

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** March 18, 2025

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Dana Bailey, Social Services & Housing Director  
Todd Henry, Police Chief  
Homelessness Subcommittee (Councilmembers Josh Chapman and Gloria Partida)

**SUBJECT:** Homeless Services Discussion Follow-Up

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### **Recommendations**

Informational.

If there is City Council interest in implementing one or more of the programs outlined in this report, staff can return with the necessary budget adjustments for the current year budget or work to include the program(s) in the upcoming two-year budget (Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027). Council may also request staff to return with additional services or more information related to proposed services regarding costs or operational service options.

### **Fiscal Impact**

This staff report does not have specific costs. However, if City Council provides direction on specific operational programs within this report, future actions could have fiscal impacts.

### **Council Goals**

This item is consistent with Improving Social Services for Vulnerable Populations and Maintaining High Quality Infrastructure and Services. It is not tied to a specific task.

### **Commission Involvement**

This item is coming directly to the City Council.

### **Background and Analysis**

On November 20, 2024, staff presented an overview to City Council of current and planned programs addressing homelessness and public safety within the city. Staff also presented various program options to enhance the City's capacity to address homelessness, encampment resolution and public safety. Council directed staff to provide further information on proposed augmented service options and estimated program costs. Specifically, the Council requested additional information on the following areas:

- Encampment clean up assistance
- Downtown Beat Police Officer

- Respite Center Hours
- Community Navigators
- Sanctioned Parking/Sanctioned Camping
- Additional Homelessness Services (Downtown Streets Team, Davis Community Meals and Housing)

### **Contracted Encampment Resolution Services**

Homeless encampments present significant challenges for the City, including public health risks, environmental concerns, and the strain on several department resources. A review of staff time committed to camp clean-ups indicates the City currently spends more than \$200,000.00 a year in personnel costs to address camp clean up. These estimates do not entirely capture material resources, storage rental, and associated costs with the delayed response to other community concerns.

There are several compelling reasons to utilize a contracted company for encampment cleanup rather than using city employees, including expertise, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Contracted cleanup companies often specialize in the specific challenges associated with homeless encampments. These companies are experienced in managing the complex, sensitive, and often hazardous nature of encampment cleanups. Their employees are trained in dealing with biohazards, discarded needles, human waste, and other health hazards commonly found in these environments.

In contrast, city employees, who may be trained in general sanitation or maintenance tasks, often lack the specialized skills or knowledge to safely and effectively address the unique risks of homeless encampments. Contracted companies can provide a team of trained professionals equipped with appropriate tools, safety gear, and protocols to ensure the cleanup is completed safely while minimizing health and safety risks for workers and the surrounding community.

These companies are accustomed to the unique logistics of encampment cleanups, including coordinating with law enforcement, social services and handling the disposal of large amounts of debris. The Police Department's Code Enforcement Unit is primarily responsible for encampment cleanup, which diverts them from other core duties or causes operational delays due to competing priorities or insufficient resources. The additional time required to train City employees or handle these tasks outside their normal scope can lead to delays and increased costs.

Code Enforcement must clean several encampments a month and often clean property left at abandoned camps multiple times daily. Very often, Code Enforcement must collect and store property of perceived value that is left in an encampment. This property must be inventoried and placed in storage for 90 days. If an owner of the property returns and requests their property, Police Department personnel must locate the property, update appropriate reports, travel to an off-site storage location, and coordinate returning the property to the owner. This lengthy process diverts employees from completing their primary responsibilities and increases response times to other community requests.

Two public safety specialists staff Code Enforcement and an estimated 50% of their current workload is committed to encampment clean-ups. Code Enforcement is also responsible for vehicle and bike abatement, blight in the public right-of-way, wood burning, illegal signage, health and safety violations, bag ordinance, some zoning enforcement, graffiti abatement, nuisance cases, and water waste. Removing substantial work related to encampments from Code Enforcement will allow them to refocus on other community issues. Regardless, Code Enforcement would still be responsible for assessing encampments for removal and fulfilling notification of removal requirements.

