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February 19, 2025

Deschutes Civic Assembly on Youth Homelessness  
c/o Healthy Democracy  
P.O. Box 18104  
Portland, OR 97218

Dear Deschutes Civic Assembly:

Thank you for your time and work studying the issue of youth homelessness. We appreciate the civil discussions and thoughtful deliberations that led to the twenty-two recommendations.

Many of the recommendations fall under the purview of the State of Oregon, school districts, or other entities. While we are supportive of many of these recommendations, we would like to focus on recommendations that directly relate to Deschutes County's core services:

- Recommendation 2 – A central hub with a recreation center run by Bend Parks and Recreation; a safe place for at-risk teens; designated space for programs and non-governmental organizations that would allow teens to access benefits at one central location.
  - Deschutes County role: Health Services operates The Drop, a center that serves youth and young adults in Deschutes County ages 14 – 27. Located in Redmond and Bend, The Drop is meant to be a safe and supportive place where people make connections that could have a positive impact on their life.
- Recommendation 8 – Expand public transit in Deschutes County.
  - Deschutes County role: the County is not a transit provider but does approve the Deschutes County Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Plan which funds transit services. Deschutes County will continue to evaluate how best to meet the transportation needs of the community as it reviews and approves STIF Plans.
- Recommendation 16 – Prioritize funding for inpatient psychiatric care for minors.
  - Deschutes County role: this recommendation has been a long-standing goal for the Board and the Health Services Department and is a Deschutes County priority for the 2025 Legislative Session. We will continue to advocate and lead the effort for inpatient psychiatric care for minors.

- Recommendation 21 – Direct Deschutes County and the Coordinated Homeless Response Office to dedicate funding to partner with J Bar J and other non-governmental organizations to educate the general public about youth homelessness and prevention.
  - Deschutes County role: TBD (CHRO oversight is transitioning to COIC. The CHRO budget remains a County fund).

Thank you again for your time serving on the Civic Assembly and the recommendations for addressing youth homelessness in our community.

Board of County Commissioners,

Anthony DeBone, Chair

Patty Adair, Vice Chair

Phil Chang, Commissioner