

## **DRAFT**

Lynn Peterson, President  
Metro Council  
600 N Grand Ave  
Portland, OR

June 18, 2024

Dear President Peterson and Metro Councilors,

Clackamas County has observed Metro's interest and intent to refer a ballot measure amending the current Supportive Housing Services program. Chair Smith has participated in Metro's recent stakeholder roundtables and our staff have kept us apprised of the continuing conversations Metro has had with the three counties. However, with the anticipated July 9 recommendation on measure referral from the Metro COO to the Metro Council, this Board would like to bring forward a number of questions and concerns.

Our priorities continue to remain firmly rooted in the promises made to voters in measure 26-210. Clackamas County's goal is to make homelessness rare, brief and non-reoccurring. This Board is committed to not just housing individuals but to putting them on a road to self-sufficiency, healing and wholeness. We are achieving this goal. Consequently, we are left wondering what is Metro's goal in seeking a change through a ballot measure and does it risk the success we are experiencing in Clackamas County?

Since the approval of this regional funding measure, and in partnership with our cities, other jurisdictional partners and community-based organizations, Clackamas County has built a homeless services system we have long needed. We are proud of the community collaboration that has made this possible and resulted in our early success. We have seen amazing results in just three years: "Clackamas County reduced homelessness by 65% since homeless services tax passed" ([oregonlive.com](https://oregonlive.com), Feb 27, 2024).

As Metro considers a change in the tax rate, please remember that the cost to deliver services has greatly increased in the last three years. The original 2019 forecast of \$250 million would not have allowed us to achieve the promised outcomes. Has Metro done financial forecasting to understand the impacts or tradeoffs the counties will have to make to accommodate reductions in revenue and trying to do more with less? Will we have to unwind programs and services that are serving our community well?

This historic investment in ending homelessness for thousands of people is just three years into the ten-year measure. It is making a difference in Clackamas and in the region but there is still substantial work to be done. The Clackamas County Board of Commissioners believes we have not yet earned the right to ask the public for an extension or the elimination of the sunset. We need to continue building on our successes, evaluating these programs to ensure optimal outcomes and engaging the community in more meaningful outcome-based dialogue. The time is not right to change the program now and lose focus on our core goals.

We have unique standing as counties. Not only are we tasked with delivering the services funded by the SHS measure, we are parties to an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with Metro and are implementing partners. Many of the changes Metro is considering will require a renegotiation of our current IGA. While we have not taken a formal position on your efforts to

date, because there are still many unknowns, we are deeply concerned about the tight timeline to refer a potential ballot measure for November 2024.

We ask you to pause on any ballot referral to the voters in 2024 until the region can demonstrate to the public the true successes of the current SHS programs.

Thank you for your consideration of these questions and concerns. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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