



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 14, 2022

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshar 
County Administrator

Re: **Additional Information for the Board of Supervisors October 18, 2022 - Availability of County Properties for Street Living Homeless Temporary Shelter, Addendum Item No. 1**

Introduction

Board of Supervisors Chair Sharon Bronson has asked that staff review the availability of County owned property that could be used to provide temporary shelters for street living homeless. The following provides a brief summary of the current problem, the need for temporary transitional housing, the County owned sites that could be used for such, a preliminary analysis of the potential costs with possible sources of funding, and recommendations for moving forward.

Discussion

To oversimplify a very complex situation, we have seen an increase in the incidents of illegal behavior perpetrated by a segment of the street living homeless in our community. The need for a temporary shelter is to address this issue and, as such, does not address the overarching issues of poverty, affordable housing, homelessness, mental illness and drug abuse. The purpose of this temporary shelter is to reduce the likelihood of unsheltered individuals engaging in illegal behavior – whether out of mental illness, drug abuse or other causes – and to simultaneously reduce the negative impact this behavior is having on area residents and businesses. It is our intent to make this temporary shelter a “transitional center” with limited stay, but with coordinated access to other housing opportunities, behavioral health and substance abuse services.

Staff has explored the availability of County owed land throughout the region for the purpose of providing a temporary shelter/transition center for this population. The following five properties were identified for potential use:

- 1010 W. Miracle Mile (corner of Miracle Mile and Fairview)
- Vacant lot south of the Kino Complex (near Michigan St. and Country Club Rd.)
- Cushing Parking Lot (Corner of Cushing St. and 1-10 Frontage Rd.)
- Vacant lot at 75 E. Broadway (between Scott Ave. and 6th Ave.)
- 1801 S. Mission Rd; previously the Sheriff’s Minimum Security Facility (corner of Mission Rd. and Silverlake Rd.)

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Given its proximity to bus lines, the Tucson Police Department, and La Frontera housing services, it appears that 1010 W. Miracle Mile would be the best location of the currently available locations to stand up a temporary shelter/transition center site. However, this site is scheduled for the construction of our Northwest Service Center and we anticipate the work to begin in April of 2023. Given the condensed timeline associated with setting up this location and then preparing for construction, choosing this location will present some pragmatic challenges for developing a successful model.

For this reason, we will continue the exploration for the use of this property along with other potentially more viable locations and will need to begin the process for the procurement of a service provider who would be in charge of developing and managing the services necessary for a transition center. The services that would need to be provided include: temporary housing structures to include cots and tents; food services; bathroom/shower facilities; and the facilitation of medical, behavior health, substance abuse, and transitional economic support with external agencies. The goal of this design is to connect street living homeless with the necessary support services to facilitate a rapid transition to a more permanent housing solution.

Given the scope of this design and the need for the 24-hour operation of any facility we ultimately choose, it is estimated that we would require an investment of approximately \$1 million a month. The funding sources that are being explored for supporting this cost are unexpended American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, other funds currently allocated for affordable housing and the contingency fund. More precise costs will be presented to the Board of Supervisors prior to the expenditure of funds once a service provider is procured and a design is finalized.

Concurrently, staff will be exploring ways to incorporate additional support services through the justice system. Greater enforcement of criminality within the unsheltered population will require a review of current systems of accountability to ensure the successful rehabilitation of those individuals cycling through our county detention complex. This is of particular concern for those individuals with behavioral health and/or substance abuse issues who may need greater involvement dictated by the courts.

Recommendations

We request that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to simultaneously pursue all other options for the temporary shelter/transition of street living homeless individuals to include, but is not limited to, the empty facility located at 1801 S. Mission Rd, the identification of other large facilities that could be leased to accommodate shelter requirements, and the acquisition on a short term or permanent basis of motel rooms. We also request that the Board of Supervisors approve a preliminary budget of \$ 5M and direct staff to begin the public procurement of a service provider for the proposed center. Furthermore, we request that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to collaborate with our law enforcement and court systems

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partners to develop a justice model that will help reduce recidivism with this population of individuals.

We realize that any property we choose would require time to outfit and make habitable and do not anticipate a location being operable until late December. Although the establishment of a County supported transition center will not address the entire population of street living homeless, it is our hope that this design along with a strong collaboration with the justice system we will establish a successful model that will make a significant impact on mitigating this critical situation.

JKL/dym

c: Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator and Chief Medical Officer
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator