



City of Florence

250 Hwy 101, Florence, OR 97439

www.ci.florence.or.us

February 9, 2024

Dear Representative Boomer Wright and Senator Dick Anderson,

For many years, the City of Florence has been working to find solutions to the ongoing housing crisis that our area faces. We are pleased that the State of Oregon has seen the need for affordable housing and has taken steps to address this issue. We fully support the Lane County Board of Commissioners' Priorities for the 2024 Oregon Legislature, especially the request for \$15 million to support affordable housing at the Homes for Good's "Field on Quince" project in Florence.

The City of Florence encompasses 5.87 square miles and houses some 9,830 people within the city limits. Our greater region of Western Lane County has a population of 20,000 people. This is a rural area one hour away from the larger population areas of Eugene (Lane County), Newport (Lincoln County), and Coos Bay/North Bend (Coos County), and has strong ties not only within our county but with the central Oregon Coast.

Our biggest industries are tourism, health care, and service and hospitality, which tie into our workforce issues with child care, living-wage jobs, and especially affordable housing. In the Housing Needs Analysis we completed in 2018, we learned that 2,000 workers travel from further away than 25 miles to participate in Florence's workforce. If new workforce housing is provided in Florence, many of these long distance in-commuters would relocate to Florence permanently.

Over the next 20 years, the City will need 1,664 new dwellings to meet housing demand, as determined by the 2018 analysis. This net new housing need is expected to consist of 764 owner-occupied dwellings, 597 renter-occupied dwellings, and 263 short-term rental units. While we lack enough available housing at every price point, we especially feel the need for affordable housing. With this in mind, the City of Florence prioritizes Housing Efforts and Initiatives in our 2023-2025 Work Plan.

The City of Florence has been hard at work since 2017 to prepare the way for housing development. Besides the Housing Needs Analysis, we completed a Housing and Economic Opportunities Project, created a Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPT) Program, accessed Community Development Block Grant funding for a Housing Rehabilitation Program, approved Accessory Dwelling Units in Florence, and completed Housing Code Updates. Most recently, a stakeholder group worked with City staff on the Housing Implementation Plan Project, approved by the Florence City Council in April 2023.

All these programs have led to some successes. We recently made a dent in our affordable housing need by adding 68 units through Northwest Housing Alternative's Shore Pines on Munsel Creek, which

Public Works
989 Spruce St.
(541) 997-4106

**City Manager/
City Recorder**
(541) 997-3437

**Community Development:
Planning & Building**
(541) 997-8237

**Finance/
Utility Billing**
(541) 997-3436

Justice Center
900 Greenwood St.
(541) 997-3515

Florence Events Center
715 Quince St.
(541) 997-1994



officially opened in early 2024. We are also working right now to increase housing density through potential Florence City Code updates.

Next, if it can secure funding, Homes for Good's shovel-ready "Field on Quince" project will bring an additional 86 units of dedicated affordable housing to Florence in the next two years.

Homes for Good purchased the property, a former Siuslaw School District ball field, in December 2022. Based on an open house, site zoning, and feedback from the community and City Staff, Homes for Good plans to develop a housing community that will provide one-, two-, and three-bedroom units offered at 60% of the area median income. The preliminary estimates for this project are approximately \$40 million.

Unfortunately, when Homes for Good submitted a funding application for the Field on Quince to the Oregon Housing and Community Services Agency (OHCS) in 2023, they were unsuccessful. This has meant at least a year delay in construction, and an increase in all fees as costs climb with inflation. Homes for Good plans to apply for OHCS LIFT Funding once applications open, but could face a shortfall due to proposed rule changes. This is due specifically to the exclusion of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to pair with OHCS's general development capital and the rising costs in development since Homes for Good received the preliminary estimate for the project.

With their 2024 Legislative Priorities, Lane County's request for \$15 million for Homes for Good's "Field on Quince" project could fill that gap and allow this development to proceed.

The City of Florence is working closely with not only our housing partners but also the Lane County Policy Team in the areas of community and economic development to source funding for Homes for Good's project. The County's guidance and support have been essential in helping guide the City in our efforts to further support affordable housing.

If funding can be secured for the Homes for Good's Field on Quince project, construction could begin in less than a year. Please, help us house our workforce and increase the quality of life of dozens of people by funding Lane County's request.

I support all efforts related to bringing more workforce housing to our City, and feel it is essential for our growth and prosperity. Thank you for offering assistance in creating a path forward to bring needed housing to Florence.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Ward
Mayor
City of Florence



In December of 2022, Homes for Good purchased the old ballfield just south of the Florence Events Center at 505 Quince Street in Florence, OR.

The Homes for Good Real Estate Development Team has been working with the City of Florence and a variety of community partners to understand what populations need to be served at this site, and to determine unit makeup. A meeting was held with Florence area community organizations and businesses to provide initial input and further feedback will be sought as the project progresses. Based on the site zoning and feedback from the community and City Staff, Homes for Good intends to develop a housing community which will provide one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. Homes for Good is prioritizing serving communities that have been historically underserved and will work closely with culturally specific community partners to prioritize reaching these individuals and families. Additionally, Homes for Good will work with community partners throughout the design process to ensure the proper amenities and accessibility features are provided on the site.

BDA Architecture & Planning has recently started drafting the initial layout of the site. Through a competitive process, Homes for Good has selected Walsh Construction as the General Contractor.

Homes for Good plans to submit for Oregon Housing and Community Services LIFT funding for the Field on Quince as soon as applications are accepted in late Spring 2024. This funding request is critical to being able to leverage those funds as no additional gap funding is available. If awarded funding, construction would begin approximately one year later.

Site Details

- 6.88-acre parcel
- The site is located just south of the Florence Events Center and within walking distance of a grocery store, other commercial services, the Port of Siuslaw and Old Town Florence.