

THURSTON COUNTY COMMUNITY PLANNING

PLANNING COMMISSION – JULY 6, 2022



Emergency Housing Ordinance Code Amendment

ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

- Docket Item A-24: Emergency Housing Ordinance (EHO) – Permitting Criteria Flexibility (Titles 20, 21, 22, 23)
- Today's work session – informational introduction only
 - History of Homeless Encampments Chapter in TCC
 - History of interim EHO ordinance
 - What other local jurisdictions are doing
 - Related policies

ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

- Docket Item A-24: Emergency Housing Ordinance (EHO) – Permitting Criteria Flexibility (Titles 20, 21, 22, 23)
- What the proposal does:
 - Allow CPED director to waive some permitting requirements during a crisis
 - Facilitate a quicker permitting process
- What the proposal doesn't do:
 - Solve homelessness
 - Eliminate unpermitted, unsanctioned camps
 - Establish camps across the County
 - Outright waive all requirements

HISTORY: HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS ORDINANCE

- Chapters 20.35, 21.64, 22.51, and 23.45 TCC
- First adopted Sept. 7, 2010 under Ordinance 14402
- Applies to rural county and all Urban Growth Areas
- The Planning Commission reviewed the original 2010 language at a public hearing in March 2010, and recommended adoption in April 2010.
- The BOCC also held a public hearing in June 2010.

HISTORY: HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS ORDINANCE

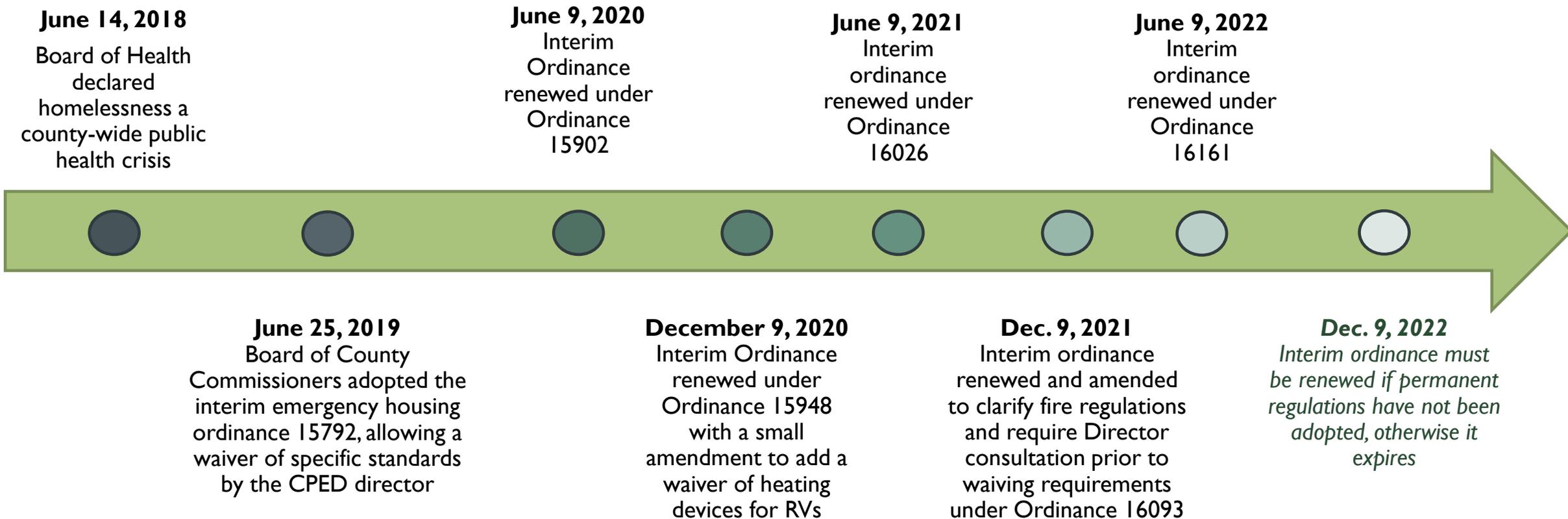
- Adopted in part to implement changes made to the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and the Consolidated Plan for Housing in Thurston County (CPHTC) to address housing needs
- Adopted also to meet requirements under RCW 43.185C.160, which requires jurisdictions to include provisions for regulating homeless encampments

HISTORY: HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS ORDINANCE

- Purpose is to provide standards that assure homeless encampments can be accommodated, while maintaining conformance with minimum health and safety standards
- Falls under a “temporary use” and is permitted for up to 180 days
- Includes limits on number of persons an encampment can have (up to 40)
- Must have a host and/or sponsoring agency to enforce regulations
- All schools in district with encampment must be notified

INTERIM EMERGENCY HOUSING ORDINANCE

- Since its initial adoption in 2010, the only amendments to the Homeless Encampments Chapters of the Thurston County Code have been through the interim regulations



INTERIM EMERGENCY HOUSING ORDINANCE

- The interim Emergency Housing Ordinance regulations allow for the waiver of some regulations that are not related to public health and safety
- In order for Director to waive requirements, BoCC or BoH must hold a public hearing every 6 months and find a public health crisis still exists and the Director must first consult with stakeholders

INTERIM EMERGENCY HOUSING ORDINANCE

- **Example of requirements that cannot be waived (not a full list):**
portable sanitary toilets must be screened; temporary structures must conform with building codes; fire safety requirements; required “Code of Conduct” that residents must sign; sponsoring agency to self-police and self-manage
- **Example of requirements that can be waived (not a full list):**
number of residents allowed in a camp; length an encampment is established; requirement for public informational meetings; on-site parking requirements; visitor regulations

WHAT ARE OTHER JURISDICTIONS DOING

- Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater – many similarities to Thurston County’s existing regulations for homeless encampments (i.e., number of residents, similar site and security requirements, similar requirements for application and public meeting)
- City of Tumwater & City of Lacey – TMC 18.59.050 and LMC 16.64
 - Allows encampments for 180 days
 - No waiver of requirements is available to applicants
- City of Olympia – OMC 18.50
 - Allows encampments for 365 days with 2 one-year extensions.
 - Includes a section that allows waiver of requirements in public health emergency

RELATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

- Increasing number of homeless families was identified as a critical issue during the last periodic update, adopted in 2019
- Most goals and policies aimed at alleviating cost burden and increasing affordable housing. Policies support the proposed amendments
 - (Chapter 4, Goal 2, Objective B, Policy 2, p. 4-23) The county should encourage social, housing, and health services organizations which offer support programs for those with special needs, by providing technical assistance, when possible, and assisting in efforts to seek funds or coordinate between agencies and groups, for areas including, but not limited to, the construction and operation of emergency housing.
 - (Chapter 4, Goal 2, Objective B, Policy 5, p. 4-23) The county should support the implementation and continued revision of the Thurston County Homeless Housing Five Year Plan and associated goals and action items.

NEXT STEPS

In order to accommodate review and final action by the BoCC before current interim regulations expire, Community Planning proposes the following schedule for review:

Schedule is tentative and subject to change

- **July 20** – Work session to review proposed code language and schedule hearing
- **August 17** – Public Hearing
- **September 7** – Work session for follow up and possible recommendation

QUESTIONS?

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