



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: September 28, 2009 REPORT NO: 09-136
ATTENTION: Council President and City Council
SUBJECT: FY 2010 Homeless Emergency Winter Shelter Program
REFERENCE: City Council Report #09-126, September 14, 2009

REQUESTED ACTION:

- Find that a significant number of persons within the City of San Diego are without the ability to obtain shelter, and that the weather conditions during the cold weather season result in a threat to the health and safety of those persons.
- Declare a homeless shelter emergency in the City of San Diego.
- Approve the FY 2010 Homeless Emergency Winter Shelter Program (HEWSP).
- Designate a site for the FY2010 HEWSP and authorize the Mayor or his designee to prepare the necessary analysis to proceed with implementation of the project.
- Authorize the Chief Financial Officer to accept, appropriate, and expend any and all additional contributions, private donations, interest earnings, and other City funds associated with the approved FY 2010 HEWSP, contingent upon certification of funds availability.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Adopt the requested actions.

SUMMARY:

According to the most recent statistics compiled by the Regional Task Force on the Homeless, there are at least 4,338 homeless persons living in the City of San Diego. Of those, 1,868 persons are living on the streets, 656 persons are living in emergency shelter, and 1,814 persons are living in transitional housing. These figures represent the homeless profile while the FY09 Winter Shelter Program was in operation. Absent the additional 370 winter shelter beds, the unmet shelter need will affect at least 2,238 persons. The weather conditions during the winter

season have the potential to affect the health and safety of individuals subjected to long-term or constant exposure. Given the existing shortage of available beds, it is recommended that a homeless shelter crisis be declared and the FY2010 Homeless Emergency Winter Shelter Program be adopted to provide shelter services to approximately 370 homeless individuals.

Single Adult Shelter

The single adult shelter houses up to 220 single men and women and is operated by Alpha Project for the Homeless. Alpha Project for the Homeless has operated the program for the past five years, which consists of basic services such as; lodging, two meals/day, showers, restroom facilities, security, hygiene supplies (when available) and case management. Alpha Project also coordinates with other homeless service agencies to provide “in kind” services on-site to program participants. These services include:

- Basic medical services/ medical assessment and referral (i.e. blood pressure checks, general exams, limited prescriptions). Chronic and comprehensive medical care is provided off-site at clinics and most prescriptions are filled off-site.
- Referrals for food stamp and financial assistance. The City’s Homeless Outreach Team will accompany participants to appointments
- Employment referrals
- Mental health referrals

The FY2010 program will run from late November, 2009 through March, 2010. The City has identified funding to operate the shelter for 120 days. The length of operation could be extended up to an additional 30 days if Alpha Project, or other donations, cover the funding necessary to cover sustained operational costs.

The City has not yet identified a location for the single adult program, which is anticipated be housed in a sprung structure. On September 14, 2009, Council reviewed a list of potential sites within a ¼ mile radius of downtown. No sites from this list were approved. Rather, Council directed staff to survey additional sites beyond a ¼ mile radius of downtown, throughout the City.

A multi-step process was used to search for sites citywide. First, a list of city-owned property over 25,000 square feet was generated. From that list, individual sites were reviewed via on-line satellite imagery for suitability such as; level surface, access, and physical shape. Based upon the on-line survey, 16 sites were identified. Of the 16 sites, only 10 sites (see maps and photos in Attachment B) were deemed potentially suitable for the winter shelter using the following criteria:

- Minimum area 25,000 sq. ft. for sanitation, food service and medical support
- City owned property with no lease or use restrictions
- Paved or un-paved with minimal grading necessary
- Availability of water and electricity hookups
- Access

Attachment A lists all of the sites under consideration, along with issues, conditions, and an analysis of the distance to nearest transit and school facilities.

In order to assist with the site identification process, the Office of the Chief Operating Officer issued a memo on September 16, 2009 requesting that each Councilmember forward a recommendation for a winter shelter in their respective districts. Responses to the call for recommendations are included in Attachment C. Only one new site, Civic Center, was suggested. The Golden Hall facility in the San Diego Civic Center hosts numerous events throughout the year, many of which pay fees to the City for use of the venue. In order to utilize the Golden Hall facility, previously scheduled events would need to be cancelled, resulting in an approximate \$218,000 loss in revenue.

Response to issues raised at first hearing:

Numerous issues were raised at the first hearing and are addressed below.

1) Feasibility of operating a hotel/motel voucher program instead of the winter shelter.

Response: The County of San Diego operates a voucher program between the months of October and May. Vouchers are available for families, disabled, and seniors who are homeless within the City and County of San Diego. Last year the County served 209 households within the City of San Diego through this program.

The County contracts with social service agencies for program administration, which includes case management and voucher issuance. Funding for the program consists of \$50,000 from the City for city vouchers, \$30,000 from County Housing and Community Development (HCD) for vouchers outside the City, \$80,000 from County General Purpose Revenue, \$105,000 from HUD Community Service Block Grants (CSBG), and up to \$15,000 in grants from smaller cities within the County. Program costs include:

- Hotel/Motel Vouchers- \$55per/night or \$350 per/week
- Administration
- Contingency – (damage, incidentals, liability)

Households access the program through 211, the regional information and referral hotline, and are referred to contracted voucher agencies for eligibility and possible voucher assistance. On average households remain in the program for 2-3 weeks, with the maximum length of assistance not to exceed 28 days. Based upon the County's model, a City operated winter shelter voucher program that replaced the adult singles program would cost a minimum of \$1,320,000. These costs only include voucher expenses and do not include any administrative expenses or a contingency fund. Additionally, the City winter shelter program historically provides two meals a day on site.

The City's current winter shelter program budget could support approximately 75 homeless persons for 120 days or 220 persons for 41 nights. If the City were to consider a "weather dependant" winter shelter program and provide vouchers on nights with more severe weather conditions, several factors would need to be considered. First, the County issues vouchers on a weekly basis to allow for economies of scale both administratively

and on hotel costs (rates run approximately \$55/night or \$350/week). If the City issued vouchers on a nightly basis, additional administrative expenses would be required to cover daily rather than weekly staffing. If the City considered vouchering on a weekly basis, weather conditions would need to be assessed at the beginning of each week to determine what bed nights would be provided that week. Either option would require the City to allocate enough funds to operate the program every night, for the entire season to account for the possibility of long term inclement weather.

In addition to administrative and funding considerations, the City would need to submit a Substantial Amendment to the recently approved FY2010 Consolidated and Annual Action Plan. The Consolidated and Annual Action Plan sets forth the City's expenditure plan for federal entitlement programs, two of which (CDBG and ESG) are used to fund the winter shelter program. A substantial amendment requires 30-day public review, preceded by a 14 day public notice period, and a public hearing prior to submission to HUD. Once HUD receives the amendment, approval is needed prior to re-allocating the funds.

Other issues for consideration include; difference in homeless population served by the winter shelter program and the County's program, time to competitively bid contracts for program administration, hotel selection and development of participation agreements, liability and insurance costs.

2) Cost of replacing the sprung structure and/or re-configuration

Response:

The cost to replace the entire sprung structure would run from \$4,000 to \$4,900 per/month for a lease option or \$198,000 to purchase. The City also has the option to re-configure the existing tent to accommodate a different footprint. However, expenses associated with reconfiguration depend upon the specific needs of individual sites. Sections cost approximately \$1,600/square foot. Purchase of several sections could approach the cost of replacing the tent in its entirety. Lease opportunities are available for sectional use, however; without site specifications cost information is difficult to estimate.

3) Potential use of Qualcomm Stadium Parking Lot or Sports Arena.

Response:

Qualcomm Parking Lot- Use of a portion of the Qualcomm Stadium Parking Lot would be problematic for a number of reasons, as stated in Attachment C, (Memorandum from Qualcomm Stadium Manager). Issues include, contract terms that require the City to provide 18,000 parking spaces for Chargers games; potential environmental remediation concerns; impacts on special events; and traffic and security considerations.

Sports Arena- Sports Arena and parking lot are currently under a lease agreement.

4) Plans to address H1N1

Response: Family Health Centers of San Diego (FHCS D) provides mobile medical services at the winter shelter site. The FHCS D Homeless Committee, consisting of a collaboration of homeless services providers, has been meeting over the past several months to plan for H1N1 precautions within the homeless community this flu season. FHCS D anticipates receipt of H1N1 vaccines by mid-October, which would be available to the winter shelter program participants. Additionally, the City is in contact with County Health and Human Services to ensure H1N1 prevention measures are offered to the program as well.

Veterans Shelter

Up to 150 homeless male veterans will be housed at the SPAWAR location in the Midway area in a sprung structure each night. The operator at this site will be Veteran's Village of San Diego. Shelter participants will have access to the programmatic services 7 days a week, twenty-four hours a day. Veteran's Village of San Diego will be responsible for providing program operations, services, and gathering appropriate information on shelter participants. The program will operate for 120 days from December 2, 2009 through March 31, 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no impact to the General Fund from this action. On March 3, 2009, through R- 304705, Council approved acceptance and expenditure of \$195,000 in Emergency Shelter Grants Funds and \$105,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and \$380,000 from the San Diego Housing Commission to be used for the Homeless Emergency Winter Shelter Program (See Attachment E).

On July 6, 2009, through R-305030, Council approved acceptance and expenditure of an additional \$66,459 in ESG funds, of which \$41,459 is allocated to the HEWSP, based upon notification from HUD that the City's actual award amount was greater than amount approved on March 3, 2009. (See Attachment F).

PREVIOUS COUNCIL AND/OR COMMITTEE ACTION:

Funding authorization for Winter Shelter Program Operations was approved on March 3, 2009, with additional funding approved on July 6, 2009.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

Since no site(s) are being recommended, staff has not conducted any outreach at this time. Efforts have primarily focused on identifying sites that meet the criteria necessary to accommodate the winter shelter program.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

Depending upon the ultimate location of the winter shelter, residents and businesses in the surrounding area could experience impacts.

Program partners include the San Diego Housing Commission, the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services Agency (health care workers and case managers), and various non-profit and veteran agencies who provide support services at no cost to the City's Homeless Shelter Program.



Jay M. Goldstone
Chief Operating Officer

Attachment: A- List of Potential Shelter Sites
B- Maps and Photos of new sites surveyed
C- Responses to Chief Operating Officer Memo dated September 16, 2009
D- Memo from Qualcomm Facility Manager
E- R- 304705
F- R-305030