



December 15, 2021

Mayor Sally Russell
Bend City Councilors
Delivery Via E-mail

Mayor Russell and City Council members,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber's 1,500 business members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments related to the work session discussion of affordable housing tax exemptions. The Chamber has long supported the City's goals towards creating additional opportunities for affordable and attainable housing, as workforce housing is the biggest challenge facing many local employers.

We are excited to see the energy surrounding these discussions and the Council's desire to find creative avenues to address the current housing challenges. Over the past year, the Chamber has supported a variety of policy changes to create additional housing capacity, including implementation of HB 2001 and several pieces of legislation in the 2021 session. In our recent public opinion survey, 67 percent of respondents shared that lack of affordable housing was the driving factor to moving away from Bend. We are currently doing a deeper dive into how the current housing climate has impacted employer recruitment and retention, as we know anecdotally this is a pain point for local employers of all sizes.

We applaud City Council for looking at a broad landscape of policies, including those on the work session agenda. While the Chamber does not currently have a position on the nuances of the individual property tax exemptions, we look forward to a robust discussion about the various options. Ultimately, we seek policy solutions that can provide options for both developers that seek to diversify their housing products and residents that seek affordable and sustainable housing. We see these discussions as a catalyst to attract future development, specifically in the Bend Central District (BCD), and a means to spur private sector investments to realize the BCD vision.

We look forward to continuing to engage with City leadership to tailor policy changes that will suit our community's unique needs.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katy Brooks".

Katy Brooks
President + CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce

Creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.