

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY: Pods to begin arriving via crane as work on St. Johns Village reaches major construction milestone

Community members also offer opportunities to welcome village residents

What: Pods are arriving at the under-construction St. Johns Village site and will be lifted into place by crane. Community members will also share opportunities for how neighbors can welcome participants and offer support and partnership going forward.

When: 1 to 2 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17

Where: Parking lot owned by St. Johns Church at N. Central and N. Charleston, Portland. (The village site is at 8005 N. Richmond Ave., but because Richmond will be blocked to accommodate the crane, it's best to park the lot. Media crews will be directed to a safe place to observe the pod placement.)

Available on-site for interviews as needed: Representatives from **Do Good Multnomah, St. Johns Church** and **Convergence Architecture**.

Learn more: See FAQs, lease documents, and manual at ahomeforeveryone.net/stjohnsvillage. Do Good Multnomah's information and referral page is at dogoodmultnomah.org/st-johns-village

PORTLAND — With the beginning of winter just days away, construction at the long-awaited St. Johns Village will reach a milestone on Thursday, Dec. 17.

The village's 19 sleeping pods — which have been manufactured off-site by St. Johns business ModsPDX — will begin arriving and be dropped into place by crane.

And over the next few weeks, the first few participants could begin moving in as part of a soft opening — even as construction continues toward overall completion, full occupancy and a grand opening early next year. The village is funded by the City of Portland and Multnomah County through the Joint Office of Homeless Services.

When fully occupied and built out next month, the village will offer alternative-style shelter for 19 people in individual pods that offer heat and electricity. The village will have landscaping, privacy fencing, lighting and outdoor gathering space. A large

community building will offer additional gathering space, bathrooms and a full kitchen.

Do Good Multnomah, a housing and shelter services provider, will operate the village through a contract with the Joint Office.



Through that contract, Do Good Multnomah will provide residents with case management, housing navigation and other supports as part of a housing-focused program that's designed to help participants end their homelessness and move to permanent homes of their own.

A limited number of spaces will be offered to residents from Hazelnut Grove, an independently organized village community in North Portland. But most of the initial spots, and then all spots that open up going forward, will be offered to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the greater St. Johns area.

Community support is vital to village's progress and future success

Several community partners in St. Johns and North Portland stepped up to ensure the village, first proposed in late 2018, would reach this milestone.

St. Johns Church, formerly St. Johns Christian Church, agreed to offer its land for lease (\$3,400/month) after it became clear an initial site planned in St. Johns would be too

small and too difficult to build on.

Soon after, a grassroots coalition of supportive neighbors — called [St. Johns Welcomes the Village](#) — organized itself to advocate for the project at the new location. The coalition collected hundreds of letters of support, and members attended community meetings to voice support.

Do Good Multnomah and St. Johns Church are working with members around how to continue supporting participants at the village over the years and months to come.

As the first few move-ins approach, St. Johns Welcomes the Village and St. Johns Church are working to curate an online resource for neighbors interested in welcoming village participants and donating their time, services or materials. That list will be at the coalition's website starting Thursday, Dec. 17: [sjwv.org](#).

Neighbors interested in contributing are strongly encouraged to follow the guidance provided on that resource for how, what and where to donate, rather than directly dropping things off at the site, where space and capacity to process donations will be limited. Neighbors can also reach out to Janel Hovde, a pastor at St. Johns Church, janel@sjcpdx.com.



Convergence Architecture, based in St. Johns, also stood up as an essential contributor to the project — donating its design services to the village project and coordinating closely with Do Good Multnomah and other local partners contributing to the work.

Those other partners include St. Johns-based builder Mods Pdx, which is under contract to construct the pods and community building.

The Oregon Home Builders Association is donating grant funding for finishing work on the pods and other needs.

Other St. Johns businesses are providing pro bono work around design and construction, including landscape architect Rachel Hill, Placecraft Design & Build, WCL Engineering and Gene Darco Painting.

Village opens amid an ongoing COVID-19 response

Since February, the City, Multnomah County and the Joint Office have been working to help people experiencing homelessness stay safe in the face of COVID-19 whether they were in shelters or living outside.

The Joint Office and Multnomah County Emergency Management maintained access to hundreds of shelter beds, despite the need for physical distancing, first by spreading services to new buildings, and then by moving vulnerable people to motels. There are now six motels operating as 24-hour physical distancing motel shelters for people assessed as having a higher risk of serious or fatal COVID-19 infections.

Two additional motels are available as space for people experiencing homelessness, whether in shelter or coming from medical settings or the streets, to quarantine if they develop symptoms or to safely await test results if they've been exposed.

The City opened public restrooms and added 135 portable restrooms and handwashing stations throughout the community. The City and the Joint Office also opened three temporary outdoor shelters, which were recently overhauled for winter conditions.

The Joint Office and partners Do Good Multnomah and Transition Projects opened more than 260 physically distanced, 24-hour indoor shelter beds for winter, including 100 beds at North Portland's Charles Jordan Community Center.

Throughout COVID-19, the Joint Office has also been supplying community partners and volunteers with life-saving gear to share with people in camps, including thousands of blankets, tents, and sleeping bags, tens of thousands of masks, and hundreds of gallons of sanitizer and water. Learn more at ahomeforeveryone.net/covid-homelessness.

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