

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

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AGENDA ITEM

DATE: February 8, 2022

14

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON AND APPROVE ACTIONS RELATED TO COMPASSIONATE EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS AND PATHWAYS TO HOUSING FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On October 19, 2021 (15), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously took action to further address the crisis of homelessness and directed the Chief Administrative Officer to return to the Board within 120 days with a plan that incorporates the following components:

- Work with the developers and community partners while Zoning Ordinance amendments
 are being developed to identify properties, buildings and concepts for low-barrier
 emergency shelters, safe lots and associated services in East County and countywide,
 preferably in the unincorporated area, and return to the Board with identified locations,
 funding and an implementation plan.
- Evaluate current resources and gaps and develop a program with flexible funding to address barriers to housing stability and report back on effectiveness annually.
- Create a plan to enhance outreach and case management direct services including robust data collection and analysis in East County and countywide.

To enable further action on program development, today's item requests the following from the Board:

- Receive an update on the progress of the items listed above and receive the Implementation Plan for Compassionate Emergency Solutions and Pathways to Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness.
- Authorize competitive solicitations for facility management, homeless services and associated supplies for emergency shelter options (sleeping cabins, safe parking and safe camping [Recreational Vehicle (RV)]).
- Authorize a competitive solicitation for Specialized Funding for Imminent Needs.
- Authorize the Agency Director, or designee, to accept initial disbursement of Homeless

Housing, Assistance and Prevention 3 (HHAP-3) funding.

 Authorize Agency Director, or designee, to execute agreements, certification forms and all other actions necessary as required by the State of California as related to HHAP-3 funding.

If approved, the competitive solicitation process would occur in alignment with the Department of General Services processes to ensure comprehensive internal coordination and efficiency in moving this effort forward.

This item supports the County of San Diego's (County) vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by improving the lives of persons at-risk of and experiencing homelessness through enhanced funding and innovative new programming. In addition, these efforts support the Framework for Our Future which prioritizes communities and populations in San Diego that have been historically left behind. Lastly, today's action is aligned with the County's Framework for Ending Homelessness. Establishing emergency housing options is in alignment with the Framework's Emergency/Interim Housing and Resources strategic domain. Additionally, establishing Specialized Funding for Imminent Needs and enhancement of outreach and case management services, including robust data collection, supports the Framework for Ending Homelessness' Services, Treatment and Outreach strategic domain.

RECOMMENDATION(S) CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

- 1. Receive an update on compassionate emergency solutions and pathways to housing for persons experiencing homelessness and the Implementation Plan for Compassionate Emergency Solutions and Pathways to Housing For People Experiencing Homelessness.
- 2. Find that the proposed actions are not a project pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines sections 15060(c)(3) and 15378 and are exempt from CEQA pursuant to Guidelines section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed actions may have a significant effect on the environment.
- 3. In accordance with Section 401, Article XXIII of the County Administrative Code, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to issue competitive solicitations for facility management, homeless services and associated supplies associated with implementation of an emergency shelter program that may include sleeping cabins or other emergency housing such as safe camping (RV camping) and safe parking at one or more sites within the County and upon successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award contracts for an initial term of up to one year, with four one-year options, and up to an additional six months, if needed; and to amend the contracts to reflect changes in program funding or service requirements,

subject to the availability of funds and the approval of the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency.

