

The Oregonian

City Council OKs Right 2 Dream Too's move to Central Eastside

*By Brad Schmidt
February 24, 2016*

Prominent homeless camp Right 2 Dream Too will move to the Central Eastside later this year as part of a controversial plan approved Wednesday by the Portland City Council.

The eventual move -- years in the making -- will allow the campsite to remain on city-owned property at Southeast Third Avenue and Harrison Street for 10 years.

"I'm looking forward to this being a success," Mayor Charlie Hales said.

The City Council voted 4-1 to approve the move with Commissioner Nick Fish opposed. The camp's relocation will go forward barring a land-use appeal from opponents, such as the Central Eastside Industrial Council.

The move had been viewed as a done deal last week but Commissioner Steve Novick got cold feet and asked to delay voting. He didn't disclose his reservation Wednesday but said Portland needs to help homeless campers, even if the location isn't ideal.

"I don't have another site to suggest," he said. "We all wish that we weren't in this situation."

Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who oversees the Housing Bureau, convinced the City Council to exclude minors from the Right 2 Dream Too site between the hours of 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. He also pushed to ensure a future agreement includes requirements that pregnant campers must seek medical prenatal treatment.

But Fish, the city's former housing commissioner, said he wasn't convinced the city's zoning code allows homeless camping in an industrial area. He suggested the city is taking a shortcut to a serious challenge.

Right 2 Dream Too opened at Northwest Fourth Avenue and Burnside Street in 2011. Hales and Commissioner Amanda Fritz hoped to move it to a city-owned location in the Pearl District in 2013, but neighbors and business leaders strongly objected and the city backed down.

Officials identified a new, half-acre site last year. The city will pay for showers, toilets and laundry facilities, and up to 100 campers in tents will be permitted. The campsite will move to its new location by October.

Fritz -- who called the Central Eastside plan "a real solution, for now" -- recalled the arduous path that led to Wednesday's vote. At one point, she misspoke and said officials had been working on the challenge since 1913, instead of 2013.

"It just seems like that long," Hales interjected.

The Portland Tribune

Council approves moving controversial R2DToo homeless camp to inner Southeast Portland

By Jim Redden

February 24, 2016

After years of discussion and delays, the City Council approved moving the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp from Chinatown to Southeast Portland on Wednesday.

The vote was 4 to 1, with Commissioner Nick Fish casting the lone "no" vote. The relocation was approved after the council adopted a restriction proposed by Commissioner Dan Saltzman that no one under 18 could spend the night at the new camp.

The Portland Development Commission has bought the camp's current site at Northwest 4th and Burnside for redevelopment. The new location is a parcel purchased by the city from the Oregon Department of Transportation at Southeast 3rd Avenue and Harrison Street.

Resolutions approved by the council say the new camp can accommodate up to 100 people at a time for as long as 10 years. The city purchased the site and will pay for such improvements as will pay for showers, toilets and laundry facilities with around \$900,000 from developers and others used to buy an earlier alternatives location in Old Town.

The vote was delayed from last week after Commission Steve Novick unexpectedly said he needed by time to consider it. Novick said he did not have an alternative site before Wednesday's vote.

The relocation is suppose to happen by the end of October, at the latest. It supported by homeless advocates and opposed by many businesses and residents near the new location, including the board of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. The Central Eastside Industrial Council also opposes the move and may challenge it in court. Board President Brad Malsin previous testified the move would violate city zoning codes and future council-approved plans for the area.

"As we've been saying consistently, we don't think outdoor camping is the right solution for people who are sleeping on the streets and we'd rather see more focus on increasing indoor shelter capacity," Sandra McDonough, President and CEO of the Portland Business Alliance, said after the vote.

The relocation was approved the same day Mayor Charlie Hales' office announced a website for centralized information about the city's evolving homeless and affordable housing efforts, including a link for reporting problems with campsites.

"My office has received countless phone calls, e-mails, and social media messages from Portlanders who want information about our efforts to manage livability in the City," Hales said. "We heard them, and we responded with an easily accessible warehouse of information."

The website is titled the Homelessness Toolkit. It is at www.portlandoregon.gov/toolkit.

Mayor Charlie Hales argued the relocation of the R2DToo homeless camp is not a solution to homelessness, but a safer sleeping option for those without homes.

“Until we reach our goal of having a permanent home for all Portlanders, our short-term approach is to balance the need for people sleeping outside to be safe, with the entire city’s need for health, safety and livability,” Hales said.

KOIN 6 News, a Portland Tribune’s media partner, contributed to this story.

The Portland Mercury

It's Official: R2DToo Is Moving Across the River (Barring Appeal)

By Dirk VanderHart

February 24, 2016

In the end, the decision to move Right 2 Dream Too across the river came quickly, and with just a smidge of drama.

Portland City Council had already listened for hours last week as foes of moving the homeless camp from beneath the Chinatown Gate to the Central Eastside laid out a litany of arguments. They think the new lot, near OMSI at the east end of Tilikum Crossing, is unsafe. That it will hamper a nearby business, East Side Plating. That it's an ugly and inhumane place to put people with few other options. And that the city's zoning code simply isn't built to allow a homeless encampment in a neighborhood carved out for industrial use.

