



Small Business Bill of Rights

Preamble

The City of Portland, Oregon

The Small Business Advisory Council was created by the Portland City Council, under city ordinance, and is the city's official advisory group on small business. We, the members of SBAC, strongly believe that a healthy, viable community must offer opportunities for local business to prosper and to attain economic sustainability. We also believe that the City must promote the attitudes, actions and conditions that encourage local business owners to take risk, invest resources, hire employees and undertake enterprises that will create financial return.

Growing, prosperous businesses create jobs for employees that result in increased tax revenues which, in turn, benefit the entire community. Nearly three-quarters of the net new jobs in Portland are created by small business. Our local economy is populated by thousands of small business enterprises, many of which struggle for viability and survival while providing hundreds of thousands of jobs with billions of dollars in payroll.

Principles:

- Economic development is made up of the attitudes, policies, regulatory interpretations and programs that promote business prosperity and that result in job creation, retention and expansion. Economic development is more than real estate development.
- Business and entrepreneurial ventures are resilient and adaptable, but there is a limit to the stresses that they can sustain. Just as the community considers the environmental impact before changing the physical environment, we must consider the potential impact of policy on business viability and job creation.
- Portland's economic environment must encourage business enterprises to start up here, to relocate here, to stay here, to grow and to thrive.
- We must create an economic development environment where government and business can mutually benefit.

Based on these principles, the Small Business Advisory Council has developed the following bill of rights for small business. We hereby request that these rights be the framework by which policies, government actions, regulatory interpretations and the allocation of resources are considered from here forward.



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Portland small businesses have the right to expect City Council and the City bureaus to:

1. Work with the business community to promote and maintain the education, training and informational resources that assist the start-up, operation and/or expansion of businesses.
2. Guarantee ready access to the information and resources needed to support business in their relationships with City government.
3. Support and promote programs that provide access to capital financing for business start up, survival and expansion.
4. Be held responsible and accountable for spending the City dollars in the same priorities as outlined in the City Charter.
5. Encourage complete transparency in all budget and expenditure areas.
6. Provide a system of taxation and fees that encourages small business to survive and grow.
7. Ensure a simple, predictable regulatory environment/permitting process that is both efficient and cost effective.
8. Make available a clear and stable system of documentation of City processes and practices.
9. Provide an adequate and efficient system of streets and roadways that support: a) the on-time delivery of commercial goods and services; b) the mobility of employees and customers.
10. Provide that small businesses have the opportunity to participate in the City's procurement process by opening to bid all purchasing of products and services.
11. Provide small business with access to city incentives and services.
12. Support and promote the Small Business Advisory Council, an organization representative of city small business, and consult with the SBAC prior to making any decisions which may affect small business job creation, job retention or job expansion.



Economic Development Position Statement

I. The essential elements for quality of life are a job and economic stability.

A former President once said "the best social program is a job." Finding and keeping a well paying job is, for most citizens, essential to enjoying a high quality of life. Neighborhood residents, business owners and property owners must recognize that their concerns are interdependent rather than adversarial. Economic development must be a priority at both the policy and bureau levels. Business associations, neighborhood associations, City Council, City Bureaus, planners and regulators must work in concert to achieve a balance of economic vitality and livability.

II. When City bureaus and other public agencies concerned with development issues are pursuing redevelopment, changes to commercial corridors, or areas of commercial concentration, job retention and creation must be the primary factor. *The anticipated impact on jobs through redevelopment must consider not only the number of jobs, but the wage and benefit quality of the jobs. Gentrification and densification of commercial corridors must not eliminate the availability of affordable commercial space which is vital to a wide spectrum of essential service industries. Existing industrial zones must be protected.*

III. In order to be profitable and to create jobs, business requires a cost climate of certainty and constancy. *Expanding regulations, high system development charges, the Business Income Tax/Business License Fee, retroactive tax increases and ever increasing water and sewer rates are all factors which will lead to a business decision to either leave, not expand, or not locate in the City of Portland or Multnomah County.*

IV. A sound transportation infrastructure is vital for a healthy business environment. *Portland's position as a global import/export facility is dependent upon the ability of goods and services to flow freely into and within the region. The City must be proactive in its endeavors and cooperate with both Multnomah County and Metro to prevent further degradation of our highway, rail and water transportation routes and facilities. The time and difficulty involved in offloading and transporting goods will be the primary factor in consideration of this region as a distribution center.*

V. Small businesses and large businesses are mutually reliant. *Small businesses, in most cases, rely on large businesses to purchase their goods and services. Consumer oriented businesses rely on the quality employment provided by larger businesses for the discretionary dollars which allow people to shop. Large businesses rely on the diverse range of products and services provided by the small employers. The City must recognize this mutual reliance and not adopt policies which appear to be small business friendly to the detriment of large business.*

VI. Availability of capital financing is essential to a healthy business environment. *City policy makers and regulators must recognize that barriers to business not only impact the ability of a business to be profitable, but also affect its ability to obtain financing. Since most business failures are associated with debt burden, the city must recognize that high permit fees and system development charges increase the capital required for a business start. The city must fight to retain economic development dollars in the budget and distribute those dollars in such a way as to provide the broadest assistance possible.*