

**District 4 Commissioner Lori Stegmann**  
**Prepared remarks FY 2025 Budget**  
**June 6, 2024**

While I am so pleased that this board has passed the 2025 budget, we all know that the real work of every program rests on the shoulders of our nearly 6, 000 amazing employees. They are responsible for operationalizing our vision, our policies, and keeping us informed which is no easy task.

So I want to thank our employees, our providers, our CBO's, and hundreds of volunteers for their willingness and commitment to catch people when they fall. A big shout out to Christian Elkin and the Budget Office and Jeff Renfron.

As the largest safety net provider in Oregon we are often the last resort for many people. I am so proud of the work we do to help people on their worst day. In an increasingly isolated and fractured world I cannot think of anything more important and noble than helping people rise above the challenges that come their way.

Each one of us commissioners advocated for individual and multiple program offers. And for many program offers contained in this budget there was broad agreement. So while you will see a "proposed by" column in this package, for me that is a technicality. It's important that the board is on the same page because with this vote, we adopt a common document that will serve the residents of our county for the next year.

**Harry S Truman said**

It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.

So while each one of us brought forth amendments, it is our collective agreement that got us across the finish line today that enables the urgent and ongoing work of the County.

I want to thank this board for recognizing the inequities that exist east of 82nd. For the last eight years, I have continued to champion increased resources for East County. It's bittersweet that this is my last year and last budget but I leave with pride knowing that we have done good work for East County and supported greater investments for the community I call home. With this year's funding:

**East County:**

We will continue to build out the Vance Vision project to support continued assessments for zoning, development, economic and workforce strategies that build on the Vance Vision Master Plan. This project has been a labor of love for me the past eight years and I hope to see a groundbreaking within my lifetime! DCS - Margi, Taylor, Brett and the PLT - I'm counting on you!

We will work collaboratively with the cities of Troutdale, Fairview and Wood Village to develop and implement a strategic action plan to build out our homelessness response capacity in East Multnomah County. This will build on the \$300k allocated in this year's budget for homeless services specifically for their three cities.

We will continue to expand homeless services with \$600k for the City of Gresham to provide staffing, rent assistance, outreach, case management, and housing placement.

And speaking of Gresham, I'm excited to see Cook Plaza come to life this year and meet immediate needs to create housing stability, access to services, and a safe place during severe weather.

And as we house more folks, it's important that we provide them with the things that most of us take for granted. Which is why I'm so excited that in

the next year, we will expand access to such basic necessities like beds, dining room tables and couches for individuals and families to make their new housing a place that they can truly call home.

## **Youth**

For our youth, we have continued food assistance to provide fresh and culturally responsive food to ensure that no child in our community goes hungry.

And with the continuation of the Community Healing Initiative Early Intervention and Diversion program we can address and prevent violence for our youth and families. We know that by going upstream and providing diversion and wrap-around services that are culturally specific our communities can thrive and are more safe. Thank you Commissioner Beason for partnering with us on this.

## **Prevention:**

Benjamin Franklin said “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” which is why eviction prevention is a proven model to keep people housed. With fewer resources for rental assistance, we are seeing an increase in evictions resulting in more people losing their housing. With this budget’s funding we can not only enhance in-courtroom eviction prevention support but we can now expand this essential service to five days a week.

## **Flood Safety Benefit Fee:**

I also want to thank the voters of Multnomah County for supporting the Flood Safety Bond Measure that will prevent catastrophic flooding that would jeopardize our economy and endanger lives. With the allocation to the Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District we are ensuring our obligations for state-mandated expenses by providing necessary flood safety and water quality services for our community.

## **Environmental, Social, and Government Standards**

I also want to acknowledge what we have heard from our community residents about the importance of being mindful of public investments. Because of these concerns, I have requested that our CFO explore a new policy for Environmental, Social and Governmental Standards (ESG Investing) and to report back to the board no later than the end of the calendar year on how we might adopt more socially responsible investment policies.

There are so many things in this budget that I'm proud to vote on today. And when you combine this budget with those of the last seven years, they amount to an extraordinary experience that I will cherish as I have served as your county commissioner. Thank you to everyone who makes our work possible - every single day, and thank you to the incredible residents of Multnomah County who keep us true to our vision and always remind us to lead with compassion and dignity.

