



March 19, 2025

To: House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2964

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee,

Carleton Hart Architecture (CHA) is dedicated to developing innovative solutions to community-centered design challenges. Since its founding in 1994, CHA has developed an expertise in affordable housing, collaborating with developers, jurisdictions, non-profit organizations, and service providers on over 100 affordable housing projects. The range of these projects includes urban, suburban, and rural locations consisting of new construction, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and historic preservation.

The housing crisis in Oregon is personal to us – every day we see our neighbors and community members struggling to find affordable places to live and we see it become harder for organizations to develop the much-needed housing. Additionally, the housing crisis disproportionately impacts BIPOC communities, who often have lower household incomes and face systemic obstacles when looking for housing.

As documented in the State's Housing Report issued in 2024, between 2004 and 2022 the median sales price of a home increased by \$7.10 for every \$1.00 in wage increases. As of 2023, only about 29% of households can afford a typical home, and more than 27% of renters are spending 50% or more of their income on housing. The rate of people and families with children experiencing homelessness in Oregon is at or near the top of all states in the US. The state is approximately 128,000 affordable housing units short based on the need for housing among low-income residents.¹ Action is needed, and innovative ideas are especially important at this moment in response to the housing crisis.

We greatly appreciate the interest from nonprofit organizations and communities of faith in pursuing development of affordable housing on their properties. In many cases, these properties are in areas with an extreme need for additional housing options for the neighborhood and in high-opportunity areas - close proximity to public transit, local schools, and other services. Furthermore, many of these properties are currently under-utilized. Incorporating affordable housing into these existing buildings and campuses is a creative response to the housing crisis that provides additional income to the property owner and activates otherwise vacant spaces.

We understand both the opportunities and challenges that nonprofit organizations and communities of faith are facing when pursuing development. It takes many steps to determine the development possibilities on a property, such as zoning review, land use review, documentation of existing conditions, evaluation of existing structures, and cost estimating of proposed construction. Much of this work needs to occur before any funding is available through a lender or other financing. It is an extreme burden for non-profit organizations and communities of faith to pay for this work out of pocket.

These organizations are integral to our communities, and they should be empowered to pursue any options they have to contribute to solving the housing crisis while strengthening their long-term viability. Every Oregonian benefits from development of affordable housing that also reinvigorates an existing organization. As experienced professionals in the affordable housing design community, we strongly encourage the passage of HB 2964 to support nonprofit and faith-based organizations to provide safe and affordable housing within our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Carleton, Principal

¹ <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/about-us/Documents/state-of-the-states-housing.pdf>