

From: Michael Sauschuck

To: HHS & Public Safety Committee

Re: Security Planning and Procedures for Proposed Homeless Service Center

The City of Portland's proposal to build a new homeless services center (HSC) presents a unique opportunity to incorporate security considerations and neighborhood impact into the building design and facility operations on the front end. By comparison, the existing Oxford Street Shelter and supporting agencies present numerous security challenges which exacerbate disorder and criminal behavior in the surrounding neighborhood. There is no question that the existing model is a failure and we intend to use the lessons learned in Bayside to ensure the new HSC is a success for clients as well as the neighboring community.

Design

The Portland Police Department will incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into the HSC design and planning. Specific security measures will depend upon the exact siting and layout of the HSC and will include the following CPTED design principles:

- Natural Surveillance: lighting and landscaping which promote natural surveillance and make loitering difficult. Landscaping does not create hidden spaces or block sight lines from the road or from the building. There are sufficient windows and doors to prevent blindspots and allow people inside the building to see all exterior areas of the site.
- Access Control: Fencing/gates to control access to the facility and limit interference and/or illicit actions by non-clients. Walkways will lead directly from sidewalks and parking lots to the building entrance. Low growing landscaping or open fencing will guide pedestrians to the entrance while discouraging loitering.
- Ownership: Clear delineation of HSC territory through the use of pavement, fencing, lighting and signage. The intent of this principle is to create a strong sense of control and discourage trespassers.
- Pride: Create a welcoming, attractive facility which encourages a sense of pride and discourages behavior which is contrary to values of the community. Establish maintenance procedures which ensure the facility and surrounding area remain free of graffiti, litter, garbage and other eyesores.

Planning

PPD will also work closely with HSC staff to create an intake process which precludes loitering outside the facility. Any queuing will take place within the footprint of the facility and will not spill onto adjacent parking areas, sidewalks, or streets. The area around the facility will be clearly posted to prevent loitering and parking areas will be monitored closely to prevent unauthorized personnel from engaging in illicit activities.

Once a service center site is selected, PPD will contact area businesses to ensure that current criminal trespass letters are on file and will examine the need to post “no drinking in public” signs in the surrounding area.

Service center rules will be clearly established and posted within the facility as well as on the City website.

Security Staffing and Policing

Any new facility will be fully staffed with a combination of security personnel and police. Security personnel must complete Verbal Judo and Behavioral Health Training. A community policing office will be co-located at the HSC and will be staffed by at least one full-time officer. Additionally, officers assigned to the beat which includes the HSC will be encouraged to stop by the office whenever possible.

Center staff will share a daily report with the PD outlining any security incidents which have occurred within the previous 24 hours. PPD will utilize this information along with calls for service and crime information to develop a list of clients who could benefit from increased intervention. The PPD Behavioral Health Team, HSC staff, and the assigned police officer will work together to identify treatment, supportive housing or other services beneficial to the individuals’ needs.

Upon opening the HSC, PPD, security personnel and staff will immediately send a united message that any behavior contrary to the values of the neighborhood will not be tolerated. Specific strategies will include issuing criminal trespass orders which allow the client to be on the Barron Center campus solely while obtaining services within the HSC. Any violations will result in an immediate arrest to ensure the offending party is removed from the neighborhood. The officer assigned to the HSC will track repeat violations and work closely with the District Attorney’s Office so that they may pursue efforts to obtain extended jail stays for the purpose of obtaining treatment for the underlying condition which is impacting their behavior.

Community Feedback

The City will provide a 24/7 hotline for community members to report any problems related to the HSC. Stakeholders will also be able to report problems via the PPD anonymous tip program. Staff and/or the assigned police officer will meet with any neighbor at their request in order to discuss concerns. The City will also create an advisory group consisting of representatives from the neighborhood, area businesses, PPD, HSC staff, HSC clients, and an elected city official. For the first year, this group will meet monthly and will be chaired by a representative of the City’s executive staff. The group will review complaints made during the prior month and recommend operational changes to reduce neighborhood impacts and/or improve client services. Upon agreement of the majority of group members, the advisory panel will shift to quarterly meetings in year 2.

Data Sharing and Tracking

In addition to the strategies discussed above, PPD intends to use leverage technology to track disorder and crime within the HSC and the neighboring community. This information will be reviewed weekly as part of the Department's Compstat program. It will also be posted on the City website for public review.

As we move forward in this process, I anticipate PPD will refine the processes described above to best suit the specifics of the location of the facility. We welcome public input into our plans for policing the facility now and as we move forward.