And they were disappointed rather quickly today, as it became clear—after nearly a week of contemplation—that four out of five city commissioners support the move.

Commissioner Nick Fish was the council's lone dissenter on a pair of votes: one that accepted the very convenient zoning rationale city code enforcers crafted to justify a homeless camp on the Central Eastside, the other to affirm that the city will, in fact, move R2DToo to the plot at SE 3rd and Harrison in coming months. The well-regarded rest area has to be off of its current lot in October at the latest.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who's led the process of finding R2DToo a new site, had an interesting slip of the tongue early on in the hearing, when she said she'd been working on the issue since "February 1913." She actually meant February 19, 2013, but the point amounted to the same: It's been a long process finding the camp a new plot of land. Fritz thought she'd accomplished the task once before, in October 2013, but was undone when Pearl District developers scuttled a deal to land campers beneath the Broadway Bridge.

"I certainly hear the concerns of the 537 people who've emailed me so far saying the city needs to do more," Fritz said today. "It's not a solution. It is a temporary place for people to sleep off the streets."

Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who controls the Portland Housing Bureau, had clear concerns about the move. He pushed for provisions in a use agreement the city will ink with R2DToo that make clear minors won't be allowed to sleep at the site, and that pregnant women staying there be required to seek prenatal care (R2DToo members say they frequently find midwives

for pregnant women, since hospitals will take a newborn if its mother is homeless). But once his concerns had been aired, Saltzman was downright cheery about the arrangement.

"They've proved me and other people wrong," said Saltzman, who's butted heads with R2DToo in the past. "I think they will do a great job at 3rd and Harrison. I think it will only be a matter of time before R2DToo and East Side Plating are best buddies."

Commissioner Steve Novick, who delayed a vote on R2DToo last week because of questions he still won't discuss with reporters, said "a number of objections [to the move] make sense. I think you could find a number of objections to any site."

It was only Fish, a former housing commissioner who's repeatedly voiced concerns about a newly lenient stance Hales has taken toward homeless camping, who found the objections concerning enough to oppose the move.

Saying his head and heart were "in conflict" and calling R2DToo "a symbol of hope, of resilience, and of self determination," Fish repeated many of the worries neighboring business owners and neighbors rattled off last week.

The plan to create a 10-year agreement with R2DToo, he said, "does not include clear accountability measures, benchmarks for success, or even a budget."

"While the road from the Westside to the Eastside is certainly paved with good intentions there's a saying that sometimes the longest distance between two points is a short cut," Fish said. He then argued that the move "overrides" zoning and land use codes, a characterization Hales bristled at after the hearing.

"Commissioner Fish comments were erroneous," he said. "We didn't override our code. I believe that this is a legal use."

That question may well be explored in the months to come. The Central Eastside Industrial Council, a collection of businesses in the neighborhood, has repeatedly raised objections to the city's zoning rationale. It's entirely possible the group could appeal that rationale to the state's Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). CEIC President Brad Malsin said after the hearing opponents would only file an appeal "if we think we can win."

"We still think it's not a great use," he said.

In the context of the city's the fast-shifting policies toward homelessness, today's decision actually isn't that wild. It merely moves an existing service across the river (though opponents believe it sets precedents that now allow homeless camps in industrial areas throughout the city). As we've reported, the vision for the new plot includes several larger structures that will housing laundry facilities, a kitchen, bathrooms, and showers. The rest of the property will be left for a collection of small and large tents that can host roughly 100 people at any time. The site's architect speaks of a "sculptural wall" wreathed in passionflower and raised garden beds.

As the move draws closer, city officials plan to hammer out a use agreement with R2DToo, and to help craft a "good-neighbor agreement" between the camp and other people in the area.

Portland Business Journal

Council votes to move homeless camp across the river

By Jon Bell

February 24, 2016

In a 4 to 1 vote this afternoon, the Portland City Council voted to move the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp from its current location downtown to a city-owned lot in the Central Eastside Industrial District.

According to KOIN, only Commissioner Nick Fish opposed the move, though Commissioner Dan Saltzman added an amendment that prevents anyone under the age of 18 staying in the camp.

With the vote, the camp will most certainly move from its current home at the entrance to Chinatown on West Burnside to a city-owned piece of land at Southeast Third Avenue and Harrison. The camp could be home for up to 100 people at a time. The site is currently zoned for industrial use, though the city has found that a "Community Service" use is allowable on the property. (The city is calling the camp a "rest area.")

Many nearby business owners have expressed their opposition to the move.

OPB

Right 2 Dream Too Homeless Camp Looks To Find New Home

By Amelia Templeton

February 24, 2016

The Portland city council will vote today on a proposal to move the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp to a city-owned lot.

The new site, near the new Tilikum Crossing Bridge, could resolve years of uncertainty over the camp's future.

Currently, the Right 2 Dream Too camp sits next to the red-and-gold gate at the entrance to Portland's Chinatown. Five years ago, an adult bookstore owner who had feuded with the city invited Right 2 Dream Too to pitch their tents on his property.

