

FAQ — OBRC & The People's Depot

Inner Powell Alliance | April 10, 2026

The Inner Powell Alliance (IPA) is an informal group of residents and businesses from the Hosford-Abernethy and Brooklyn neighborhoods, concerned with public safety along SE Powell Boulevard. Many members helped create the Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) for the nearby Clinton TASS site and serve on its oversight committee. They are proud of the productive and collaborative relationship that they have had with the City and with Urban Alchemy, the operator of the Clinton TASS.

The Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) and a coalition of partners including the Northwest Grocers Retail Association, Groundscore Association, Portland Metro Chamber and Governor Kotek's office helped identify and [select the proposed People's Depot \(TPD\) site](#) at 1109 SE Brooklyn Ave without neighborhood input. The City and OBRC have excluded neighbors from negotiations about police patrols for the site. The funding arrangements are opaque. Collaboration between OBRC and the neighborhoods is non-existent..

The TPD operator, the Ground Score Association, is happy to work on a GNA with the neighborhoods. But neither the City nor OBRC are willing to sign this GNA. They want to duck responsibility.

IPA does not oppose the TPD in principle — the existing site under the Morrison Bridge is inadequate and needs to move. But the proposed location raises serious safety and community concerns, and better nearby sites exist.

With little input on the proposal, the neighbors are working hard to expose important questions about the site that must be addressed before moving forward with this (or any) Alternative Access Redemption Center in the City of Portland.

Background

What is The People's Depot (TPD)?

TPD is a beverage container redemption facility run by the Ground Score Association (GSA), currently in a cargo container under the east end of the Morrison Bridge at MLK Boulevard. GSA and OBRC plan to relocate it to an existing building at 1109 SE Brooklyn St, at the corner of SE Milwaukie, near SE Powell Boulevard.



TPD serves "canners" — people who collect redeemable cans and bottles on a daily or near daily basis and exchange them for cash.

What is SB 992?

[Senate Bill 992](#), passed in 2025, creates a new category of bottle redemption center called an "Alternative Access Redemption Center" (AARC). It relieves some grocery stores of their container redemption obligations if they fund an AARC instead. The bill appears to have been designed around the TPD.

What is an Alternative Access Redemption Center (AARC)?

An AARC provides container redemption for people who redeem cans or bottles daily or near-daily — an alternative to grocery store or OBRC full-service returns. Key provisions:

- AARCs may only be established in Portland.
- Must be run by a non-profit and sponsored by distributor partner
- Minimal operational requirements: the AARC must simply "provide alternative redemption access."

The TPD will be an AARC.

What is an Alternative Access Convenience Zone?

A "convenience zone" is a circular area centered on the AARC. The one for the TPD will have a radius of 3 miles, covering 28 square miles. Within this zone, large grocery stores that fund the AARC need not redeem containers at all. Stores that don't participate, and also don't accept blue and green bags, must accept up to 350 containers per person per day; convenience stores, 24 per day. This structure gives grocers and OBRC strong financial incentives to support the AARC.

[How many canners and containers are expected?](#)

GSA expects 225–250 canners per day, arriving mostly on foot, by transit, or by bicycle. Each may redeem up to 350 containers daily. The projected annual volume is 22 million containers.

[What is Ground Score Association \(GSA\)?](#)

GSA is a not-for-profit association of informal recyclers, canners, and waste pickers that creates low-barrier recycling jobs in Portland.

[What is the Northwest Grocers Retail Association \(NWGRA\)?](#)

NWGRA represents large grocery stores and provides fifty percent of the funding for the TPD, channeled through OBRC.

[What is the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative \(OBRC\)?](#)

OBRC is a private not-for-profit cooperative that has an exclusive right to administer Oregon's Bottle Bill statewide. It is funded by beverage dealers, distributors, and the value of unredeemed deposits. OBRC is the primary driver of the new TPD site.

[What is the Portland Police Bureau's Behavioral Health Unit \(BHU\)?](#)

The BHU consists of officers trained in mental health response and crisis intervention. Its Service Coordination Team (SCT) conducts proactive patrols, combining law enforcement with program staff who connect chronically arrested individuals to housing and treatment services.

The BHU does not perform campsite cleanups, but can refer homeless sites to the regular police.

