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May 7, 2015

Co-Chair Fred Girod

Co-Chair Tobias Read

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

900 Court Street, NE

Salem, OR 97301

Re: \$100 Million for Affordable Housing

Dear Chairmen Girod and Read and Committee Members:

I am the Mayor of Corvallis and want to express my strong support for the proposed historic investment of \$100 million for affordable homes for low income families.

Background:

Housing affordability for lower income workers and families has been a long standing concern in Corvallis. For the last three decades, Corvallis has offered programs that provide housing assistance directly and in partnership with community non-profit agencies such as Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services and Habitat for Humanity. Over the last fifteen years, jointly we have built or renovated nearly 1,000 homes for low-income families. However, there are serious resource constraints that limit the ability of Corvallis and other jurisdictions to meet the full need.

Current Opportunities:


Corvallis's affordable housing need still exists even with our long term efforts. Several points highlight the need:

- Corvallis has over 5,000 low income households spending half or more of their monthly income on housing.
- Corvallis's low vacancy rates exacerbate the situation for people who would like to be Corvallis residents, forcing many to live outside the city.
- There is some emergency shelter space for homeless families but too little permanent affordable housing for them to move into once they leave shelter.
- More than 18,000 people travel to Corvallis to work each day. Of those, 40% would like to live in the city but most often cite affordability as the barrier to doing so.
- As an example of our affordability challenges, the Corvallis school district reports that nearly 30% of its teachers live outside of Corvallis.

Affordable housing is a key element of our view of the future Corvallis. Families need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home in order for kids to succeed in school, parents to go to work, and the whole family to be healthy. With any investment our community would receive we could build transitional and permanent multi-family housing for homeless, at-risk and extremely low-income families with children. Expanding the supply of such housing will provide significant family stability, enabling students to stay in one school and parents to live in the town in which they work.

Thank you for your consideration of this historic investment. Whatever investment you decide upon will be used to creatively address Corvallis's ongoing and deepening housing challenges.

Sincerely,


Biff Traber
Mayor