



Streets to Stability: Safe Rest Villages Initiative
Led by Commissioner Dan Ryan

Safe Rest Villages (SRV) Program Public Engagement Plan

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Engagement Coordinators: Eder Katembwe and Jake Dornblaser (each to have an assigned portfolio)

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Project Scope: Locate sites for, develop, and launch managed outdoor shelters, or Safe Rest Villages, with amenities, services, and stability for Portlanders experiencing homelessness.

Project Background

Safe Rest Villages are one of a range of programs designed to support Portlanders experiencing homelessness. They will provide temporary outdoor shelter space with shared amenities, community, and mental, social, and medical health services for villagers. This will include peer supports, case management, and navigation to In/Outpatient services.

Safe Rest Villages are just one of a range of services and program models that are addressing homelessness in our community. The City and Multnomah County—[through the Joint Office of Homeless Services](#), (JOHS) and with federal funding and revenue from the Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure—are actively expanding that system of services, which serves tens of thousands of people every year. Together, the SRV team and our partners at the JOHS are adding additional shelter capacity, including village-style and motel shelters, along with more outreach workers, more behavioral health resources, and more rental assistance resources to house people. Some of these new investments are already in place and are making a difference right now.

More background is available at the [project's website](#), including information on locations, siting criteria, how equity is guiding our work, and additional initiative information.
(<https://www.portland.gov/ryan/safe-rest-villages>)

Project Direction

The **City of Portland's** Safe Rest Villages team is responsible for selecting sites, procuring pods and materials to develop all the shared facilities (restrooms, showers, laundry, kitchen, gathering spaces, etc.), and leasing the land for sites. Essentially, the City is responsible for all the infrastructure.

Multnomah County—through the Joint Office of Homeless Services—is responsible for recruiting shelter operators and overseeing shelter operations in tandem with the operators they select. The mental, behavioral, and physical health providers will be arranged by the County and shelter operators. Essentially, the County is responsible for all programming.

All costs—for both infrastructure and programming—will be funded by the \$16M of American Rescue Plan Act funds allocated to Safe Rest Villages, and the initiative will follow strict federal spending guidelines and procurement processes.

Public Involvement Overview

Selecting locations for shelters (indoors or outdoors) is a complicated process—there are many technical needs for outdoor shelters, ranging from ground surfacing, access to transit, and nearby utilities to zoning considerations and physical space to accommodate shelter operations. In addition to these technical requirements, the Safe Rest Villages team is working to ensure villages are equitably distributed around the city and close to Portlanders currently living on the streets, so we meet unhoused Portlanders where they are and support integration with surrounding communities.

Given the urgency of the need and the limited timeframe of the project funding (3 years with American Rescue Plan funding), the SRV team and our partners at the JOHS have solicited community input since preliminary options were announced in June 2021. Together, the SRV and JOHS teams are doing the initial site selections. Once sites are announced, community engagement coordinators will work with neighbors and stakeholders to discuss possible concerns, anticipated impacts and opportunities, and how we can best integrate the Safe Rest Villages into their respective communities.

General outreach about the purpose, timeline, and need for the villages has been ongoing since summer 2021 when Portland City Council unanimously supported the SRV concept and Commissioner Ryan secured federal dollars to make them a reality. As of early October 2021, Commissioner Ryan and his staff have shared the overall Safe Rest Village program model with various community groups, ranging from the Portland Business Alliance and Multifamily Northwest, to the Grantmakers of Oregon and SW Washington.

Stakeholder Outreach – Overview of Tools and Approach

Commissioner Ryan’s Office and the Safe Rest Villages team are using a variety of tools and methods to reach out to the community at large, and more specifically to stakeholders and neighbors near Village locations. Engagement will continue—and grow—as villages are developed, shelter operators are selected, and they too begin engagement with surrounding communities to ensure transparent communication and collaborative problem-solving.

Outreach will move forward in phases, focused on two parts: general outreach to the community at large, and targeted outreach to neighbors, stakeholders, and others immediately surrounding Village locations.

PHASES OF OUTREACH

1. Ongoing Outreach throughout the life of the project

Newsletters (during siting and ongoing throughout life of SRV program)

- Commissioner Ryan's [September 2021 newsletter](#) introduced the new SRV team, most of whom started just after Labor Day. The [October 2021 newsletter](#) focused on the accomplishments of the first 6 weeks.
- Anyone can self-subscribe to these newsletters. [Here](#) is where you can sign up.
- Future Commissioner Ryan newsletters will provide project updates.

