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PORTLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE SUPPORTS EXTENSION OF DOWNTOWN PORTLAND'S SAFE PROGRAM

Portland, Ore. – Today, Portland Business Alliance president and CEO, Sandra McDonough, testified before Portland City Council in support of the council's move to extend the Street Access for Everyone (SAFE) initiative for five months. McDonough also represented the sentiments of downtown property owners and the Downtown Retail Council in her testimony.

"SAFE is a model of how diverse communities and interests, working together in good faith, can find common ground and pragmatic solutions for issues that have stymied other communities," said Sandra McDonough, President and CEO of the Portland Business Alliance.

"The SAFE program is an effort to make it easier for people to *remain* in our public areas peacefully rather than to exclude them. Its elements aim to make it easier for Portland's diverse residents and visitors to share our public areas with less conflict."

The SAFE initiative has been very successful and is supported by both the business community and a wide array of homeless advocates that have been a part of the SAFE committee, which has overseen the program's implementation.

Some of the services for homeless individuals provided through the SAFE program include:

- Day shelter space and services at Julia West House, Transition Projects, Inc. and Harbor Light's West Women's Shelter, serving about 150 individuals.
- Expanded showers and lockers including increased shower capacity at the three shelters providing day services and space.
- Additional restrooms including four unisex public restrooms repaired and improved at NW 8th and Ankeny.
- Additional benches with 31 new benches added in high pedestrian areas for a total of 438 benches now available downtown.

The SAFE program also includes a sit/lie provision, which prohibits the sitting, lying or placing belongings on the sidewalk in high pedestrian areas in downtown and the Lloyd District from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. This provision is a non-criminal offense with numerous exceptions, and requires a written warning prior to any citation. Portland Police Bureau has issued less than one citation per week or a total of 38 citations since the ordinance was implemented in 2007.

McDonough's full testimony is attached.

The Portland Business Alliance is Greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce representing more than 1,400 businesses in the region.



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