

County to seek proposals in converting NE Portland commercial space into low-income housing

- Multnomah County

October 23, 2015



Mike Sublett of the county's Facilities and Property Management Division addresses the board on Thursday.

Multnomah County will seek proposals to redevelop a Northeast Portland commercial building into homes for low-income working families, those at risk of displacement and families transitioning out of homelessness.

The Board of Commissioners on Thursday approved a [resolution](#) that clears the way for the North Williams Center, in the burgeoning North Williams/Vancouver corridor, to be converted into affordable housing.

The North Williams property is made up of three buildings totaling 50,000 square feet. The county currently leases the site to Albertina Kerr Centers, Inc., which provides career training and other services to adults with developmental disabilities. Albertina Kerr's lease expires June 30, 2016.

Converting the property into affordable housing will advance the county's mission of identifying safe and affordable housing, both temporary and permanent, for families in need, said Mike Sublett of the county's Facilities and Property Management Division.

"This is a vibrant neighborhood," Sublett said. "But it's not one that's characterized by families who are most in need of affordable housing and that's one of the things that we've emphasized and that's a very important criterion within (the request for proposals)."



An aerial view of the North Williams Center.

Multnomah County has owned the 1.15 acre site since 2013. The board declared it surplus property later that year and adopted a resolution in March directing its redevelopment into affordable housing.

As an incentive, the county plans to turn the property over to the selected developer at no cost. *Home Forward* also has committed to providing up to 40 housing vouchers for the project to subsidize the fair-market rent of low-income tenants.

The land and building are currently valued at more than \$2.1 million, according to a real market value analysis from the Multnomah County Assessor's Office.

The request for proposals (RFP) is expected to be issued Oct. 26 as a Notice of Funding Availability through the *Portland Housing Bureau*. Inclusion in the NOFA makes the project eligible for tax increment financing of up to \$4.5 million.

The RFP will request that a minimum of 30 units in the development be dedicated to families with incomes of not more than 30 percent of the median family income. A preliminary analysis determined that the site can accommodate 40 to 60 units, Sublett said.

The North Williams Center previously operated for nearly three decades as the Wagstaff Battery Manufacturing Center.

Proposals are tentatively due in January, with an award to be made in February or March. The preliminary schedule also projects a Fall 2018 opening for the housing site.

<https://multco.us/multnomah-county/news/county-seek-proposals-converting-ne-portland-commercial-space-low-income>