Shelter Services Program Newsletter

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Jan. 22, 2024

New Year - So Much New

What will you find inside this issue?

- Brief Program Updates
- Reedway and Multnomah Safe Rest Villages are Expanding
- Introducing Brandy Westerman
- Partner Updates from the Impact Reduction Program
- New E-Newsletter provider coming soon

Read on to learn more...

Brief Program Updates

(Including merging of Safe Rest Villages and Temporary Alternative Shelter Sites)

Our last newsletter was in August 2022 – so we have many things to share:

SRV and TASS merge into the City of Portland Shelter Services program
The Safe Rest Village (SRV) program and the Temporary Alternative Shelter Sites (TASS) program are merging. While there are some slight differences, we all serve the same goals – providing shelters with services for those experiencing houselessness. Uniting all of the city's alternative shelter operations into one program will streamline day-to-day operations, enhance services, and simplify communication channels with the public. Under the new leadership of Brandy Westerman (see article below), these programs are coming together. Our teams are working together already, with webpages and other more visible changes coming soon. Check out our website for more details on this program merger.

New email (same people)
We've created a new, shared email that can be used to reach all of us involved with the city's shelter services programs: shelterservices@portlandoregon.gov. Emails sent to our previous address (saferestvillages@...) are forwarded to the new inbox. Our same team still checks the inbox and uses the same phone number (503) 823-1340. Feel free to reach out with questions at any time.

We weathered the winter weather well (so far)
On the heels of the winter holidays (see links to photos below of the village celebrations), this recent snow and ice storm briefly impacted services and shelters. Both Reedway and Multnomah SRVs faced power outages. Reedway guests were temporarily relocated to Clinton Triangle TASS, while Multnomah SRV guests moved to a motel. (That is for all who didn't make their own arrangements). As of this writing, Reedway guests are back in their village.

address a safety concern. Guests remain sheltered in a motel in the meantime.

Good Neighbor Commitments continue

The City's Shelter Services team recognizes that the success of each managed shelter hinges on being a good neighbor to the community. Back in November we developed and shared the City's commitment to be good neighbors. Good Neighbor Agreements are negotiated between stakeholders, including the City of Portland and neighborhood associations, for some locations and may include additional commitments beyond those outlined here. Still, we wanted to share our team's intentions to ensure that we're reachable and accountable to our promise: that the villages are safe and successful for those inside and around them.

Tracking our progress - Data dashboard updated (soon)

With the end of the year came the close of another quarterly reporting period. We are working on updating both the SRV Dashboard and the TASS Dashboard. (They too will merge in the future.)

Environmental efforts at the new TASS N. Portland TASS site

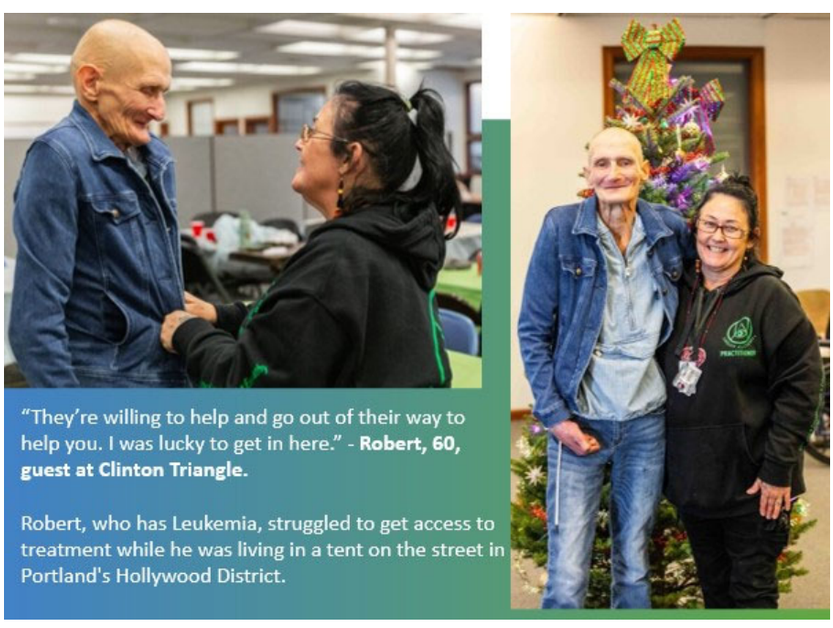
The TASS 2 site (1505 N. Portland Road) near Smith and Bybee Wetlands has a long history of industrial uses that have left behind soil contamination. As always, before developing a brownfield, the City's hydrogeologists collect and test samples based on the anticipated use of the proposed site and then take direction from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on how to ensure that the property is safe for the environment and people. We will share DEQ's recommendations as soon as we receive them. Meanwhile, here's information from our partners at the City's Bureau of Environmental Services on their Brownfield Program.

