

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

**RESOLUTION NO. XXX**

Resolution to Pause Opening of Multnomah County Deflection Center.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:**

- A. Measure 110, passed in 2021, decriminalized possession of small amounts of hard drugs for personal use in Oregon.
- B. Subsequent to passage of Measure 110, drug use, overdoses and deaths significantly increased in Oregon. Although due to a complex interplay of factors, there was concern that the lack of potential consequences in the criminal justice system resulted in an inability to leverage the system to incent positive outcomes relating to drug treatment and recovery.
- C. HB 4002, signed into law in April, 2024, responded to concerns around Measure 110 and made possession of even small amounts of hard drugs a misdemeanor, with the potential for arrest and incarceration.
- D. HB 4002 did not require that counties implement deflection programs, but established incentives for counties to implement programs whereby individuals who could otherwise be arrested for possession of small amounts of hard drugs could instead be “deflected” into treatment. No physical deflection structures were required in order for counties to pursue deflection programming, and no deadlines were established.
- E. Although counties were not required by HB 4002 to implement deflection programs, they were incentivized to do so and given broad leeway to determine what those programs would look like in their own jurisdictions.
- F. Deflection programs, commonly referred to as pre-arrest diversion programs, have been implemented in many jurisdictions across the country and there are a number of effective models, some of which include physical deflection centers and many of which do not.
- G. Multnomah County has leased a facility already permitted for demolition, at a

cost of \$2 million for refurbishing alone, to open as a temporary deflection center on September 1, 2024.

- H. Substantial questions remain around internal operations of the Deflection Center, including what services will be provided inside the Center, how referrals will be made, and where people sent to the deflection center will be deflected to.
- I. There are even more questions related to public safety external to the facility, including what happens if people brought to the facility by police choose not to go inside the facility and what happens to people after they leave. There is no comprehensive public safety plan, no plan to address contingencies, and no suggestion that a plan can be feasibly created by September 1, 2024, the scheduled opening of the facility.
- J. Most decisions regarding facility operations have been made behind closed doors without opportunity for public engagement.
- K. Without a cohesive, complete, rational, and operational safety plan, presented to the community with opportunity for input, there is substantial risk of harm to community members in proximity to the deflection center, particularly in regard to a preschool located 450 feet from the facility.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:**

1. The lack of a comprehensive, cohesive plan around public safety for a facility that by definition will have adults impaired by alcohol and other drugs dropped off by police, in close proximity to a preschool, demands that the opening of the facility be paused.
2. During the pause, action will be taken along four parallel paths:
  - a. Implementation of an alternative deflection model in real time that does not require a built facility.
  - b. Consideration of alternative approaches to deflection other than the current plan to open a temporary deflection center at the current location.
  - c. Development of a clear, comprehensive security plan that would be fully staffed, account for contingencies, and be implementable from the first day the facility opens.
  - d. Urgent identification of a location for a permanent Sobering Center with

the potential for later expansion into a facility providing additional services such as triage, detox, treatment, and stabilization. Lack of detox and treatment services initially should not prevent a permanent Sobering Center from being established.

3. Funding committed to the currently proposed deflection center should be held in contingency until the pause is lifted, with the potential for these funds to be used for purposes described in Section 2.
4. At minimum, the pause shall last as long as needed to engage the community in the development of a comprehensive safety plan with evidence that the plan can be fully deployed as soon as the deflection center is opened. The duration of the pause should be determined through open and transparent communication with the community, including the Buckman Community Association, the Central Eastside Industrial Council, and the administrators, teachers, and families of the adjacent preschool.

**ADOPTED this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.**

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON  
Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair

REVIEWED:

JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By

Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

**SUBMITTED BY: Sharon Meieran, Multnomah County Commissioner District 1**