



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

NATHAN FLETCHER
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: November 15, 2022

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS ON BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO PREVENT, ADDRESS AND SEEK AN END TO HOMELESSNESS AND APPROVE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT EXEMPTION (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On October 19, 2021 (15) and February 8, 2022 (14), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved recommendations that set forth compassionate emergency solutions and pathways to housing for people experiencing homelessness.

To expand on the work already set forth, on October 11, 2022 (12), the Board voted to approve additional and innovative ways to expand emergency housing options. These options include exploring the feasibility of purchasing sleeping cabins or sprung shelters for partner organizations to place on their properties for use as shelters, along with conducting stakeholder input sessions to determine need, interest, and capacity of local organizations to utilize these shelter options; a plan to explore partnerships with local private companies that have new and innovative solutions to address homelessness; develop the criteria to site County of San Diego (County) funded shelter options on non-County properties and include a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) finding as required.

Today's actions request acceptance of the analysis of the feasibility to purchase sleeping cabins or sprung shelters, approval of the stakeholder engagement plan, and approval of the plan to engage local private companies through a Request for Information seeking new and innovative solutions and find that today's actions are exempt from CEQA. If approved, a report will be submitted within 120 days that includes outcomes of stakeholder engagement and information gathered through the Request for Information, including costs and potential funding sources in order to move forward.

These items support the County's 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 our most vulnerable residents, specifically unsheltered people experiencing homelessness by exploring new and innovative ways to add new emergency housing resources and ensure that people experiencing homelessness have increased options when it comes to shelter. Today's actions also

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align with the County of San Diego’s Framework for Ending Homelessness, particularly the Emergency/Interim Housing and Resources strategic domain, which seeks to expand emergency housing options.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. 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.
2. Accept the analysis of the feasibility to purchase sleeping cabins or sprung shelters for partner organizations to place on their properties for use as emergency shelters which finds that the more feasible approach would be to have the Department of Purchasing and Contracting select a vendor at a competitive rate for sleeping cabins or sprung shelters which qualified partner organizations could purchase directly through a County of San Diego grant program.
3. Approve the Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities plan to conduct stakeholder input sessions to determine need, interest, and capacity of local organizations to utilize sleeping cabins and engagement of stakeholders and partner organizations and return to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) with the outcomes in 120 days.
4. Approve the plan to engage local private companies through a Request for Information to be posted publicly seeking new and innovative solutions and return to the Board with the outcomes in 120 days.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

In 2022, the We All Count Point-in-Time Count identified 8,427 individuals as living on the streets or in shelters throughout San Diego County. Of the 4,106 who were unsheltered, 25% were 55 years of age or older, 8% were youth, and 15% reported chronic homelessness. People of color are disproportionately impacted among those experiencing homelessness, with 24% identifying as Black or African American, which is five times the proportion of African Americans in the region; 3% identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, which is nearly three times the proportion in the region.

The cost of housing continues to increase in our region leaving many families at risk of homelessness. To address the varied needs of San Diego County residents at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, it is imperative to explore additional options to ensure a healthy, safe, and dignified environment for all. Identifying additional housing resources further emphasizes the County of San Diego’s compassionate and committed approach to addressing homelessness by exploring partnerships with organizations to increase shelter options and keep unsheltered residents safe from the dangers associated with living on the streets.

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SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today’s proposed actions support the County of San Diego’s (County’s) Sustainability Goal #1 to engage the community; Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access; and Sustainability Goal #3 to protect health and wellbeing. Through the development of additional shelter options and locations the County will be engaging the community by working with private entities to site sheltering options on their properties and developing public/private partnerships to create innovative approaches to addressing homelessness. This will allow the County to provide increased shelter options and provide just and equitable access to these shelters for those experiencing homelessness. These shelter options will also protect health and wellbeing by providing supportive services connected to these new shelter options.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

There is no fiscal impact associated with these recommendations. There may be future fiscal impacts associated with future recommendations. Any such recommendations would return to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors for approval. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

Providing additional sheltering options and developing programmatic partnerships with private entities could beneficially impact our communities and businesses in assisting people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On October 19, 2021 (15), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a variety of actions to address the crisis of homelessness and develop plans for compassionate emergency solutions and pathways to housing for people experiencing homelessness. On January 26, 2022 (5), the Board approved the Zoning Ordinance Amendment to expand emergency housing options and on February 8, 2022 (14), the Board approved the Implementation Plan for Compassionate Emergency Solutions and Pathways to Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness. In conjunction with these actions the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities (HSEC) held multiple community input sessions that explored emergency housing options in the unincorporated area. These sessions included input from local planning groups, community members, and people with lived experience.

