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## QuickPoint! – Reduce Homelessness by Reusing the Expo Center

By Vlad Yurlov

Portland values its “green” projects; but local policymakers are attempting to address the region’s homelessness crisis by creating new facilities, rather than repurposing properties that already exist. [Cascade Policy Institute has released a new report offering straightforward solutions](#) to aid the unsheltered homeless by using public resources more effectively. Publicly owned and operated buildings should serve as emergency homeless shelters to eliminate the need for illegal camping. Homeless individuals need shelter, and vacant buildings like the Portland Expo Center have the space.

The Expo Center has never generated much revenue, and the property has capital needs that are not in its budget. This makes it a great candidate for Metro’s recent Supportive Housing Services funds, which could redevelop the Expo Center into a shelter. This 330,000-square-foot building sits on 53 acres of land. At 100 square feet per person, the exhibition space alone could shelter thousands of people. The kitchen, restaurant, meeting rooms, and other flexible space could provide the services emergency shelters need. Finally, the massive parking areas could serve as outdoor shelters for tents or vehicles.

To solve Oregon’s homelessness crisis, readily available public buildings, like the Expo Center, should be repurposed as shelter space. Using taxpayer-funded resources more efficiently would both provide emergency relief for the homeless and be a win for the local communities that have already paid for them.

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