Share the impact of Site-based Housing First with the City of Portland's Planning Board.

On Tuesday, June 25, 2024, the City of Portland's Planning Board will hold a meeting at 4:30pm to consider the proposed redevelopment of the former Oxford Street Shelter location into a new Avesta Housing and Preble Street Site-based Housing First building.

Thank you for planning to testify in support of this project and its impacts. Your story about how Site-based Housing First benefits our community will be powerful. Below are details about how to submit your testimony to the Planning Board and how to attend the meeting in person or online if that is possible your schedule.

Meeting details

- **Date & time:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024, at 4:30pm
- **Location:** Hybrid Meeting, Room 24 (Basement Level of City Hall) and Zoom
- **Zoom info:** The Zoom Link will be available when the Agenda PDF is posted to the 'Meeting Files' Tab; see this link
- **To submit written testimony:** Please email planningboard@portlandmaine.gov; it would be helpful if you forward this email after it is sent to communications@preblestreet.org so that we can compile the testimony in support of Site-based Housing First

Tips for preparing your written testimony:

In preparing testimony, make sure you introduce yourself and, if you represent an organization, give the name of the organization. State your support of Site-based Housing First and the need for more Site-based Housing First programs in Portland. Share the reason(s) that you support and then explain why.

There is no set length for written testimony.

Talking points:

Avesta Housing and Preble Street collaborated on the first three Site-based Housing First properties in Maine offering 85 apartments to people who have experienced chronic homelessness — Logan Place, which opened in 2005; Florence House (2010); and Huston Commons (2017). Avesta owns and operates the properties, and Preble Street provides 24/7 onsite support services, harm reduction, and crisis intervention to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness. Plans for this fourth location of Site-based Housing First

were announced in November 2023 and will add approximately 30 apartments for vulnerable Mainers.

- Site-based Housing First has proven to be a cost-effective, permanent solution to ending homelessness nationwide.
- With more than 150 people on the wait list for Logan Place, Florence House, and Huston Commons and daily proof of the model's success in bringing people who are chronically homeless home for good, Portland needs more Site-based Housing First apartments.
- The role of the Planning Board right now is to evaluate the technicalities of the proposal which this project should meet.
- More Site-based Housing First programs in Maine will help us to end long-term, chronic homelessness in our state.
- A Site-based Housing First approach provides dedicated apartment buildings with on-site, 24/7 professional social work staff providing supportive services and crisis intervention to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness.
- **Site-Based Housing First leads to positive outcomes for tenants and the community.** In a study of Logan Place tenants comparing emergency service use while homeless and after being housed in Site-Based Housing First, there was an 81% decrease in police contacts, a 71% decrease in ambulance use, and a 74% decrease in emergency room visits.
- Site-based Housing First is especially effective for highly vulnerable populations, including the chronically homeless, people sleeping outside, and people with untreated mental and behavioral health and/or substance use disorders.
- Once people are safe and supported by 24-hour onsite social work staff in permanent housing, they can stabilize and work toward a more fulfilling and independent future; including addressing substance use disorder, focusing on health, education, or employment, and rebuilding relationships with friends and family.
- Maine needs 400 Site-based Housing First units, which translates to the establishment of 12-15 new properties.