

The Portland Tribune

Plans for homeless shelter at Terminal 1 scaled back, delayed

By Jim Redden

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The homeless shelter proposed for Terminal 1 will be smaller and open later than planned — if it opens at all.

Developer Homer Williams originally proposed opening a 400-bed shelter in a vacant warehouse on the 15-acre site in Northwest Portland. But at a community meeting last Wednesday, backers said the shelter will only house 100 people at first and the opening date has not yet been set.

Although the City Council approved the plan on a 3-to-2 vote Aug. 10, the lease for the property is still being negotiated. The Portland Housing Bureau has not yet told the Bureau of Environmental Services, which owns Terminal 1, how much of the warehouse it wants and what changes will be made to it. Williams says he, so far, has raised \$225,000 toward the project.

Williams and his backers are still working on plans to convert Terminal 1 into a larger homeless multiservice center that could accommodate 1,000 or more homeless people at a time. The housing bureau has submitted a \$100,000 grant request to Metro to help design the project, now called Harbor of Hope. The Metro Council will not vote on it until Dec. 1. The final project could cost \$60 million or more.

Critics say Terminal 1 is not suitable for either a temporary homeless shelter or permanent multiservice center. They believe the property, which has been declared surplus by the council, should be sold to create good-paying industrial jobs. The environmental services bureau has received bids ranging from \$6 million to \$10 million for the site, but the sale is on hold until the council makes a final decision about it. Nearby businesses and others are still preparing to challenge the lease before the state Land Use Board of Appeals.

Meanwhile, Multnomah County opened its third permanent new homeless shelter over the weekend in a remodeled building on East Burnside Street. The Gresham Women's Shelter has 90 beds, showers, laundry facilities, dining tables and work and recreation spaces. It will be operated by Human Solutions, a nonprofit social service and housing agency.

The first shelter the county opened this year was a 134-bed shelter for women and children in a former strip club on Southeast Stark Street in Portland. The second was a 200-bed shelter for adults in the Hansen Building that once housed the Sheriff's Office headquarters at Northeast 122nd Avenue and Glisan Street.

A fourth shelter is set to open next month in the Sellwood area. It is being designed with 120 beds for couples.

Earlier, Portland opened and later closed two temporary shelters that each housed more than 100 homeless adults.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners will receive an update on the shelter system at around 10 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 22. Public testimony will be taken.

KOIN 6 News contributed to this story.