

our public response to homelessness across the region, and We Are In, which centralizes non-governmental efforts. KCRHA and We Are In, alongside our partners like Microsoft, work together to further our regional

prevention and homelessness in our region. We hope that more businesses – large and small – advocates, and neighbors will join the movement.

Join us at wearein.org

The state Right of Way Initiative has resolved eight encampments, moving nearly 300 people safely inside thanks to state funding and support.

Together Center: Innovation, Partnerships Drive New Housing Solution

by Kim Sarnecki, Together Center CEO

In 1990, four nonprofits came together to accomplish something both novel and risky. They purchased a former strip mall in Redmond and converted it into a shared space for nonprofits to operate and collaborate. They created a separate 501c3 nonprofit, now named Together Center (TC), to own and operate what became the first nonprofit human services hub in the nation.

Five years ago, with the original mortgage paid off and the 1980s converted strip mall at the end of its useful life, TC assessed the future of our facility. The land value had increased ten-fold since the purchase and TC's board committed to leveraging this nonprofit-owned land equity to generate an even greater positive impact for the community.

A strategic planning study and community needs survey found resounding requests for more human service spaces and, unsurprisingly, affordable housing.

The idea for a bold social purpose real estate project was born, but for a small nonprofit to realize this vision, we had to be highly creative and partner deeply across multiple sectors.

Through its Affordable Housing Initiative, Microsoft provided vital support at multiple points throughout the project's lifecycle.

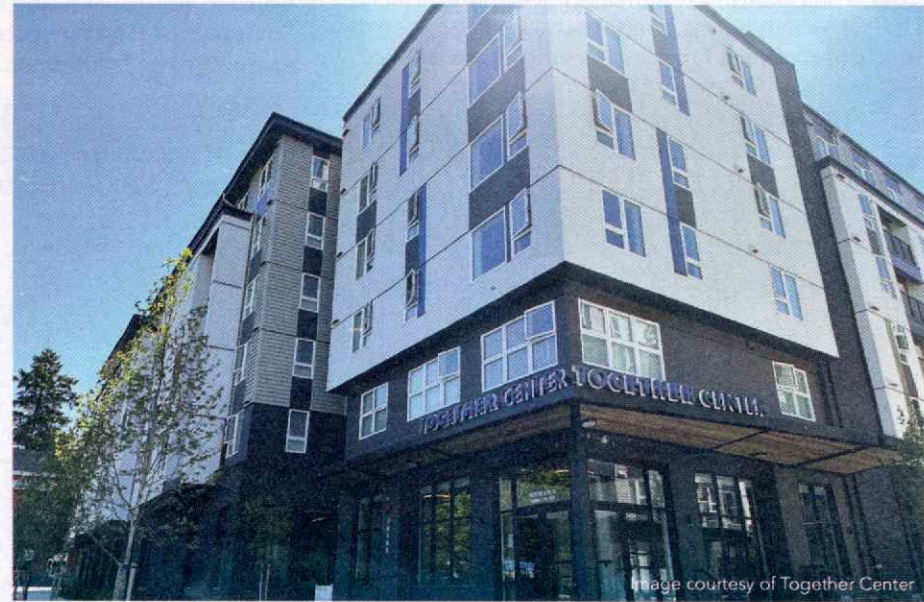
- In the initial stages, a \$6.8 million gap financing loan made to TC's housing partners provided quick and efficient capital at a critical time.

- Later, a \$1 million grant helped narrow the philanthropic funding gap, as well as helped to attract other funders and champions to support this community endeavor.

TC is now months away from opening the new community campus, which will feature an expanded human services hub for nonprofits on the ground floor and 280 units of affordable housing on the floors above. The human services hub will have space for 20+ nonprofit providers to continue serving over 30,000 Greater Eastside residents a year and essential community spaces like a nonprofit event center, coworking lounge, community kitchen and local art gallery. This modern hub will lower barriers to access for those seeking help and enhance collaboration and outcomes for human services providers while preventing nonprofit displacement.

On the five upper levels will be 280 units of affordable housing for those making 30-60% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Over 60% of the units will be 2- and 3-bedroom sizes to better accommodate families and multi-generational households. Via a creative structure, TC will maintain ownership of the land and human services hub, with our housing partners, Inland Group and Horizon Housing Alliance, owning and operating the apartment units above.

The second building opens later this summer, with Grand Opening set for Fall 2023. With construction nearly complete, Microsoft and TC are now partnering to



The first of two buildings on Together Center's new campus, with nonprofit space on the ground floor and affordable housing units on the five upper levels.

draw attention to this innovative solution.

While this individual project and the 280 affordable units it puts into service is incredibly important, it has broader importance as a model that can be replicated across the region, state, and country.

TC's campus transformation is a proof-of-concept idea and with it now proven out, word is spreading. TC is frequently being contacted by organizations interested in better activating their land, from municipalities to nonprofit agencies and beyond.

Microsoft has leaned in to further amplify this solution, bringing in key stakeholders and land-owning groups to learn from TC's example and experience.

TC is grateful for Microsoft's continued work to champion nonprofit solutions to this housing crisis, through their philanthropic dollars, as well as making sure our region continues to center cross-sector, collaborative solutions to this housing crisis. Because if a small nonprofit with a staff of three and limited cash resources can find a way to catalyze a redevelopment project that adds 280 units of truly affordable housing, then this crisis is solvable.