

The Oregonian

Right 2 Dream Too: List of 21 potential sites for Portland homeless community touches many neighborhoods

By Andrew Theen

Right 2 Dream Too has \$846,000 in financial support from the city of Portland, and now the homeless community has a list of 21 buildings or vacant properties that could serve as a long-term home.

Possible sites stretch across many city neighborhoods, from South Portland to the Central Eastside to Elliot and the Northwest District.

City officials released a list of 21 different properties on Wednesday in response to public records requests filed by The Oregonian and Willamette Week. The homeless community setup shop on the corner of West Burnside and Northwest Fourth Avenue in Oct 2011.

Last week, the City Council signed off on a complex deal dedicating \$846,000 to help find R2D2 a new location by either buying or renting property.

Part of the deal - developers Homer Williams and Dike Dame purchased a city-owned parking lot near their Residence Inn by Marriott project in the Pearl District. By buying so-called Lot 7, the developers averted a previous

The developers also erased a 2011 agreement with the Portland Development Commission to pay an estimated \$1.5 million to use a city parking structure. Instead the developers paid \$896,000 to the city, with \$50,000 going to REACH Community Development and the remainder going to help find R2D2 a new home.

The list of potential properties includes one duplicate, a 0.37-acre parcel at 110 S.W. Arthur St, which the city could either buy or lease for the homeless community. That land has an asking price of \$1.2 million. The most expensive parcel, on Southeast Ash Street, is worth \$3 million.

Both the city and R2D2 found it "mutually acceptable" to find a suitable location within a 1.5 mile radius of the Portland Building, and more than half of the sites identified by real fall within that area.

At a City Council meeting two weeks ago, Commissioner Dan Saltzman questioned the rationale for setting a 1.5-mile radius, saying that included some of the most expensive and desirable properties in the city. R2D2 co-founder Ibrahim Mubarak said the homeless community must be close to public services and transit.

But just one of R2D2's suggested sites, a building on Southeast Salmon, falls within 1.5 miles of the city's iconic Portland Building.

Another site, a nearly one-acre property valued at \$225,000, is in Milwaukie, but is along the Springwater Corridor.

Other locations include a building across from the Jupiter Hotel on East Burnside, a property a few blocks east of Widmer Brother's Brewery, and a parking lot across MLK Boulevard from Ox Restaurant.

Kelly Ball, spokeswoman with the Office of Management & Finance, stressed in an email that the list is a preliminary one.

"Keep in mind it is still early in the process and this list is a work in progress, she said."

Right 2 Dream Too co-founder arrested in Portland

By Lynne Terry

Portland police arrested the co-founder of Right 2 Dream Too in an overnight roust under the Burnside Bridge.

A posting on the Facebook page, Right 2 Survive, says Ibrahim Bilal Mubarak will be arraigned at 2 p.m. at the Justice Center. A group of supporters is planning on rallying at Southwest Third Avenue and Main Street at 1:15 p.m.

His arrest was filmed by supporters, who posted the video on the Facebook page. The posting said police returned after his arrest, allegedly harassing people.

Mubarak was charged under his real name, Keith Jackson, with interfering with a police officer and trespassing.

Last week, the City Council signed off on a complex deal dedicating \$846,000 to help find R2D2 a new location by either buying or renting property. A list of 21 possible sites stretch across many city neighborhoods, from South Portland to the Central Eastside to Elliot and the Northwest District.

The Portland Tribune

Mayor Hales proposes overhaul of city's urban renewal program.

By Steve Law

Mayor Charlie Hales is proposing an overhaul of the city's urban renewal districts, sending more property taxes to Portland schools and Multnomah County, while enabling more redevelopment near OMSI and the South Waterfront. Hales also wants to pull the plug on the new urban renewal district around Portland State University that was championed by his predecessor Sam Adams.

Hales' draft plan would eliminate two urban renewal districts, shrink two others so some land goes back on the property tax rolls, and expand two others where the mayor sees ripe development potential.

"I think it's kind of updating the structure of our urban renewal areas to fit the opportunities that we see in front of us to pursue," says Patrick Quinton, executive director of the Portland Development Commission, the city urban renewal agency.

Hales has made rethinking the city's approach to urban renewal one of his top priorities since taking office last year, and that means rethinking PDC's role.

Now it appears that Hales' review is done, and it's amounting to more of a "fine tuning" of urban renewal, says Ed McNamara, the mayor's policy aide spearheading the effort.

McNamara cautioned that Hales' proposal is still under negotiation with other parties, such as PSU, and requires City Council approval. But Hales and his staff have already briefed PSU, county and school officials who are heavily affected, McNamara says.

Hales has been prodding PDC to make more progress in its neighborhood-focused urban renewal districts in East Portland, specifically in Lents and Gateway, where economic growth has been anemic.

Now he's moving to PDC's central city urban renewal areas, which have served as engines of the city's recent growth.

Here's a summary of his proposals:

Scrapping Education Urban Renewal Area

This effort has barely gotten off the ground, and would have taken many years to generate serious urban renewal funds, McNamara says. That's because the PDC relies on tax increment financing, which freezes property values in urban renewal districts and siphons off taxes from rising property values to use for redevelopment. Much of the district is owned by PSU, which is property tax-exempt, limiting the available revenues to tap.

Dumping the district would mean less city aid for the university district in the south side of downtown, and \$46 million less for subsidized housing near PSU.

The original urban renewal plan pushed by then-Mayor Adams called for improvements to some PSU buildings. But a subsequent tax ruling makes such projects "look a lot more questionable today," McNamara says. That's because any property taxes spent on PSU buildings must meet Oregon's property tax limitation for education — causing a corresponding drop in property taxes for public schools. Hales sees the limitations of the PSU urban renewal area and "from a legal perspective, sees it as an imperfect tool," McNamara says.

"We'd be more cautious ourselves about spending money on campus-related projects, just because of the increased scrutiny on it," Quinton says.

As an alternative, Hales has suggested the city could expand the North Macadam urban renewal area and have its boundaries include PSU's eastern flank. That would enable PDC to collect some urban renewal money for infrastructure improvements near PSU, and the money could be raised much more quickly than under the old plan, McNamara says.

PSU President Wim Wiewel and Hales are still discussing the idea, "and we're confident that the city and PDC are still supportive of PSU's growth," says PSU spokesman Scott Gallagher. "Urban renewal was a tool to do that but not the only tool," Gallagher says.

Scrapping the district near PSU also would nix plans for PDC to pay \$19 million towards a new Multnomah County office building of some sort.

But that was seen as a way of repaying the county for the lost property taxes from the district. "With the urban renewal area not going forward, the county recognizes that there's no loss to make up for," Quinton says.

Expanding North Macadam

Hales proposes to add about 35 acres to this district, which encompasses the South Waterfront area, and extending the life of the district another five years.

PDC sees ripe opportunities now to assist redevelopment of the Zidell barge site on the waterfront, McNamara says, as well as the Knight Cancer Institute that would be on Oregon Health & Science University's adjoining property.

Expanding that district and extending its life could yield about \$60 million additional funding for PDC and about \$24.5 million for low-income housing projects, says Kimberly Branam, PDC deputy director.

It's possible that some PDC support could help meet the \$500 million match required under Phil Knight's challenge grant to expand the cancer institute.

Expanding Central Eastside

Hales earlier talked about the potential of new development near the new MAX line to Milwaukie and new light rail stops next to OMSI and Clinton Street. Now he's proposing to add acreage to the urban renewal

there, and extending the life of that district by five years. That could yield an additional \$21 million to spend, including \$3.6 million for subsidized housing.

By adding acreage to the North Macadam and Central Eastside urban renewal areas, PDC is effectively capturing more future property taxes that would otherwise go to schools, the county and other local governments.

But Hales is proposing to put much more acreage back on the tax rolls than he takes off.

Shrinking the River District

This urban renewal project, which has made the Pearl District a national success story for economic development, has been viewed as ripe for returning property back to the tax rolls.

But Hales also wants to devote more money into redeveloping Old Town and Chinatown, which are part of the urban renewal area.

