

TO: Capital Construction Sub-Committee of Ways and Means

RE: Bend redevelopment project to build affordable housing replacing existing church

Support of HB 5006

Following is the testimony of Pastor Jen Stuart of Bend United Methodist Church and Ben Pray, Home First Development Partners, LLC.

Hi, I am Reverend Jen Stuart and I'm the pastor of Bend United Methodist Church in downtown Bend. Daily our ministries support the needs of those who cannot find housing. We provide resources of food, clothing and a place for over 300 mostly unhoused people to get their mail five days a week.

Bend has a significant housing shortage in all aspects of the economic spectrum. A 2023 analysis by city staff found an immediate need for 23,000 housing units, but as we all know building affordable housing is expensive and takes a very long time. Due to the market pressures in the city of Bend there is **no available land to build housing downtown.**

My congregation has been on Bond Street for over 100 years of continual ministry to the people of Bend and we believe that one of the best expressions of our mission would be to use our acre of prime land in the center of Downtown Bend to provide affordable housing and support services in a desirable, walkable location.

We are willing to consider demolishing our existing structure and to have a smaller footprint for our own church in order to help ease the housing crisis.

We offer you a unique and unprecedented opportunity to build housing in one of the most vibrant and growing spaces in our state. However, this is a complex project that requires significant pre-development support. Your financial support will allow us to apply to OHCS for full funding next year as a thoughtful, permit-ready development.

We will partner with an experienced affordable housing developer to deliver a product we and the community are proud of and we request your support to make this exciting project possible.

Thank you for your time.

Pastor Jen Stuart