



Memo

Date: September 30, 2022
To: Planning and Sustainability Commissioners
From: JP McNeil, City Planner
cc: Patricia Diefenderfer and Sandra Wood
Re: Shelter to Housing Continuum – Part 2

Staff Recommendation

Staff proposes that the Planning and Sustainability Commission recommend that City Council:

- Adopt this report.
- Amend Zoning Code Chapter 33.285, Short Term, Mass, and Outdoor Shelters; Chapter 296, Temporary Activities; Chapter 815, Conditional Uses; and other sections of Title 33 as listed in the Proposed Draft. The amendments clarify standards for the new outdoor shelters, for shelters operated as a temporary activity, and add exemptions for shelters located on sites with an existing conditional use.

Key elements of the S2HC2 Project

Zoning Code changes proposed:

1. Clarification of the size of outdoor shelters in industrial zones;
2. Establishment of a limited set of development standards for outdoor shelters to meet and otherwise exempting outdoor shelters from base zone, overlay zone, and plan district development standards;
3. Minor technical amendments that clarify how outdoor shelters operating as a temporary activity are regulated under the Temporary Activities chapter; and
4. Amendments to allow shelters to be added to a site with an already approved conditional use without triggering a conditional use review in some cases.

Purpose and Background

Purpose

- This project proposes amendments to Title 33 to refine the code adopted in August 2021 with the first Shelter to Housing Continuum, which was intended to expand the housing and shelter options for individuals and households with extremely low incomes.



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- While the code changes adopted in 2021 have helped to simplify the process for siting shelters, several other zoning code barriers and unanticipated technical issues have arisen. This project addresses those issues.

Background

- In April of 2021, City Council adopted a package of City code amendments to help address the growing crisis of houseless Portlanders. The S2HC project was initiated as part of City Council's Housing Emergency Declaration in 2015. The code changes removed barriers that presented an unnecessary burden to City-County efforts to open more homeless shelters. The SH2H package also included changes that expanded housing choice and facilitated the production of affordable housing projects.
- In June of 2021, City Council passed the Paving the Pathway from Streets to Stability ordinance (Ordinance No.190478), which codified an approach toward outdoor shelters and directed the construction of six Safe Rest Villages. Safe Rest Villages are outdoor shelters—not tents—that provide a place for Portlanders to sleep, basic and necessary hygiene facilities, and access to case management and behavioral health services.
- As the City has launched the Safe Rest Villages Initiative, and the Joint City-County Office of Homeless Services continues to operate and open other facilities, several zoning code barriers and unanticipated technical issues have arisen. This project proposes a limited number of Zoning Code amendments to address the issues identified.

Outreach and Engagement

- Staff attended meetings during the In-House and Proposed Draft phases, hosted by the following stakeholder and interested party groups: Housing Continuum Workgroup, Southeast Uplift, Southwest Community Services, and North Portland Neighborhood Services.
- Staff hosted meetings during the In-House and Proposed Draft phase, including meetings with City Commissioners' staff working on the Safe Rest Village Program and the Joint Offices on Homeless Services:
- Project documents have been shared on the Shelter to Housing Continuum project website: www.portland.gov/bps/s2hc
- Public notice for the PSC hearing was sent and the MapApp was opened for testimony to the PSC on September 6, 2022.

Issues

- Misconceptions about the scope of the project. The changes proposed through this project are minor. Given that the houselessness crisis is one of the major challenges that the City, agencies, and private actors are working to address, the project could easily be conflated with other efforts. In other words, expectations from the public could be misaligned with the actual project scope.
- The details of the screening standards have been a sticking point. Some stakeholders would like to see there be more lenient fencing standards or none at all. Staff has proposed a standard that requires the least stringent standard in the code that would provide adequate screening for both neighbors and shelter residents while also allowing some flexibility to keep costs down. Applicants could always exceed the minimum standards, and most shelters are doing just that.



- The staff proposal to allow some exemptions for shelters located on sites with an existing conditional use approval could be misconstrued to seem as if all conditions of approval for a conditional use are exempt for shelters, when in fact only three triggers for a modified conditional use are being exempt -- adding floor area, adding outdoor activity area or removing less than 50% of parking.

PSC Schedule (tentative)

10/11/22 Briefing and Hearing
11/08/22 Work Session
11/22/22 Work Session/Recommendation

Related Projects and Background Info

- More information on the first Shelter to Housing Continuum project can be found on the [project website](#). The original [City Council hearing](#) video is helpful to hear the background on what the S2HC1 sought to address.
- The City's Safe Rest to Village program has three operating outdoor shelters with five more planned. Info on what has been built and what is coming can be found on the [SRV Program website](#).
- For more information on what services are available to serve the houseless population, see the [Joint Office of Homeless Services website](#).

For more information

Webpage: portland.gov/bps/s2hc

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