### Projected Annual Costs

Costs for contracted encampment cleanup and property storage can vary depending on the level and type of services desired. Several companies provide specific services related to encampment clean-ups, property storage, inventorying, documentation, and coordinating stored property returns to owners. Contract costs can vary from \$80,000.00 to \$175,000.00 annually, depending on required operational needs. A submitted quote received by the Police Department for contracted service that includes two employees twice a week (8 hours a day) for encampment cleanup and property collection, storage, auditing, purging, and scheduled releases would be approximately \$175,000.00 annually. This is less than a Public Safety Specialist (PSS), which has an annual total compensation cost of \$190,536.00. Code Enforcement frequently commits two PSS positions to camp cleanup and property storage. More complex cleanups require considerably more personnel resources. Contracting these services would significantly increase Code Enforcement's ability to address other community issues without adding additional city personnel.

Should the Council be interested in pursuing this option, staff recommends issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for any proposed contracted camp cleanup services. An RFP would allow the City to explore a wide range of options, enabling a price comparison and selecting the most cost-effective solution.

### **Downtown Beat Officer**

The downtown area often faces a higher concentration of foot traffic and economic activity, which can contribute to unique public safety challenges. A dedicated officer ensures downtown will have a greater visible City presence, allowing for quicker response times to incidents such as disturbances, fights, thefts, or accidents. Their presence also serves as a deterrent to criminal activity, reducing the likelihood of low-level and more serious offenses.

A dedicated police officer assigned specifically to the downtown area offers numerous benefits for both public safety and community engagement. A downtown beat officer can help build trust and relationships with residents, business owners, and visitors. By being a consistent, visible presence, the officer will foster positive relationships within the community, making it easier for people to approach law enforcement with concerns or public safety issues. Regular business and community interactions will allow the officer to better understand the area's unique challenges related to public safety issues.

This engagement also creates opportunities for proactive crime prevention, as community members are more likely to report suspicious activity or quality of life issues to an officer they are familiar with.

A police officer assigned to downtown can respond to incidents immediately without being required to travel from other areas of the city. Additionally, the officer will have an in-depth understanding of the specific concerns of the community and downtown businesses, enabling them to respond more effectively and prioritize resources where they are most needed. The position would not be primarily responsible for routine calls for service outside the downtown area. Placing an officer position downtown will create more available time focused on the downtown as they will not be called away to handle calls for service in other areas of the City. This will allow the officer to develop solutions for chronic and ongoing issues that often require deeper analysis and coordination of various resources.

A well-patrolled and safe downtown attracts more businesses, tourists, and residents. The officer's presence will help reassure business owners and consumers that the area is safe, potentially leading to increased foot traffic, economic development, and tourism. A downtown officer would be assigned to the Community-Oriented Policing Unit. In addition to directed and proactive crime prevention, the position would also be responsible for downtown community and business meetings. The officer would also occupy office space downtown with defined and regular hours for community member visits increasing in-person communication.

#### Projected Annual Costs

The current annual total compensation costs of a police officer position (step 3), with benefits, is approximately \$217,000.00.

#### **Expanding Daytime Respite Center hours**

The Davis Daytime Respite Center (Respite Center) is a low-barrier access site designed to offer non-overnight sheltering to connect people experiencing homelessness to a variety of services. Downtown Streets Team is the current operator of the Respite Center and provides case management, housing navigation, referral to health/behavioral health, employment services and basic needs support (laundry, showers, storage, etc.). Respite Center hours of operation are currently Monday-Friday, 8am to 4pm.

#### Projected Annual Costs

Staff requested DST provide an analysis and cost estimate to expand the hours of operation of the Respite Center from 5-days to 7-days a week or to stagger weekday operations to cover weekends. The annual costs to operate through the current model is \$361,484 annually. The proposed costs to expand to a 7-day model is \$559,465, a difference of \$197,981. The proposed costs to stagger days of operations to include a five-day week that covers weekends (for example, Wednesday through Sunday) is estimated to be \$414,873, a difference of \$53,389. DST attributes much of the

increased costs to securing staff and attendants to work on weekends, which may require overtime or a premium to incentivize.