River District Navigation Center - The City took over the lease

As local nonprofit organization Harbor of Hope's lease for the River District Navigation Center was set to expire, the City stepped in to take over the lease for the property from Prosper Portland, to prevent the displacement of approximately 90 people who were staying at the congregate shelter on NW Naito Parkway. *Note: This site is not a Safe Rest Village or Temporary Alternative Shelter Site.*

Building community over the holidays

Across the City's eight shelters, 500 people received a warm, home-cooked holiday meal, provided by staff who donated their time and effort to make the season special. See photos and read about the celebrations on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.



Reedway and Multnomah Safe Rest Villages to Expand Number of People Served

As the recent winter storms have demonstrated, there are still thousands of people living unsheltered in Portland, many of whom sought refuge in the county's warming shelters during the recent storms.

There is an urgent, dire need to continue to provide longer-term alternative shelter to people experiencing chronic homelessness in our community – not just when the weather is particularly extreme and unsafe.

As such, the City's Shelter Services Team has been exploring opportunities to expand existing Safe Rest Villages to accommodate more tiny home pods – and more people.

In November 2023, the Safe Rest Villages program announced plans to expand Multnomah Safe Rest Village (2731 SW Multnomah Blvd.) and hosted a listening session to gather input from neighbors in the immediate area. Read the report of that conversation.

Given the need for more services to meet demand -- and given the extra space available at the Reedway Safe Rest Village site -- the City plans to expand capacity at the Southeast Portland shelter in the coming months, too. A mailer was sent to neighbors in early January detailing the expansion, which included an invitation to our upcoming listening session (Jan. 22 via Zoom).

Both expansion projects are currently in the design phase, and we cannot at this time confirm with certainty the exact number of dwelling units that will be added to each site.

However, we intend to increase shelter capacity by at least 270 units total (this figure includes plans to develop another Temporary Alternative Shelter Site in North Portland).

We want to hear from the community about **how** to make these expansion efforts a success for both the surrounding neighborhood and village guests. A few ways people can share their thoughts and ideas:

- Email the team at shelterservices@portlandoregon…
- Call and leave a voicemail at 503-823-1340
- Writing us a letter: You can address it to "City Shelters Team, 1120 SW 5th Avenue, Rm 901, Portland, OR 97204"

Introducing Brandy Westerman

The City's Humanitarian Operations Director

The City's Shelter Services Team is excited to introduce our humble new leader, Brandy Westerman.

Inspired by the diligent, compassionate work of countless individuals and organizations serving Portland's houseless community, Brandy joined the City in September 2023 in a brand-new role as the Emergency Humanitarian Operations Director.

After more than two decades leading humanitarian response teams across the globe for international non-governmental organizations (most recently in her role as a senior director at Mercy Corps), Brandy is bringing her passion and expertise to serve her local community, for which she cares deeply.

As the City begins its transition into a new form of government, Brandy will manage the Safe Rest Villages and Temporary Alternative Shelter Sites programs (more on this integration in the Program Updates above.)

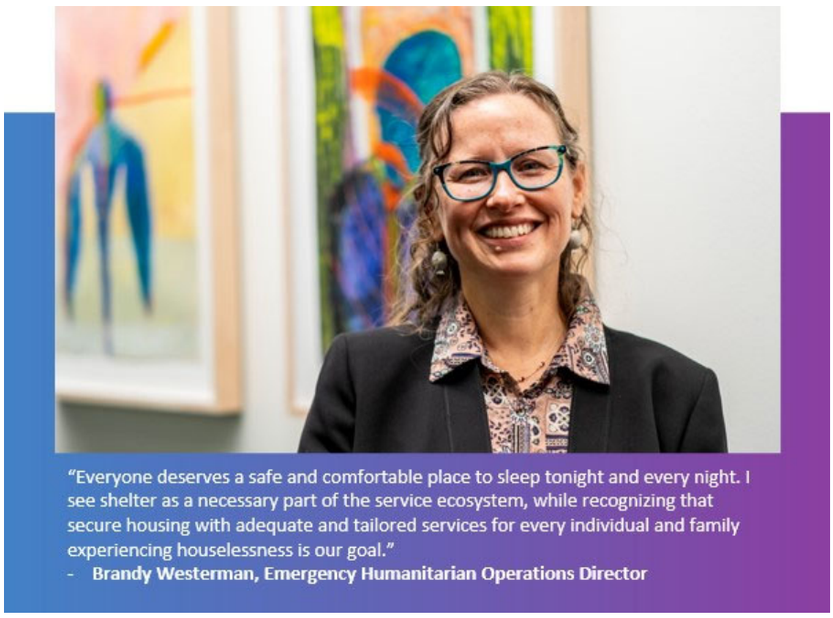
Brandy's role is a vital one -- overseeing all the city's alternative shelter operations, including budget, procurement, construction, communications, and project evaluations.

