

Dear Residents and Homeowners:

As you may be aware there is currently a plan to build a homeless shelter on the land directly across from your property. We have significant concerns as to how this may affect your property values and the safety and livability of the McCormick Pier community. This is being promoted by Oregon Harbor of Hope and will be managed by Transition Projects. As such, it will be a private endeavor, leaving the City of Portland without responsibility for it, even though the City is pushing for this project. There have been no town meetings to gather questions and input, only informational meetings of what will be.

This center is being built on the property directly adjacent to the Union Train Station, just north of The Yards, along NW Naito Pkwy. The lot is empty, there's evidence of contamination, and it's partially under the Broadway bridge. The structure will be a large tent, there will be no plumbing. Food will be brought in daily. Residents will have porta pottys, and the plan is to build mobile shower vans as well as mobile laundry vans which will be able to service other areas of need as well. It has been presented as having privacy landscaping, and community gardens, but the soil is contaminated and there will be no plumbing.

Although we do not support this center, and it would seem we have no voice in the matter, it is not yet a forgone conclusion. We would like to encourage all residents and owners to speak up and out to our city leaders, their emails and phone numbers follow. To that end, we have drafted a couple of letters that you may use as templates, or just copy them.

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July 30, 2018

Dear

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed Harbor of Hope transit station that is planned for under the Broadway Bridge on NW Naito Parkway.

While I am sympathetic to the homeless issues Portland is facing right now, I feel this location is not the right place. I believe it is unsuitable for a variety of reasons but primarily I live in this area and I think there has not been adequate planning for safety of the neighborhood and those who will reside in this shelter.

The site is right next to the train station tracks and under a heavily trafficked bridge – toxic contamination from lead, arsenic and other chemicals along with other hazards (like possible bridge collapse due to an earthquake) make it a site that seems totally inappropriate to house people. It comes off as if it was the cheapest and easiest solution without really considering where you are forcing people already struggling to live. Simply because some homeless people camp under bridges doesn't mean that should be where this housing is placed.

There is no planned onsite security which causes concern for those of us living in the area, and the site is a temporary structure and not a brick and mortar building. It doesn't have proper plumbing facilities which also seems inhumane.

The people that will be served by this site need real care and compassion. It seems like this will cost a lot of money for an unsuitable site that shouldn't be used to house anyone.

Wouldn't a better solution be to use the Wapato facility? It has plumbing, electricity, and space for not only the initial demographic of men over 50, veterans and disabled men over 50, but also for women and families who also need these transition services.

July 30, 2018

Dear

I live at McCormick Pier Condos and I want to tell you I am concerned about the plan to build a homeless center under the Broadway Bridge. I am surprised this project has gotten as far as it has in the planning considering I think it is a terrible idea.

I attended a meeting put on by the Harbor of Hope group and I know what they are trying to do is for a good cause, but I am very concerned about the location. Can this new center be built somewhere else that isn't right under a bridge, right next to the train?

Since our complex is between both the Steele Bridge and the Broadway Bridge, those of us who live at McCormick Pier are between two popular campsite areas. We have first-hand experiences with the current situation and while this new site is intended to help get people off the street, their target population is very narrow, and I worry it will only make what we have to deal with on a daily basis worse.

I appreciate it is not an easy problem to solve. I know the desire to help is sincere and well intentioned. I just don't think the plan to build this facility in an area that is next door to the Yards housing complex, a complex that has within the last few months seen a stabbing and couple of shootings, is a good idea. Let alone the ready supply of drugs in this area that may be tempting for people who are on the fence about recovery. Especially when I understand the new center won't have security. I think it could be a dangerous mix.

I've heard the Wapato facility is another option? I've been told Wapato has enough room for medical care which I think many I have observed desperately need. I have also been told that rather than being a soft sided building it is an actual building. And that it is big enough to provide housing for more than the narrow demographic Harbor of Hope is focusing on.