

# “YES, IN OUR BACKYARD”

## PORTLAND METRO RESIDENTS SEE VALUE IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

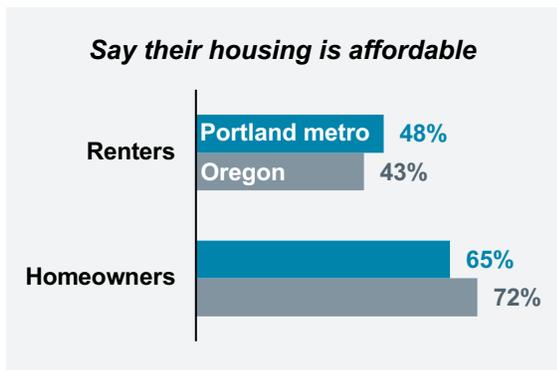
DHM Panel May Survey Results  
August 1, 2019

In the past 20 years, housing production in the US has failed to keep pace with demand by approximately seven million units, with half of that underproduction accounted for by the West Coast. Currently, Oregon is one of the most unaffordable states for people to rent and own housing<sup>1</sup>. In 2018, voters in the Portland metro region approved a \$652.8 million affordable housing bond measure, one of many responses to the affordable housing crisis across the state. In May of 2019, we checked in with the Portland metro region’s residents to find out whether or not they support building more affordable housing in the area and in their own communities.

These findings come from the May 2019 fielding of our DHM Panel. The survey was conducted from May 16 to 23, 2019, and surveyed 430 residents of the Portland metro region. The results were weighted by age, gender, area of the state, political party, and level of education to ensure a representative sample of residents in the Portland metro region. The margin of error for this survey was  $\pm 4.7\%$ . The survey questionnaire can be found at the end of this post.

### While most residents consider their housing affordable, half of renters do not.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “affordable housing” as housing that accounts for no more than 30% of a household’s income, including basic utilities. Using this calculation, most residents of the Portland metro area consider their housing situation affordable (61%). Metro residents find their housing to be slightly less affordable than Oregonians in general (69%).



Statewide, there is a significant disparity in the percentage of renters and homeowners who say their housing is affordable. While the difference is not significant in the metro area, there is still a gap between renters and homeowners.

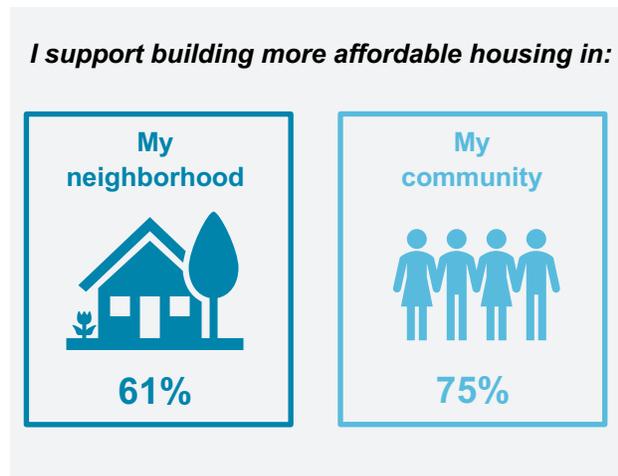
Additionally, 36% of renters say they could not afford an emergency costing \$1,000, compared to only 6% of homeowners.

Income and education have significant impacts on whether an individual living in the Portland metro area considers their housing to be affordable. Those who make less than \$50,000 annually are most likely to say their housing is not affordable (54%-72%). 56% of metro residents with some college education say their housing is not affordable compared to 12% of college graduates who say the same. Income and education are also significant factors in determining whether or not residents can afford an emergency costing \$1,000.

<sup>1</sup> <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/conferences/2018/ITED/Presentations/2A-2.MichaelWilkerson.pdf>

## Metro residents would support building more affordable housing in their community or neighborhood.

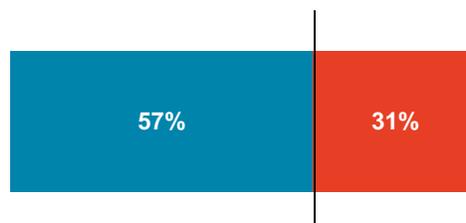
In order to more accurately gauge residents' support for building affordable housing, DHM asked in a split sample about perceptions of affordable housing in residents' "community" or "neighborhood". While the majority of metro residents said they would support building more affordable housing in both cases, the results show that word choice does matter. Metro residents are more likely to support the initiative in their "community" (75%) than in their "neighborhood" (61%).



