



CITY OF EMERYVILLE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 3, 2015

TO: Carolyn Lehr, City Manager

FROM: Charles S. Bryant, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: **Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Emeryville Authorizing The City Manager To Enter Into A Memorandum Of Understanding With The City Of Oakland For The Operation Of A Winter Shelter In The City Of Oakland For The Accommodation Of Up To 50 Persons For The Period Of November 15, 2015 Through April 15, 2016 In An Amount Not To Exceed \$15,000 And Appropriating Said Amount From Fund 299 Affordable Housing Fund**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Oakland for the operation of a winter shelter in the City of Oakland for the accommodation of up to 50 persons for the period of November 15, 2015 through April 15, 2016 in an amount not to exceed \$15,000 and appropriating said amount from the Fund 299 Affordable Housing Fund.

BACKGROUND

Between 1999 and 2012, the Cities of Oakland and Berkeley and the County of Alameda jointly funded the operation of a regional winter shelter at the Oakland Army Base. The 100 bed congregate shelter for single men and women primarily provided compassionate refuge from inclement weather between November and April of each year, with minimal social services on site due to budget constraints. In 2013, the Oakland Army Base site was no longer available due to development and no other suitable alternative site for a large congregate shelter was identified. An analysis of winter shelter data between 2010 and 2013 showed that approximately 20% of the people served at the shelter took refuge there every year over a three year period, indicating a need for a different intervention to assist that segment of the population out of homelessness. In the 2012-2013 season, only 12 out of 160 (7.5%) winter shelter residents were known to have obtained permanent housing prior to the winter shelter closing.

For the 2013-2014 winter season, the three partnering jurisdictions coordinated a temporary expansion of the number of shelter beds at several existing shelter sites, and

added a small re-housing component to the program. Rapid Re-Housing Funds are used to move people into rental housing and provide rent subsidies for approximately six months (but up to 24 months) while case managers work with the household to become more self-sufficient. This strategy resulted in reduced overall bed capacity, some facility management and coordination challenges, and no significant changes in overall program outcomes.

For the 2014-2015 season, a regional response effort was developed that included contributions from the cities of Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland as well as Alameda County. The 2014-2015 effort focused on: 1) reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness that were sleeping in places not meant for human habitation during inclement weather (50% chance of rain or temperatures below 40°F) and 2) increasing the number of individuals, with long histories of homelessness and significant health care needs that obtain permanent housing.

The strategy included the following key elements:

- Continuation of the Berkeley Storm Shelter operated by Dorothy Day, which is open during inclement weather and has a capacity to shelter up to 65 individuals
- Continuation of a winter shelter in Berkeley for 25 youth experiencing homelessness
- Creation of a warming center/inclement weather shelter at St. Vincent de Paul in Oakland
- Creation of warming center/inclement weather increased bed capacity at the Henry Robinson Multi-Service Center, a transitional housing facility in Oakland
- Set-aside of 10 dedicated winter shelter beds (November – April) for high-need seniors (aged 55 and older) experiencing homelessness at St. Mary's Center in Oakland, four of which were reserved for Emeryville seniors
- Set-aside of 8 dedicated winter shelter beds (November – April) for high-need individuals experiencing homelessness at East Oakland Community Project's Crossroads shelter in Oakland
- An expansion of an existing Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS) program, operated by Bay Area Community Services (BACS), focused on helping high needs individuals experiencing homelessness obtain permanent housing with an average of six months of post-housing aftercare. Winter shelter funding was used to expand this program during the winter season. Leveraged Medi-Cal funding was to be used to continue the program year-round to continue working with enrolled clients. The program capacity was increased to serve an additional 40 clients at a time and an estimated 50-60 new clients were served over a 12 month period.
- More coordinated outreach and communication among North County providers in order to enhance engagement of homeless persons with high needs in services and housing programs.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Some of the key lessons learned from the implementation of the 2014-2015 pilot project include:

Warming Centers: Warming centers were only effective in providing assistance for people experiencing homelessness that live near enough to them to see when they were open. Even though Emeryville provided bus passes to and from the centers on nights in which they were open, people experiencing homelessness in or near Emeryville were reluctant to leave their belongings and sleeping location in order to move indoors at a center that may or may not be open the next day.

Shelters in General: Many homeless individuals, living on the streets and other places not meant for human habitation, are reluctant to enter shelter and transitional housing programs, but are motivated to work with a program focused on helping them find permanent housing.

Engagement Strategies: Engagement of individuals with long histories of homelessness and disabilities into service programs takes long-term, sustained outreach that involves trust-building and linking individuals with resources that meet their individual priority needs.

Jurisdictional and Service Provider Coordination: Coordination of outreach and service efforts at a regional level has the potential to improve client outcomes.

2015-2016 Plans and Recommendations

Given the lessons learned from the pilot project and anticipating the expected wet “El Niño” winter, the jurisdictions and providers met in August 2015 to discuss the 2015-2016 winter season and the following plan was developed:

- Identify a single location in Oakland for a winter-specific shelter that has low barriers to entry for homeless individuals with long histories of homelessness and disabilities;
- Identify a service-rich secondary site for persons identified as being most vulnerable;
- Continue to support increased coordination among outreach efforts, service programs, and housing;
- Continue to support housing navigation programs for high need individuals;
- Continue to find ways to leverage federal Medicaid dollars to help fund supportive services associated with addressing homelessness and housing issues

The 2015-2016 North County Winter Shelter Strategy provides a single site seasonal shelter accommodating 50 single adults, as well as a service rich secondary site accommodating no more than 10 beds for persons who are identified as most vulnerable. This strategy provides a hybrid of the previous ‘single site’ model which was utilized at the Army Base shelter, closed in 2013, as well as continuing the more targeted intervention for the most vulnerable persons utilized in the winter of 2014-2015.

To implement this strategy, the following steps have been undertaken:

1. The City of Oakland has identified the St. Vincent de Paul facility at 2272 San Pablo Avenue as a location and provider for 50 winter shelter beds that will be available each night from 6 pm to 8 am. Oakland has requested a \$15,000 contribution from Emeryville for the operation of the winter shelter. The shelter will reserve five beds for Emeryville referrals.
2. Alameda County Behavioral Health (ACBH) has identified the Henry Robinson Multi-Service Center at 559 16th Street for the service-rich secondary site with a 10 bed shelter for medically fragile people experiencing homelessness.
3. Emeryville has contracted with Berkeley Food and Housing Project (BFHP) to provide street outreach and harm reduction. BFHP will continue to coordinate with Emeryville Community Services Department, Emeryville Police Department, and homeless service providers to provide outreach and referrals to shelters, services and providers.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City Council set aside 20% of the residual property tax revenue (the boomerang funds) in Fund 299 for affordable housing. These funds can be utilized for the provision of homelessness services and there are adequate funds in Fund 299 to cover the cost of this project.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

The City Attorney has reviewed and approved as to form the resolution and Memorandum of Understanding accompanying this report.

PREPARED BY: Catherine Firpo, Housing Coordinator

Michelle E. De Guzman, Acting Economic Development and
Housing Manager

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE EMERYVILLE CITY COUNCIL:



Carolyn Lehr
City Manager

Attachments: Resolution

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