



October 26, 2021

To: Mayor Wheeler and Portland City Council

Re: **SUPPORT - Historic Resources Code Project “Recommended Draft” (HRCP)**

Restore Oregon helps preserve, reuse and pass forward meaningful places and spaces in communities across the state. As a non-profit educational and advocacy organization, we believe **that historic resources (officially designated or not) are a vibrant part of the solution to our most pressing challenges**. The HRCP provides important means to utilize preservation inclusively and work together to advance:

**Equity:** Let’s recognize, celebrate and protect a wider variety of places and spaces that reflect the diversity of all communities in Portland.

**Cultural Heritage:** Let’s proactively tell the full and complete story of the people and places of Portland.

**Climate Action:** Let’s preserve and reuse existing older neighborhoods citywide to reduce a senseless waste of precious materials and craftsmanship AND reduce our carbon footprint. The embodied carbon of our existing buildings is an underutilized resource. Re-use is Climate Action!

**Housing Affordability and Anti-displacement:** Let’s find more equitable models for funding historic preservation efforts for all older housing, regardless of historic designation. There are many ways to allow for greater density while retaining heritage all across the City.

There is much to like and support in the HRCP Recommended Draft. Restore Oregon echoes and supports the testimony of the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission highlighting improvements to the inventory process, streamlining common reviews, and especially providing additional incentives for historic resources.

While there could always be improvements (as we previously requested during this long process), there is one critical item that still needs work. Restore Oregon was disheartened by the decision to approve the demolition of the Yamaguchi Hotel in Portland’s only cultural heritage historic district, the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic district. This decision has impacted us ALL. The erasure of this cultural heritage contradicts everything the City of Portland states it is doing for under-represented communities of color. **Demolition is a forever loss, so demolition review must be done right.** It must comply with Oregon Land Use Goal 5 rules, *taking a balanced approach* that considers the economic and non-economic value of a historic resource -- and its impact on the community -- relative to a specific proposed replacement. We stand committed to partner with the City Council to revisit the demolition criterion (D1 in the Recommended Draft).

In conclusion, Restore Oregon acknowledges all of the effort that City Staff, the Historic Landmarks Commission and the Planning and Sustainability Commission have put into this update. Restore Oregon thanks you all for this hard work with a common commitment to creating a livable, affordable, equitable, and sustainable city.

Restore Oregon recommends that the Council should **adopt the HRCP** with:

- an amendment to address the critical need to update the demolition criteria AND
- providing support and funding for two critical needs identified as next steps in the HRCP - updates to the Citywide Historic Resources Inventory and a Cultural Resources Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nicole Possert".

Nicole Possert  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew M. Davis".

Matthew M. Davis  
Board President