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**NEWS RELEASE: In historic partnership, Portland and Multnomah County agree to pay operating expenses at 100-bed shelter financed by business community**

PORTLAND — The City of Portland and Multnomah County have agreed to pay for operating expenses at a 100-bed shelter and services center in the Pearl District that's been designed and championed, through extensive fundraising, by prominent members of the local business community.

The agreement, between the Joint Office of Homeless Services and nonprofit Oregon Harbor of Hope, will leverage that unprecedented investment to bring shelter beds and other services — including assessment, individual recovery plans, mental health treatment and housing services — to a part of the community where they're needed.

The facility, called a navigation center, will be the first year-round services center constructed largely through contributions from the business community. In April 2018, Oregon Harbor of Hope announced a \$1.5 million contribution to the project from Tim Boyle, CEO of Columbia Sportswear.

Work on the project follows years of increasingly close collaboration between business and government to address homelessness and its impacts, including work to open emergency winter shelter and expand cleanup efforts.

But the navigation center will mark the most ambitious public-private partnership on homelessness yet. Harbor of Hope, after hitting its fundraising target, will contribute \$3.5 million for construction and capital costs.

The site will operate on land owned by Portland's urban renewal agency. And now the City and County, through the Joint Office, will contribute more than \$1 million to cover operating expenses.

"Our elected leaders and service providers don't get enough credit for their success in adding hundreds of shelter beds across our community," said developer Homer Williams, a co-founder of Oregon Harbor of Hope. "It's difficult and expensive to find and invest in good sites, close to the right services. We're grateful for our deepening partnership with the Joint Office, and we're excited we can keep working to make a difference in hundreds of lives."

### **Navigation center model is a first for the region**

The navigation center, in a tent-like structure north of the Broadway Bridge on SW Naito Parkway, is expected to open as soon as June 1. In a model new to Multnomah County, it will offer limited-term shelter for 100 people a night, alongside intensive case management, to help clients return to stable housing as soon as possible.

The site will also provide laundry and shower facilities, among other services. Transition Projects, an experienced shelter and housing services provider that already works closely with the Joint Office, will operate the site in partnership with Harbor of Hope.

Oregon Harbor of Hope, founded by Williams and Don Mazziotti, former director of the Portland Development Commission, shared their plans for the project in April 2018. Williams and other partners announced Boyle's gift at the time. Other announcements of gifts, including a contribution from gas utility NW Natural, followed.

Harbor of Hope had hoped to use roughly half of their \$3.5 million fundraising goal for construction, with the other half set aside to pay for operations in the facility's first year. But rising costs, because of a competitive construction market and environmental remediation, all but doubled the nonprofit's original construction estimate.

That means, to keep the project moving, Harbor of Hope will now have to spend most if not all of the money it's raised on construction and development costs. That's why the Joint Office will step in and support the center's operations. Williams said Harbor of Hope will continue to raise funds to help with operating expenses in future years.

"To sustain our effective and compassionate response to this housing crisis, we need more partnerships like this one," Mayor Ted Wheeler said. "Kudos to Harbor of Hope

and the business community for stepping up with this big investment and their commitment to ongoing involvement. This shows the power of public-private collaboration.”

### **Transitioning to higher-quality, purpose-built shelter**

The navigation center will advance the Joint Office’s work to not just add shelter but also transform how it’s offered — so it can work better for more people, serving as a path back to housing.

Since 2015, the Joint Office has doubled year-round shelter capacity, adding more than 600 beds. The Joint Office also has worked to bring people inside who hadn’t been served by traditional shelter.

New beds are open 24 hours, ending nightly queues, while also accommodating couples, pet owners and people who need a place to store belongings.

But many of those beds were opened under emergency conditions in temporary spaces. In recent months, the Joint Office has been working to shift those beds into purpose-designed, long-term, high-quality facilities like the navigation center.

The navigation center will help the Joint Office achieve its goal of providing purpose-designed, quality space in the central city.

It will join a new 120-bed shelter on Foster Road, set to open as soon as this summer, that will meet the need for longer-term, service-connected space in Southeast Portland. Transition Projects will also operate that shelter and provide housing and health services.

Last fiscal year, more than 8,700 people accessed at least one night in shelter, double the number four years before. At the same time, nearly 6,000 people were helped out of homelessness back into housing, also nearly double the number of people housed four years ago.

“Shelter saves lives and keeps people safe. But let’s never forget that the only thing that actually ends someone’s homelessness is a home,” Chair Deborah Kafoury said.

“That’s the promise of this navigation center and the full suite of services it will offer. It’s not enough to get someone inside a few nights. We need them inside, in homes of their own, each and every night.”