There is, however, a difference related to service delivery outside of regular Monday-Friday business hours/days. While visitors to the respite center during weekend or evening hours could access showers, laundry facilities and the physical space, the connection to other social services and counseling would be limited to traditional business hours, since those services are typically offered through partnering programs, such as County or State programs, that operate during the traditional business week.

### **Volunteer-based Community Navigator System**

Community navigation programs act as a bridge to helping individuals in communities, including the unhoused and the housing insecure, to find and utilize resources, services, and opportunities that are available to them. These programs may vary widely in their target audience and their approach, but they are often rooted in local communities, with navigators who understand the specific needs and challenges of the area they serve in order for them to build trust with those they are trying to assist. Two examples of effective community navigation programs include:

*Promotores programs:* Promotores or Promotores de Salud are trained individuals who are trusted and respected in their community and have a shared culture or language. They provide culturally relevant health education, connect people to resources, and advocate for their communities' needs as community health workers (CHW) who offer connection to preventive and curative health services.

*Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART):* The Citrus Heights community has a local non-profit that provides community navigation. HART is a volunteer-run community effort whose goal is to act as a resource for those facing extreme poverty and chronic instability by connecting them to local services <https://citrusheightshart.org/>. Citrus Heights HART is one of three HART's (Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, and Citrus Heights) all of which are located within Sacramento County. Each group originally formed in response to a lack of centralized access to homeless services and recruited members who had previous experience volunteering in soup kitchens or food banks. HART is a registered nonprofit, operates independently of the City of Citrus Heights, and receives no public funding. Their budget (\$72,000 in 2022) is dependent on donations, fundraisers and grants.

City staff is currently pursuing three collaborative projects as we look at what makes sense for a Davis community navigation system:

- 1) **Peer Support Programs:** The City is working to partner with Downtown Streets Team to pilot the Peer Support program. A paid Peer Navigator (PN) will receive training to lead a small (3-5 person) team of Peer Support Specialists with lived experience to provide outreach and support to members of the unhoused community not availing themselves of services provided at the Daytime Respite Center. Following training, these Specialists will receive a stipend to conduct outreach and attend weekly debriefs.

Davis Community Meals and Housing has also launched a peer-led program to manage cleanliness and promote neighborliness on H Street where Paul's Place operates. Working with a crew of peer volunteers, staff at DCMAH have conducted litter pickup and engaged the unhoused community in acts of civic participation. DCMAH reports the program's success is largely due to the enthusiasm and number of unhoused people eager to demonstrate their willingness to be active partners in the community.

Projected Annual Costs

The Yolo County Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition (HPAC) Board awarded the City of Davis \$41,413 in Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP) funds to execute a Peer Support Program as described above. These funds are obligated and must be expended by June 30, 2026. An equivalent amount would be sufficient for a similar program at DCMAH. DCMAH is handling their current peer-led program with existing resources. Round 5 of HHAP has been delayed and no new rounds have been announced.

- 2) DJUSD Promotores Model: The City is working with the Davis Joint Unified School Districts Coordinator of Language Justice and Family Partnerships to provide technical assistance for the submission of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for funds to support Un Cafecito. Un Cafecito is grassroots coalition of Spanish speaking community navigators (Promotores) chosen from within the Spanish-speaking Davis community who share similar life experiences and have gained trust through familiarity. The objective is for the Promotores to offer a range of information about homelessness prevention in a way that is culturally appropriate through housing navigation and service connection to community members who are often marginalized.

Projected Annual Costs

Staff proposes \$20,000 in annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds would be sufficient to provide support to up to ten (10) Un Cafecito Promotores serving as community navigators to the Spanish speaking community in Davis for a year.

- 3) Safe Harbor / Safe Stay: The Social Services and Housing Department is in active talks with local congregations to determine if they have the interest and capacity to create and sustain the necessary infrastructure to serve as an access point for outreach and services to Davis homeless. Some Davis faith-based organizations are already informally creating environments of trust, respect, support to the unhoused community, and are willing to offer on-site services. To bolster that work, staff has identified an experienced consultant willing to contract to conduct training focused on trauma-informed practices, including techniques and concepts in enriched skills related to listening, establishing and maintaining boundaries for the safety of all and de-escalation techniques.

