

RESOLUTION No.

Adopt a goal of creating 2,000 additional supportive housing units by 2028 (Resolution)

WHEREAS, homelessness is a humanitarian crisis which threatens the dignity and safety of very vulnerable people in our community; and

WHEREAS, Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and Home Forward share a long history of partnership in the fight against homelessness; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 the County, City and Home Forward joined to develop “*A Home For Everyone: A United Community Plan to End Homelessness for Portland/Multnomah County*”; launched the City/County Joint Office of Homeless Services in 2016; and dedicated historic resources to homeless services in their FY 2017-18 budgets; and

WHEREAS, multi-jurisdiction, coordinated efforts have a proven track record, as when we established “Operation 305” and successfully housed 305 homeless veterans; and when the County and City joined with local hospital systems to open the Unity Center, improving crisis mental health services in our community; and

WHEREAS, Portlanders recently passed Portland’s first-ever affordable housing bond and continue to stand with our most vulnerable neighbors in their time of need; and

WHEREAS, every person’s challenges and needs are unique and therefore we provide a ‘continuum’ of services including emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive services, rent assistance, affordable rental housing, and supportive housing; and

WHEREAS, the A Home For Everyone Community Plan emphasizes the need for both emergency shelter and long-term solutions to homelessness, including permanent housing and robust prevention services; and

WHEREAS, supportive housing marries affordable housing with support services, and is often the only effective tool to help the most vulnerable and most visible people experiencing homelessness in our community; and

WHEREAS, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has confirmed that “A broad body of research shows that supportive housing effectively helps people with disabilities maintain stable housing. People in supportive housing use costly systems like emergency health services less frequently and are less likely to be incarcerated. Supportive housing also can aid people with disabilities in getting better health care and help seniors trying to stay in the community as they age and families trying to keep their children out of foster care”; and

WHEREAS, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness reports that “study after study has shown that supportive housing not only resolves homelessness and increases housing stability, but also improves health and lowers public costs by

reducing the use of publicly-funded crisis services”; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 a Multnomah County jail bed cost approximately \$200 per night; in 2013 an inpatient stay in a state hospital was reportedly over \$2,700 per night, and an average emergency room visit cost \$2,000; studies place the average per-night cost of a supportive housing unit at between \$24 and \$54; and

WHEREAS, every two years Multnomah County and the City of Portland partner on the Point in Time count, deploying volunteers and outreach workers to determine our greatest unmet needs and how to prioritize our resources; and

WHEREAS, unlike other major West Coast cities, Portland’s 2017 count showed a decline in the number of people sleeping outside, and for the first time since 2005 counted more people in emergency shelter than living outdoors; and

WHEREAS, this reduction is attributable in significant part to large new investments, both ongoing and limited-term, in emergency shelter over the last several years; and

WHEREAS, the count also revealed chronic homelessness as one of the fastest-growing categories of homelessness locally, up 24% over two years; and

WHEREAS, 72% of people sleeping outside reported a mental illness, chronic physical condition, and/or substance use disorder, and for those people traditional affordable housing is often not enough and emergency shelter is at best a short-term solution; and

WHEREAS, for an extremely vulnerable population particularly at risk in severe weather and other emergencies, supportive housing is a proven, cost-effective solution; and

WHEREAS, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), a national leader in the field of affordable housing and homelessness, has projected a need for 2,800 new supportive housing units in Multnomah County; and

WHEREAS, the State, through Oregon Housing and Community Services and the Oregon Health Authority, has recognized the statewide need for supportive housing and has committed to providing 2,000 people with supportive housing by 2019; and

WHEREAS, Multnomah County, Clackamas County, and Washington County have joined with regional health care systems and non-profit partners to propose to Metro a process to identify and address the regional need for supportive housing; and

WHEREAS, national best practices, our own history, and the 2017 Point in Time count demonstrate the urgency of re-focusing our efforts on supportive housing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Multnomah County, through the Department of Health; the City of Portland, through the Portland Housing Bureau; Home Forward; and the Joint Office of Homeless Services (Conveners) shall prepare a plan

for creating 2,000 units of supportive housing over a ten year period that (1) aligns with the State of Oregon’s work through the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Housing and Community services to provide 2,000 supportive housing placements and (2) can be scaled to further expand to meet the total unmet need; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Conveners shall determine how to align local efforts with the proposed regional effort, funded by Metro, that will bring together health care providers and Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties to develop a strategy to meet the regional supportive housing need; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Conveners will ensure the plan aligns with the principles of the A Home For Everyone framework plan, including a commitment to racial justice, as well as the AHFE strategies to address chronic homelessness; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Conveners shall engage and seek resource alignment opportunities with all potential funders and service provision sources, including the federal government, the state government, the criminal justice system, the public mental health system, hospitals, Coordinated Care Organizations, the non-profit and for-profit housing development industries, non-profit service providers, philanthropic organizations, and the business community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the plan shall contain a clear demonstration of the level of need for supportive housing, how it can be targeted to the appropriate people, the projected costs of meeting the 2,000-unit target; how much of the target can be achieved through alignment of existing resources, including the strategies to achieve that alignment; and the level of new resource that will be needed to achieve the unit goal, on what timeline, and from which potential sources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the plan shall contain specific recommendations for ongoing tracking and evaluation, and will ensure that units are prioritized to those homeless households with disabilities and those who would otherwise continue to be frequent utilizers of public safety, health, and human services resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Conveners shall present the plan to the Executive Committee of A Home For Everyone, the Multnomah County Commission, the Portland City Council, and the Board of Home Forward within nine (9) months of the adoption of this Resolution; and that the Conveners shall annually report to those bodies their progress toward the goal.

Passed by the Council:

Commissioner Nick Fish
Commissioner Chloe Eudaly
Mayor Ted Wheeler
Prepared by: Sonia Schmanski
Date Prepared: September 22, 2017

Mary Hull Caballero
Auditor of the City of Portland
By
Deputy