

# **SOCIAL HOUSING TASK FORCE**

Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 6:00 PM  
City Hall Basement Room 24 Kippy  
Richardson Room



## **MEMBERS**

City Councilor Kate Sykes, Co-Chair  
City Councilor Sarah Michniewicz  
Paul Styslinger  
Bill Stauffer  
Jason Spector  
Catherine Buxton  
Wendy Cherubini  
Cullen Ryan  
Matthew Peters  
Kristin Leffler  
Jon Fetherston, Co-Chair  
Jonathan Culley  
Tim Wells

The Social Housing Task Force will conduct this meeting in person. The members will break into working groups in order to focus on specific topic areas. As a result of the meeting format, there will be no meeting recording. Written notes from each working group will be incorporated into the minutes of the meeting, which will be posted in the [Agenda Center](#).

## **PUBLIC COMMENT INFORMATION:**

To submit written public comment on an agenda item, email [SocialHousingTaskForce@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:SocialHousingTaskForce@portlandmaine.gov). Submissions must be received by 12:00 pm the day before the Social Housing Task Force meeting to guarantee their inclusion in the agenda packet. All submissions must include the commenter's name and legal address. To help ensure your comment is submitted for the correct item, please include the name of the agenda item (see below).

## **AGENDA:**

- 1. Review and Approve Minutes from the February 11, 2026 Meeting**
  - i. Draft Minutes from the February 11, 2026, Meeting
- 2. Administrative Updates, Announcements, etc., as needed**
  - i. Resolve 7-24/25 Resolution Calling For The Establishment Of A Task Force On Social Housing
- 3. Working Group Exercise Led by Paul Styslinger**

Social Housing Task Force Minutes of Business Meeting held February 11, 2026 at 6:00 pm

A recording of the meeting is posted [here](#). These minutes provide a record of those in attendance, the general discussion taking place, and motions made. Please refer to the recording for discussion details.

In attendance:

City Councilor Kate Sykes – Co-Chair

Jon Fetherston – Co-Chair

Bill Stauffer

Wendy Cherubini

Matt Peters

Tim Wells

Jonathan Culley

Jason Spector

Cullen Ryan

City Councilor Sarah Michniewicz

Kristin Leffler

Catherine Buxton

Greg Watson, Director of City's Housing and Economic Development Department

Mary Davis, Division Director, City's Housing and Community Development Division

Christian Roadman, GPCOG, Senior Planner

The meeting started at approximately 6:03 PM. It opened with approval of the minutes from January 14, 2026 (moved by Jonathan Culley, seconded by Bill Stauffer, with unanimous approval).

Wendy Cherubini noted that the task force should take a look at the council order which formed it, to illustrate what progress has been made and identify work that still may need to occur.

Christian Roadman presented a summary of feedback collected by a survey of task force members. Chair Sykes offered her perspective and led a discussion about the responses, takeaways, and paths forward.

Paul Styslinger summarized that, generally, the group is interested in establishing City influence in housing development, City equity in that housing in some form, long-term fiscal sustainability in some way, and either projects targeted at 100% AMI or any AMI.

Discussion moved to the January 28 remote educational session featuring Portland Housing Authority (PHA). Chair Sykes summarized the meeting as establishing a strong potential for a better partnership between PHA and the City of Portland. The group discussed potential advantages of partnering with PHA, including a level of remove from developer/approver conflicts, PHA's experience and varied project structure, and their capacity for property management and work with Section 8. The group discussed how a partnership could advance.

Mary Davis provided an update on the City-owned properties list she presented at the last meeting, noting that Jonathan Culley whittled the list down to about eight that he found promising. She noted that she worked to determine the approximate development capacity of each, but also that some of the largest parcels near the airport may be subject to conservation easements and hold wetlands; those may not be good candidates for development. The group discussed opportunities and challenges.

The group then discussed next steps and future meetings, including the potential for establishing working groups dedicated to particular topics and another meeting with PHA.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:46 pm (moved by Tim Wells, seconded by Catherine Buxton, with unanimous approval).

