



Living there
with equitable
housing choices

Equitable Housing Initiative 2015-16

Promoting equitable housing means ensuring **diverse, quality, affordable housing choices with access to opportunities and amenities.**

We know the Portland metropolitan region is stronger when we all have options for safe, quality, affordable housing with access to jobs, schools, services and amenities to help preserve our region's economic competitiveness and quality of life.

As the region grows, options for a variety of housing types and sizes that meet our needs, regardless of income, family size, age or other characteristics are increasingly scarce.

Through the Equitable Housing Initiative, Metro is committed to working together with partners across the region to find opportunities for innovative approaches and policies that result in more people being able to find a home that meets their needs and income levels.

Why does equitable housing matter?

Vacancy rates in the Portland metropolitan region are among the lowest in the country, and the mix of new housing being built often does not match what is needed. The costs of both ownership and rental housing are rising

rapidly, preventing many residents from living in their neighborhood of choice.

There is no single solution to promoting balanced development and diverse housing types across the region's unique communities.

A combination of collaborative strategies and tools for different conditions are needed to help focus new housing in downtowns and main streets, adapt and diversify housing stock to align with demographic trends, and coordinate public investments to promote access to housing opportunity and choice for economically disadvantaged groups.

The Equitable Housing Initiative will focus on providing tools and resources to support local implementation efforts and regional policy goals.



Why is a regional approach needed?

Our region needs a shared understanding of how future trends in lifespan, lifestyle and income can affect future demand for housing before we can develop tailored solutions and collaborative strategies.

Metro's Equitable Housing Initiative creates a regional platform for sharing best practices and developing partnerships between community-based organizations, housing and service providers, government, philanthropy and the private sector to identify strategies that promote housing, equity and access to opportunity through the following ways:

Knowledge sharing

The region is home to an experienced and knowledgeable community of for-profit and nonprofit housing developers and lenders, as well as government staff and elected leaders working hard to remove barriers to equitable development. However, the region lacks a forum for sharing creative solutions and best practices – particularly among smaller communities where housing development models created for an urban context may not be the right fit.

Economies of scale

Best practices from across the country suggest that collaborative funding mechanisms can maximize the effectiveness of limited public resources by creating flexible financing tools that leverage additional private and philanthropic capital to support equitable housing development on a greater scale.



Shared vision

Passionate advocates are working to advance affordable housing goals and develop coordinated responses to homelessness, yet the region lacks a broader lens for connecting this work to our shared 2040 vision for our communities. As the region considers how we grow, equitable housing must continue to be not only a shared priority, but also a framework for providing access to the resources that will allow us to achieve our shared vision for the future of our region.

What will the Equitable Housing Initiative accomplish?

The Equitable Housing Initiative will begin with an analysis of housing market data to understand the current state of housing affordability and choice. With the help of the Oregon Opportunity Network, Metro will research and document best practices and engage stakeholders across diverse geographies and sectors in identifying barriers and opportunities for equitable housing. A working group will be convened to help evaluate opportunities for Metro and its partners to



support equitable housing development and preservation.

In fall 2015, Metro and its partners will convene a regional housing summit to share findings and discuss opportunities. In 2016, Metro will develop and launch a technical assistance program to help jurisdictions tackle short-term opportunities to advance equitable housing goals. In addition, the initiative will act as a platform to elevate a regional conversation about key long-term opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

What are the goals and objectives of the Equity Housing Initiative?

The goal of the Equitable Housing Initiative is to identify and pursue opportunities for Metro and local government partners to build stronger partnerships with affordable housing developers, funders and

community-based organizations to support policies and programs that promote equitable housing.

The objectives identified to reach this goal include:

- **Develop a shared understanding** among elected officials, jurisdictional staff, developers, funders and stakeholders regarding best practices, needs and opportunities for collaboration.
- **Develop and provide technical assistance** to support local implementation of best practices to overcome barriers to equitable housing development.
- **Evaluate the feasibility of collaborative approaches and pursue partnerships opportunities** to support capacity building, policy and resource development, and research to advance regional equitable housing efforts.



Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and sustainable transportation and living choices for people and businesses in the region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges and opportunities that affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to providing services, operating venues and making decisions about how the region grows. Metro works with communities to support a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Together we're making a great place, now and for generations to come.

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Timeline of activities

Spring – Fall 2015

Phase 1 | Assessment and analysis

- Analyze regional housing market data and trends
- Engage stakeholders to identify opportunities and barriers
- Research local and national best practices

Winter 2016

Phase 2 | Building a shared understanding

- Convene regional summit on equitable housing
- Develop a platform for sharing tools and best practices

Spring – Summer 2016

Phase 3 | Short-term implementation and recommendations

- Launch a technical assistance demonstration program to support short-term implementation opportunities
- Analyze feasibility and develop partnerships for long-term opportunities

Summer – Fall 2016

Phase 4 | Recommendations for future direction

- Provide Metro Council with recommendations for next steps and future direction



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