

Date: February 24, 2004

To: City Council

From: Brant Williams, Director, Portland Office of Transportation
Jeanne Nyquist, Director, Bureau of Maintenance

Subject: Dignity Village

On August 24, 2001, the Portland City Council directed PDOT to provide space to Dignity Village for a period of 6 months. Over the past two years and five months, we have continued to provide this space at our Sunderland Recycling Facility (aerial photo attached). We have also worked hard to provide Dignity Village reasonable services for their operation while continuing to do our daily work in a safe and efficient manner. City Council Offices have asked about the impacts of Dignity Village to PDOT's operations. We have attempted, in brief, to answer that question below. As you will read, we have had operational, financial and safety impacts, and are available to discuss these issues with you in greater detail, should it be useful.

Sunderland Recycling Facility

The Sunderland Recycling Facility is a leader in construction product recycling. The site recycles 25,000 tons of leaves into compost, processes 28,000 tons of asphalt and concrete into reusable aggregate, recycles snow sand for reuse, and processes landslide debris for sidewalk backfill and other activities. These recycling processes save the City over \$2 million in landfill tipping fees annually. In addition, the City reuses many of these materials on City projects. PDOT employs five full-time staff to operate the Sunderland recycling facility. Unlike other City facilities, Sunderland does not have hired security on site.

Impacts to Sunderland Operations

Dignity Village occupies over one acre of the original six acre leaf composting area, which has resulted in a 20 percent reduction in usable compost space. The City Fire Marshall has established spacing requirements for the rows of leaf compost. It is difficult to meet these spacing requirements with the reduced operating space. We

have stacked the leaf windrows higher in order to accommodate as much material as possible. As a result visibility is reduced, creating safety issues for employees working at the site.

In addition, the placement of Dignity Village has eliminated the use of the south entrance to the recycling facility, which has impacted the safe and efficient egress and ingress of truck traffic through the property.

Dignity Village poses water quality and other environmental threats. The recycling facility has a Conditional Land Use Permit and has Environmental Zone (E-zone) overlays. Dignity Village is in violation of the E-zone regulations and inhibits the Bureau's ability to meet the requirements of the Conditional Land Use permit. The operational plan for composting calls for reuse of captured runoff water from the site to keep up moisture content in the compost during dry periods. Since Dignity Village has moved in, soap bubbles are often observed in the pond, rendering the water unusable for our recycling purposes.

Financial Impacts to the Office of Transportation

PDOT has invested in excess of \$4.5 million to purchase and develop the Sunderland Recycling Facility.

To date, the Maintenance Bureau has spent \$25,000 on improvements solely related to accommodating Dignity Village (such as fencing the site and providing basic sanitary sewer and water distribution facilities).

There have been ongoing operational costs in addition to the initial site improvements. The annual cost for utilities has been \$3,600 and staff time associated with site cleanup is estimated at \$7,000 per year. Since Dignity Village occupies 20% of the available composting space, the Bureau has had to incur additional expenses to process the compost at \$11,000 per year. In summary, the total ongoing annual cost to the Maintenance Bureau is \$21,600. Total costs incurred to date are \$77,000 (\$25,000 initial and \$52,000 operational).

Dignity Village made an agreement with the Maintenance Bureau to pay \$2,000/month to defray the City's expenses related to Dignity Village. To date, we have received a total of \$44,000 and have not received a payment since July 2003. In addition, Dignity owes the Maintenance Bureau \$775 for their telephone bill. Taking into consideration the \$44,000 Dignity Village has reimbursed PDOT, the total financial impact to PDOT thus far is \$35,775. This cost does not include the value of the land, which is estimated to be \$300,000.

In response to a complaint to the State Building Codes Division, we were asked to develop a cost estimate of infrastructure improvements. PDOT has developed an engineering cost estimate of approximately \$240,000 to provide infrastructure improvements to a minimal level to meet the needs of 60 residents. We don't know if PDOT will be expected to pick up these costs. These infrastructure improvements include engineering, permitting and construction of sanitary sewer, drainage, electrical, and water supply upgrades.

The above cost estimate does not include the Yurt structures that are required to meet the campground land use designation. It also does not take into account liability issues for the City. Dignity Village does not have insurance at this time; therefore, the City would be liable should problems arise.

Safety Issues

Fire: In July 2002, a Villager's car caught fire. The fire spread to a neighbor's yard. The neighbor was injured fighting the fire. The Portland Fire Bureau was able to extinguish the fire without significant property damage. Another fire occurred on December 23, 2003. Three of Dignity Village's structures were destroyed or damaged in this fire. Quick response by Portland's Fire and Maintenance Bureaus prevented injury and further property damage.

Electrical: PDOT was supplying electricity to a trailer in Dignity Village. In December it was discovered that villagers were running extension cords from the trailer to their individual dwellings. This is an unsafe practice that is illegal under building codes. The manner in which the villagers were running the cords, in some cases through puddles of water, was particularly unsafe. Unfortunately, because of the dangers associated with this practice, we were forced to discontinue electrical service.

Crime: The Portland Police have a complete history of calls made to Dignity Village and have developed special procedures for responding. Portland Police have responded to numerous incidents at Dignity Village in the two and a half years they have been at Sunderland Recycling Facility. Most of the incidents involve drugs, alcohol, and assault including domestic violence.

City Employee Safety: Hypodermic needles, trash, and dog feces from Dignity Village are commonly found on the City's recycling facility, on the adjacent streets and on neighboring properties. In addition, various issues at Dignity Village, such as fires, threats and acts of vandalism have compromised the safety of the employees.

Other: Dignity Village is full or beyond capacity, but allows non-residents to access services on the site. As a result, non-Dignity Village residents have set up camps on various pieces of property around the neighborhood. Most recently, a camp has been

established at a nearby sanitary sewer pump station operated by the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES).

Cost Summary

The following table provides a summary of costs incurred by PDOT to date associated with Dignity Village's presence and future costs associated with the extension of Dignity Village's stay at the Sunderland facility.

SUNDERLAND RECYCLING FACILITY DEVELOPMENT COSTS

Item	Cost	Note	Purchase Price	\$3,000,000
Property Improvements			1,500,000	Building
Improvements to Office			<u>58,266</u>	Total Investment
\$ 4,558,266				

DIGNITY VILLAGE COST TO PDOT

Expenditures to Date				Value of property occupied
by Dignity	\$300,000			Cost of improvements related to siting DV
at Sunderland	25,000	Signs, materials, utility set-up		Annual City Subsidy of
		Dignity Village: \$21,600/yr.		
		Utility costs such as electricity and water (\$3,600)		
		Staff time assisting Village (\$7,000)		
		Compost operating costs (\$11,000 annually)		
Total for 2.4 years subsidy				

\$52,000

Reimbursements by Dignity Village (44,000)

Net Expenditures to Date \$333,000

Cost of Future Improvements/Site Upgrades

Sanitary Sewer Improvements	\$ 60,000	Electrical
Upgrades	100,000	Water Supply Upgrades
		10,000
Fire Safety Upgrades	Unknown	Total Future
Improvements/ Upgrades	\$ 240,000	Plus Fire Safety Upgrades

Other Costs:

estimate)	\$ 250,000	Purchase Yurts (BDS cost
		Temporary Relocation of Villagers
Pending Site	Improvements	\$ 48,000

Attachments: Summary of Police Calls
Aerial Photo of Sunderland Recycling Facility

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