### Projected Annual Costs

Staff estimates the costs to provide training and related resources to be \$20,000 per year. This approach is highly dependent on volunteers, so additional costs are most likely to be in-kind contributions of City staff time to facilitate and coordinate efforts with local faith organizations.

City-Run Volunteer Navigator Program: In addition to the programs described above, all of which are led by groups outside of the City organization, there is the possibility of the City leading an effort for a more general navigator program not tied to a specific cultural group and available to anyone in the community interested in becoming trained and serving as a navigator to assist those in the unhoused community.

Such a program would recruit, train, and supportively supervise community volunteers who would in turn develop relationships with unhoused members of the community, build trust, integrate them into the community, connect them to the services they need, and, ultimately, help place them in permanent housing. These volunteers would need significant training to be able to link and refer unhoused individuals to local resources, including informal community supports and formal services. Specifically, community navigators would link individuals to the following:

- Mental health services
- Substance abuse treatment and support
- Support groups
- Parenting classes
- Low cost medical services
- Free to low cost legal services
- Food banks
- Clothing and shoes

The intent is for such a program to supplement and amplify the existing outreach services currently offered by the two full-time homeless outreach team staff members within the City of Davis Department of Housing and Social Services. This type of program is not intended to duplicate existing efforts.

In addition to providing linkage and referral services, the volunteer community navigators could also collaborate with and regularly visit community organizations, including mental health service providers, self-help groups, law enforcement agencies, schools, courts, residential facilities, local National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) chapter, client advocacy groups and homeless shelters. Ideally, this model supplements the existing formal infrastructure the City has in place and extends the ability to reach the most vulnerable members of the community.

While many organizations, including the City, depend on volunteers to execute many tasks, recruiting and retaining volunteers does present challenges to consider. Based on the city's experience with other volunteer programs, well-meaning individuals who want to help can and have put themselves in inappropriate or even dangerous situations, which can bring harm to them and/or the City. The level of training and commitment that would be required of these volunteers is high, which reduces the field

of candidates who would be interested in serving in a volunteer capacity. Professional service providers may still want direct contact and communication with City staff, rather than communicating with volunteers. And volunteers ultimately have no obligation to serve for any length of term or follow policies.

Existing resources in the community should also be considered to ensure there is not duplication of services, should the City Council wish to stand up an internal volunteer community navigators program. Davis Community Meals and Housing, Downtown Streets Team, Turning Point Community Services, CommuniCare/Mobile Medicine (contracted through Yolo County), and Yolo County Mobile Outreach Team all currently engage in outreach and provide connection to services to the unsheltered community. If the City proceeds with a City-run program, additional conversation should take place with all of these organizations so that each can understand what the City's internal volunteer program is intended to accomplish so that all resources, both public and private, in this arena can be maximized.

#### Projected Annual Costs

In order to implement such a program, the City would need to allocate a staff position to develop the program and policies, recruit and train volunteers and provide ongoing supervision and guidance to the team of volunteers. This cost is estimated at \$160,000 per year. (Alternatively, the City could choose to redirect the current Homeless Outreach Coordinator position to oversee this program, however, this means that they would not have the bandwidth to seek grants, perform analyses, engage in encampment resolution or fully engage with outside stakeholders to continue to build/foster partnerships in provision of homelessness services.) In addition, while the City staff position could provide some of the training as part of their duties, additional training, likely provided by outside specialists, would be necessary. Estimated training and operational costs to oversee a program with 10 volunteers is likely to cost \$40,000 per year. Another option that could reduce costs, at least for training, would be to consider a "train the trainer" model, where the original trainer teaches or "certifies" a lead volunteer, who in turn could provide training for new volunteers as they join the program. Cost savings would need to be balanced with the assurance that the volunteer trainer maintained ongoing communication with City staff to address concerns or needs quickly and efficiently.

#### **Sanctioned Parking / Sanctioned Camping**

Sanctioned camping/parking refers to designated, city-approved areas where people experiencing homelessness can set up tents or park vehicles without the risk of arrest or citation, often providing access to basic services and resources. In 2020, Council reserved a portion of CARES Act funds to explore the feasibility of pursuing either option, but was unable to designate a suitable location for the activities.