[What BHU/SCT services is OBRC funding?](#)

OBRC will pay the City \$500,000 per year for SCT patrols around the new TPD. SCT will deploy two-officer, out-of-vehicle teams on varying days and daytime hours. The precise service area remains under discussion — see the "BHU Service Area" section below.

[What is G.L.I.T.T.E.R.?](#)

G.L.I.T.T.E.R. is a GSA program that provides litter and biohazard/sharps removal at houseless camps. It is staffed by people who are experiencing, or have recently experienced, homelessness.

[What G.L.I.T.T.E.R. services is OBRC funding?](#)

OBRC will pay \$75,000 per year for G.L.I.T.T.E.R. to deploy at least two team members Monday–Friday, a minimum of three hours per day, for cleanup around the new TPD.

[How is the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission \(OLCC\) involved?](#)

The TPD cannot open at its new location without OLCC approval. The process includes an application and a 30-day public comment period, but SB 992 provides almost no grounds for rejection.

What are the relevant neighborhood and business associations?

The new TPD site sits at the boundary between the [Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood District](#) (HAND) and [Brooklyn Action Corps](#) (BAC) neighborhood associations, and between the [Central Eastside Industrial Council](#) (CEIC) and [Brooklyn Business Association](#) (BBA) business associations. As of April 9, 2026, the neighborhood associations have not taken a formal position on the new location. HAND, BAC, and CEIC have held initial GNA discussions with GSA.

What is the Inner Powell Alliance (IPA)?

IPA is an informal group of residents and businesses from both affected neighborhoods. IPA focuses on public safety and conditions along the portion of SE Powell that runs between their neighborhoods.

IPA supplements the work of the neighborhood associations by addressing issues that affect both. IPA helps to coordinate the work of the neighborhood and business associations.

Who is pushing for this location?

Downtown business interests and large grocery retailers — including Fred Meyer and Safeway — want relief from individual container redemptions, which have been linked to drug activity. In 2024, the Governor [temporarily suspended downtown bottle returns](#) because of those concerns. The NWGRA and OBRC successfully lobbied for the creation of the AARC redemption center type and TPD as the first operator offers a partial solution to the business challenges.

Both Mayor Wilson and Governor Kotek are actively pushing to formalize the TPD at the new location.

“The Mayor mentioned that he spoke to the Governor on Friday about this topic and both are eager to find a resolution this week.”¹

Follow the Money

Funding flows from NWGRA to OBRC, which is:

- Organizing the project
- Lobbying the City, Mayor, Governor, state senator, and state representative
- Selecting the new site — without neighborhood input
- Funding GSA to lease the building and run G.L.I.T.T.E.R.
- Funding City police patrols (which as of now are to cover 28 square miles within the Convenience Zone and not focused in the immediate vicinity of the AARC)

Despite driving the project, OBRC refuses to sign a GNA with the neighborhoods.

¹ Email from Hank Smith (Deputy Director, Portland Solutions) to Devon Morales (OBRC) on September 14, obtained via public records request.

The City's Position

The City is contracting to provide police patrols but refuses to participate in a GNA. An internal communication from a City official explains:

*"The Mayor has been very clear with us that we are not to engage in GNA processes... This is not our site, nor a shelter. It's been an interesting project, due to City permitting, Mayoral involvement, and our relationship with Groundscore, but not owning the project and often having to deal with the surrounding livability consequences."*²

Issues

Canner Safety

The current TPD site is adjacent to MLK, a three-lane one-way street. The proposed site is adjacent to SE Milwaukie (two lanes each direction) and very close to SE Powell (three lanes each direction) — significantly more traffic exposure.



A "slip lane" in front of the new site allows southbound Milwaukie traffic to merge quickly onto westbound Powell. It has no marked crosswalk or traffic signal. Slip lanes are a well-documented cause of pedestrian crashes.

The yellow surface of the ADA ramp at the corner of SE Brooklyn and SE Milwaukie is worn out, suggesting trucks regularly cut the corner.

The [2025 Multnomah County Deadly Crash Report](#) found that people experiencing homelessness make up roughly 1% of the county's population but 10% of Portland traffic deaths in 2025, and about 20% of annual traffic deaths since 2021. Given the site's traffic exposure, IPA believes canners are at meaningful risk of injury or death.

² Email on January 29 2026 from Skylar Broker-Knapp to Rep. Rob Nosse, obtained via public records request.

Neighborhood Impact

In July 2025, Mayor Wilson commissioned a [police study](#) of three Portland bottle drop locations that were identified as “nuisance locations”, including TPD. Relevant findings:

- Drug dealers wait outside bottle drop locations.
- People have been observed dumping water to convert bottles into redemption cash.
- Central Precinct's Bike Squad estimates over half its deployment time is spent within three blocks of a bottle return location.
- Burglaries have occurred specifically to steal bags of cans for redemption.

The [Delta Park BottleDrop is closing](#) in July 2026 because its landlord declined to renew, citing open-air drug use and dealing in the parking area. A 2024 attempt to relocate a similar facility to St. Johns generated over 650 protest emails.

Business Impact

The police study also found reduced foot traffic near bottle drop locations and theft of glass containers from nearby businesses for redemption. Businesses near the proposed TPD site have expressed repeated concerns about vandalism, graffiti, and lost customers.

TriMet Safety

TriMet Line 9 stops very close to the new TPD site. This stop is regularly used by Cleveland High School students. Canners heading to TPD will use the same stop, and must cross the uncontrolled slip lane to reach the site.

Cash Redemptions

At 250 canners per day redeeming up to 350 containers at 10 cents each,³ TPD could redeem up to \$8,750 daily. A [2025 GSA survey](#) found that 7.2% of customers spend redemption money on hard drugs and 3.3% on alcohol or marijuana — implying roughly \$630 per day flowing toward hard drugs and \$289 toward alcohol/marijuana. IPA believes this cash will attract drug dealers to the neighborhood. Street costs of a fentanyl pill are about \$1. The daily purchase of up to 630 pills will attract drug dealers and be a contributor to street level addiction in Portland.

An alternative exists: OBRC already uses account-based, card-accessible payments for bulk (green- and blue-bag) redemptions. Applying the same system to individual redemptions — and restricting use to groceries and similar goods — would cut off drug-purchase cash flows and reduce dealer concentration.

OBRC claims Oregon law requires cash payment, but IPA's reading of the Bottle Bill as amended by SB 992 finds no such requirement. Switching to non-cash redemptions would significantly reduce nuisance around the TPD.

³ These numbers come from [The People's Depot - Now & Next](#), distributed by Ground Score on March 27, 2026.

The Clinton TASS

The Clinton Temporary Alternative Shelter Site (CTASS) is a 200-person “pod village” funded by the City, and run by Urban Alchemy (UA). IPA members worked with the City to define a [Good Neighbor Agreement](#) (GNA) when CTASS was established in 2023. The GNA defines three zones around the CTASS site, with varying levels of City services for each zone. The GNA creates a “CTASS Oversight Committee” (CTOC) with representatives from the nearby neighborhood and business associations, UA, and the City. The CTOC works well as a communication venue to address problems as they arise.

The new TPD location is under 1,400 feet from the CTASS — within the innermost zone of the CTASS GNA. UA has expressed concern that TPD-related activity will disrupt residents and operations there.

Concentration of Homeless Services

Several other social service agencies are clustered nearby:

- A future County Sobering and Crisis Stabilization Center within 2,000 feet.
- A Central City Concern recovery center about 2,500 feet away.
- Two City-sponsored homeless shelters within 2.25 miles on Grand Avenue.

Many residents at these agencies are working to overcome addiction. Placing a Bottledrop that attracts drug dealers in close proximity undermines those efforts.

Zoning Classification

All BottleDrops are currently classified as "Retail Sales and Services" ⁴ — likely a legacy of bottle returns being ancillary to grocery stores. IPA argues this is a poor fit: retail operations sell goods and receive payment, while bottle drops receive goods and pay customers. An industrial classification such as "Waste Related" ⁵ is more appropriate.

This matters because the proposed TPD site is zoned EXd (Central Employment), which allows retail but not industrial use. A correct industrial classification would require the TPD to locate in an industrial zone as encouraged by an amendment adopted to SB 992— and IPA believes better, safer industrial sites are available nearby.