The homeless camp is sheltered by a wall made of painted wooden doors. Everyone who enters has to check in at the security desk.

"Before we let people in, we have them read this code of conduct," said Ibrahim Mubarak, a homeless activist who founded Right 2 Dream Too. "Some of the most important rules are we are a weapon free zone; we are a drug free zone. And those are the most important things. And respecting each other."

Those rules are similar to what most homeless shelters in Portland require. But in many other ways, Right To Dream Too is atypical. Inside, the camp looks like an adult version of a childhood fort.

The floors are built out of pallets. The walls and roof are built from blue tarps and old lumber. There are three main communal sleeping areas: one for men, one for women and one for couples.

A few dozen men are stretched out on the floor, snoring quietly. Nearby Mubarak points out a stack of fresh sleeping bags.

“This here is our biggest expense. Keeping over 200 sleeping bags clean. We wash them two to three times a week,” Mubarak says.

The camp smells a little like mildew. But it’s also tidy, organized and dry. And unlike Portland’s other shelters, which don’t allow people to stay during the day, Right To Dream Too allows people to show up any time and sleep for up to twelve hours.

Mike Summers says he feels safe here.

“I’m not trying to sleep with one eye open and one eye closed, making sure that I’m not assaulted and my girlfriend’s not assaulted,” Summers says.

Summers says he quit his job to take care of his mother and has been unemployed and homeless since she died.

“I think there’s more of these that need to be built. It’s not a long term solution; it’s a temporary thing until the city gets more housing built up,” he says.

Here’s where Right 2 Dream Too gets complicated. In addition to the short-term visitors who stay for up to 12 hours, there’s also a group of longer term residents, called members. The members essentially run the camp.

They keep it clean and do at least an hour of chores a week.

In exchange, they get to sleep in their own tents in the back. And have access to a small kitchen.

Inside, Marty Monahan is cooking his breakfast in a George Foreman Grill.

“I’m making yummy hashbrowns. They’re to die for. That’s Crisco,” he says.

Monahan does not fit the stereotype of a homeless person. He is clean-shaven, cleanly dressed and handsome. He works in an Italian restaurant. But he says the wage he earns isn’t enough.

“I’m making \$12. And even at \$12 an hour — that’s not cutting it,” Monahan says. Even with his income, he’s struggled to get off the street. He’s been living at Right 2 Dream Too for four years. He hasn’t found a place that will rent to him, and he hasn’t qualified for subsidized housing.

“I tried to get housing, and a waiting list would be four to five years for someone like me,” he says.

Monahan admits that spending time indoors is hard for him now.

“After four years, you start getting claustrophobia when you go inside. So I’ll go over to my friend’s. You have to have the windows open, and the doors open. Otherwise you can’t breathe,” he says.

But Monahan does have an exit strategy. He’s bought an RV, and he’s paying to have it fixed up. Long-term residents like Monahan are part of what makes Right 2 Dream Too controversial.

Some argue that the camp is really short-term housing, and not just a rest area. Critics say it's just not an appropriate place to have people living for months or even years at a time. Mubarak, the camp's founder, stresses that his goal is to have the members find permanent housing.

He points out an open space in the middle of the camp and says several tents were recently taken down: "Four people got housed last month. And that's good. That brings our total to 295 people."

The camp's members have mixed feelings about the proposed move across the river. On the one hand, they'll be farther away from the social services downtown. On the other hand, the new camp will have showers, bathrooms and a laundry area.

That, they said, will be a blessing.

KOIN

Portland City Council approves moving R2DToo

*By KOIN 6 News Staff
February 24, 2016*

PORTLAND, Ore. (KOIN) — A deal was finally reached Wednesday to move the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp from Chinatown to Southeast Portland.

The Portland City Council voted 4-1, giving the green light to R2DToo's future home at SE 3rd and Harrison.

Commissioner Nick Fish was the sole vote against it.

It was approved with an amendment by Commissioner Dan Saltzman, stating no one under the age of 18 will be allowed to stay at the camp overnight.

"It's been a long road to get here," Mayor Hales' Chief of Staff John Alpert said.

The move relocates the camp from its current location in Chinatown to a city-owned parcel near OMSI, whose board opposed the proposal.

It's supported by homeless advocates, but opposed by many eastside businesses, developers and residents.

Developer Brad Malsin, president of the Central Eastside Industrial Council, previously testified the move would violate city zoning codes and conflict with future plans for the area, which is classified as an industrial sanctuary.

"We've got respect for what they're doing to serve the homeless," Gary Rehnberg, who believes R2DToo will affect his East Side Plating business, said. "I just don't believe this to be an appropriate, compatible use under the zoning code."

The new camp could house up to 100 people at a time for as long as 10 years.

"On any given night, there are about 70-75 people who are staying there," Alpert said.

Mayor Charlie Hales argued the move is not a solution to homelessness, but a safer sleeping option for those currently without homes.

“You can’t just snap your fingers and make [permanent housing] come out of the ground,” Hales said. “We have to have places where they can sleep.”

The Portland Tribune, a KOIN 6 media partner, contributed to this report.