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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Mayor Miro Weinberger Announces Champlain Housing Trust
to Manage Elmwood Emergency Shelter**

Burlington, VT – Today, Mayor Miro Weinberger announced that Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) will manage and operate the Elmwood Emergency Shelter Community. The Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity will provide services for the guests. The Shelter, projected to open in November, will play an essential role in addressing homelessness in Burlington.

The Elmwood Emergency Shelter Community is comprised of 30 climate-controlled modular shelters; 25 shelters for individuals and five shelters which will accommodate two people.

“I am grateful the Champlain Housing Trust for stepping up in a spirit of partnership to make this innovative concept of providing shelter a reality,” Mayor Weinberger said. “I want to thank CEDO and the City team for their tireless work to make this announcement with CHT possible. I also want to thank the Vermont Agency of Human Services and Secretary Jenney Samuelson for making this project a high priority. Together, we will continue working to end homelessness in Burlington.”

Founded by the City and community activists in 1984, CHT owns and manages 2,500 affordable rental homes and 650 permanently affordable owner-occupied homes. A little over 20% of CHT’s apartments are serving people who were previously homeless.

“We recognize that this Emergency Shelter, alone, is not a solution to our crisis in homelessness. But it is an essential community resource that will provide safe, temporary shelter, offering low-barrier access to critical support services and resources, which will enable people to move toward stable and affordable permanent housing. We are creating this temporary facility to respond to the acute housing pressures the community is facing today in the wake of the pandemic. I am pleased

to share that the City and CHT are both committed to exploring in the months ahead an agreement to develop permanent affordable housing on this City-owned site approximately three years from now. This exploration will include engaging neighbors, the Public Works Commission, the City Council and other Old North End stakeholders," Mayor Weinberger said.

Background

- In December 2021, the Mayor announced a ten-point [Action Plan to Fulfill Housing as a Human Right in Burlington](#), which included the goal for the City to invest in shelter pods and related infrastructure to create a new low-barrier facility for 2022. Mayor Weinberger's Action Plan seeks to end chronic homelessness in Burlington by the end of 2025.
- The City developed the Elmwood Emergency Shelter Community plan after securing City Council approval in March. In June, the Development and Review Board approved the zoning permit.
- The City held numerous public meetings to ensure that the project is planned and developed in a way that has the best outcomes for the occupants and the surrounding neighbors. Public engagement efforts included holding two presentations at Neighborhood Planning Assemblies and four Community Neighbor Conversations at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington.
- Prior to the pandemic, in January 2020, the annual Point in Time (PIT) Count, administered by the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, reported 261 people experiencing homelessness, including 10 unsheltered individuals, in Chittenden County. In January 2022, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased nearly 3-fold -- to 668. Local outreach teams estimate the number of unsheltered individuals has increased to nearly 70 across the county in the summer of 2022, with the vast majority unsheltered within the City.

Jenny Samuelson, Vermont Agency of Human Services Secretary: "CEDO's Elmwood Avenue Emergency Shelter Community meets a critical shelter need in our state, and in Burlington particularly. We appreciate the efforts each community has made to address the challenge of homelessness. It is exciting that this project is able to move forward, with the management of Champlain Housing Trust. This is a critical component of our state's efforts to ensure that Vermonters have access to flexible options and services that address their diverse needs."

Michael Monte, Champlain Housing Trust CEO: "Champlain Housing Trust is a committed partner in the City and State's work to end homelessness. This new initiative will provide a better path forward for dozens of our unhoused community members, and the program we will put in place on Elmwood Avenue will be grounded in privacy, security and safety for both the neighborhood and those staying in the shelters. We are appreciative of the City's responsiveness to the concerns raised by the community, resulting in a comprehensive management plan."

Paul Dragon, Executive Director of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Development (CVOEO): "CVOEO is ready to partner with the City of Burlington and other community

organizations to bring critical services to people experiencing homelessness as we collectively support them on their path to permanent housing."

In the coming weeks, The City will form a committee that will provide feedback, advice and help build a greater sense of community with people living in the shelter and nearby residents and businesses. Those who are interested should call CEDO at 802-865-7144 or send an email to: cedofd@burlingtonvt.gov.