



**To:** The Honorable Tina Kotek, Governor of Oregon; Oregon State Representative Rob Nosse; Mayor Tedd Wheeler; City Commissioners Rene Gonzalez, Mingus Mapps, Carmen Rubio, and Dan Ryan; Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson; and Multnomah County District 3 Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards

**From:** Carlyne Holcomb, Executive Director, Central Eastside Industrial Council

**Date:** February 13, 2024

**Subject:** Central Eastside Requests Urgent Support for Bureau-Owned Properties

---

The Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC) serves as the business advocate for the Central Eastside Industrial District, a vibrant 700-acre industrial and multi-use area on the east bank of the Willamette River. It is a vital connector to the downtown core, Lloyd, and East Portland.

The recent release of the State of Small Business report by the Portland Metro Chamber underscores the essential role played by small businesses in our city. With over 1,700 businesses employing more than 22,000 people, the Central Eastside has transformed from its manufacturing roots into a thriving design, entertainment, and culture hub, consistently earning accolades as one of Portland's top destinations.

However, our vibrant community faces significant challenges, particularly regarding the complex web of multi-jurisdictional property boundaries within the Central Eastside. As such, we urgently call for a collective effort to assess properties where jurisdictional ownership is unclear. We seek swift improvements to ensure cleanliness, security, and the prevention of activity that results in unsafe corridors and threatens our bustling business community in these key areas:

- Water Ave Corridor
- Grand and King Ave
- Division Street under the 99 bridges
- Burnside, Morrison, and Hawthorne bridgeheads, bioswales and viaducts

At present, the burden of vigilance falls on our small business community, which has invested considerable resources in deploying enhanced cleaning and safety services to sustain daily operations. Additionally, our affiliate organization, Central Eastside Together, and the Transportation Parking Advisory Committee have allocated more than \$600,000 to clean District properties impacted by encampments and debris, including bio-hazards and drug paraphernalia. As a community, we are deploying unsustainable resources to address recurring issues that resurface shortly after intervention.

The CEIC's mission is to advocate for the interests of our member businesses by creating a vibrant, prosperous, safe, and welcoming district. We urgently request attention to the following areas, particularly where jurisdictional boundaries are unclear or shared.

**Develop immediate and long-term solutions to address the proliferation of mass tent and RV encampments.** While investments, such as the 90-Day Reset conducted from January to April 2023, yielded short-term improvements in safety, cleanliness, and accessibility, the ongoing surge in mass encampments and RV sites poses an escalating challenge and undermines our collective efforts. The Central Eastside community is grappling with the destabilizing impact of these challenges, leading to an unfortunate departure of businesses from the District. We urgently seek attention to the unprecedented increase in mass encampments, RVs, and abandoned automobiles throughout the District.

**Employ Services for Cleaning & Trash Removal:** The excessive accumulation of trash and debris adversely affects the District's pedestrian and biking right-of-way, hindering accessibility by obstructing sidewalks and corridors. Debris and litter severely restrict the availability of parking spaces and loading zones essential for conducting daily business operations. We advocate for immediate action to address these cleanliness and accessibility challenges through strategic and coordinated efforts, including complying with maintenance requirements outlined in City Code 29.20.010.

**Prioritize establishing safe walk corridors and passageways.** We seek assurance that employees, residents, and visitors can navigate the District confidently and securely. We call for an immediate assessment of all lighting infrastructure at bridgeheads, transit stops, stairwells, bike paths, and viaducts. Additionally, we advocate for the prompt removal of debris obstructing these pathways. Simultaneously, we seek long-term strategies with embedded accountability frameworks to maintain and enhance these passages consistently.

**Enact policies aimed at safeguarding historic properties from open fires.** We urgently request guidance from our elected officials to advise business owners on proactive measures to protect their properties from open fires, especially those directly abutting businesses. The Central Eastside, housing numerous historic properties that contribute to our urban industrial sanctuary, is particularly vulnerable to potential damage or irreplaceable harm due to the escalating frequency of open fires. Immediate attention and collaborative efforts are crucial to preserve our historic properties' unique heritage and integrity within the Central Eastside.

Through this, we seek swift, strategic, and collaborative actions to safeguard our community's well-being and foster a conducive environment for businesses, their employees, and visitors. Our shared responsibility is to ensure the Central Eastside remains a beacon of resilience and prosperity for the Portland Metro Region.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Holcomb  
Executive Director

[Central Eastside Industrial Council](#) and [Central Eastside Together](#)