- 4. In accordance with Section 401, Article XXIII of the County Administrative Code, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to issue competitive solicitations for administration, services and related supplies associated with development and implementation of Specialized Funding for Imminent Needs program countywide and upon successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award contracts for an initial term of up to one year, with four one-year options, and up to an additional six months, if needed; and to amend the contracts to reflect changes in program funding or service requirements, subject to the availability of funds and the approval of the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency.
- 5. Authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee, to apply for and accept the State of California Interagency Council on Homelessness (formerly Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council) Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention HHAP-3 initial disbursement of funding for HHAP-3.
- 6. Authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee to execute agreements, execute certification forms, prepare and execute all necessary documents for the submittal, regulatory processing and implementation, and take any other actions necessary as required by the State of California for Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention HHAP-3 initial disbursement funding for HHAP-3.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Regional Taskforce on Homelessness Point-in-Time Count identifies the number of individuals living on the streets or in emergency shelters on one specific designated day of the year. In the 2020 Point-in-Time Count, 7,638 individuals were identified as living on the streets or in shelters throughout the county. Of those who were unsheltered, 58% reported having a disability and 27% were 55 years or older. Unified under a County of One approach, the County of San Diego is dedicated to addressing the root causes of homelessness and providing preventative and supportive services to the most vulnerable residents. The Framework for Ending Homelessness (Framework) outlines the path toward building the capacity to advance the San Diego County Board of Supervisors priority of addressing homelessness.

People of color are disproportionally impacted among those experiencing homelessness, with 27.2% identifying as Black or African American—roughly five times the proportion of African Americans in the region—3.4% identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native—which is nearly three times the proportion in the region—and 2.8% identifying as Asian. 28% of persons experiencing homelessness in San Diego County are Hispanic. Individuals at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, impacted residents, community partners and other key stakeholders were engaged during the development of the plans outlined in today's actions, and their feedback was sought and incorporated.

Ensuring racial and social equity in all aspects of homelessness prevention and response is one of the key principles that guide the Framework and all items that fall under its strategic domains.

Additionally, securing equitable homeless housing, supports and funding will assist those who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness throughout San Diego County. Therefore, it is anticipated that the recommended actions will provide needed housing and supports to residents in East County and countywide who are disproportionality represented in the homeless system including justice involved individuals, individuals with a range of health and social needs, as well as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). In general, the incidence of Black, Native Americans and other persons of color experiencing homelessness mirrors the disparities found at the broader community levels.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendations 1 and 2

These recommendations have no fiscal impact. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

Recommendation 3

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2021-23 County of San Diego (County) Operational Plan. If approved, this is expected to result in no change in costs and revenue in Fiscal Year 2021-22 and estimated annual costs and revenue of \$4.3 million in Fiscal Year 2022-23 for site operations of a safe parking, safe camping, and sleeping cabin site once fully implemented. Actual costs may vary depending on site location and the mix of sheltering intervention types. The funding sources that potentially could be applied are Homeless Housing Assistance Program Round 3 (HHAP-3) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). It is estimated that the identified funding would cover three years of operations. Ongoing funds for subsequent years would need to be identified. Any new federal and/or State funding targeting homelessness efforts will also be evaluated for eligibility. There will be no immediate change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years related to this recommendation.

Recommendation #3 addresses site operations. Additionally, there will be one-time site acquisition and/or development costs as the selection of sites is finalized. Staff will return to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors once a site is ready to move forward for necessary approvals with cost estimates identified for funding at that time.

Recommendation 4

Funds for this request are partially included in the Fiscal Year 2021-23 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this will result in no change in cost and revenues in Fiscal Year 2021-22 and estimated costs and revenue of \$1.0 million starting in Fiscal Year 2022-23 for the Specialized Funding for Imminent Needs program. The funding sources that potentially could be applied are HHAP-3 and ARPA. Funds for subsequent years will be incorporated into future operational plans. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

Recommendation 5

Funds for this request are not included in the Fiscal Year 2021-23 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this will result in no change in costs and revenues in

FY 2021-22 and annual cost and revenues of \$6.5 million starting in Fiscal Year 2022-23 through 2023-24, for a total of \$13 million. Funds for subsequent years will be incorporated into future operational plans. The funding source is the HHAP-3 grant. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Over the last several years, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) has demonstrated its commitment to housing and providing the support needed to address the needs of people experiencing and at-risk of homelessness. Most recently, on April 6, 2021 (6), the Board established the Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities (HSEC) within the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), which launched on July 1, 2021. In addition, on June 8, 2021 (3), the Board allocated \$85 million of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to homeless services. To maximize existing and future regional work on homelessness by creating a unified strategic approach to support the coordination of homeless services and funding, the Board adopted the Framework for Ending Homelessness (Framework) on November 2, 2021 (4). The Framework is anchored in five strategic domains:

