

STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 22, 2020

TO: City Council

FROM: Mike Webb, City Manager
Kelly Stachowicz, Assistant City Manager
Darren Pytel, Police Chief
Deanne Machado, Deputy Director of Police Services

SUBJECT: Overnight Shelter and Homelessness Update

Recommendation

1. Receive update and provide feedback to staff regarding expectations related to sanctioned camping.
2. Approve Resolution (Attachment 1) to authorize City Manager to approve agreements related to the 2020 cold weather shelter program.

Fiscal Impact

Funding for the projects comes primarily from CARES Act funding the City has received. With this funding, the City will pay lease costs for a 6-month period (\$247,500) and medical services (\$75,000) for the winter shelter program. The City is working with non-profit partners to try to leverage additional funding to provide other services for the program.

The CARES Act funds are required to be spent to benefit low income individuals and to mitigate issues related to COVID-19. They are required to be expended prior to December 30, 2020 and are not eligible to offset other City programs or expenses.

Staff continues to look into eligibility of the funds for other costs related to serving unsheltered individuals.

Council Goal(s)

Ensure a Safe, Healthy, Equitable Community.

Background and Analysis

Background. As of the most recent Point-in-Time count (2019), the City of Davis has 190 people who are unhoused. The City has been and continues to work on myriad efforts to address homelessness. We currently have several grants and programs focused on meeting the immediate needs of the homeless population in Davis, moving them to housing, and keeping them housed. As examples, within the past several months:

- the City has opened a pilot daytime homeless respite center to meet hygiene needs and connect guests to services;

- the City’s homeless outreach team continues to make contact with unsheltered individuals and assist them;
- Project RoomKey funded by CARES Act funds through Yolo County currently provides 39 rooms to house individuals in local hotels.
- the Creekside project, which includes 90 affordable units and wrap around services, has started to move residents in, with some moving in this permanent housing from Project Roomkey or the City’s Pathways program;
- the affordable project adjacent to the new Sterling development, which will provide 38 affordable family units and supportive services, is preparing to begin construction;
- the City Council approved Paul’s Place which is pending construction (details below);

Cold Weather Season and Shelter. The COVID pandemic has made provision of services more complicated and costlier, and the community needs a solution to house people during the upcoming cold weather season. For the past 13 years, the Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter (IRWS) has operated a cold weather shelter for individuals, located in different member properties. This year, because of COVID, the IRWS members are not able to safely provide congregate shelter in the manner they have in the past. The City and IRWS have been working together with other stakeholder partners to develop a solution to allow the community to safely house unsheltered individuals in a non-congregate setting, which greatly reduces their risk of contracting COVID-19 and/or transmitting it throughout the community.

The proposed project is for a non-congregate emergency shelter in Davis for six months. Individuals will be placed in apartments for emergency shelter with the goal of transitioning to permanent housing as quickly as their situations permit. This proposal takes advantage of an uncommonly high apartment vacancy rate in Davis because UC Davis students are taking many classes online remotely due to the COVID pandemic.

The City has received CDBG-CV1 funds from the CARES Act, which are required to be used to support low income individuals related to COVID-19. In mid-June, the City Council approved an initial plan for these dollars, and on the Council agenda this evening is a recommendation to amend that plan to allow for the funds previously approved for “rental acquisition” to be used for rental payments instead. Assuming Council approves this plan amendment, the City plans to pay rental costs to lease up to 25 two-bedroom apartments for a 6-month period to house the most vulnerable homeless individuals (starting with those over age 65 and/or with an underlying health condition that puts them at greater risk for COVID-19). When serving persons outside the highest risk of medical vulnerability, the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Tool (VI-SPDAT) will be used to prioritize placement of other persons experiencing homelessness on a space-available basis. In addition, the City will utilize up to \$75,000 in the already approved CDBG-CV funding to provide medical services through CommuniCare.

The IRWS is currently the lead applicant (with the City, CommuniCare, DOVe, and the Yolo Food Bank as primary partners) on a \$229,121 grant to the County for funding through the Emergency Solutions Grant program. The grant proposal rounds out the apartment leases secured by the City by funding services and basic needs, such as food, for the participants. The IRWS will manage the program, serving up to 40 individuals every night. This is a 24-hour non-

congregate model of care including home-visits by medical staff (MD physician and medical assistant) from CommuniCare; food delivery by volunteers from IRWS congregations (with many items provided by Yolo Food Bank); two Medical Case Managers from IRWS, each with a caseload of 20 individuals; two trained supervisors from IRWS who will supervise volunteers. DOVe will provide advocacy and community education. IRWS will make daily check-ins to participants for health and well-being. A decision on grant award is expected the week of September 21st.

