

CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Policy Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: 1/10/2024 **Approx. Start Time:** 10:00 am **Approx. Length:** 30 minutes

Presentation Title: Workforce Housing Partnership with the United States Forest Service

Department: Health, Housing & Human Services

Presenters: Rod Cook, Director, Devin Ellin, Housing Development Director, and Meta Loftsgaarden, Forest Supervisor of the Mt. Hood area of the United States Forest Service

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING FROM THE BOARD?

Staff are seeking direction from the Board on whether to proceed with a potential partnership with the United States Forest Service (Forest Service) to support the development of workforce housing on Forest Service property.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Mt. Hood Forest Service and local ski resort operators like Timberline Lodge have an immediate and growing need for workforce housing for their employees. For the Forest Service, the need is primarily during warmer fire season months and, for local ski resort operators, it is primarily during the months of winter recreation. This presents a unique opportunity to develop workforce housing that meets multiple needs related to seasonal work on the mountain.

The Forest Service owns an underused administrative site in Zigzag (outlined in red on the attached satellite view) that they hope to develop with workforce housing to help meet this need. The 2018 Farm Bill provides the Forest Service the authority to lease its underused administrative sites to a local jurisdiction to serve local needs, including building affordable housing. Administrative site means any site that was acquired or is used specifically for purposes of administration of Forest Service activities (as opposed to land designated for natural area or recreational purposes). The Forest Service has a strong preference to partner with Clackamas County in the role of the local jurisdiction for this project.

The Forest Service is eager to commence initial due diligence activities, including surveys, environmental review, and site planning. These costs will be paid for using Forest Service funds. However, before funds are committed and initial due diligence is started, the Forest Service is seeking preliminary support from the county for the partnership, with the understanding that any formal partnership will be subject to mutually agreeable terms.

The county's primary role in this partnership is a conduit lessee/lessor – the county would lease the Zigzag site from the Forest Service for a nominal amount and sublease it to a to-be-determined entity responsible for overseeing the financing, development, management, and operation of the property. No other financial commitment from the county is anticipated. Opportunities to be explored could include subleasing the site to an authorized non-profit with experience in workforce and affordable housing development that would ultimately become the project owner.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (current year and ongoing):

Is this item in your current budget? YES NO N/A

What is the cost? To be determined.

What is the funding source? Forest Service funds for due diligence. Outside of a nominal cost for lease/sub-lease, no additional county funds are anticipated.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

- How does this item align with your Department’s Strategic Business Plan goals?
 - This item aligns with the following Department strategic priorities:
 - Provide sustainable and affordable housing.
 - Assist individuals and families in need to be healthy and safe.
 - Increase self-sufficiency.
 - Increase community safety and health.
 - Continually improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services.

- How does this item align with the County’s Performance Clackamas goals?
 - This item aligns with the following County strategic priorities:
 - Ensure safe, healthy and secure communities.
 - Grow a vibrant economy.
 - Build a strong infrastructure.
 - Build public trust through good government.

LEGAL/POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

As part of the due diligence process, county staff will engage County Counsel to identify and understand any exposure or risk and define the county’s role, obligations, and expectations.

PUBLIC/GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION:

The project as contemplated would include a partnership between Clackamas County and the Mt. Hood Forest Service, and could include an authorized non-profit with experience in workforce and affordable housing development.

OPTIONS:

1. Provide preliminary Board support for the Forest Service partnership and direct staff to continue exploring partnership terms, subject to further approval by the Board at a future date.
2. Do not provide preliminary Board support for the Forest Service partnership and direct staff to discontinue exploring partnership terms.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommend Option 1, Provide preliminary Board support for the Forest Service partnership and direct staff to continue exploring partnership terms, subject to further approval by the Board at a future date.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Zigzag Site Map

SUBMITTED BY:

Division Director/Head Approval _____
Department Director/Head Approval _____
County Administrator Approval _____

