

REGIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING ASSESSMENT

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Department: Housing
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Length: 60 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Staff will introduce a coordinated Regional Affordable Housing Assessment to create a shared understanding of current conditions, identify opportunities to strengthen the regional housing system, and inform future housing policy and investment decisions.

The assessment consists of six complementary projects examining different dimensions of the housing system. Together, they intend to provide the foundation for future policy discussions while also informing near-term actions where appropriate, particularly through operational stabilization efforts.

In addition to work done in partnership with the Planning, Development and Research department, the Regional Affordable Housing Assessment comprises most of the Housing Department's portion of the Regional Housing Coordination Strategy approved by Metro Council in December 2025.

ACTION REQUESTED

No Council action is requested at this time. Council feedback will help refine the assessment scope and ensure the work addresses Council policy questions, desired outcomes or potential actions relevant to future regional decision-making.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

This work advances implementation of the Regional Housing Coordination Strategy by developing a shared regional understanding of housing system performance, investment implementation, resident experience and emerging opportunities that can inform future regional collaboration and policy discussions.

POLICY QUESTIONS

This work is intended to help answer several strategic questions, including:

- How effectively is the region's housing system meeting current needs?
- How have housing market conditions, development economics and operating environments changed since major public investments were initiated?
- What lessons have emerged from implementation of recent regional housing initiatives?
- Where are there opportunities to strengthen housing policy, investment strategies and regional coordination?
- What information will help Metro Council evaluate future housing policy and investment decisions?

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Portland Metro region has experienced nearly a decade of significant housing policy innovation, public investment and implementation. During that time, regional voters approved unprecedented investments through the Portland Housing Bond, the Metro Affordable Housing Bond and the Supportive Housing Services Measure.

The state created new housing resources and enacted comprehensive reforms to accelerate housing production. Cities and counties developed local housing production strategies, and in December 2025 Metro Council adopted the Regional Housing Coordination Strategy.

During that same period, the conditions under which housing is produced, financed and operated have changed substantially. Construction costs, insurance costs and operating expenses have increased. Capital markets have shifted. Resident needs and public expectations have evolved. At the same time, Metro and its partners have gained valuable implementation experience across multiple housing initiatives.

Because no single analysis can answer the range of strategic questions facing the region, staff will complete a coordinated assessment consisting of six complementary projects to examine:

- Housing market and economic conditions
- Resident experiences and outcomes
- Housing access and geographic strategies
- Lessons from implementation of the 2018 Affordable Housing Bond
- Innovative housing approaches
- Operational stabilization

Together, these projects will build a shared understanding of how the housing system is performing today and where there are opportunities to strengthen future policy, funding and implementation.

The assessment advances implementation of the Regional Housing Coordination Strategy in coordination with related work across Metro, drawing on expertise from Planning, Development and Research and other departments while continuing to engage regional partners throughout the process.

Metro's regional role positions it to convene partners, synthesize implementation experience across multiple housing initiatives, and examine issues that extend beyond the responsibilities of any single jurisdiction or program.

Council engagement

Staff anticipate returning to Council approximately quarterly throughout the assessment to share progress on major workstreams, discuss emerging findings, and receive feedback. Work sessions are expected to incorporate researchers, practitioners and subject matter experts alongside staff presentations to inform Council discussion of specific topics as the work develops.

This assessment is intended to be an ongoing conversation with Council rather than a single report at the end of the process. Some workstreams—particularly operational stabilization—are intended to inform coordinated near-term actions as opportunities arise, while the broader assessment builds a foundation for future policy and investment discussions.

As housing conditions continue to evolve and public resources remain constrained, future policy discussions will increasingly require careful evaluation of competing priorities, tradeoffs and investment choices.

Equity

Equity remains a central objective of Metro's housing work. The assessment will examine equity of access to affordable housing, resident experience, geographic distribution of investments, and implementation practices to better understand how current systems serve diverse communities and where policy and implementation changes could improve equitable outcomes.

Climate

Climate considerations will be incorporated where appropriate throughout the assessment, particularly through the review of Metro's affordable housing policies and implementation. This may include evaluating selected climate-related policies adopted during

implementation of the 2018 Affordable Housing Bond, such as Metro's policy on in-unit air conditioning, and considering lessons that may inform future housing investments.

Stakeholder Engagement

Staff anticipate ongoing coordination with regional housing partners throughout the assessment, including affordable housing providers, local jurisdictions, state agencies, housing advocates and advisory bodies. The assessment will also be coordinated with related work across Metro to ensure alignment with existing research, planning and policy initiatives. Portions of the work, including the Affordable Housing Bond review, will be developed in partnership with the Housing Bond Oversight Committee.

Financial Implications

Staff will complete the assessment using a combination of existing resources and consultant support that has been incorporated into the Housing Department's work program and budget.

BACKGROUND

The region has accumulated nearly a decade of implementation experience across the regional affordable housing bond, the Supportive Housing Services Measure, state housing reforms and implementation of the Regional Housing Coordination Strategy. At the same time, the economic, financial and operating environment for affordable housing has changed significantly.

The proposed Regional Affordable Housing Assessment provides a coordinated framework for evaluating these changes and identifying opportunities to strengthen the regional housing system. Rather than producing a single study or set of recommendations, the assessment consists of six complementary projects examining housing market conditions, resident experiences, housing access and geography, implementation lessons, innovative housing approaches and operational stabilization.

The Regional Housing Coordination Strategy identified a number of actions intended to strengthen the regional housing system over multiple years. Advancing those actions requires a stronger understanding of current conditions, market dynamics and implementation experience. This assessment supports RHCS implementation by developing that shared evidence base while informing future regional priorities.

The assessment is intended to support an ongoing dialogue with Council throughout the coming year. Staff anticipate returning approximately quarterly to share progress on major workstreams, discuss emerging findings and policy questions, and receive Council feedback. While some workstreams—particularly operational stabilization—are intended to identify and advance coordinated near-term actions, the broader assessment is expected to culminate in summer 2027 with a synthesis of findings that identifies opportunities,

constraints and policy tradeoffs to inform future regional housing policy and investment discussions.

ATTACHMENTS

None