

*Multnomah County statement regarding Oct. 11 Wapato press event.*

“We’re glad that Jordan Schnitzer has reached the conclusion that he can’t afford to warehouse people in this remote jail. For us, it was never about the cost alone. Our community, our homeless service providers, business leaders like Business for a Better Portland, and most critically, people with lived experience, have told us it’s the wrong building in the wrong place.

Over the past four years, Multnomah County and the city of Portland working together have doubled the number of shelter beds in this community.

We’ve also helped house record numbers of people as we answer our housing affordability crisis. On any one night this year, we support 12,400 people in permanent housing, double the number from four years ago.

And we are well on the way to a significant expansion in supportive housing. The \$18 million a year that Wapato supporters say they need to fund Wapato, will create 1,000 permanent homes with support services instead.

We’re not willing to take funding from those families getting rent assistance, from the people in apartments and shelters, and kick them to the street, just to throw good money after bad.

That’s why we’ve been pushing ahead with the strategies that we know work. We bought a building and parking lot downtown and are designing a behavioral health resource center - with the community at the table. This will provide the services for the very people who are experiencing chronic homelessness being discussed here.

We fully agree that treatment and services change lives. If Harbor of Hope wants to invest in treatment for people experiencing chronic homelessness, then we welcome them to join us and support the Downtown Behavioral Health Resource Center.”