Staff conducted informational interviews with two jurisdictions offering city-based programs, with additional information included below, each with different budgets for their programs. One funds a Safe Park program in partnership with a local nonprofit. The other supports a sanctioned camping site. Both are funded through grants.

*City of Modesto/ Salvation Army Safe Park:* In 2022, the City of Modesto partnered with the Salvation Army Berberian Shelter to offer a Safe Park program in conjunction with their 185-bed shelter facility. The Safe Park program serves homeless individuals and families experiencing homelessness and using their vehicle as their primary residence. The program operates seven (7) days a week for approximately 12 hours a day and has a capacity of 25 parking spaces. The Salvation Army provides case management and supportive services, including housing search, housing placement and employment services. The location has on-site security, potable water, portable restrooms and dumpsters. Participants are required to have vehicle insurance, a drivers' license and current registration in order to reserve a space. Total annual costs, underwritten with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds are approximately \$264,755 or \$20,607 per month.

*City of San Rafael Safe Camp:* The City of San Rafael and Marin County received a California Inter-agency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) grant specifically addressing a large encampment on San Rafael's Mahon Creek Path Area. The city approved the use of a portion of a city owned bike path to operate a low-barrier, housing-focused safe sleeping site. The total ERF grant was \$5,999,241, which the City proposed to expend in two phases. They are currently coming to the close of the first phase, which established the sanctioned camping program and supported site improvements to the area. The first phase expense is approximately \$2.1million dollars including the site improvements and operational costs. Sanctioned camping is specifically reserved for former inhabitants of the Mahon Creek encampment, and includes up to 47 tent sites. The city created a no-camping buffer along the sanctioned camping site to limit individuals from camping near the program to take advantage of the services or engage in disruptive behavior.

In coordination with the Davis Police Department, staff is also reviewing a proposal by HEART of Davis to pilot the "Safe Heart" parking program. In partnership with Davis United Methodist Church, HEART of Davis hopes to serve unhoused individuals who own and live in their vehicle through legally sanctioned and protected parking from 7am-7pm daily in the United Methodist Church parking lot. A paid staff manager will check-in and monitor participants at 7pm as they register, return during the night to check for any issues and again at 7am to ensure participants have exited. Each participant would be required to sign a code of conduct and be allowed in/out privileges during the night to obtain food, go to work, attend to an errand, etc. Parkers will be discouraged from parking in the immediate area during the day to minimize neighbor relations.

Staff has requested a meeting with HEART of Davis and the Davis United Methodist Church to review the proposed program and discuss how they might receive a required operating permit (to ensure compliance with City Municipal Code) prior to moving forward with the program.

### Projected Annual Costs

This project would operate independent of the City: the City's contribution would be restricted primarily to training support for volunteers. Staff has identified an experienced consultant willing to provide two-part, full day workshops in trauma informed concepts and practices when offering community navigation. Projected contract value is approximately \$10,000 per cohort.

### **Additional Services for the Unhoused**

Based on the Council's request, staff approached the two primary homeless resource providers in Davis, Davis Community Meals and Housing (DCMAH) and Downtown Streets Team (DST), to discuss the feasibility of providing different or altered services.

### Downtown Streets Team Volunteer Flagship program

The Downtown Streets Team (DST) Volunteer Work Experience program launched in Davis in 2023. This program, known as Flagship, is DST's core work-experience model and provides employment and case management to those experiencing homelessness. Team members receive a low-barrier re-introduction to basic work skills through participation in litter abatement work crews led by peers. This project focuses primarily on locations in the downtown area. The two-year pilot was jointly funded by the City of Davis using cannabis benefit funds and Yolo County using American Rescue Plan funds. Funding for this project will conclude in June 2025, unless Council chooses to fund the program in the upcoming FY26 and FY27 budget process.

Over the course of 2024, DST has provided a number of services including but not limited to:

- Served 457 unique individuals;
- Removed 31,391 gallons of debris;
- Removed 257 barriers to service (i.e. obtained drivers licenses, Medi-Cal access, social security, etc.);
- Facilitated eight (8) housing placements; and
- Facilitated 14 job placements.