Building Use

OBRC's Early Assessment filing described the site as a container redemption facility. GSA has since indicated the space will also be used for community meetings. It is unclear whether this affects the zoning or permitting analysis.

⁴ Section 33.920.250 of the Portland City Code.

⁵ Section 33.920.350 of the Portland City Code.

BHU Contract Issues

Although OBRC is funding the BHU/SCT contract, OBRC has declined to sign it, suggesting the unnamed property buyer may sign instead. As of March 27, 2026, the contract with the City is unsigned.

The BHU "Service Area"

GSA's March 27 [comparison document](#) defines the BHU patrol area as the "AARC convenience zone radius" — a legal term from SB 992 that for the TPD is proposed as a 3-mile radius, covering 28 square miles and all of downtown Portland. This contradicts a promise made on October 7, 2025 for "visible, proactive patrols focused on the surrounding area."

A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) says SCT will patrol "within a one mile radius" of the TPD — a far more targeted area. The final service area definition is a critical unresolved issue. IPA and the neighborhood associations have been excluded from those discussions.

Why Only the East Side?

Governor Kotek [suspended bottle returns](#) at two downtown (west side) grocery stores in 2024. The TPD relieves pressure on downtown stores, drawing canners away from the west side of town — but shifts the resulting problems to east side neighborhoods.

Landlord Shrouded In Mystery

An unnamed investor is purchasing the new TPD site and will lease it to GSA. OBRC has proposed that this person — not OBRC — sign the MOU with the City.

Impact of the [Delta Park Closure](#)

The Delta Park Bottle Drop closes in July 2026. Some canners who used that site may redirect to the TPD, increasing volume beyond current projections.

Who Signs the GNA?

GSA has proposed that HAND and BAC sign a GNA with GSA alone. The City and OBRC are refusing to sign, avoiding accountability for the arrangement's outcome.

Status and Schedule (as of April 10, 2026)

IPA's understanding is limited to what's in the public record and as stated publicly by Ground Score and the OBRC.

- September 2025 — GSA and OBRC announce the move to 1109 SE Brooklyn in a phone call to the CTOC.

- September 30, 2025 — OBRC opens MOU discussions with the City's Portland Solutions Office.
- October 7, 2025 — Community meeting with GSA, OBRC, NWGRA, HAND, and BAC. Opening target: January 1, 2026.
- November 2025 — OBRC requests an Early Assessment from Portland Planning & Development (PPD).
- December 12, 2025 — PPD issues Early Assessment: site requires sidewalk widening, ADA improvements, driveway work, and street trees.
- February 11, 2026 — Public Works Alternative Review requested; approved with conditions on March 2. Street trees and Milwaukie sidewalk work waived. Brooklyn sidewalk and driveway improvements still required.
- February 23, 2026 — OBRC tells Portland Solutions it will not sign the GNA.
- March 27, 2026 — Type 1 Land Use Review submitted. GSA meets with HAND and BAC on a possible GNA.
- March–April 2026 — Environmental remediation underway at the site.

Coming up:

- Ongoing GNA discussions.
- Land use review to finalize required improvements and City permits.
- Property purchase by the unnamed investor (likely through an LLC).
- Site construction.
- OLCC license application by GSA or OBRC.
- Target opening: summer 2026.

What the IPA Requests

Immediate

1. A 6–12 month delay, starting after the Delta Park closure, to evaluate alternate sites, assess the impact of that closure and evaluate the shift away from in-store can counting.

Short Term

2. A safer TPD location. IPA is not opposing the facility in principle — it can stay in the neighborhood. Several nearby industrial-zoned sites offer better pedestrian safety and transit access.
3. The City and OBRC must sign the GNA. The City is delivering mitigation services; OBRC is paying for them. Both must be accountable.
4. To ensure alignment with UA patrols, the BHU/SCT service area should be aligned with the CTASS neighborhood zones, as defined in the [CTASS Good Neighborhood Agreement](#).

Longer Term

5. Switch to non-cash redemptions. An account-based system (similar to HOP or EBT cards) would reduce cash flows to drug markets and disperse drug dealers away from the site.
6. Update the zoning code so standalone bottle drops are classified as an industrial use, not retail.