Website (from site selection through SRV program's evolution)

- The project website will be kept current, with new locations, responses to various community questions, and other pertinent information being updated often.
- As new locations develop into sites, each will get its own page, with site-specific information.
- A Community Engagement section (or page) has now been posted, where this plan will be shared, as well as information on what has been accomplished, what lay ahead, and with clear indication of when updates are added.

Media (from site selection through SRV program's evolution)

The local media has been paying close attention to the SRV program and reports on it routinely. Some highlights include:

- [Locals react to proposed Safe Rest Village by Portland park](#) (Portland Tribune, 11/2/21)
- [Portland, Multnomah County leaders pledge additional \\$38 million to address homeless crisis](#) (KGW, 11/1/21)
- ['Not tents': Ryan continues to make case for Safe Rest Village sites](#) (KOIN, 10/29/21)
- [Multnomah County leaders provide progress update on Safe Rest Villages](#) (KPTV, 10/28/21)
- [Safe Rest Village site scrapped in SE Portland](#) (KPTV, 10/06/21)
- [Editorial: Portland's safe rest villages need buy-in from Metro, county](#) (Oregonian 10/3/21)
- [Portland announces sites city-sanctioned 'safe rest villages' for homeless people](#) (OPB, 9/30/21)
- [City considers Portland Expo Center for homeless village designated for cars, RVs](#) (KGW, 9/21/21)
- [Portland lags on finding locations for homeless villages](#) (Oregonian, 9/16/21) [Portland City Council OK's six Safe Rest Villages for homeless](#) (Portland Tribune, July 1, 2021)

2. Site Selection Phase

General Community Meetings (during siting and ongoing throughout life of SRV program)

- Commissioner Ryan and SRV Engagement Coordinators will continue to attend various community meetings.

- The Community Engagement team has created a presentation that is being shared widely with community groups, neighbors, and other stakeholders.
 - This program will be adapted to address issues, common questions and concerns, and to show what villages are intended to be, and what they will not be.

Anticipated audiences for this general Program Overview presentation include:

- Neighborhood Coalitions, as representatives from neighborhoods need to be involved
- Portland Business Alliance, as representatives from many businesses and business coalitions are involved with this group
- Cultural Community groups
- Unhoused/Housing Advocates
 - A Home for Everyone - Safety Off the Streets meetings/regular updates
 - Partner with groups to help develop knowledge and understanding of the unhoused by the housed living near villages.

3. Post Site Selection Phase

Site-Specific Community Meetings / other outreach (during site selection phase)

- After due diligence efforts are completed and sites are confirmed, Commissioner Ryan and the Community Engagement team will develop site-specific stakeholder lists for each future village:
 - Outreach will include phone calls and emails to nearby residents/businesses/impacted neighbors.
 - Additional outreach will include:
 - A letter from Commissioner Ryan with program information and contact information for the SRV team
 - Sites will be announced publicly (press releases, social media, and website updates)
 - Internal City and County partners
- More broadly than immediate neighbors, engagement with other stakeholders that has already begun includes:
 - Neighborhood Association(s)
 - Business Districts
 - Environmental/Parks groups
 - Culturally specific community-based orgs
 - Adjacent businesses
 - School District/area schools
 - Condo/Homeowner Associations
 - Property-owning bureaus
 - Elected Officials (Commissioner Ryan will do)
 - And others, as we hear interest from new stakeholders

4. Site Development/Construction Phase (once locations begin development / construction)

The Community Engagement will evolve once the sites get developed and villages become a reality.

- Construction/project communications
- Share timeline and regular updates (with pictures!)
- Signs at each location with links (QR code) to website
- Mailers to immediately surrounding businesses and residents
- Open house tours – see the village before people move in
- Connect with Street Roots Ambassadors who can engage with neighbors as a liaison between housed and unhoused community members.
- Welcome packet for neighbors
 - Letter from Commissioner Ryan
 - How you can engage
 - Definitions of what SRVs will be, won't be

5. Shelter Operator Phase (once shelter operators are selected, and ready to begin)

- Shelter operators will gain contact information from village neighbors, and share their contact information as well, for problem-solving and community building activities.
- Shelter operators to begin coordination on opportunities to develop community ties between operators/village and surrounding community. Ways community can support the Villagers:
 - Community garden
 - Planter boxes
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Materials
 - Foods

6. Shelters Open and Operational Phase

Community engagement will continue throughout the life of the villages.