

I am contacting you on behalf of the 4000+ members & supporters of Stop Demolishing Portland, regarding the proposed mandate to retrofit Portland's URM's. I realize that the entire Council is not currently actively-involved in it, but it is such a far-reaching proposal that carries such grave consequences, I felt you all have a responsibility to provide the citizenry with your views & reasoning, if you do support this proposal. I will be happy to share the Council's responses, here, with our group.

When I was first informed about this proposal, by some of the URM building owners, even I was shocked by the immediate & direct impact it would have on this city. Retrofitting requires buildings be emptied while the work is done, and many of these URM's currently house low-income renters, small/independent businesses, non-profits and churches. I find it incredible that you would even consider this mandate on 1600+ buildings in our City!

The fact that they house this population of renters and businesses also means that it's unlikely that most of the URM owners will be able to shoulder the cost of a retrofit - especially on a building that will generate no income while the work is being done. If that cost will be too much for them to bear, the sale of the building then seals it's fate as a "teardown".

The current level of gentrification/redevelopment is already rapidly-displacing this population, with very-few options of where these residents and businesses will go. And rather than finding any real solutions to relieve this pressure, you're considering forced-displacement of everyone in these 1600+ buildings-?!

And I have a question, if one of you would like to answer this for us - Some of the buildings on the URM list are our public treasures, such as Pittock Mansion, for example.

If the URM retrofits become mandatory for occupancy - as the owners of Pittock Mansion, will The People be asked to choose between permanently-vacating and closing it down for good, unless we pay the massive-cost to retrofit it-?

If this will be the outcome for the private building owners, I don't see how this will not be the required-outcome for the Pittock & other public structures, as well.

I've followed development/real estate industry news closely for years now. I've observed that this same push started last Spring in other US Cities as well. Particularly in the ones, like ours, that have a lot of vintage buildings in the neighborhoods that are popular among the developers. The fact that there's already ample buildable lots in this city is well-documented, there's just not many in the close-in 'hot' neighborhoods. Sending our vintage/historic buildings to the landfill so the lots can be redeveloped is nothing new in this City, but the massive-scale of this proposal is alarming.

I understand that Commissioner Eudaly has stated that, 'it's only the URM building owners who are concerned about this proposal'. Thousands of SDP members/supporters, as well as historic preservationists, low-income renters, small business owners, church leaders, non-profits, and *many* others strongly disagree with that assessment.

Sincerely,

Karen Crichton, Stop Demolishing Portland