- 1) Root Cause and Upstream Prevention
- 2) Diversion and Mitigation
- 3) Services, Treatment and Outreach
- 4) Emergency/Interim Housing and Resources
- 5) Permanent Housing and Support

Each of the five strategic domains is driven by five key commitments that guide the County's approach: Person-Centered, Data, Regional Collaboration, Sustainability, and Equity. The Framework encompasses the County's ongoing work and provides a vision to support forward, collaborative, and impactful progress. Additionally, on October 19, 2021 (15), the Board unanimously took action to further address the crisis of homelessness and directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to return to the Board within 120 days with a plan that incorporates the following components:

Work with the developers and community partners while Zoning Ordinance amendments
are being developed to identify properties, buildings and concepts for low-barrier
emergency shelters, safe lots and associated services in East County and countywide,
preferably in the unincorporated area, and return to the Board with identified locations,
funding and an implementation plan.

- Evaluate current resources and gaps and develop a program with flexible funding to address barriers to housing stability and report back on effectiveness annually.
- Create a plan to enhance outreach and case management direct services including robust data collection and analysis in East County and countywide.

The following sections provide an update on the above listed items.

Work with the developers and community partners while Zoning Ordinance amendments are being developed to identify properties, buildings and concepts for low-barrier emergency shelters, safe lots, and associated services in East County and countywide, preferably in the unincorporated area, and return to the Board with identified locations, funding, and an implementation plan.

On May 19, 2020 (7), the Board directed the CAO to assist persons experiencing homelessness by amending the Zoning Ordinance to expand opportunities for providing safe shelter and housing options. On January 26, 2022 (5), the Board adopted the amendment to the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance related to the applicability of the Zoning Ordinance definitions, Emergency Shelter classification and General Regulations. This action now allows the County and other State or Federal agencies to build, operate or lease emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing in specified unincorporated locations and will exempt these types of facilities that are County owned, operated, or leased from the Zoning Ordinance. Adoption of this amendment has expanded potential site options, which after the appropriate review and permitting process, may allow for the eventual development of the chosen sites.

In May and June 2021, as part of the community outreach related to the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, HSEC held multiple community feedback sessions that explored emergency housing options in the unincorporated area. Over 650 individuals were reached during those sessions that also included persons experiencing homelessness. In addition, since October 19, 2021 HSEC held 18 community feedback sessions to identify sites for low-barrier emergency housing and safe lots for parking with associated services. Sessions were held both virtually and in-person, including with Community Planning Groups, business owners, community partners, and neighbors reaching nearly 450 individuals, including persons experiencing homelessness. Feedback from the community engagement sessions provided valuable insight into the needs of the community. This feedback guided further discussion with subject matter expertise and other jurisdictions that operate low-barrier emergency shelter and safe parking facilities. As a result, an implementation plan specifically regarding concepts for low-barrier emergency shelters, safe lots, and associated services in East County and countywide was developed (Attachment A).

The County Department of General Services (DGS) evaluated hundreds of properties over a two-year period, including buildings and concepts for low-barrier emergency shelters and safe lots, as part of the ongoing homeless solutions property identification process. The process began by reviewing County-owned sites in the unincorporated areas of the County, followed by State of California (Caltrans)-owned property also located in the unincorporated County, pursuant to Executive Order N-23-20. Recently, County staff intensified efforts focused on the

compassionate solutions sought by the Board. This included reaching back out to prior property owners and significant engagement directly with the community. In addition to County and Caltrans-owned property, multiple searches of privately owned, on-market properties were performed. DGS staff then performed preliminary site assessments that included site test fits for various homeless solutions options as well as associated zoning and environmental considerations for HSEC review. During this review process, conflicts with the County Zoning Ordinance relating to Emergency Shelters were identified on numerous sites. Requirements within the Zoning Ordinance did not allow alternatives to traditional shelters, among other issues. Adoption of the recent amendments to the Zoning Ordinance has remedied this conflict and will now allow for a greater variety of sites to be considered.

