

7/10/18

City of Portland

389 Congress Street

Portland, ME 04101

Members of the City Council,

As a resident of Portland for a number of years, I fail to see how this linkage fee will be conducive to the overall growth of the city. I have a myriad of other concerns that the city could address, to solve the problem at hand. Instead of pointing specifically at hotel developers to fix the lack of affordable housing, we should look at other problems within the city itself.

One of the most attractive parts about living in downtown Portland, is that you can walk to most places very easily. However for the rest of the city, the public transportation to get you there is inadequate. There are not enough buses running or designed routes to make public transit efficient or viable. This has created a catalyst for the current traffic congestions we are experiencing in the city. The demand for affordable housing downtown, would not be as great if people living on the outskirts of the city could easily commute in.

Linkage fees in a broad application can be effective, in this case though, targeting a small group of taxpayers and investors simply because of the potential profitability of their investment, does not seem like a solution to our affordable housing problem. On the contrary a broader tax incentive program to build affordable housing, would have a far greater long term impact on the city. Also Portland would become one the first cities nationally where the linkage fee is targeted at such a specific sector. I don't think this is the precedent we want to set for the city's future development.

I do think that the city council is in the right place in trying to address the affordable housing problem that Portland currently has. I believe this is one of the biggest challenges facing our city in the coming future. I just struggle to find the correlation between hotel developments and the lack of affordable housing. I believe there is a multitude of issues contributing to the overall problem. Therefore the solution will not come from any one thing but a much more comprehensive plan to address this growing issue.

Sincerely,

Brent Maurice