

QuickPoint! – Portland’s Self-Inflicted Rental Housing Shortage

By Micah Perry

According to a [revised report](#) from economic consulting firm ECONorthwest, Portland lost 14% of its single family rental houses between 2017 and 2020. That’s a decline of more than 1,300 rental homes per year.

This steep drop shouldn’t come as a surprise given the policies enacted by the Portland City Council in recent years, which have made it increasingly difficult for landlords to operate their rentals.

In early 2017, Portland [passed an ordinance](#) requiring landlords to pay up to \$4,500 in a tenant’s relocation costs if the landlord decides not to renew a lease or raises rent more than 10%. Two years later, the City Council limited a landlord’s ability to [deny rental applicants](#) based on their criminal record, income level, and credit history.

Some are likely to blame the drop in single family rental homes on a hot housing market. However, the City of Portland lost rental homes at twice the rate of the rest of the region, indicating that these policies have played a role in driving the shortage.

While these regulations were meant to help tenants, they have largely hurt them by making it even harder to find a place to live amid a limited supply of rental housing. The City Council should act on this new data and repeal these harmful policies before more damage is done.

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May 11, 2022

Word Count: 221

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