In addition to existing County or Caltrans-owned properties, staff evaluated potential acquisition of privately-owned properties. Due to regulatory, due diligence, and appraisal requirements affecting County acquisitions, privately-owned properties are often sold before the County can act or have an asking price above County's appraised value. However, DGS continues to identify and evaluate opportunities with private property owners who are willing to lease or sell to the County for homeless solutions and identify and evaluate sites brought forward by community members.

After DGS and HSEC staff's evaluation of potential sites, the options were narrowed down to several sites for consideration and additional site due diligence. This includes County cross departmental staff input as described in the Implementation Plan for Compassionate Emergency Solutions and Pathways to Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness (Attachment A).

The implementation plan covers:

- Emergency Shelter Options (Non-congregate sleeping cabins, safe parking and safe camping (Recreational Vehicle [RV]);
- Specialized Funding for Imminent Needs Program; and
- Enhanced Street Outreach, Case Management, and Data collections and analysis.

Emergency Shelter: Non-congregate sleeping cabins/Safe Parking/Safe Camping (RV)

Today's action requests the Board authorize the Director of Purchasing and Contracting to issue competitive solicitations for services and related supplies for emergency shelter options (sleeping cabins, safe parking and safe camping (RV). If approved, the Request for Proposal for facility management, homeless services, and associated supplies for emergency shelter options would be non-site specific as further assessment of sites is required. As part of this assessment, the County will obtain a consultant familiar with the development of shelter sites to further evaluate each location and form a cross-functional County working team to oversee and support the implementation of the plan. The consultants' evaluation of sites will include conducting due diligence on environmental, land use and other necessary assessments, and preparation of Project Development Plans (Plans) for each potential homeless solution site. They will also cross reference each site with the various shelter type options to identify the best fit and most efficient and cost-effective construction method. Upon the County's receipt of the completed Plans, the

County Team will evaluate and determine the order in which the sites will be developed. After evaluation and final determinations, staff will return to the Board for any necessary approvals, if applicable, to proceed with implementing authorized facilities on the selected sites.

It is anticipated that the timeline for full design, review, permitting, procurement, construction, and securing a service provider will be at least one year. Given the need for ongoing emergency housing options, staff also proposes to extend the existing Regional Hotel Assistance Program and Local Rental Subsidy Program, to provide immediate relief to unincorporated communities while the emergency housing options are established. Lastly, as part of ongoing efforts to increase funding available for emergency housing options and programs that address homelessness, staff is applying for the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Round 3 (HHAP-3) State grant which helps maximize funding availability and sustainability of programs.

Evaluate current resources and gaps and develop a program with flexible funding to address barriers to housing stability and report back on effectiveness annually.

Flexible funding provides just in time funds to assist persons experiencing homelessness in removing barriers to housing. Utilizing flexible funding is a promising strategy to reduce barriers to housing. This type of funding is vital when other types of funding sources have been exhausted. These one-time assistance costs are often difficult to obtain and are not typically included in the available housing or supportive service programs, which means households can become homeless despite being connected to resources and services. A longitudinal evaluation of a flexible funding program in Washington, D.C. found that this brief, relatively inexpensive intervention may increase housing stability, with 94% of participants being housed 6 months after funding was received. Additionally, programs such as Los Angeles' United Way of Greater LA's Home for Good (HFG) Funders Collaborative Regional Client Flex Funds grants and the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative Housing Stability Flexible Fund program have seen positive results when it comes to resolving barriers and housing persons experiencing homelessness by utilizing flexible funding programs.

Locally, there are several programs that have flexible funds embedded into their program design. These programs serve specific populations and are not available outside of this population criteria. Within County programs alone, there are several that incorporate flexible funding including: Community Care Coordination, Community Care Coordination for Veterans, Housing Our Youth, Bringing Families Home, CalWORKs Housing Support Program, and various Behavioral Health Services programs, such as Assertive Community Treatment, Residential and Outpatient Substance Use Treatment Programs, Crisis Stabilization Units, Mental Health Homeless Outreach Workers.

