation and regional policies
- Technical assistance and capacity building

Next steps

The challenge of creating and sustaining housing options that meet the diverse needs, household configurations, and income levels of people in our region is too big for any single jurisdiction. Collective efforts are needed now more than ever. This RHCS provides a framework for regional coordination and collaboration to guide progress toward a future where all people have access to safe, affordable and stable housing. Once adopted by Metro Council, the RHCS will guide Metro's actions over the next six years (2026-2031). It will be followed by the development of more detailed work plans and continued engagement to further shape the work and ensure responsiveness to needs, opportunities and shared values.

New actions to be taken by Metro

	ID	Action	Impact on development of needed housing	Impact on housing affordability or choice
Accelerate housing production	1	Create a new housing pre-development and technical assistance grant program for site specific housing development. May include site surveys, feasibility studies, design, permitting, etc.	Low	Low
	2	Expand resources available for brownfield assessment and explore grant opportunities for small scale remediation that leads to middle housing and multi-family housing development.	Medium	Medium
	3	Funding and support for local housing production strategy implementation	Medium	Low
	4	Consider developing a regional pool of housing professionals for technical assistance and staffing support to smaller jurisdictions to support planning and implementation related to housing production, affordability and choice.	Medium	Low
Research and assessment	5	Evaluate lessons learned and effective practices from implementation of the 2018 Affordable Housing Bond; research models and best practices and develop and share recommendations with state and local funders to strengthen fair housing and equitable access to affordable housing . Incorporate recommendations into the implementation of any future Metro affordable housing funding implementation.	Low to none	Low to Medium
	6	Building upon lessons learned and best practices from the 2018 Metro Affordable Housing Bond and Metro's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) grant program, evaluate and advance opportunities to strengthen requirements and incentives for community participation and co-design in the development and operations of Metro funded affordable housing , to support the creation of housing that is designed and operated to be culturally responsive to the needs of historically marginalized populations. Identify opportunities for Metro to support capacity building for community based and culturally specific organizations to participate in affordable housing development and operations through future housing funding allocation and/or program requirements or criteria that incentivize partnerships that benefit community based and culturally specific organizations.	Low to none	Low to Medium
	7	Research, evaluate and identify opportunities to advance innovative and non-LIHTC approaches to housing development/construction, financing, and ownership that present opportunities to reduce costs, diversify housing	Medium	Medium

New actions to be taken by Metro

	ID	Action	Impact on development of needed housing	Impact on housing affordability or choice
		types, and strengthen outcomes for groups most impacted by housing instability. This research is intended to build upon previous Metro research and engagement in 2024 to evaluate affordable housing investment opportunities. The 2024 study scope included consideration of rental housing development gap funding, acquisition/conversion, preservation, and complementary investments such as land acquisition/banking, predevelopment funding, and operating support and risk mitigation, as summarized in Metro’s report, Evaluation of Affordable Housing Investment Opportunities. Based on feedback collected through the 2024 engagement process as well as 2025 engagement related to the RHCS, Metro has identified additional areas of research/engagement related to future affordable housing funding opportunities. This action seeks to fill gaps in previously conducted research by exploring and evaluating areas of innovation not previously explored, including: • Modular and manufactured housing and cross-laminated timber and smaller or expandable designs • Social housing and alternative ownership models, including CLT and resident-owned multi-family housing models • Innovative financing approaches to support development and operations of smaller scale (<20 unit) building types, including PSH Assess barriers and identify opportunities to pilot or scale up innovative approaches; approach would include engagement with public, private, and philanthropic partners to support coordinated research, development and investment strategies.		
	8	Conduct an assessment of middle housing in the region to identify best practices and common barriers.	Low	Low
Convene and coordinate	9	Develop or support the development of a coordinated affordable housing operational stabilization strategy to respond to industry-wide challenges due to rising operational costs, increased resident needs, and lack of coordination/alignment with homeless and supportive services. This strategy will result in a coordinated set of concrete actions for Metro and state/local partners to take to address operational stabilization needs, potentially including but not limited to: adjustments or flexibility to established regulatory agreements, changes to policies	Medium	Medium to High

New actions to be taken by Metro

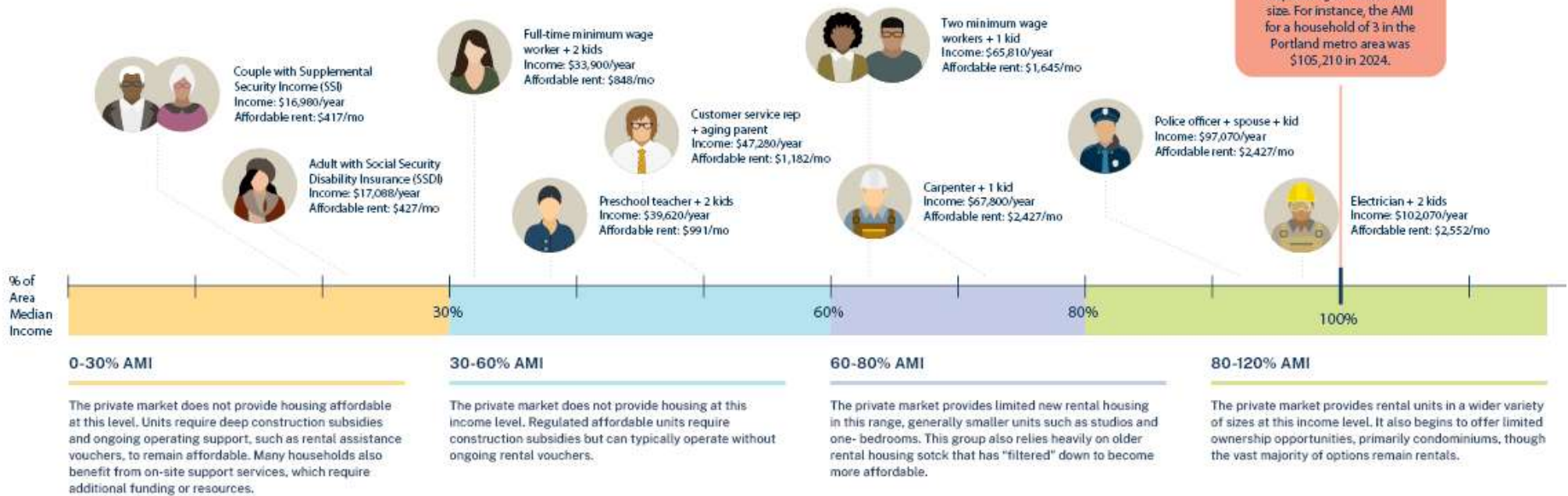
	ID	Action	Impact on development of needed housing	Impact on housing affordability or choice
		such as rental assistance payment standards, coordinated actions to address vacancies and streamlined referrals, and coordination to secure new funding for operational stabilization.		
	10	Evaluate and improve voucher and other rental assistance policies and implementation to address portability challenges, shifting market conditions impacting affordable housing, and to connect available vouchers with vacant regulated affordable housing units.	Low	Medium
New tools	11	Develop a centralized regional affordable housing inventory and listing service to support housing navigators and seekers in connecting with information about available affordable housing units that meet their needs across the region.	Low	Medium
	12	Develop a plan for a regional land bank that outlines the necessary legal framework, governance structures, and operational guidelines to support cross-sector collaboration and investment. Define clear policy priorities, including considerations related to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, market conditions and funding opportunities.	Low	Low
	13	Explore how to create a permitting dashboard to track trends across the region.	Low	Low
Policy	14	Begin a Metro Urban Growth Management Functional Plan audit and cleanup of housing-related titles to align with new State requirements and regional priorities as identified in the 2027 Future Vision.	Low	Low
Funding and cross-sector collaboration	15	Convene jurisdictional partners to develop a coordinated legislative agenda for state and federal housing/homelessness resources , including a regional priority to identify funding for infrastructure. The agenda would be updated as needed to meet changing regional needs (or every six years) and guided by engagement with appropriate Metro advisory committees for land use, housing and homelessness, engagement with jurisdictions, and consultation with interested Tribes.	Medium to High	Medium

New actions to be taken by Metro

	ID	Action	Impact on development of needed housing	Impact on housing affordability or choice
	16	Consider the viability and feasibility of new funding for affordable housing development and preservation. Ensure that any new funding framework is informed by public opinion research and engagement with public, private and nonprofit leaders as well as analysis of housing needs and market conditions, and lessons learned from the 2018 regional housing bond and best practices from other regions, including evaluating opportunities to strengthen racial equity, fair housing and community resilience outcomes and alignment/integration with homeless and supportive housing services.	High	High

Connecting equitable housing strategies to resident needs

Metro is collaborating with regional partners to take new actions to advance housing production, affordability, and choice for families at different income levels.



The RHCS actions listed here will be advanced over the next six years (2026-2031)

0-30% AMI

ACTION #10: Improvements to voucher and other rental assistance policies and implementation.

0-80% AMI

ACTION #16: Affordable housing funding feasibility

ACTION #9: Affordable housing operational stabilization strategy

ACTION #11: Regional affordable housing inventory and listing service

ACTION #5: Equitable access to regulated affordable housing

ACTION #6: Community co-design

ACTION #7: Innovative approaches

0-120% AMI

ACTION #1: Housing pre-development and technical assistance

ACTION #3: Local HPS implementation funding and support

ACTION #12: Regional land bank plan

60-120% AMI

ACTION #8: Middle housing assessment

ALL INCOMES

ACTION #2: Expand funding for the brownfield grant program

ACTION #4: Regionally available pool of housing professionals for technical assistance and staffing support

ACTION #13: Permitting dashboard

ACTION #14: Urban growth management functional plan housing audit

ACTION #15: Coordinated advocacy agenda

Income data source: HUD 2024 Median Income Percentages for the Portland Vancouver-Hillsboro MSA, SSDI 2024, SSI 2024, BLS May 2024. Affordable monthly housing costs are calculated at 30 percent of monthly income.