She's committed to preventing and alleviating the suffering on Portland's streets by building effective coordination and increasing the impact of the City's homelessness services system.

Already, we've seen how her presence has increased collaboration and communication between the various programs and offices that support our program.

Brandy put it best in a recent interview on Oregon Public Broadcasting's Think Out Loud when she said:

"One thing that has stood out to me over the past couple months in this role, is that the coordination at the operational level between each of these players and entities is much much stronger than what the public believes and what stands out in the media. At the operational level, I'm talking to people at the County's Joint Office on a daily basis, and we are more aligned than I think we're given credit for in terms of how we think about this crisis and where we set priorities."



Partner Updates

New Campsite Reporting Form

Portlanders now have a new and improved online form for reporting campsites. The new form improves accessibility for all community members, ensures we collect the necessary information that City staff and contractors need to respond, and efficiently notifies the various City departments who play a role in assessing and addressing campsite related issues.

The new form features improved location reporting, user-friendly questions, and an optional email confirmation. Soon, the new form will also allow community members to report campsite-related vehicles as well, which currently requires completing a separate abandoned vehicle report.

While the report is, and will continue to be, available through PDXReporter.org, community members are encouraged to use new form at www.portland.gov/report/campsite instead as it eliminates the need for a log in. The new form, launched in December, was developed by the Homelessness & Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (IRP), PDX 311, and Bureau of Technology Services staff and has already proven to be a more effective and comprehensive way to report campsite-related issues to City staff.

The City of Portland's IRP team thanks the public for their continued reports about campsites on public property. IRP works with partners to help minimize the impacts of unsanctioned camping, remove those campsites that pose the highest risk, and uses the information they receive from the public to deploy resources and outreach in places where people are living unsheltered.

New Day Storage Facility

The City of Portland opened a new, brick-and-mortar day storage facility serving people experiencing homelessness in early December 2023. The City has offered day storage since 2016, after the need for safe places to store belongings during the day was identified as a barrier for homeless individuals in going to work, keeping appointments, and attending to other daily activities.

The new facility, at 435 NW Glisan St., replaces the City's previous storage facility, a retrofitted shipping container operating on the west side of the Steel Bridge. The new 4,900-square-foot location represents a major increase in storage capacity, offers additional low-barrier job opportunities, and will host new outreach services.

Storage facility operations

holidays. Customers can drop off and pick up their property anytime during hours of operation. Abandoned property will be stored for at least 30 days before being disposed of, recycled, or donated.

The storage container near the Steel Bridge ceased operations in December 2023.

New services and opportunities through partnership with Central City Concern

The City has contracted with Central City Concern (CCC) to manage the new facility, continuing employment for two full-time CCC staff. Additionally, four temporary trainee positions will be added. These jobs provide meaningful employment opportunities to previously homeless individuals, helping them achieve economic independence while serving customers from a place of shared experience and empathy.

CCC will supplement staffing with outreach workers to help customers who need assistance in accessing services and referrals. Outreach staff will be on-site two days per week, with a final schedule still to be determined. Additional emergency supplies will be on site as they are available, including clothing and Naloxone.

Switching to new e-newsletter provider

GovDelivery starting soon

The City of Portland is migrating all e-newsletters to GovDelivery to send news and information to the community. If you're getting this newsletter, you can expect to get a notification from GovDelivery at some point in the future, as your subscription will be moved over from Mailchimp. You can choose to continue, cancel, and see other City of Portland newsletters that may be of interest. We just wanted to give you advance notice of this change, so you can choose to stay informed.

Get in Touch!

Reach the City's Shelter Services Program team at shelterservices@portlandoregon.gov or by phone at 503-823-1340.

Questions, comments, concerns—all are welcome.

Funded by:

American Rescue Plan
Investing in Portland

- **Safe Rest Village (SRV) webpages**
- **Temporary Alternative Shelter Sites (TASS) webpages**
- **Shelter Services team email**
- **Locations (links on this page to each shelter's webpage)**

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