Based on the resources and gap analysis, a proposed plan for Specialized Funding for Imminent Needs program was developed. The goal of the plan is to remove financial barriers that prevent households from obtaining and sustaining housing by incorporating a flexible funding mechanism as part of homeless services team conducing outreach and case management. Adding a flexible funds component to these teams would enhance the ability

to provide supports for core needs such as emergency night stays, clothing, medicine, hygiene items, storage, and immediate payments at grocery and convenience stores. These funds could also be used to pay for expenses, such as security deposits, rental payments, moving expenses, fees to obtain identification documents, transportation, auto repairs and health care expenses. This proposed plan aligns with the Framework's Services, Treatment and Outreach as well as Emergency/Interim Housing and Resources domains.

Today's item requests the Board authorize the Director of Purchasing and Contracting to issue competitive solicitation for administration, services and related supplies associated with the development of Specialized Funding for Imminent Needs program. If approved, it is anticipated that Request for Proposal will be issued in Spring 2022 for a fiscal administrator of these funds, in accordance with all County policies.

Create a plan to enhance outreach and case management direct services including robust data collection and analysis in East County and countywide.

The Office of Homeless Solutions (OHS), a part of HSEC, has developed a plan to enhance services in the East Region, through the use of an integrated team that will work in partnership with East Region cities and service providers to conduct homeless outreach, street case management, assessment, and provide connections to services and housing opportunities. To enhance the team in the East Region, eight additional full-time positions were added to the existing two positions, for a total of ten staff. This integrated team now consists of six social workers (street case management staff), four human services specialists (outreach staff) as well as leadership staff who support them. The team, referred to as the HSEC-OHS East Region Homeless Services Team, will provide services beyond outreach, such as engagement and prolonged involvement with unsheltered individuals, as well as follow up with them after they are housed or sheltered to ensure housing stability. This collaborative approach takes into consideration the unique needs of the East Region and each jurisdiction within it as well as the unincorporated areas to ensure a tailored approach.

The team is in process of launching comprehensive coverage in the East Region in partnership and collaboration with East Region cities and other key stakeholders. This team is collecting data and once fully established, the team will be entering data into the Regional Task Force on Homelessness Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) under a newly created project code. This will provide the ability to collect and analyze customer interactions, establish real time locations of encampments, and provide interventions based on enhanced data collection and analysis. The creation and work of the HSEC-OHS East Region Homeless Services Team aligns with the Services, Treatment and Outreach Domain of the Framework by expanding outreach and case management services and enhancing data collection and analysis.

In addition, OHS expanded direct services Countywide in Central, South and North Regions. Upon establishment on July 1, 2021, OHS integrated existing Central and South Region Homeless Services and expanded these teams in both regions. Two Human Services Specialists

were added to Central Region for total of fourteen staff and one Human Services Specialist and two Social Workers were added to South Region for total of six staff. Additionally, on November 15, 2021, OHS launched North Region Homeless Services by adding two Human Services Specialists, ten Social Workers and two Licensed Social Workers for total of seventeen staff.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Section 15060(c)3 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines provides that activities identified in Section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines are not subject to CEQA review. Section 15378 provides that those administrative activities of governments that will not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment are exempt from CEQA review. The proposed actions are administrative in nature as it includes procurement of contracts, and application for grant funding. Therefore, the proposed action is not subject to CEQA review. In addition, it can also be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activities in question may have a significant effect on the environment by merely authorizing staff to obtain contractors for emergency shelter options including sleeping cabins and safe parking.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's actions support the County of San Diego's vision of *Live Well San Diego* and align with the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan and the new Strategic Initiatives of just, sustainable and resilient future for all by providing assistance to and increasing the availability of services and resources for people experiencing homelessness.

Respectfully submitted,

HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER Chief Administrative Officer

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ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A - Implementation Plan for Compassionate Emergency Solutions and Pathways to Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness