

# DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO SHELTER TO HOUSING (S2H) CONTINUUM POLICY

## Potential Amendment Concepts

March 12, 2021

1. **Innovative Housing Demonstration Projects.** To create opportunities for novel innovation housing strategies and typologies, create a pathway to remove barriers that exist to a variety of alternative housing types that provide both environmental innovation and greater affordability. Until permanent ordinances regarding innovative housing projects can be implemented, there is a need to allow and incentivize a limited number of regulated innovative housing projects. A small set of pilot projects would provide a pathway to test innovative housing models, evaluate code issues, and demonstrate viability with low risk. Drawing on policy precedent<sup>1</sup>, staff shall create an **Innovative Housing Demonstrations Policy (IHDP)** for Portland to advance further study, remove unnecessary code barriers, and encourage greater innovative housing. This demonstration approach will broaden the array of local examples and strategies for low-impact, climate responsive housing and increase the availability of built examples that model social, financial and environmental innovation in Portland neighborhoods. This program will implement responses to the declared housing and climate emergencies by providing a pathway for regulations to be adjusted or waived, including zoning and building regulations as required to facilitate rapid-deployment of innovative housing solutions.

*Innovations examples include: Tiny houses<sup>2</sup>, Tiny Homes on Wheels<sup>3</sup>, (THOW), zero energy and net positive energy buildings, living buildings, community land trusts, cohousing, and affordable housing paired with Equitable Food Oriented Development<sup>4</sup> (EFOD).*

2. **Setbacks in Outdoor Shelters.** To encourage the feasibility of providing tiny home clusters, setbacks should be reduced from 25 feet to 5 feet for tiny houses and tiny homes on wheels (THOW) projects. The 25' setback significantly reduces the development potential of multifamily sites which otherwise could support greater density in other housing types with a 5' setback required. This would make the project consistent with other housing types and setback requirements. Consistent with the temporary and quick-deploy nature of THOWs, all landscaping and infrastructure requirements for THOW communities may be waived if they cannot be met via temporary installations, such as bamboo in above-ground planter containers.
3. **Water, electrical and Sanitation in Tiny Homes on Wheels:** Create an “all of the above” strategy that allows opportunities for off-grid living: the use of solar panels and batteries for power, rather than a required electrical hook-up; the use of portable water tanks or other containers that are manually refilled, rather than a site water connection, to provide potable water; the use of greywater systems for bar sink and shower drainage, composting toilets (already allowed by Oregon building code), and/or drain to tank and pump approaches to provide for sanitation needs in innovative housing demonstration projects, especially those involving tiny homes on wheels.
4. **Outdoor Shelters - Conditional Use Requirement.** A required Conditional Use permit review process presents a greater degree of uncertainty for small affordable non-encampment projects that may serve to help address our affordable housing emergency. While greater review may be required for houseless camps, this level of review does not make sense for other projects and presents further permit costs, additional time delays, and administration that would not be present in by-right housing typically allowed (e.g. townhouses). This is an unnecessary hurdle for affordable projects. To reduce these undue barriers, direct staff to:
  - a) create a parallel by-right expedited pathway for tiny house and tiny homes on wheels village clusters,
  - b) reduce or waive permit fees, and
  - c) collaborate with community partners to connect applicants in need with free or low-cost technical assistance for applicants that may not have access to architecture, planning and permitting expertise
5. **Clarification of Timeline for Shelters.** Clarify what the 180-day restriction on temporary shelters is, what the permit pathway is for it, and how that differs from the permitting pathway for an Outdoor Shelter that is not subject to the 180-day restriction; this is currently very unclear in the code proposal.

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<sup>1</sup>Precedent: City of Redmond Innovative Housing Demonstration Policy  
<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Redmond/CDG/RCDG20C/RCDG20C3062.html>

<sup>2</sup> Tiny house Veteran's Village Example - <http://ahomeforeveryone.net/stjohnsvillage>

<sup>3</sup> Example Tiny House on Wheels (THOW) Village Project - Art Farm Tiny House Artist Ecovillage - [www.foragedesign.org/artfarm](http://www.foragedesign.org/artfarm) Testimony slides to PSC on Innovative Housing Demonstration Policy <https://foragedesign.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/art-farm-innovative-housing-policy-testimony-slides-on-shelter-to-housing-continuum-12.15.20.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://archive.curbed.com/2018/5/10/17259776/what-is-food-oriented-development-kresge-foundation>