

LISA REYNOLDS, MD
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
District 36



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 7th, 2021

Co-Chairs Girod, Holvey and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capitol Construction,

I am writing today in support of Multnomah County's request to fund the Downtown Behavioral Health Resource Center in Portland.

As you are aware, thousands of people across Oregon, especially in the Metro region, are struggling with a houselessness crisis. Multnomah County and the City of Portland formed the Joint Office of Homeless Services in 2016 to respond to this crisis.

The housing emergency has been exacerbated by COVID and it disproportionately affects some of the most vulnerable residents of our community - such as those with behavioral health and substance use disorders.

We need more spaces for houseless Oregonians to receive treatment and assistance to move into permanent housing.

In 2019, Multnomah County in collaboration with community partners, developed a plan for a centrally located, multi-service behavioral health resource center with peer support services, overnight shelter beds and transitional housing, all-in-one.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners approved the purchase of property at 333 SW Park Avenue in Portland to build this behavioral health resource center. They are finalizing the design now and looking to start construction later this year. The total cost is \$31 million, and the county has already committed \$15 million.

I believe that this is the perfect opportunity for the state to partner with Multnomah County to fund this project by providing \$12.5 million in bond funding to get the program up and running.

While this project is located in the heart of Portland (and in my district), its reach will extend much further than even the city limits. Portland is often a congregation point for many of our houseless community members, since there is a general lack of resources and facilities across the state.

This center will have the additional benefit of taking pressure off of emergency departments, law enforcement, libraries, and businesses by providing a central location for people to transition off the streets and into their own homes.

I thank the Committee for your consideration, and strongly urge your support of this incredibly important project.

Representative Lisa Reynolds