Individuals residing in Clackamas County are less likely to support affordable housing in both their neighborhood (28%) and community (46%), while the greatest support comes from those in Multnomah County (82% and 88% respectively). Democrats are much more likely to support either option (82%, 96%) than Republicans (34%, 42%). While all renters (100%) support affordable housing in their neighborhood, 44% of homeowners do so.

Slightly fewer residents answer in favor of building affordable housing in their neighborhood when forced to choose if they would welcome affordable housing in their neighborhood. 3 in 10 feel that neighborhoods other than their own would be better suited for building more affordable housing and 12% say they don't know.

*I would welcome more affordable housing in my neighborhood. It is important to me that every neighborhood work to address our region's housing crisis.*

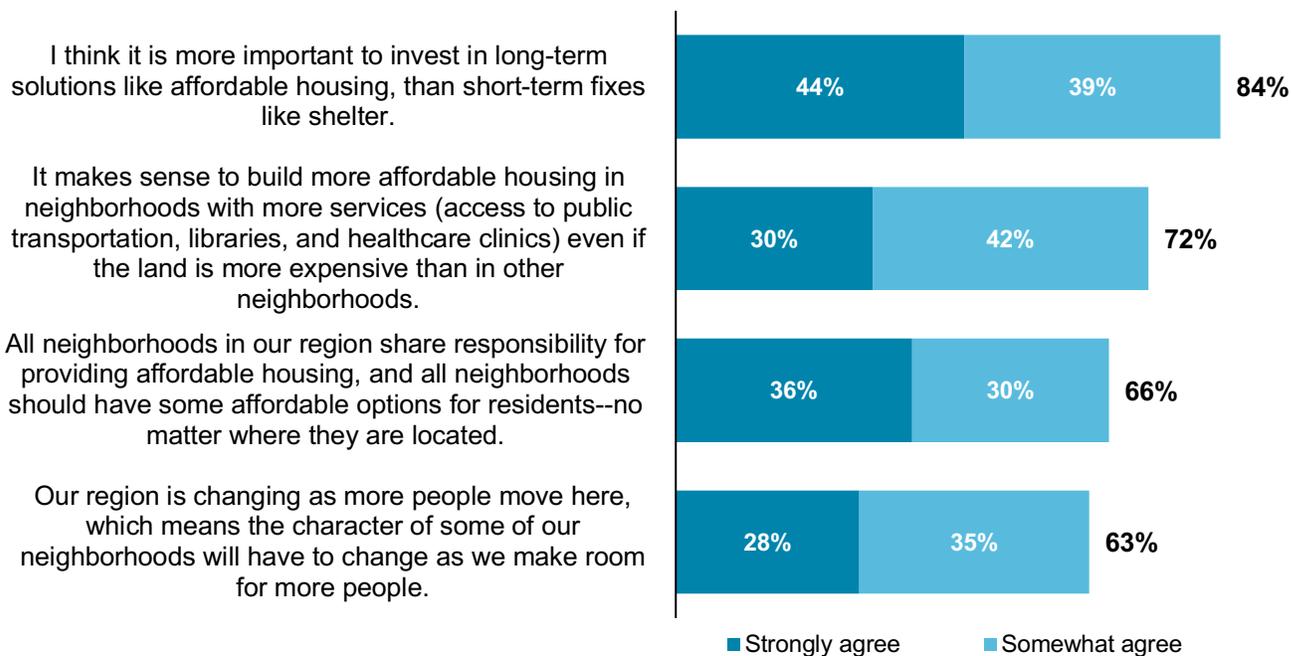


*I would not want more affordable housing in my neighborhood. Neighborhoods other than mine would be better suited to providing more affordable housing.*

Familiar demographic trends are also seen here, with higher support for building affordable housing in their own neighborhood coming from Multnomah County residents, Democrats, and renters. 74% of Multnomah County residents would welcome more affordable housing in their neighborhood compared to 32% of Clackamas County and 49% of Washington County residents. Democrats (78%) express stronger support than Republicans (30%) and Independents or other voters (44%). Twice as many renters (83%) as homeowners (44%) would welcome affordable housing in their neighborhood.

