

## Questions for the Housing Opportunity Candidate Forum

**The 30% Set Aside policy requires that 30% of all TIF funds (projected as \$163 million over the first 6 years) will be allocated to affordable housing below 80% of MFI (100% MFI for Family Housing). In its first year of implementation two out of nine districts have met the minimum requirements. Do you support the 30% Set Aside? If you do support the set aside, how will you assure the minimum requirements are met in the first five year implementation period?**

*Ed Garren:* I support the Set Aside. Too many exceptions have been granted in order to get projects completed. We have created a lot of housing that few people can afford because of this.

**What impact do you see the low homeownership rates for people of color having in our city? What role if any should the city play to address homeownership rates for people of color?**

*E.G.* The current gentrification model encourages persons of lower and moderate means to move to the edges of, or out of the city. The issues involving traditional communities of color in the city relate directly to this issue, and it is a nationwide situation, not just in Portland. The city needs to decide if all neighborhoods in the city are going to offer economically diverse housing, or are we going to continue to “red line” neighborhoods and create policies that favor some groups and discriminate others.

**The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness is going into its fourth year. The numbers resulting from the investments that the City has made suggest that we are making significant progress moving chronically homeless individuals and families into permanent housing. But achieving the goals of the Ten Year Plan will require significant additional financial investments. How would you propose to generate the funding required to fully achieve these goals for both singles and families?**

*E. G.* The first thing is to elect officials (and lobby current ones) who will press for the return of revenue sharing from the federal government. The steady decline in federal revenue sharing has placed inordinate burdens on state and local government.

The current housing paradigm in most cities, including Portland is to let the private sector build housing for the upper classes and let the government build housing for the lower classes. There is virtually no encouragement to build housing for lower middle class people.

**The City of Portland recently convened a Quality Rental Housing Workgroup to address issues of substandard housing in Portland. Representatives from landlord associations, tenant advocates, public health officials, and community nonprofits have are serving on the QRWH. The QRWH is exploring the issues of substandard housing, housing habitability, and environmental hazards in rental housing in**

**Portland. The QRWH will follow up by suggesting policy and program strategies that could be used to increase compliance with existing habitability laws and support the maintenance of quality rental housing for low-income households. <http://www.portlandonline.com/bhcd/index.cfm?c=45357>**  
<<http://www.portlandonline.com/bhcd/index.cfm?c=45357>>

**What do you see as the best strategies to address issues of substandard housing in the City?**

**E.G.** Follow the recommendations of the QRWH. Establish standards as a part of a Rent Stabilization ordinance, enforce compliance.

Because there has been so much investment driven speculation in all housing, the rental market has suffered significantly. Property owners have been inclined to look at their rental properties as short-term windfalls rather than a long term public service. The city should enact laws that are more regulatory of rental housing and recognize that housing is part of “The Commons” like any other public service/utility. The whole notion of “market value” of rental property has been largely driven by speculation and greed, not reality.

The city has reached a “critical mass” in terms of housing such that it is time to establish some form of Rent Stabilization in the city. We can no longer afford to treat rental housing like we do the commerce of used automobiles. Ironically, the commerce of used automobiles has more government oversight than the commerce of rental housing.

Such a law does not need to create draconian measures for property owners, but it can reduce the speculation driven “market values” and other rationale for ongoing arbitrary rent increases which are becoming increasingly difficult for most people to pay.

**There are a number of laws currently in place that are enforced against homeless people. What if anything would you do to address the civil rights of people experiencing homelessness?**

**E.G.** I am not informed enough on the specifics of this issue to offer a specific answer. However, as a member of an institutionally oppressed minority group, which is still struggling for our civil rights, I have strong feelings about abuse of any person or group of people.

As someone who’s training is in Rehabilitation, and who has worked in social services most of my life, I have seen systematic exclusion of working people, the exportation of industrial and manufacturing jobs, the gutting of education and training programs which have all contributed to this situation.

**Tenants with Section 8 vouchers are finding it increasingly difficult to find landlords willing to accept their vouchers. What do you think are the best strategies to**

**increase Section 8 recipients' ability to find housing where they can use their voucher?**

The city can continue to encourage the rehabilitation and construction of moderate price housing within the city. The city could also require that all new construction contain dedicated Section IIX units. The city could also require larger landlords to make a certain percentage of rental units open to Section IIX recipients.

**The City of Portland has an opportunity to obtain free land on an army base in Southwest Portland that could be used for affordable housing to the benefit of homeless families and individuals. How would you propose this land be used and what would your role be in its development?**

If the city has this opportunity available, it would be unconscionable of the city not to utilize the opportunity to create affordable housing with a robust opportunity for housing solutions for homeless persons. Because I am not familiar with the specific parcel and do not know it's limitations (transit, build-ability, accessibility) I cannot speak to more specific issues.

**Affordable housing for the city's lowest income populations requires an ongoing commitment from nonprofits that manage them, the city and a range of community partners. Often the rents alone aren't enough to manage properties and provide important resident services. What are the best strategies to support projects when rents alone are not enough to manage properties, provide important services, and ensure affordability and stability of the projects over time?**

The more inclusive a program or project is, the more resources it can utilize. Often situations like this become the "property" of one entity which can tend to become territorial about the management and support of the property. Providing comprehensive support, perhaps utilizing the site as a training venue for apprenticeship programs, as well as management training would reduce costs and also give a sense of "ownership" to a broader base of the community.

For decades the Dade County (Miami) Public School system operated a hotel on the top three floors of it's administration and adult education building. The Lindsey-Hopkins hotel was staffed by students in the adult education hospitality training programs. Similar partnerships were developed between Florida International University's Hospitality Management programs and dozens of private sector vendors in Miami's thriving hospitality industry.

One of the assets I believe I bring to this campaign and to the office if I am elected is a wealth of experience providing hands on and administrative support to the types of persons involved in these issues. I am the only candidate who has worked directly with the diverse populations which are affected by the public policy decisions that emerge from City Hall. Information about my background and history of advocacy can be found at my web site: [www.edforportland.com](http://www.edforportland.com) and by doing a "Google" search for Ed Garren.

