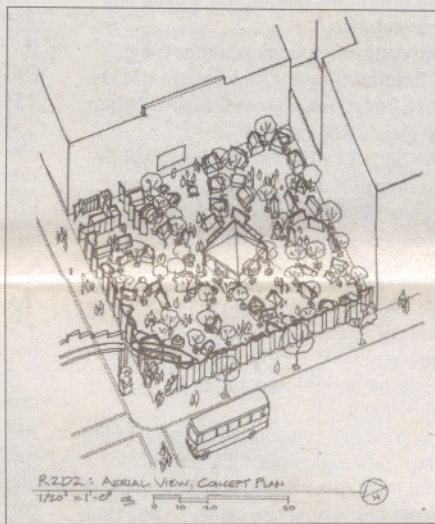




PHOTOS BY ISRAEL BAYER

Above, Right 2 Dream Too begins to fill the lot at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Burnside. Bottom left, Volunteers help build platforms to keep tents above the wet gravel. Bottom right, blueprints drawn up for the site show a set of tents and restrooms for people on the streets with a barrier around the property constructed of recycled doors, seen above.



Right 2 Dream Too begins to build

STAFF REPORTS

On Monday, Oct. 10, a group of homeless people set up a new community on an empty lot on the corner of Northwest Fourth Avenue and Burnside. The group says it is trying to establish a safe and stable place for people experiencing homelessness in Portland.

"We're out here because there is no place for people who have no place to sleep to sleep. So we want to bring in a good place where they can come and rest," says Ibrahim Mubarak, one of the leaders of the small group and one of the founders of Dignity Village.

The group – calling itself Right 2 Dream Too – is an offshoot of the Right 2 Survive organization. Right 2 Survive is composed of homeless and housed people advocating for civil and human rights for people on the street. They're calling the site at Fourth and Burnside a "membership space," with the purpose of raising awareness on the importance of safe and secure place for undisturbed sleep.

Street Roots talked to city officials with the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) who oversee both the permitting and zoning process for the lot. According to the BDS, a complaint has been filed with the city, and they are currently investigating if the group or the landowners are in violation of any city codes. BDS says it intends to follow due process if code violations are found, which could mean fines or liens against the property owners.

The group started out with eight individuals, but soon swelled to nearly 40. The Portland Housing Bureau, which oversees Portland's housing and homeless services, declined to comment.

According to the people at the site, the property owners, Dan Cossette and Michael Wright, have agreed to a one-year lease to Right 2 Survive in order to provide a space for people experiencing homelessness to sleep.

Cossette and Wright were the owners of Cindy's Adult Bookstore, once located on the same plot. But that business was closed and the building demolished in 2008 after City Commissioner Randy Leonard's controversial "HIT" squad concluded it was a chronic code violator.

According to the City of Portland/Multnomah County 2011 homeless count, 1,718 people were unsheltered (sleeping outside, in a vehicle or abandoned building) in January 2011.

CORRECTIONS

Street Roots strives for accuracy, but we're human. So we also strive to correct errors in our paper whenever possible. Please report any errors to our managing editor, Joanne Zuhl, at 503-228-5657, or write to joanne@streetroots.org



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(South Park Blocks at Salmon)
1:30 PM MARCH
2:30 PM FORUM
at First Unitarian Church
(SW 12th and Main)

Saturday
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