The project is based on Housing First principles, which the City of Davis has adopted. Participation is not based on sobriety or use of substances, completion of treatment or agreement to participate in services.

This project is proposed to start as soon as funding and other approvals are in place, with October 1 being the target date. It will run through the end of March, 2021. The IRWS normally operates late November to mid-March.

While staff acknowledges that this is a temporary fix, we are in need of a different type of solution for this year, due to the pandemic. Utilizing the CARES Act funding and other funding sources intended to address COVID needs allows the City time to continue to pursue longer term options to address homelessness.

Paul's Place Update. In June, the City Council approved the Paul's Place application, which will provide 28 units of housing and 4 emergency shelter beds for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, managed by Davis Community Meals and Housing. It was originally hoped that construction for this project would start as early as this fall, however, it appears that the project won't begin until late spring or early summer 2021. With the delay, City staff are working with Davis Community Meals and Housing to ensure the organization is able to continue to utilize the City's properties at 512 Fifth Street and 1101 H Street to house and provide services to unsheltered individuals. Utilizing these properties will further expand community resources to provide non-congregate shelter for our most vulnerable populations.

Project Roomkey Update. Project Roomkey was initiated in the spring, utilizing CARES Act funds via Yolo County to provide temporary shelter for unhoused individuals during COVID. Priority is given to those most in need of shelter – those with medical issues, over 65 years of age, etc.. Currently, 39 rooms are reserved in local hotels for the program. The County recently extended the funding for the program through the end of the calendar year. Further extensions will depend upon funding availability. Should the program not be extended past the end of the year, those individuals would be eligible for housing in the IRWS apartment units noted above. Alternatively, should funding for project RoomKey not be extended, the City may wish to utilize a new round of CARES Act funds that the City expects to receive to extend stays, while we continue to want to provide non-congregate care to prevent the transmission of coronavirus. Staff is awaiting further information on the funding and its parameters.

Sanctioned Camping. Unsheltered individuals often pitch tents or camp out in spaces and nooks across the city. These spaces are not intended for residential living and in most cases, the individuals do not have access to basic necessities such as running water, toilets, or trash

disposal. These campsites can be health hazards as well as eyesores, however in many cases people cannot be forced to move if they do not have another place to land because of federal court decisions. This is further complicated by the State COVID orders and Center for Disease Control guidance which generally specify that the unhoused should not be moved from their locations because of the increased risk of spreading the disease to others when they do so. This issue has presented even more complicated challenges to a serious problem where there are no easy answers or quick solutions.

Staff have been researching options for sanctioned camping areas and are not yet prepared to recommend a specific location or locations. There are challenges with any location and any site must be carefully evaluated to ensure that it is safe and can be used as intended. Ongoing funding has not been identified. Staff is looking for input from the Council on the following parameters, which will help in determining appropriate properties:

- Preference for a centralized or disbursed model (i.e. One location or multiple?)
- Whether to provide other services on the site or just camping, toilets and potable water
- Whether vehicles and trailers will be allowed
- Intended duration, and whether to pursue on a pilot basis for an initial period

Staff has already conducted research around potential non-congregate dwellings to be placed in sanctioned camping areas once a location has been approved. Pallet shelters have been identified as a suitable solution given the relatively low price point per unit, ease of deployment and mobility and durability. Pallet shelters can accommodate individuals or small families and take approximately one hour each to assemble.



Attachments

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 20-XXX, SERIES 2020

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE DOCUMENTS
NECESSARY FOR THE 2020-2021 WINTER SHELTER PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the City Council has approved funding through the CDBG-CV1, CARES Act allocation to provide medical services and housing to unsheltered individuals to mitigate the effects of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has limited the ability of the Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter (IRWS) to provide cold weather overnight shelter in the same manner they have done over the past 13 years; and

WHEREAS, the City of Davis is working with non-profit partners, including the Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter, Davis Opportunity Village (DOVe), the Yolo Food Bank, and CommuniCare to provide a program for cold weather shelter and services to homeless individuals; and

WHEREAS, the program has many elements and the City, through grant funding, will be providing the shelter for six months through the leasing of 25 apartments and medical services through an agreement with CommuniCare. The apartment leases are estimated to cost \$247,500 and the medical services up to \$75,000.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Davis authorizes the City Manager, in consultation with the City Attorney, to execute all necessary agreements, including lease documents, necessary insurance, and agreements with CommuniCare, to successfully operate the program.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Davis on this 22nd day of September, 2020 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

Gloria Partida
Mayor

ATTEST:

Zoe S. Mirabile, CMC
City Clerk