

From: [Kate Gorge](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Models for Permanent Housing in the 2027 Plan Review
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Dear Commissioners and the Economic Vitality Committee:

Following Executive Director Krystyna Wolniakowski's recent 4/7 update to the Skamania County Board of Commissioners, I am writing to share existing housing policy models that may assist the Commission as it navigates landscape preservation and the acute need for safe, dignified housing.

During the BoCC meeting, the discussion touched on the current reliance on "temporary" or "seasonal" structures to meet agricultural and medical hardship needs. As the Commission looks toward the 2027 Management Plan review, we can examine how other agricultural regions are successfully pivoting away from the "temporary housing" model (which often creates significant [safety hazards and financial barriers](#) for our most vulnerable neighbors) in favor of permanent, safety-regulated solutions.

I hope you find the following precedents helpful to your policy research:

1. Ventura County, California: Permanent Farmworker Dwelling Units

In 2022, Ventura County, a jurisdiction managing a multi-billion dollar agricultural economy, recognized that temporary RVs and trailers were an inadequate and often dangerous substitute for stable housing. The county [amended its zoning ordinance](#) to explicitly allow for permanent "Farmworker Dwelling Units." To address the "bureaucratic premium" that often prevents farmers from building safe housing, the county created a suite of [pre-approved, standardized architectural plans](#) provided to residents for free. This model ensures that permanent structures meet strict safety and aesthetic codes while removing the crushing financial burden of custom design.

2. Pre-approved Housing Plan Books

And **pre-approved, standardized housing design plan books** can be considered for other housing policy changes this committee is discussing, **such as ADUs** or primary structures. The City of White Salmon is already leading the way by pursuing a pre-approved plan book to streamline its planning department's approvals. I recommend watching the [2024 presentation](#) on this topic, and catching up on [their progress](#).

3. California Assembly Bill 2240:

California's [Assembly Bill 2240 \(2024\)](#) represents a significant shift in legislative intent. The law explicitly acknowledges that forcing agricultural workers to cycle through temporary, seasonal housing centers destabilizes families and local economies. It mandates a transition of temporary migrant labor centers into safe, permanent, year-round housing.

As we have seen in our own neighborhood, forcing residents into temporary trailers and campers often results in reliance on improvised heating, which creates a severe fire risk that

threatens both our neighbors' lives and the landscape. I believe anyone who calls this place home (no matter how briefly) deserves better.

The success of the Commission's recent disaster-rebuilding amendment for Rowena and Burdoin fire victims demonstrates that the Management Plan can be a flexible, compassionate tool. I urge the Commission to view these permanent housing models and design supports as an opportunity to replace expensive, "temporary" workarounds with permanent, enforceable, and dignified infrastructure in the next Gorge Management Plan.

Thank you for your time and for the vital work you do in our community.

Sincerely,

Kate Bertash

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