### Projected Annual Costs

DST's Davis Chapter of the flagship DST model consists of a standing Team of 15 volunteers (serving at least 60 individuals over the course of the year) to supplement existing cleaning initiatives undertaken by the City of Davis in the downtown core and other mutually agreed upon areas. The project budget is \$397,978 per year.

If additional funding is identified beyond the costs for the Flagship program, staff has reached out to DST about contracting with its Streets Team Enterprise (STE) program. (<https://www.streetsteam.org/our-work/workforce-development-program>). Membership in STE is open to graduates of DST's Streets Team Volunteers Program as well as to formerly incarcerated individuals. The type of workforce preparation undertaken by members of Streets Team Enterprises varies from community to community depending on the availability of community partners who collaborate with STE in job preparation and placement. STE currently has contracts for a variety of services with CalTRANS,

Solano County Transit and Santa Clara County Building Maintenance Services. Staff has not received cost estimates from DST for the Enterprise program, which can vary greatly based on the type of work the City would contract for. One option is to request a proposal from DST for the Enterprise program to contract for encampment resolution services, as described earlier in this report.

Davis Community Meals and Housing – Paul’s Place:

Paul’s Place is an innovative multi-use four-story building that includes a day-use resource center, and emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing. This vertical community is designed to help those who are homeless and at-risk of homeless to move from the streets to stability, with a goal to improve individual and community health and wellbeing. Staff met with the executive director of DCMAH to determine if the organization had suggestions for supporting or expanding services to the unhoused.

DCMAH is a partner to the Davis Winter Shelter, providing eight (8) congregate (shared) bed support to the program. DCMAH is using Paul’s Place as the site for shelter for the first time this year; it was formerly at 512 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Because of the project’s success, including full beds and no major incidents, the organization is considering operating eight (8) beds year-round.

Projected Annual Costs

The cost to run the eight (8) bed congregate shelter from November through March is \$72,962. DCMAH projects they could expand operations of the program to year-round with a total budget of approximately \$150,000. (The City has historically contributed CDBG funds approximating \$50,000 per year for homelessness services to DCMAH.)

DCMAH also provided a budget overview for the total operational costs of Paul’s Place:

<b>Paul's Place (1111 H St.) Operational Expenses (Actual - FY 2023-24)</b>						
	1c-PSH	2a-Transitional	4-Resource Center	7-Administration	TOTAL	
<b>Expenses</b>						
7600 Capital Expenses - solar	\$ 7,497.00	\$ 3,748.50	\$ 3,748.50			\$ 14,994.00
<b>Total Labor Costs Total</b>	\$ 77,176.44	\$ 237,682.53	\$ 48,224.08	\$ 30,650.11		\$ 393,733.16
Operating Costs	\$ 130,403.18	\$ 63,994.48	\$ 71,836.32	\$ 37,590.02		\$ 303,824.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 207,579.62</b>	<b>\$ 301,677.01</b>	<b>\$ 120,060.40</b>	<b>\$ 68,240.13</b>		<b>\$ 697,557.16</b>
<b>Total Expenses all DCMH Programs</b>						<b>\$ 1,139,708.12</b>

Projected revenue of \$1,009,000 is sourced through donations, rental income, and grants and contracts.

Conclusion

Council may wish to direct staff to prioritize one or more of these services as we are developing the upcoming two year budget. Alternatively, Council may need additional information prior to providing direction. The chart below summarizes the various services shared in this report, along with the annual cost estimates for each one.

Program/Service	Estimated Additional Annual Cost
Encampment clean up assistance	\$80,000-\$175,000
Downtown beat officer	\$217,000
Respite Center Hours	\$53,389-\$197,981
Community Navigators	\$40,000 (training only) - \$200,000 (staff + training)
Sanctioned Camping/Sanctioned Parking	\$10,000 (training only)
Downtown Streets Team	Enterprise Program costs vary based on jobs.
Davis Community Meals and Housing – expand to 8-bed year round shelter	\$73,000 (4 month) or \$150,000 (12-month)