DRAFT

Resolve 7-24/25 Passage: 7-0, as amended on 3/17/2025 (Councilor Sykes & Mayor Dion Absent)

Effective 3/27/2025

The following amendments were voted on:

Motion to amend, amendment titled “Pelletier #1”, Passed 7-0 on 3/21/25

Motion to amend from the floor by Councilor Fournier, Amendment: Adding to the first Be it further resolved section, which has the makeup of the task force to amend: "At least 2 members of the community with lived experience navigating the challenging housing environment from underserved populations", Passed 7-0 on 3/17/25

MARK DION (MAYOR)  
PIOUS ALI (A/L)  
APRIL D. FOURNIER (A/L)  
BENJAMIN GRANT (A/L)

**CITY OF PORTLAND  
IN THE CITY COUNCIL**

SARAH MICHNIEWICZ (1)  
WESLEY PELLETTIER (2)  
REGINA L. PHILLIPS (3)  
ANNA BULLETT (4)  
KATE SYKES (5)

**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE ON  
SOCIAL HOUSING**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portland is Maine’s largest city, with a population of just over 68,000, and saw a population increase of nearly three percent in the last decade, while surrounding municipalities have experienced increased growth as well; and

**WHEREAS**, the development of housing has not kept pace with this increase in population and the corresponding demand, resulting in rising housing costs, suburban sprawl, and increasing pressure around housing production; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portland is experiencing a critical housing shortage, with increasing demand and affordability challenges affecting residents across all income levels; and

**WHEREAS**, as set forth in its goals for 2025, the City Council is committed to finding solutions to the City’s housing crisis, including the development of more middle-income housing; and

**WHEREAS**, according to a study done by the Furman Center at New York University, a steady decline of federal support for public housing has led to a country-wide developing interest in “social housing,” where public entities take an active role in development and ownership of housing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Furman Center study has also demonstrated that other municipalities across the country have successfully implemented publicly owned and mixed-income social housing models, illustrating the viability of such initiatives; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council desires to explore the possibility of developing a social housing program through the creation of a task force, the primary objective of which will be to study and propose a framework for government-led social housing, prioritizing permanent affordability, environmental sustainability, and inclusivity.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BET IT RESOLVED**, that Mayor Dion and members of the Portland City Council hereby establish the Portland Social Housing Task Force, which will conduct a comprehensive study and develop a strategic framework for a social housing program that will address relevant issues including but not limited to:

- 1) Identifying Key Impact Areas in Housing Production: Analyze existing resources, opportunities, and barriers to pinpoint areas where municipal intervention could catalyze growth in housing supply and affordability;
- 2) Risk and Return Analysis of Public Investment: Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to guide sustainable public investment strategies in social housing, balancing affordability goals with financial sustainability. This will include considering the issuance of bonds to fund housing;
- 3) Maximizing and Streamlining Funding Programs: Develop a plan to integrate existing funding sources, such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), HUD's RAD program, and local revolving loan funds (JDHTF), to achieve an efficient financing model for social housing development;
- 4) Addressing Critical Needs for Public Development: Define gaps in housing production that private and non-profit developers cannot fill, focusing on workforce and middle-income housing to ensure affordable, mixed-income communities. This could include creating a Portland social housing development corporation, exploring partnerships with the Portland Housing Authority (PHA), and/or partnering with the County, GPCOG, and State on advancing regional public housing solutions;
- 5) Assessing Local Barriers and Public Development Opportunities: Examine Portland-specific factors such as public land availability, construction costs, and rent levels to identify barriers and opportunities. This includes assessing recommended strategies, such as addressing permitting and site plan approval efficiencies, facilitating adaptive reuse processes for existing building renovations, streamlining Historic Preservation processes, and exploring ways to make it easier for developers to meet our inclusionary zoning (IZ) requirements;
- 6) Establishing a Sustainable Funding Stream: Evaluate sustainable financial structures, including revenue bonds, revolving loan funds, and tax-set-asides, to ensure ongoing financing for public development. Consideration should also be given to ways of using publicly-owned or quasi-publicly-owned land for development;

