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The Ultimate Smackdown

We've earned our
18 hours of fame.

BY COLIN W. SARGENT

THE 18-HOUR CITY. It's a nifty investment handle, though it has yet to crack into café society.

Will it become the *lingua franca* of commercial-real estate gurus? How better to describe emerging cultural capitals like Portland, Maine?

We're not too urban, like Manhattan, a nerve-jangling '24-hour city.' We're walkable and suburban, yet we still enjoy the illusion of a skyline, though our proportions are so bijou gulls and eagles can rest on our tallest buildings.

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JUST SAYIN'

We haven't 'renaissanced' in such a mercantile way that everyone's sick of us, and (I'll drop to a whisper) we're just a shade too genuine to be hipster. Oh, yeah, Portland, Maine. For many visitors, we beckon like the last drink they've never tried.

After all, Brooklyn's so 2014. Ditto for Portland, Oregon, with 10 times our population but a fraction of our originality.

Richard Barringer of The Muskie School is interested in the concept and its origins. "It started with the 24-hour city, with real-estate types. The first time I heard of the 24-hour city was from a developer in Boston in the 1980s, before Boston became a 24-hour city. I feel that yes, Portland is evolving into an 18-hour city, with exceptions. There's the fragmentation of effort,

"An 18-Hour City is a second-tier city with above-average urban population growth that offers a lower cost of living and lower cost of doing business than first-tier cities." -Rebecca Lake

and the absence of a coherent strategy for moving forward—not just a haphazard response to immediate real-estate opportunities. Right now, there's the absence of a really commanding sense of public transportation here, because the age of the automobile is coming to a crashing end, I hope, as a public transportation solution."

The attraction of an 18-hour city seems to dovetail with the new study "Greater Portland Tomorrow: Choices for Sustained Prosperity," Fall 2017. This report, the work of a team led by Barringer, is available electronically at digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu.

Just like the 18-hour city criteria, the need for new workers coming to Portland is a driver. Consider this variable, addressed by graphs in the study: "Imagine if no one moved to Portland for 16 years, not a soul. What would happen to the economy and labor force? What about taxes for public schools and needed public



Moving On Up

Where can savvy young professionals claim their own slice of this up-and-coming 18 hour city?

On the Market: New condo developments on the Portland peninsula have cropped up in the past few years, offering sleek modern one- and two-bed apartments and studios in the West End and newly gentrified neighborhoods like East Bayside.

Hiawatha, 667 Congress Street (One bed apartment from \$1,560/month)

89 Anderson Street (One bed apartment from \$1,200/month)

113 Newbury Street (One bed to buy from \$340,00)

Munjoy Heights, 118 Congress Street
West End Place, 72 Pine Street

In the Works: According to Portland's Planning department, there are 16 major projects currently under construction, amounting to a total of 690 proposed units. The estimated construction cost for these 16 projects is over \$97 million.

101 York Street, 63 market-rate apartments under construction.

510 Cumberland Avenue, 82 affordable units proposed.

218-220 Washington Avenue, 45 units proposed.

383 Commercial Street, 272 luxury units proposed.

161 York Street, 11 luxury units proposed.

infrastructure? Then, imagine that 1,500 young adults move to Portland each year. How would this change the labor force and economy?"

Because *Huffington Post* financial writer Rebecca Lake helped conceptualize the 18-Hour City and legitimized it with her definition of the term in *Investopedia*, here's how she breaks this "viable investment alternative" down: "An 18-Hour City is a second-tier city with above-average urban population growth that offers a lower cost of living and lower cost of doing business than first-tier cities."

Lake identifies the "big six" as first tier: "Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C."

What's an 18-hour city, then? "Charlotte, Denver and Portland, for example, have become target for Millennials (the word emphasized in click-thru blue) whose goal is launching or advancing their career. Eighteen-hour cities are often characterized by the availability of recreation and entertainment opportunities that extend beyond what the typical suburban city affords."

Whoops, she means the 'other' Portland. Paradoxically, I feel Charlotte, Denver, and the 'other' Portland are so obviously 18-hour cities that they aren't really 18-hour cities anymore. Why would (I use Lake's term) Millennials target these destinations if their older brothers and sisters have already tried them on and pushed them to the back of the closet (along with that velour hoodie you were sure would change everything)?

Sorry, Portland, Oregon, but PDX is so 2011. PWM is the rising commodity. Just look at the Yahoo smackdown between the two Portlands online. *Portlandia* is in its last season. That says it all. This is the year of PWM rising (we have much better sculptures at our airport than Denver). Oh, and by the way, the proper pronunciation of "Keep Portland Weird" is 'WEE-ID.' ■