



June 2, 2021

To: Chair Kafoury  
cc: Commissioner Ryan, Mayor Wheeler, and Marc Jolin

Dear Chair Kafoury,

The Central Eastside Industrial Council is the business association for Portland's Central Eastside representing an area of major growth for the City, with over 1300 businesses. Many of these businesses provide median wage manufacturing and distribution jobs, which are key in promoting income equality and alleviating poverty in our region.

This area has also been highly impacted by the housing crisis. In 2019, we embarked upon Central Eastside Together, the first Enhanced Services District in Portland in nearly 20 years, with the understanding that the wellness of our most vulnerable impacts the wellness of our entire community, including our businesses. We built outreach services into our safety programs. Our outreach team has four full time staff members and has partnered extensively with the Joint Office to disseminate information and resources during COVID. They also have linked people who are unsheltered to shelter resources, medical and mental health care, the Oregon Health Plan and ID's. The outreach workers have become an invaluable conduit between the unsheltered and the majority of area businesses who want to be part of the solution. We partnered with Central City Concern and Trash for Peace Ground Score to offer job opportunities to those living outside. In addition, we brought on a licensed clinical social worker to develop a trauma-informed lens and provide training for our staff, board members, and for the general public.

We know that for too long, the means to truly address the needs of our most vulnerable communities have been lacking. The clear impact has been major infrastructural deficits in our social services systems, lack of navigational support for helping those experiencing houselessness to get off of the streets, and increased trauma for people who are chronically houseless who lack resources to stay in permanent housing. The Joint Office of Homeless Services proposed budget goes straight to the heart of this issue, striving to increase capacity among our shelter and social service partners, offering more culturally specific care, and improving the 211 system. Most importantly, it

offers a sustained pathway to permanent housing, the ultimate goal of the supportive services measure. Clear, real time figures measuring the JOHS's success and more outreach to the general public on the evolving state of our housing crisis should also be priority. Showing JOHS's marked progress along this journey will leverage more even support from the community.

Lack of hygiene resources and lack of safe camping locations for those living outside continues to take a toll on our entire community. The American Rescue Plan funds offer an unprecedented opportunity to address the current level of crisis on our streets by offering more choice. In a survey the CEIC/CET conducted with people living outside in our district last year, traditional shelter ranked lower than outdoor shelters as a temporary housing solution, with safe sleep parking lots and tiny home villages ranking the highest. Alternative shelters with hygiene services and safety resources offer a safe transition off of the streets for those who can't immediately access supportive housing. We ask that the City and County work together to ensure that these sites are part of the Joint Office's coordinated network of shelters and include safety plans, and adequate access to behavioral and primary health care and navigational support. We also ask that the City and County work with the residential and business communities surrounding these shelters in ensuring that our entire community are partners in their success. This includes a Good Neighbor Agreement framework led by the City in collaboration with the CEID community, in our specific case.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with JOHS and overcoming some of the hurdles that our outreach workers face when offering services to their clients. As we have witnessed through our program, having outreach workers working full time in a concentrated geographical area is very impactful. We are encouraged that the County sees the benefit of creating deeper connections with the efforts of more non-profits like ours, so that we are able to provide services immediately on the ground. We are thankful to have the Joint Office of Homeless Services as a partner in elevating and addressing the needs of our most vulnerable, which we recognize is crucial for the viability of our businesses and for our economy.

Sincerely,

Deane Funk

Mike Larkin