- 7) Evaluating Legal Authority and Capacity: Review Portland’s legal capacity, resources, and expertise to operate as a public developer;
- 8) Ensuring Long-term Sustainability of Public Housing: Develop a lifecycle management and funding plan to ensure the long-term affordability and quality of publicly developed housing;
- 9) Models of Public Development and Ownership: Review various public development and ownership models, such as mixed-income developments with public equity stakes and fully affordable models, analyzing their applicability to Portland’s housing needs; and
- 10) Financing Options and Risk Management: Assess potential financing methods, including but not limited to revenue bonds, general obligation bonds, revolving loan funds, and public-private partnerships, alongside risk management strategies to mitigate market fluctuations, construction risks, and operational challenges.
- 11) Land Use and Acquisition: Evaluate city-owned land and propose strategic acquisition of additional land as necessary. Public land, especially in underdeveloped areas, will be prioritized. This effort will include an inventory of parking lots and other underused spaces, such as vacant office and commercial properties, that could serve as potential development sites or be repurposed for housing.
- 12) Planning and Permitting Modifications: To streamline public development, the task force will assess ways to expedite planning and permitting. This includes evaluating a “concierge” service to assist larger projects, fast-track approvals for housing projects, and eliminate redundant reviews and inspections.
- 13) Community Engagement: Engage with community stakeholders to gather input on housing needs and priorities, with a focus on affordability and accessibility. The task force will address public concerns by educating residents on housing processes and the effects of policies like IZ on overall affordability.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Portland Social Housing Task Force will consist of no fewer than 9 members and no more than 13 members, all of whom will be appointed by the Mayor, with input from the City Council, in accordance with Article II, Section 5(1) of the Charter, and will include a range of stakeholders, including:

One member of the City Council

One member of the Board of the Portland Housing Authority (PHA)

One representative from an affordable housing developer

One representative from a market developer

At least three Portland residents with relevant knowledge or skills (e.g. housing advocates, urban planners, financial and legal experts.)

At least two members of the community from underserved populations with lived experience navigating the challenging housing environment in Portland

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Portland Social Housing Task Force will elect a chair or co-chairs from among its members, who will develop meeting agendas and who will work closely with an independent facilitator and legal, financial and other professional consultants paid for by the City of Portland, and members of City staff assigned by the City Manager as needed; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Social Housing Task Force will meet over the course of one year, beginning as soon as practicable after its members have been appointed, during which time it will conduct a phased study and will submit its report and recommendations to the City Council in the form of a communication on or before the date that is one year after its first meeting. The City Council will host, at minimum, one Workshop and one Public Hearing to discuss the report.

RESOLVE 7 – 24/25 RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE ON SOCIAL HOUSING

SCOPE OF WORK

- 1) Identifying Key Impact Areas in Housing Production: Analyze existing resources, opportunities, and barriers to pinpoint areas where municipal intervention could catalyze growth in housing supply and affordability;
- 2) Risk and Return Analysis of Public Investment: Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to guide sustainable public investment strategies in social housing, balancing affordability goals with financial sustainability. This will include considering the issuance of bonds to fund housing;
- 3) Maximizing and Streamline Funding Programs: Develop a plan to integrate existing funding sources, such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), HUD’s RAD program, and local revolving loan funds (JDHTF), to achieve an efficient financing model for social housing development;
- 4) Addressing Critical Needs for Public Development: Define gaps in housing production that private and non-profit developers cannot fill, focusing on workforce and middle-income housing to ensure affordable, mixed-income communities. This could include creating a Portland social housing development corporation, exploring partnerships with the Portland Housing Authority (OHA), and/or partnering with the County, GPCOG, and State on advancing regional public housing solutions;
- 5) Assessing Local Barriers and Public Development Opportunities: Examine Portland-specific factors such as public land availability, construction costs, and rent levels to identify barriers and opportunities. This includes assessing recommended strategies, such as addressing permitting and site plan approval efficiencies, facilitating adaptive reuse processes for existing building renovations, streamlining Historic Preservation processes, and exploring ways to make it easier for developers to meet our inclusionary zoning (IZ) requirements;
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