As a compromise, Hales proposes to put about 15 percent of the district's property value back on the tax rolls. That was the "sweet spot," McNamara says.

Though it's only about 12 acres, it includes \$291 million worth of property — enough to send \$15.7 million in property taxes over the ensuing five years to schools, the county and the city general fund.

Shrinking Airport Way

This is another success story for PDC, and development is largely finished there.

City financial analysts found they could put 40 percent of this district back on the tax rolls, or about 900 acres of land, and still raise enough tax increment to pay off bonds used to fund past improvements there.

Scrapping Willamette

This urban renewal area would be eliminated, putting 755 acres back on the tax rolls. The district was originally created to support an expansion by Wacker Siltronic that never occurred, so it has been somewhat of a shell project.

About \$3.5 million left in the kitty might be proposed for business loans to harbor companies, McNamara says.

The net changes in urban renewal areas would add about 1,700 acres of property back on the tax rolls, Branam says. That still means that roughly 12.5 percent of Portland's land base is tied up in urban renewal areas, down from the current 14.2 percent.

But the city is currently close to the 15 percent cap set by state law, which hampers its ability to create new urban renewal areas where opportunities arise.

There are no discussions about creating any new urban renewal areas right now, Quinton says. But Hales' proposal "gives you a little more room for it, if the City Council wants to do that."

Willamette Week

Here Are the 22 Sites Portland is Considering for Right 2 Dream Too

By Aaron Mesh and Kate Willson

As the City of Portland tries to complete a deal that would provide homeless camp Right 2 Dream Too more than \$800,000 to move to a new location, a real-estate broker has identified 22 possible destinations for the camp.

Possible landing sites for the camp range from the Inner Eastside to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to property in Milwaukie.

The city released the preliminary list of locations today in response to a records request by *WW*.

"Please keep in mind it is still early in the process," says Office of Management and Finance spokeswoman Kelly Ball, "and this list is a work in progress."

Portland City Council voted earlier this month to give Right 2 Dream Too \$846,000 to relocate out of the Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood, possibly bringing an end to a years-long standoff.

Sites proposed include a vacant lot in the blocks between Sloan's Tavern and the Widmer Brewery on North Russell Ave., a storage yard in the Northwest Industrial District that's owned by the Bureau of Environmental Services, the PaperPlus building across from the Jupiter Hotel on East Burnside, a building next door to Miho Izakaya on North Interstate Avenue, a building on Sandy Boulevard next to the Ocean food pod, and a camping spot in Milwaukie along the Springwater corridor.

One of the addresses also corresponds to the still-open Anzen Hiroshi Japanese grocery store, across from the Oregon Convention Center. The building is listed as for sale, with an asking price of \$2.1 million.

The Mercury

Right 2 Dream Too Co-Founder Arrested Last Night While Confronting Cops

By Dennis C. Theriault

Ibrahim Mubarak, a Right 2 Dream Too co-founder, was arrested last night and booked into the main jail after he and a group of advocates reportedly confronted police officers who'd been cracking down on some of the homeless folks who'd been gathering in recent weeks beneath the Burnside Bridge.

Mubarak—booked under his legal name, Keith Jackson—faces one count of interfering with a peace officer, a class A misdemeanor, and one count of trespassing.

Interfering with a peace officer is the same charge, ironically, that police and prosecutors are using to target nuisance crimes among the homeless, as the *Mercury* first reported. Because of the *Mercury's* reporting, the DA's office yesterday acknowledged that police had mistakenly been applying the program to sidewalk violations. A memo telling police of the mistake also went out yesterday.

News of Mubarak's arrest spread on Facebook through advocacy group Right 2 Survive. Trillium Shannon, a Right 2 Dream Too board member, posted that Mubarak and others had gone to the Burnside

Bridge after hearing a steady drip of reports about police and private guards rousting the groups that had gathered under the bridge at night.

Update 7:30 AM: Here's a [link to video](#) showing Mubarak's arrest and what led to it. It shows private security guards taking pictures of people, for recordkeeping, saying they're working "for the city" as well as the University of Oregon. It shows an officer asking Mubarak for his name and then invoking the university's property rights by ordering everyone off the lot and onto the sidewalks. Mubarak was headed to the sidewalk, but slowly, and asking the officer to ask him nicely. And that's when she had enough—and he was put into handcuffs and taken to a police car. Someone at the end says "Call Amanda Fritz."