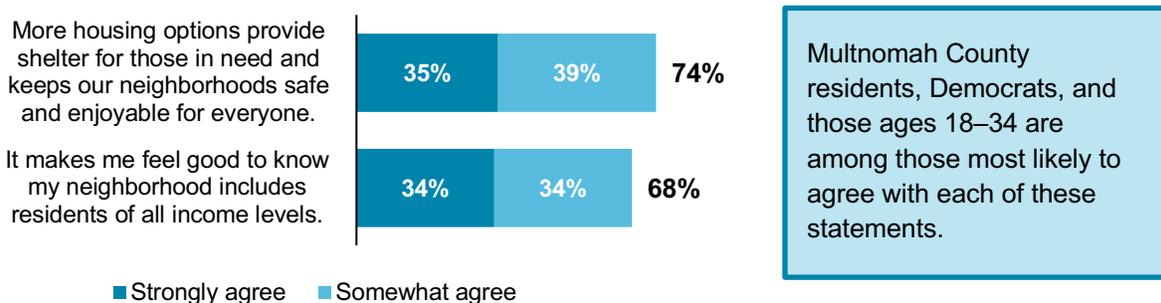
## Metro residents prefer long-term solutions like building affordable housing.

While most metro residents are supportive of a range of reasons to build more affordable housing, the idea of a long-term investment rather than a short-term fix was a clear front-runner (84%). This reason received similar support from all demographic groups. Individuals from Multnomah County, Democrats, and renters are more supportive of the three remaining reasons than their counterparts.



**Metro residents focus on the benefits rather than the concerns when it comes to building more affordable housing.**

In general, Portland metro region residents agree more often with statements about potential benefits of affordable housing than with statements about potential concerns. The benefits that received the strongest agreement from residents are presented in the figure below. Less popular benefits are that more affordable housing would support local businesses and increase neighborhoods’ purchasing power (46%) and that more affordable housing would ensure that themselves and their family would be able to remain in their neighborhood in the future (51%).

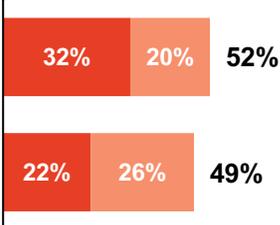


Considering potential concerns, around half agree that decisions about affordable housing should not be imposed by local governments (52%) and that building more affordable housing will lower property values for existing residents (49%). Fewer residents expressed concerns about personal and family safety (36%) or agreed that their neighborhoods already have enough affordable housing (26%).

**26%**  
*My neighborhood  
 already has enough  
 affordable housing.*

Building more affordable housing should be a neighborhood decision, not something imposed by local governments.

Building more affordable housing in my neighborhood will lower property values for existing residents.



■ Strongly agree    ■ Somewhat agree

Republicans and men are more likely than their counterparts to agree that building more affordable housing will cause concerns for safety and lower property values. Republicans (90%) are also more likely than Democrats (23%) to agree that building more affordable housing should be a neighborhood decision rather than a local government decision and that their neighborhoods already have enough affordable housing (66%, as compared to 14%).

**DHM Panel  
May 2019  
Housing**

**WARM UP**

**New page**

1. All things considered, do you think Oregon is headed in the right direction, or off on the wrong track?

Response category	n=430
Right direction	44%
Wrong track	42%
Don't know	14%

**INTRO TO HOUSING**

**New page**

Each May, we ask Oregonians about housing issues that affect our state. You may recognize some of these questions, as we like to ask them over time. Other questions will be new and will address emerging issues in the state.

First off, we'd like to know your current housing situation.

2. Do you rent or own your home?

Response category	n=430
Rent	30%
Own	63%
I have a different arrangement	7%

**New page**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines "affordable housing" as housing that accounts for no more than 30% (or about one-third) of a household's income. This suggestion includes basic utilities like water, heat, and electricity.

3. Using this calculation, is your housing situation "affordable?" Your best guess is okay.

Response category	n=430
Yes	61%
No	35%
Don't know	4%

4. If an emergency arose that would cost you and your household \$1,000, would you be able to pay for the emergency and pay your rent or mortgage on time?

Response category	n=430
Yes	66%
No	16%
I don't pay rent or a mortgage	12%
Don't know	6%

**New page**

5. Have you moved in the last two years?

Response category	n=427
Yes	14%
No	86%

**New page**

6. (If Q5=1) When you moved in the last two years, was it for any of the following reasons?

Response category	n=59
No-cause eviction	34%
Increase in rent	12%
Decrease in wage or income	12%
Decrease in rental or other housing assistance	7%
For-cause eviction	1%
Increase in property taxes	--
None of the above	50%
Other	4%

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**New page**

7. What county do you live in?

Response category	n=430
Clackamas	23%
Multnomah	46%
Washington	31%

**Rest of section for residents of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties**

Local governments in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties are working to create more affordable housing. They need to make decisions about where to build new housing, or where to convert existing apartment buildings into affordable housing units.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. **(Randomize)**

