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TO: Steve Rudman, Executive Director; Housing Authority of Portland
Will White, Director; Bureau of Housing and Community Development
Bruce Warner, Executive Director of Portland Development Commission

FROM: Commissioner Erik Sten 

DATE: September 19, 2007

RE: The Development of a Resource Access Center as part of Portland's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

In December 2005, City Council adopted *Home Again, A Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County (the "Plan")*. This is a bold plan that seeks permanent solutions to our city's homeless problem. It is built on three principles:

- 1) Focus on the most chronically homeless populations;
- 2) Streamline access to existing services to prevent and reduce other homelessness; and
- 3) Concentrate resources on programs that offer measurable results.

I was pleased by the City Auditor's recent review of the program. The audit report shows we have made real progress towards addressing the homeless problem. As we move forward into the next phase of the plan, it is critical that we succeed in developing a Resource Access Center to provide homeless people with quick and direct access to programs that move them directly into permanent housing and to services that meet basic daily needs not currently provided by our shelters.

In June 2007, Mayor Potter asked me to take the lead in siting the Resource Access Center and I agreed. My goal is to identify and secure the most appropriate site for this facility this fall so development can proceed quickly and the Resource Access Center (the Center) can begin its service to the community.

I have directed Margaret Bax to work with each of you and your organizations to ensure that the planning, development, and programming of the Center is coordinated with other stakeholders, including service providers and funders.

The Center will be included in a larger development (the Development) that will likely include permanent supportive housing, a men's shelter, and other related uses. Taking this approach provides an opportunity to create a highly functional facility that will offer dignity and hope to its clients and that will stand as a positive contribution to the surrounding neighborhood. Securing funding for the Development is my top priority in the current discussions and deliberations regarding the expansion of the River District URA.

The long term success of the Center will depend on the quality of its management and program delivery. Transitions Project, Inc. (TPI) has demonstrated its ability to successfully operate facilities

for homeless individuals in Portland's central city, including the Glisan Street Shelter. I anticipate they will be the lead operator of the Center once it is constructed, though other agencies likely will have a service presence as well.

Success also is dependent on each of your organizations playing a significant role in the development of the Center. The Bureau of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) will focus on the development of a funding strategy and an operating plan. BHCD also will work with Multnomah County and other service providers to ensure necessary services are in place.

I am asking the Portland Development Commission (PDC), the City's urban redevelopment agency, to continue its work analyzing potential sites, site assembly, and financing to support acquisition and development of the Center.

The Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) has successfully developed, and is owner of, other shelters and similar facilities that are master leased to service providers. HAP also has a strong history with TPI, the current operator of the Glisan Street Shelter and the anticipated lead operator of the new Center. For these reasons, HAP is the preferred developer and owner of the new facility.

Each of your organizations possesses capacities and skills critical to the success of the Development and the Center. To ensure coordination and to provide clarity about roles and responsibilities I would like to request that each of your organizations take on the following:

Bureau of Housing and Community Development:

- Coordinate the overall complement of services in the Development and determine a strategy for long term operating funds for the Center and men's shelter (this may include cooperative partnerships with Multnomah County, local hospitals and other health care providers).
- Work cooperatively with HAP, hospitals and Multnomah County to ensure needed services are connected to permanent supportive housing created as part of the Development.

Portland Development Commission:

- Identify site/s (including consideration of existing PDC holdings) suitable for the Center, the Development and/or the redevelopment of the Blanchet House.
- Maintain lead responsibility for negotiating with private property owners for potential site acquisition and/or assembly.
- Work cooperatively with BHCD and HAP to ensure that the identified site or sites support the Development plan.
- Identify tax increment and other financial resources to support site acquisition and development.

Housing Authority of Portland:

- Serve as the master developer for the Development.
- Assess the feasibility of the site(s) to meet the programmatic needs of the Center and the Development.
- Manage the financing, design, and construction of a Development that will successfully integrate the Center and related functions on the preferred site or sites.
- Own all or portions of the Development, and master lease to providers as necessary.

As we have discussed, the following key assumptions and facts will continue to guide our work during the next several months:

- The Center will include space for multiple agencies to deliver on-site housing counseling and supportive services, lockers, showers, lounging and recreation space for homeless individuals.
- The Center will be within a larger development that will include permanent supportive housing for one or more of the Center's most chronically homeless client groups.
- The Development will likely include a redeveloped shelter for men to replace the Glisan Street Shelter. It may also include other targeted affordable housing.
- The Development may be undertaken on one site or may involve multiple sites to accomplish a range of public goals, including the addition of PSH.
- The site(s) will be located within the expanded River District URA.
- PDC will make available TIF funds for site acquisition and development of the Center and the Development.
- TPI will be the lead operator of the Center.
- The Development may provide a redevelopment opportunity for Blanchet House.
- The Development will eliminate, or at least significantly reduce, the need for clients to queue up on the street as they wait to access services.

PDC has considerable history and experience in working with various stakeholders in the OTCT area. They have been working to site the Center for several months and working with Blanchet House for several years to on redevelopment options for their aging facility.

Thank you for your commitment to ending homelessness in our community. I look forward to working with each of you and your organizations to bring about the timely development of a Resource Access Center and the much needed housing.

Cc: Margaret Bax
Andy Wilch
Mike Andrews
Andy Miller