And finally, I'd like to end my comments by sharing an excerpt from a poem with you. Which is a bit of a tradition, thanks to our resident poet and Director of our Dept of County Human Services, Mohammad Bader. This poem reflects the determination and hope that I see at the County and in our community every single day. You're probably familiar with it. It's called "Anyway" written by Mother Teresa.

*People are often unreasonable, illogical and self centered;*

*Forgive them anyway.*

*If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;*

*Be kind anyway.*

*If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;*

*Succeed anyway.*

*If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;*

*Be honest and frank anyway.*

*What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;*

*Build anyway.*

*If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;*

*Be happy anyway.*

*The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;*

*Do good anyway.*

*Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;*

*Give the world the best you've got anyway.*

Also I want to thank my entire team, Rebecca Stavenjord, my COS, Layan Ammouri, my policy advisor and Jennifer Lewis for their hard work day in and day out. You are the wind beneath my wings. And I am so proud of our many accomplishments.

Thank you to everyone I've had the honor to work alongside for the last eight years and for letting me be a part of something so much bigger than all of us. It has been an amazing ride and a most wonderful journey.

## **Amendments**

### **\$580K OTO      Dept of County Human Services**

This amendment augments Program Offer #25133C - YFS - Eviction Prevention by adding funding for in-courtroom eviction prevention supports and serves to expand that service to five days a week.

### **Offset of \$200K SHS - Joint Office of Homeless Services**

This amendment proposes a cut to SHS funds in the JOHS which will allow for services to be provided through my two previous amendments benefitting an expansion of capacity in East Multnomah County.

### **\$48K OTO      Program Offer 10021: State Mandated Expenses**

Allocated to the payment of Multnomah County's flood safety benefit fee. This financial impact request will cover the County's fiscal expenses as part of the Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District and apportioning those expenses amongst the district's unincorporated properties.

### **\$100K OTO      Dept of County Assets**

Allocated to the Vance Vision project for continued necessary assessments for zoning, development, and economic/workforce strategies building off the Vance Vision Master Plan.

### **\$50K OTO      Joint Office of Homeless Services**

Allocated to the development of an implementation and strategic action plan for homeless response capacity building across East Multnomah County.

### **\$150K OTO      Joint Office of Homeless Services**

Allocated to Furniture Bank Program Expansion to increase the capacity to meet the needs of residents experiencing housing insecurity in East Multnomah County.

### **\$180K OTO      Department of County Human Services - Youth and Family Services Division**

Allocated to increased food assistance, including fresh and culturally responsive choices, through school-based distribution. This program was previously supported by ARP funding.

### **\$432K OTO      Department of Community Justice (introduced in partnership with Comm Beason)**

Allocated to make whole the Community Healing Initiative (CHI) Early Intervention and Diversion program (Program Offer #50067) to sustain and enhance upstream diversion and wrap-around services for youth tailored to culturally specific communities to address and prevent violence in our communities. (There's a budget note to go with this, we listed it first in the list below)

## **Budget Notes**

### Exploring Contract Compensation:

Asking the COO's office to explore a process that engages County Departments that fund Human Services to examine existing provider contracts and compensation parity. This process should include needs for capacity building, wage equity and greater compensation parity for like services and positions, as well as for currently uncovered service delivery costs. This note asks for a report to the board on the process of this examination and recommendations no later than Dec. 31, 2024.

### [Community Healing Initiative \(CHI\) Early Intervention program](#)

This program has been in place for close to a decade and has evolved to meet the needs of culturally specific communities experiencing the impacts of violence. I would like to introduce a budget note for the Dept of Community Justice as they work over the next year as a bridge for the program. This note asks them to evaluate the utilization and effectiveness of the program and report back to the board no later than Dec 31, 2024. (This can be a report, not a briefing)

### [Environmental, Social, and Government Standards](#)

We have heard from community residents about the importance of being mindful of public investments. These investments serve a role in supporting our ongoing ability to meet the needs of our communities, therefore I would like to introduce a budget note for the office of the CFO to explore a new policy for Environmental, Social and Governmental Standards (ESG) and to share that information back to the board no later than Dec 31, 2024. (This should be a briefing)