



133 SW Second Ave, Suite 201 • Portland, OR 97204 • (503) 497-1000 • fax (503) 223-0073 • [www.friends.org](http://www.friends.org)

Southern Oregon Office • PO Box 2442 • Grants Pass, OR 97528 • (541) 474-1155 • fax (541) 474-9389

Willamette Valley Office • PO Box 51252 • Eugene, OR 97405 • (541) 520-3763 • fax (503) 223-0073

Central Oregon Office • 115 NW Oregon Ave #21 • Bend, OR 97701 • (541) 719-8221 • fax (866) 394-3089

## Mass Shelter and Housing Code Update

Dear members of the Planning & Sustainability Commission,

1000 Friends of Oregon urges your support for changes to the Mass Shelter and Housing Zoning Code, in order to facilitate the siting of short-term and transitional shelters.

The reality is, we're facing an unprecedented crisis in Portland: according to Multnomah County's "Domicile Unknown" report, 88 members of our community died, houseless, on the streets of Multnomah County last year. Tonight, 2,000 individuals will lay their heads on bare concrete as they go to sleep. The scope & scale of this crisis demands action at every level, and the package of code changes in front of you are both timely and critically necessary.

We applaud and support the work of Bureau of Planning & Sustainability staff in developing this proposal, and we're prepared to support it as written. At the same time, we also believe that there is room to amend this proposal in several areas; given the uniqueness of the opportunity to change this specific piece of the zoning code, we advocate several ways to amplify its impact:

**Eliminate parking minimums on all mass shelters (33.285.050).** While the changes in front of you exempt shelters constructed in or accessory to existing Institutional Uses from parking minimums, they leave open the possibility that some newly-constructed shelters would be subject to Group Living parking minimums, making such construction more – if not prohibitively – expensive. To remove this barrier, the City should simply exempt mass shelters from all parking minimums.

**Further reduce minimum distances between shelters (33.285.050).** Reducing the distance between shelter sites is important, as it allows agencies to better coordinate the provision of services across multiple shelter facilities. And in the Central City, the current minimum-distance requirement is a significant barrier to expanding the number of shelter beds. Reducing this requirement to 400 feet - approximately two city blocks - would give providers an even greater degree of flexibility than the 600-foot limit proposed by staff.

**Expand options for transitional housing affiliated with existing institutions (33.920).** A number of religious institutions have indicated their desire to expand transitional housing options on their own properties. At the same time, those institutions are sharply limited in the number of transitional beds they can operate and residents themselves are limited to very short stays, even as finding & renting affordable homes becomes even more of a challenge; as the Bureau's background report indicates, that's presented a challenge for institutions and service providers alike. We propose permitting up to 10 transitional beds with a maximum stay of up to 365 days (that is, a calendar year).

**Allow shelters by right in EG zones (33.285.040).** Given that Community Service uses are already allowed by right in EG1 and EG2 zones, it makes little sense to subject mass shelters in the same zones to conditional use review. We propose that mass shelters be allowed by right in EG zones.

**Allow a greater number of beds in R3-R1 & IR zones (33.285.050).** The staff proposal would permit mass shelters with a maximum of merely 15 beds in some multi-family zones, and then only if operated on the site of existing Institutional Uses. We propose increasing this maximum to 50 beds in R3, R2, R1, and IR zones.

**Permit self-managed encampments.** Although not contemplated by this code section, one short-term housing option for some houseless individuals has been self-managed encampments, such as Dignity Village, Right 2 Dream Too, and Hazelnut Grove; these should be explicitly permitted in code. At the same time, self-managed encampment regulations should be more flexible than those applying solely to shelters, for example, by allowing them to be sited on I-zoned industrial lands through a conditional use review.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Riley  
Community Engagement Coordinator, 1000 Friends of Oregon  
(503) 497-1000, ext. 129  
[andrew@friends.org](mailto:andrew@friends.org)