Yes, this confrontation occurred in the lot near the MAX tracks. But I also ride down along the waterfront every morning and night. And groups of homeless people have been gathering there, beneath the bridge, for weeks with their belongings—blankets, sleeping bags, packs, and sometimes shopping carts, only to thin out in recent days amid a noticeably stepped-up police presence.

The arrest comes more than a week after Right 2 Dream Too, the homeless rest area at NW 4th and Burnside, won the right to spend \$846,000 on a new location as part of a complicated land deal approved by city council. The group had agreed to drop a lawsuit over the city challenging code fines and move to the Pearl, but developers in the Pearl fought that agreement. It's their money that will finance Right 2 Dream Too's move somewhere else. *Willamette Week* was first to publish a preliminary list of more than 20 potential locations turned up by a city-paid real estate broker.

Mubarak was released from jail overnight and is due in court at 2 pm.

Bolting Down Novick Gets Funds for Earthquake Retrofits

By Nathan Gilles

CITY COMMISSIONER Steve Novick took a definitive step this month toward tackling an imminent earthquake disaster.

On Thursday, February 20, Novick and US Representative Earl Blumenauer stood outside a Southeast Portland woman's home and announced a \$100,000 pilot project that lets homeowners tap federal money to help finance seismic retrofits of their homes.

These retrofits are a critical issue for many homeowners: Houses built before the mid-1970s—roughly 100,000 in Portland, according to city planners—are probably not attached to their foundations. And in a major quake, like the magnitude 9.0 whopper that scientists warn is coming, they are likely to shake right off.

"I was alarmed to learn in the summer of 2012 that one of our biggest vulnerabilities, when we have a big quake, is homes built before 1974 are unlikely to be bolted to their foundations, and are unlikely to survive," said Novick, who is in charge of the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM).

As the Mercury first reported in October, Novick has been playing with the idea of acquiring federal dollars to solve the unbolted-home problem since at least the fall ["Coding for Quakes," News, Oct 16, 2013]. He found an ally in Blumenauer, who acquired funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"If we do our jobs right, we can prevent injuries, deaths, and disruptions to business," Blumenauer said at the program's launch. "This is an opportunity to show that prevention works."

The pilot project, run by the nonprofit Clean Energy Works Oregon, will cover about 75 percent of the price of the retrofits. Bolting a house to its foundation can cost anywhere from \$2,500 to \$3,500, or more, if work to a home's foundation is needed. Both Blumenauer and Novick have committed to expanding the project past its pilot stage of 30 homeowners, all of whom were chosen by Clean Energy Works on a first-come basis.

"We're talking about 30 homes," said Novick. "We need to get to thousands."

In October, Novick also signaled his intention to tackle a different, stickier seismic issue: unreinforced masonry buildings.

These so-called URMs—too weak and inflexible to withstand strong shaking—are known killers in major quakes. And there are roughly 1,765 in Portland alone, according to the Historic Preservation League of Oregon. But unlike Novick's current pilot project, tackling URMs could mean a fight.

Novick told the Mercury last fall that he hopes to put some regulatory teeth into the city's existing seismic code, which building owners have long circumvented. His and PBEM's plan is to require seismic retrofits for URM owners.

Under the existing code, retrofits are mandatory only under certain circumstances. And, concerned that regulation alone won't be enough, Novick still hopes to sweeten the deal for owners.

The commissioner says he has spoken with Mayor Charlie Hales' staff about using urban renewal funds for seismic retrofits—starting with the city's River District, which covers most of the downtown waterfront from the Morrison Bridge to just past the Fremont Bridge. Hales is working with the Portland Development Commission on the future shape of the city's urban renewal efforts.

"Obviously, it would be nice if building owners would just go ahead and do [seismic retrofits] themselves," Novick told the Mercury. "And there is going to be a regulatory move. But it would be nice if we had some money to help them out."