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Malheur & Harney
Counties*

March 17, 2021

Mayor Ted Wheeler
City of Portland
1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 340
Portland, OR97204

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Members of the City Council:

Housing Oregon urges City Council to support the Shelter to Housing Continuum project with a few simple amendments. At the same time, while it is absolutely critical to accommodate temporary solutions for the unhoused, we urge City Council to not lose sight of the need to create a longer-term strategy guiding future investments so that everyone has both a temporary housing solution and ultimately a permanent home they deserve.

Housing Oregon is a membership-based statewide association of 45 affordable housing community development corporations (CDCs) committed to serving and supporting low-income Oregonians across the housing needs spectrum – from homeless to homeowner. We support and strengthen our members by providing training on industry best practices, peer support networks, communications, and advocacy on local and statewide policy issues.

We support easing procedures for the siting of some Group Living uses in existing residential structures without a conditional use, which promotes fair housing practices. We also support the relaxing of conditional-use review requirements for shelters in most zones which have been a significant barrier in the past triggering long and expensive conditional use reviews.

We support legalizing small-scale housing on private property without counting it against ADU limits. By permanently legalizing one RV or tiny house on wheels per private site, this empowers welcoming neighbors to create opportunities to keep roofs over Portlanders' heads. The proposal also expands accommodation types in Outdoor Shelters to include RVs, Tiny House on Wheels, and other types of shelter/housing. This allowance gives providers the flexibility they need to create safe and decent shelter for unhoused people.

P.O. Box 8427, Portland, OR 97207

Housing Oregon endorses amendments proposed by Portland: Neighbors Welcome including:

- **Extend the Housing Emergency** at least until the end of the declared public health emergency, plus six months to help ensure a safe transition back to some version of normal. Although the Shelter to Housing Continuum will make huge strides in codifying the best tools of the Housing Emergency, it is designed for long-term thinking, not an emergency and removes some important tools while the real-world emergency continues.
- **Allow sanctioned Outdoor Shelters in appropriate, approved sites** in Open Space zones and in the right-of-way (ROW). We ask the City to remove the blanket ban on sanctioned shelters in Open Space Zones and the ROW and allow small sanctioned shelters in specific sites, if approved by a vote of City Council. Open Space Zones cover enough viable territory that, if the community identifies an appropriate place, City Council should be able to approve it without going through an onerous rezoning process.
- **Reduce time and cost for setting up Outdoor Shelters.** We support waiving conditional use permit fees in narrow, appropriate circumstances in residential and Open Space zones. In low-density zones, we support allowing churches, faith-based organizations, and other community-based organizations to host sanctioned shelters without conditional use review if they are below 20 accommodations on site.
- **Don't undermine existing vehicle dwellings.** Do not require vehicle dwellings to have sewer connections, which would make many existing dwellings illegal or prohibitively expensive (\$10-20k per connection). Adopt alternative best-practice sanitation solutions, such as establishing dumping sites, a mobile street team, or a pumping service such as those used for portable toilets, as Eugene does.

These proposals are a refreshing change as zoning code has historically been enacted to protect the most monied interests in our community. The S2HC proposal is an important tool to facilitate more equitable temporary housing that better meets the needs of the unhoused.

Again, in addition to enacting the Shelter to Housing Continuum proposal, we encourage the City of Portland to partner with Metro, and the tri-counties to develop a long-term strategy aligning voter approved City and Metro affordable housing construction bonds and the Metro Regional Supportive Housing Program. The public deserves a strategy defining what types of temporary housing solutions – tent camps, pod villages, congregate shelters – and permanent conventional housing solutions we plan to prioritize to deliver the outcomes promised to voters.

Thank you for your service to the public. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions at 503-475-6056 or brian@housingoregon.org.

Sincerely,



Brian Hoop
Executive Director
Housing Oregon