



JOINT OFFICE OF HOMELESS SERVICES

Dear neighbors,

On behalf of the City of Portland, Multnomah County and the Joint Office of Homeless Services, we would like to invite you and your neighbors to a community meeting about our plans to open an emergency shelter for homeless adults in vacant property at 6144 SE Foster Road.

The meeting is set for 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 18, at the meeting hall of Service Employees International Union Local 503, at 6401 SE Foster Road. Chair Deborah Kafoury, Mayor Ted Wheeler, County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson and Joint Office director Marc Jolin are set to attend.

We hope you'll share this opportunity to learn more about the planned shelter with your networks. We look forward to hearing from neighbors, addressing concerns and sharing ways in which residents can stay engaged in the shelter development process.

By next year, we plan to convert the space into a high-quality shelter with room for roughly 100 people, along with offices, showers, laundry facilities and other amenities that will help participants better connect with services. The shelter would be managed by an experienced, proven operator and would run on a reservation-based system to avoid queueing outside.

Over the past two years, our community has worked successfully with businesses, faith groups, neighbors and nonprofits to open hundreds of shelter beds across Multnomah County while also providing housing placements for record numbers of people.

Those new beds mean people who might otherwise have camped outside, in tents or on sidewalks, have a warm, safe place to go instead. Those beds allow folks to come in with their pets, or with their partners, and store belongings during the day. It's working. We counted more people sleeping in shelter than outside last winter.

Those beds have also helped connect our work to communities of volunteers.

In Westmoreland last year, we worked with Transition Projects to open the 120-bed Willamette Resource Center. Ongoing community support in a neighborhood where development has continued to flourish has enriched the experiences of shelter participants.

Betty, who came to stay at the Willamette Center soon after it opened, said the shelter saved her life after she found herself homeless for the first time in her 51 years. She'd become very ill sleeping outside and landed in the emergency room. She said the love she felt at the Willamette Center was overwhelming and that she wants to do her part to give back.

We expect this shelter at 6144 SE Foster Road to continue that success – and help not only the individuals who come inside but also the rest of the neighborhood. We are committed to working with stakeholders to ensure that happens, and we look forward to meeting with you this month.

Sincerely,

Mayor Ted Wheeler

Chair Deborah Kafoury