

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR THE STATE OF OREGON, FOR THE COUNTY OF BENTON**

In the Matter of Adopting) **ORDINANCE No. 2020-0296**
Benton County Code Chapter 40,)
Vehicle Camping at Religious Institutions)

WHEREAS:

The COVID-19 pandemic response in Benton County has necessitated a unified response from Benton County, the City of Corvallis, and communities throughout the area. Closures, cancellations, and service adjustments have disrupted everyday life for the entire community.

Benton County will assure that COVID-19 prevention, mitigation, treatment and recovery plans & activities will apply strategies and tactics that strive to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent full and equal access for all.

Social service disruptions caused by the COVID-19 emergency have left all vulnerable populations in the community, including people experiencing homelessness, at greater risk to a variety of health and welfare impacts.

There is an immediate need for individuals to have access to stable locations at which to shelter, in order to comply with Oregon Governor Brown’s Executive Order No. 20-12, directing Oregonians to stay at home and mandating social distancing, and such compliance is necessary for the health and safety of all Benton County residents.

Many members of the community have vehicles as their primary shelter and no fixed place at which to safely and legally park their vehicle. Additionally, community organizations have constructed temporary transportable sleeping units (“micro-shelters”) which are similar to vehicles in that they can be relocated and are not permanent installations but which provide many benefits when compared to a standard vehicle in use as a sleeping unit. Several religious institutions within the county have expressed willingness to provide space for people to camp in vehicles and/or micro-shelters.

Benton County is committed to a community dialog but the need for swift action in the face of the COVID-19 crisis combined with the challenges that the pandemic creates for public engagement necessitate the County adopting a limited-term ordinance at this time with a commitment to a robust public engagement process prior to adopting any permanent ordinance authorizing vehicle camping at religious institutions.

Pursuant to Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 203.082, Benton County may enact an ordinance authorizing vehicle camping at religious institutions.

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NOW THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BENTON COUNTY ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

PART I: Short Title. Adoption of Benton County Code Chapter Regarding Vehicle Camping at Religious Institutions.

PART II. Authority. The Board of County Commissioners of Benton County has authority to amend the County Code pursuant to the Benton County Charter.

PART III. The Benton County Code Chapter 40 is hereby adopted as shown in "Exhibit 1".

PART IV. Ordinance 2020-0295 is hereby repealed upon the effective date of this ordinance.

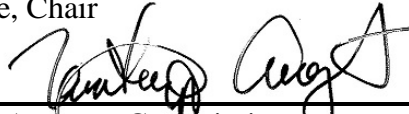
PART IV. The effective date for these amendments to the Benton Code will be July 5, 2020, and this ordinance shall stand repealed at midnight on December 31, 2021, unless repealed sooner by an action of the Benton County Board of Commissioners.

First Reading: May 5, 2020
Second Reading: June 2, 2020
Effective Date: July 5, 2020
Sunset Date: December 31, 2021

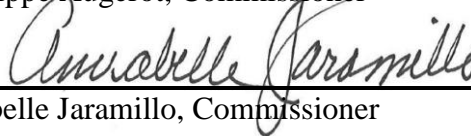
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Pat Malone, Chair



Xanthippe Augerot, Commissioner



Annabelle Jaramillo, Commissioner

Approved as to Form:



County Counsel



Recording Secretary

Exhibit 1

CHAPTER 40

VEHICLE CAMPING AT RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

40.100. A church, synagogue or other religious institution located in unincorporated Benton County may allow overnight camping in vehicles, subject to the following:

- (1) As used in this chapter, “vehicle” includes a licensed and operable automobile, camper, travel trailer or recreational vehicle. “Vehicle” also includes a rigid-walled, readily transportable temporary sleeping unit exempt from building code and consistent with minimum guidelines issued by the Community Development Director. A church, synagogue or other religious institution shall be responsible for ensuring vehicles meet and adhere to the minimum guidelines.
- (2) The religious institution shall register with the Benton County Community Development Department prior to establishing overnight camping in vehicles and shall submit a site plan and any other documentation required by the department’s adopted procedures for ensuring compliance with this chapter.
- (3) A maximum of three vehicles for vehicle camping is allowed at the registered site at any one time.
- (4) The religious institution shall provide campers with access to onsite sanitary facilities, including at minimum toilet, hand washing and trash disposal facilities, and shall make readily available, at minimum, one fire extinguisher per vehicle.
- (5) The camping occurs on the same property as the religious institution’s facility or an adjacent property that the religious institution owns or leases and has land use approval for religious institutional uses. In the case of leased land, the church shall provide the County with written authorization from the property owner to establish vehicle camping.
- (6) No payment of fee, rent, or other monetary charge shall be required of campers. This provision does not prevent the religious institution from accepting donations.
- (7) The religious institution may select which individuals to allow to camp on the institution’s property, and may revoke this permission at any time and for any reason.
- (8) Vehicles and all associated outside facilities (such as toilet, trash disposal, storage unit) shall be located at least 12 feet from all property lines, road right-of-way or access easements, and each vehicle shall be located at least 12 feet from other vehicles and from associated outside facilities.
- (9) All items and materials must be stored in vehicles or in separate storage unit, other than items designed and intended for outdoor use which shall be screened from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way
- (10) The number of people camping per vehicle is not generally limited by this code; however, notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the Benton County

Community Development Director or designee may limit the total number of individuals camping on a premises or prohibit vehicle camping as provided in this chapter if the Community Development Director or designee finds that such activity on the premises constitutes a nuisance or other threat to public health, safety, or welfare. In addition to any other penalties that may be imposed, any premises used for vehicle camping in a manner not authorized by this chapter or other provisions of the Benton County Code shall constitute a nuisance and may be abated as such pursuant to Benton County Code Chapter 21 – Nuisance Abatement.

- (11) Upon expiration or revocation of this chapter, all vehicle camping on registered sites shall cease. Authorization of vehicle camping on a site does not establish a land use or a vested right to continue the activity if and when this code is modified.
- (12) Nothing in this chapter creates any duty on the part of the County, its employees, or its agents to ensure the protection of persons or property with regard to overnight sleeping in vehicles.