

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC**

Eastgate Housing Campus Implementation Update

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY****INFORMATION  
ONLY**

Overview of the first several months of operations for the three projects at the Eastgate Housing Campus: PorchLight men's shelter, Plymouth Crossing permanent supportive housing, and Polaris at Eastgate workforce housing.

**RECOMMENDATION**

N/A

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

As the organizations at the Eastgate Housing Campus approach their first year of operations, this report presents an overview of implementation progress to date. The three individual projects that comprise the Eastgate Housing Campus will provide shelter, housing, and services for more than 1,500 community members of varied incomes. These include: Polaris at Eastgate with 360 affordable workforce apartments, Plymouth Crossing with 92 apartments providing permanent supportive housing, and the 100-bed PorchLight men's shelter.

Development of the nearly 10-acre site, previously owned by King County, necessitated a unique partnership among agencies that serve a spectrum of housing needs in the community. The partnership between Plymouth Housing, PorchLight (formerly Congregations for the Homeless), and Inland Group worked closely with city staff, community members, business leaders, service providers, and funders to implement the Eastgate Housing Campus. The City has made substantial financial investments in these projects directly and through ARCH.

**Public Safety**

From the earliest project planning and continuing today, the safety and comfort of clients and residents at Eastgate as well as businesses and residents in the surrounding community is of primary importance. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CEPTED) principles were incorporated into the building and site design for the PorchLight site. Extensive coordination with Bellevue Fire and Police Departments is ongoing, and the City's CCAT and Fire CARES teams are regularly on site to support residents and continue to build collaborative relationships.

The Bellevue Police Department tracks calls for service (911 calls) in and near the Eastgate campus. Within a half-mile radius of the new shelter address, the call volume has increased 56% compared to the same time period in 2022/2023 (1,795 vs 1,151). It is important to note that this increase is not entirely attributable to the presence of the shelter, as myriad factors influence calls for service. However, some community members and nearby businesses have expressed concern about increasing visibility

of homelessness and related impacts in the area.

From June 2023 through April 2024, PorchLight has received 289 calls for service, and Plymouth Crossing has received 120. These numbers do not include officer-initiated calls, such as regular relationship-building visits by the CCAT team and are largely attributable to staff calling for assistance. The volume of calls to the shelter is consistent with when it was temporarily located on 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE; the City's first responders planned for this and are able to support public safety needs on site and in the surrounding area. The City's CCAT and Fire CAREs teams continue to collaborate with Plymouth and PorchLight staff to support residents as well.

## **PorchLight**

Bellevue has hosted a winter men's shelter in interim locations beginning in 2008, shifting to a year-round shelter in 2019. The Council recognized the importance of establishing a permanent location for the shelter, and after a multi-year process and considerable public input, the Eastgate site was selected. Per the City's Land Use Code, new shelter facilities require formation of a Good Neighbor Agreement Advisory Committee. A Committee was formed to foster communication between the community and PorchLight (then Congregations for the Homeless), with the purpose of informing the permitting process and establishing a Good Neighbor Agreement. This Agreement addresses expectations for communications, security and crime prevention, and shelter operations which were incorporated into their Conditional Use approval.

Construction of the men's shelter began in January 2022 and was completed in June 2023. This building is the permanent home of the only emergency men's shelter on the Eastside. PorchLight is an enhanced shelter, offering 100 beds along with a day center, laundry, three meals each day, and access to case management, employment and housing navigation, and behavioral health and addiction supportive services. After years in a temporary location, the Eastgate shelter is now housed in an architecturally-award-winning facility designed to welcome and support clients and staff.

PorchLight has hosted more than 450 individuals overnight since moving to the Eastgate campus and continues to be at capacity nearly every night of the year. The need for shelter in the community remains high as rates of homelessness increase across the region. In addition to providing ongoing emergency shelter, the facility's partnership and proximity to Plymouth Crossing (below) have resulted in a dozen men moving out of the shelter and directly into housing in the past year.

PorchLight has continued to convene a Community Advisory Board made up of area residents and business representatives. This group meets monthly to discuss community impacts, provide input on implementation of the Good Neighbor Agreement, and receive updates about shelter operations. Per the Good Neighbor Agreement, PorchLight will report data annually to the community. Shelter outreach staff monitor "magnet areas" nearby where clients or other unhoused individuals may gather or camp. PorchLight staff and residents walk the site and surrounding areas daily to pick up trash. In response to feedback, they are increasing the frequency of these walks. The shelter has also engaged with City staff and King County Metro regarding trash cans or other future improvements to the adjacent bus stops on Eastgate.

A number of individuals, businesses, and community and faith-based organizations are actively engaged in supporting the shelter and the men staying there. In the last year, local organizations

provided 265 meals (each for 100 men), dental checkups, haircuts, and even on-site theater performances. PorchLight has hosted vaccine events in partnership with King County as well as voter registration drives.

### **Plymouth Crossing**

Plymouth Crossing opened July 10, 2023, and provides 92 studio apartments for single adults who were previously experiencing chronic homelessness. This permanent supportive housing building provides a behavioral health clinic and nursing services on-site, supported by funding from Bellevue's Housing Stability Program. This service is highly utilized by residents, with nearly half engaging in behavioral health services in the past three months. The building is staffed 24 hours a day and includes three units for live-in staff. Plymouth Crossing also provides case management services for residents, with an engagement rate of over 90%, the highest of any of Plymouth's buildings in the region.

Plymouth Crossing is committed to leasing its units with at least 35% of residents coming from local referral partner agencies, including the Cities of Bellevue, Redmond, and Issaquah, as well as several service providers. Currently 49 of the units (53%) are filled through local referrals. Among these, five residents were clients placed directly by Bellevue's Homelessness Outreach program, 12 from the PorchLight men's shelter, and 11 from Sophia Way. The remaining units were filled through the countywide Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) program, which matches unhoused individuals to program criteria in order to facilitate placements in projects that have County funding. Several of the residents identified through CEA also have Eastside connections.

The program has built strong community partnerships. FareStart, Hopelink, Nourishing Networks, Forest Ridge High School, and other community members are involved with providing food. Seattle Humane, located nearby, has facilitated volunteer opportunities for residents and provides discounted spay and neuter fees for low income individuals. Local businesses have provided volunteers and Christmas gifts for residents.

### **Polaris Eastgate**

Polaris Eastgate, operated by the Inland Group, offers 360 units of affordable workforce housing, with rents set to be affordable to households earning between 30% and 60% of Area Median Income (\$44,200 or \$88,440, respectively, for a family of four). Completion of this project represents the final stage of development for the Eastgate campus. Polaris Eastgate has two buildings; the first with 138 units began move-ins at the end of March 2024. The second building of 222 units expected to receive a Certificate of Occupancy in May with move-ins beginning June 1. The project is designed to be family-friendly, with a mix of 1- to 3-bedroom units, and on-site amenities including a YMCA early learning center.

Demand for the apartments has been very strong, with over 96% of the units already leased. Inland provided information about the leasing process in advance to a number of local agencies, working with ARCH, LifeSpring, Hopelink, and others to identify potential residents. They also specifically engaged with the Bellevue School District early in the process to encourage teachers and staff to move in and with BSD Family Support Centers to train them in how to refer clients and families for housing. Over 140 initial referrals came through these BSD connections. Inland is also working closely with BSD to

share the number of students moving into the building so that local schools can plan appropriately.

**Next Steps**

City staff continues to collaborate with the three agencies on the Eastgate Housing Campus, supporting successful outcomes for clients, residents, and the surrounding community.

**POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

**Policy Impact**

Development of the Eastgate Housing Campus and ongoing support of operations at this location is implements multiple city policies and priorities, including:

- 2021-23 City Council Priority to seek a permanent location for the men’s shelter,
- 2024-26 City Council Priority to support programs related to homelessness prevention and programs that help quickly house individuals experiencing homelessness,
- Diversity Advantage Plan to support the establishment of a year-round homeless shelter on the Eastside, and
- Affordable Housing Strategy

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

**OPTIONS**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

**AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

N/A