Response category	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
8. Our region is changing as more people move here, which means the character of some of our neighborhoods will have to change as we make room for more people. n=429	28%	35%	16%	16%	5%
9. All neighborhoods in our region share responsibility for providing affordable housing, and all neighborhoods should have some affordable options for residents—no matter where they are located. n=429	36%	30%	12%	18%	4%
10. Some neighborhoods offer more services and amenities, such as access to public transportation, libraries, and healthcare clinics. It makes sense to build more affordable housing in neighborhoods with more services even if the land is more expensive than in other neighborhoods. n=427	30%	42%	12%	7%	9%
11. Affordable housing takes time to plan and build, but it creates permanent housing stability for those in need. I think it is more important to invest in long-term solutions like affordable housing, than short-term, temporary fixes like shelter. n=427	44%	39%	9%	5%	3%

**New page**

**12. Split question below**

Response category	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<b>(Split A)</b> Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: I support building more affordable housing in my community. n=169	42%	33%	10%	15%	1%
<b>(Split B)</b> Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: I support building more affordable housing in my neighborhood. n=258	40%	21%	13%	22%	4%

13. Which of the following statements comes closer to your opinion?

Response category	n=429
I would welcome more affordable housing in my neighborhood. It is important to me that every neighborhood work to address our region’s housing crisis.	57%
I would not want more affordable housing in my neighborhood. Neighborhoods other than mine would be better suited to providing more affordable housing.	31%
Don’t know	12%

**New page**

14. Would you be more likely to support building more affordable housing in your neighborhood—or would it not make a difference—if you were certain your neighborhood would also include additional services, like health clinics or transit stops?

Response category	n=427
Much more likely to support	30%
Somewhat more likely to support	17%
It would not make a difference	46%
Don’t know	6%

**New page**

Some people say that there are benefits to building affordable housing in their neighborhoods. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement. **(Randomize)**

Response category	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know
15. More housing options provide shelter for those in need and keeps our neighborhoods safe and enjoyable for everyone. n=421	35%	39%	8%	14%	4%
16. It makes me feel good to know my neighborhood includes residents of all income levels. n=420	34%	34%	14%	12%	6%
17. Adding more affordable housing to my neighborhood would support local businesses in my neighborhood by increasing my neighborhood’s purchasing power. n=421	19%	27%	25%	19%	10%

Response category	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
18. Building affordable housing in my neighborhood will ensure that my children, my parents, or even me personally, will be able to live in this neighborhood in the future. n=420	26%	25%	23%	16%	10%

### New page

Some people are concerned that building affordable housing in their neighborhoods will negatively impact them. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement. **(Randomize)**

Response category	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
19. Building more affordable housing in my neighborhood will lower property values for existing residents. n=423	22%	26%	24%	19%	9%
20. I would worry about my personal safety and the safety of my family members if additional affordable housing were built in my neighborhood. n=423	18%	18%	23%	31%	10%
21. My neighborhood already has enough affordable housing. n=423	12%	14%	28%	27%	19%
22. Building more affordable housing should be a neighborhood decision, not something imposed by local governments. n=423	32%	20%	28%	17%	3%

### DEMOGRAPHICS

These last questions are for demographic purposes only. Your responses are confidential.

23. What is your zip code? **(OPEN)**

24. In what year were you born?

Response category	n=428
18–24	4%
25–34	26%
35–54	36%
55–64	16%
65+	18%

25. With which of the following gender identities do you identify? Check all that apply.

Response category	n=426
Male	49%
Female	50%
Non-binary or gender non-conforming	1%
Trans	--
Other	--

26. With which of the following races and ethnicities do you identify? Check all that apply.

Response category	n=403
African	n=1
Asian or Pacific Islander	12%
Black or African American	1%
Hispanic or Latino	3%
Middle Eastern or North African	--
Native American or American Indian	6%
Slavic	3%
White or Caucasian	92%
Other	5%

27. What is your party registration?

Response category	n=408
Democrat	42%
Republican	19%
Independent Party of Oregon	7%
Registered with some other party	6%
Not registered as a member of a party (non-affiliated voter)	26%
Not registered to vote	n=2

28. When it comes to politics and elections, are you:

Response category	n=408
Very liberal	27%
Somewhat liberal	29%
Middle of the road	18%
Somewhat conservative	18%
Very conservative	8%

29. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

Response category	n=407
Less than high school diploma	1%
High school diploma	7%
2-year degree/some college/trade	51%
4-year degree	23%
Graduate degree	18%

30. What was your total household income in 2018? Remember to include everyone and your best guess is okay.

<b>Response category</b>	<b>n=399</b>
Less than \$25,000	11%
\$25,00- \$49,999	19%
\$50,000-\$74,999	24%
\$75,000-\$99,999	15%
\$100,000-\$149,999	22%
\$150,000 or more	9%