

CENTRAL EASTSIDE: ENHANCED SERVICES DISTRICT

Clarification re: Proposed Central Eastside Enhanced Services District

On 1/9/19, Willamette Week reduced a two year effort to create the Central Eastside's version of an Enhanced Services District to a 'traditional response' solely characterized by hiring security guards. We are deeply disappointed by this and other recent mischaracterizations of our work serving our community and our intentions in forming an Enhanced Services District.

For nearly half a century the Central Eastside Industrial Council has supported the Central Eastside Industrial District. This 681-acre industrial sanctuary contains 1,300 businesses and provides 20,000 jobs. Our diverse mix of businesses, industries, makers and creatives contributes to an innovative environment that generates quality jobs, promotes a vibrant pedestrian experience and ensures a resilient, welcoming and connected community.

We started this process with a clear focus on our values – collaboration, innovation, responsive, transparent and equitable – and a desire to put our money where our mouth is. Our leadership has a long history of community involvement and only wants to dive in deeper. Our President serves on the Board of A Home For Everyone, our President and previous VP partnered with Transition Projects to open a temporary shelter for 100 women, men and couples in 2017, and the majority of our Executive Committee contribute to supporting Portland's most vulnerable populations.

The Central Eastside Industrial District is changing. A lot. And so is Portland. Some of these changes are positive – new businesses, development, residents and transportation options. Some are negative – increasing congestion, garbage and crime and a city wide housing emergency now stretching into its 4th year. All must be managed to ensure our district, and our city, remain vibrant, prosperous and equitable.

To manage all of the change, we must take advantage of new tools and generate new revenue. For more than two years our all-volunteer Industrial Council has worked to do just that. In January 2018, Central Eastside leaders presented City Council with five innovative public/private solutions to address critical district needs including public restrooms, improved access to hygiene, public trash removal and compassionate community policing. In the absence of meaningful public investment in any of these areas, Central Eastside moved forward with the creation of an Enhanced Services District.

Issue: Community Innovation

Central Eastside is Portland's Innovation Quadrant. Our district is filled with innovators who are used to questioning the status quo and disrupting business as usual. In this spirit, we are also disrupting the traditional functions of an Enhanced Services District and creating a unique model that fits our unique district. Through the Community Innovation Fund, we will award annual grants to organizations implementing innovative workforce development strategies or providing services in the district that support the ESD's goals including serving our most vulnerable. We are excited to fund new approaches to addressing our biggest challenges.

Issue: Vulnerable Populations

Central Eastside has a burgeoning population of vulnerable people on our streets. Houselessness is not a crime and should not be treated as such or conflated with the increasing rate of crime against people and property in our district. In fact, we know that our houseless population is frequently preyed upon by criminal elements. Creating safer and cleaner streets benefits ALL who live, work and visit our district. *Central Eastside does not support sweeps of vulnerable populations.*

- *Initial Proposed Solution (July 2018)* – We partnered with Central City Concern to launch a peer-based Pilot Project to remove trash and other biohazards. The innovative Clean Start Program provides mentored employment for individuals impacted by houselessness. This six-month experience provides a living wage, builds confidence in employees to pursue ongoing permanent employment and is expected to graduate 20 employment-ready workers each year. Clean Start cleaners also provide referrals to supportive services.

- Revised Solution (October 2018) – In addition to continuing the Clean Start Program, we are working to bring Harbor of Hope’s shower truck to St. Francis on a regular basis to provide increased access to hygiene (expected February 2019). We are also exploring adding overnight toilet access for houseless residents at social service centers in the district. Finally, Central Eastside will step up our advocacy efforts to ensure placement and appropriate maintenance of the 4 Portland Loos we were told to expect.

Issue: Trash and Vandalism

Central Eastside has an increasing amount of trash and vandalism. Biohazards and trash make navigating sidewalks difficult for all users and impact access to transit options district wide.

- Initial Proposed Solution (July 2018) – In partnership with the City of Portland’s Graffiti Abatement Team and SOLVE, CEIC coordinates 3 district-wide Clean-ups annually which engage more than 200 individual volunteers contributing 750 hours of work. We also contracted Central City Concern to launch a peer-based Pilot Project to remove trash and other biohazards. In 2018 these combined efforts removed 80 tons of trash (8,048 bags)
- Revised Solution (November 2018) – After documenting nearly 1,000 incidents of graffiti we added removal services to Clean Start Program and helped Portland Street Art Alliance secure a \$50,000 grant to implement ‘mural corridors’ under the Hawthorne and Morrison bridges as graffiti deterrent.

Issue: Crime and Safety

Central Eastside has a crime problem. Using the City’s own crime statistics we know that crimes against people (including our most vulnerable populations) have increased significantly over the last 12 months. In November 2018 **Central Eastside had the 7th highest level of crimes against people and property in Portland per capita.**

- Initial Proposed Solution (August 2018) – We launched a Pilot Project to provide contracted, unarmed security services in the northeast portion of the district. The unarmed security professionals we hired were chosen because of their innovative approach to maintaining order while being compassionate, respectful and helpful to our vulnerable houseless population. In fact, at their own cost, they launched a district-wide Warm Winter Coat drive and provided more than 100 winter coats, sleeping bags, blankets, hand-warmers, water and first aid supplies to houseless individuals. They are highly trained in de-escalation techniques and trauma-informed interventions and went through Cascadia Behavioral Health’s 8-hour mental health crisis training. Services provided include tracking and reporting incidents of graffiti, vandalism, trash and biohazards; crime prevention through environmental design property assessments; and referrals to social services. The security team worked Monday-Saturday from 5pm-3am. A Security Committee made up of 30 diverse stakeholders including businesses, property owners, nonprofit leaders, social service providers, residents and government agencies was convened to provide oversight of this work.
- Revised Solution (January 2019) – After six months of implementation, data collection and community feedback, we revised our security services in January 2019. The new ‘Safety Contract’ retains the same highly trained personnel who have built strong relationships with district businesses, employees and vulnerable populations but shifts hours and focus:
 - Employee Escorts – Between the hours of 3-7pm employees who feel unsafe walking in the district can call for a free escort from their office to their car or transit option
 - Transit Routes – Increased presence along transit routes including the Water Avenue Shuttle
 - Vandalism Hot Spots – Increased presence in hot spot areas including under freeways

District documentation of graffiti, vandalism, trash and biohazards; crime prevention through environmental design property assessments; and referrals to social services will continue. A newly constituted Safe and Sound Committee will be convened in the spring. In addition, we are also looking at best practices programs like CAHOOTs in Eugene as a model for adding a crisis worker to the security team.

Together we are confident we can create an innovative ESD. As always, we are open to new ideas and welcome suggestions. To learn more about our work, call us for a tour and/or visit ceic.cc.