As a result of Board direction and feedback received from the community, County Department of General Services (DGS) and HSEC, evaluated hundreds of properties for low-barrier emergency housing options. In August 2022, the County’s first Safe Parking Program, the Magnolia Safe Parking Program, opened in the unincorporated area of East County. This program provides up to 17 individuals with a safe place to sleep and supportive services as well as linkages to permanent

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housing options. There are three other sites in East County that are currently, under DGS consultant review in multi-phased consultant evaluation.

On October 11, 2022 (12), the Board took further action in exploring innovative opportunities for supporting partners throughout the region to expand emergency housing options and directed the Chief Administrative Officer to:

- Explore the feasibility of purchasing sleeping cabins or sprung shelters for partner organizations to place on their properties for use as shelters for people experiencing homelessness;
- Develop criteria necessary to site County funded sleeping cabins, sprung shelters or similar shelter options on non-County properties;
- Engage with local private companies that have new and innovative solutions to address homelessness and explore public/private partnerships between the County and such entities interested and capable of providing innovative approaches to end homelessness; and
- Find the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply.

Recommendations for these board actions are summarized below.

Analysis of Feasibility to Purchase Sleeping Cabins or Sprung Shelters for Partner Organizations
Sleeping cabins and sprung shelters are solutions that can support a compassionate approach in assisting the region's unsheltered populations. In response to the October 11, 2022 (12), Board direction HHSA, DGS, and County Department of Purchasing and Contracting (DPC) convened to explore the most feasible approach.

One approach that was explored is for the County to purchase the sleeping cabins or sprung shelters and either donate or license them to partner organizations for their use in establishing shelters on their property. However, it was determined that having the County purchase the sleeping cabins or sprung shelters and gift or license them to the partner organization(s) is not as feasible due to the multiple and complex logistics. For example, the County would need to identify storage options for the sleeping cabins or sprung shelters before they are installed at partner organization sites, and in the event the partner organization(s) is not able to sustain the shelter. There would also need to be a clear agreement on maintenance, insurance, liability, and other factors.

The recommended approach explored is for DPC to select a vendor and establish a competitive rate for the sleeping cabins or sprung shelters and then have HSEC issue grants to qualified partner organizations. These partner organizations would have to demonstrate viable plans for establishing shelter operations on their property so they can purchase the sleeping cabins or sprung shelters directly. This approach ensures better pricing for the partner organizations and streamlines the process of purchasing for them by working directly with the vendor on types and quantity of units as well as the logistics of delivery and storage. This approach affords control to purchase and install the sleeping cabins or sprung shelters based on partner organization project plans and timelines and helps them work directly with the vendor if there are any changes to their project.

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HSEC plans to lead four public stakeholder input sessions in November and December 2022, to solicit feedback, gauge interest, and capacity of utilizing sleeping cabins or other alternative solutions such as sprung shelters. HSEC in partnership with DPC, will leverage stakeholder networks such as the County's Homeless Sector, Faith-Based Sector, Regional Community Leadership Teams, County contractors, community planning groups and others to identify potential partners and notify them of the stakeholder input opportunities. HSEC will also work with the County Communications Office to advertise stakeholder input opportunities via the County's social media and other networks. Lastly, HSEC will share information through the Regional Task Force on Homelessness and other regional groups focused on homelessness. The results of stakeholder input will help inform and guide the next steps, which will be brought before the Board.

Criteria Necessary to Site County Funded Sleeping Cabins, Sprung Shelters or Similar Shelter Options on Non-County Properties

On January 26, 2022 (5), the Board approved an amendment to the County of San Diego Zoning Ordinance (Zoning Ordinance) that allows emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing projects to be located on any parcel in the unincorporated area, regardless of that parcel's zoning, as long as they are either:

1. Owned or operated by the County;
2. Financed in whole or in part by the County and leased to or contracted with a third party to provide a public purpose; or
3. Located on State or federal land within the unincorporated county.

The amendments to the Zoning Ordinance did not remove any requirements for projects located within the unincorporated County to comply with State Department of Housing and Community Development requirements, County Building or Fire Codes, General Plan, or discretionary permits, such as a grading permit. Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance amendment did not exempt privately held and wholly financed emergency shelters from Zoning Ordinance compliance. Therefore, partner organizations would still need to comply with State Department of Housing and Community Development requirements, applicable County or city Building and Fire Codes, and potentially require other discretionary permits, such as a grading permit.

Privately held and wholly financed emergency shelter projects located in the unincorporated County would need to comply with the Zoning Ordinance, Building Code, Fire Code, and any other applicable regulations. Currently, the Zoning Ordinance only allows private emergency shelters by-right on parcels that are zoned Manufacturing and Industrial (M50, M52, M54 and M58) and within civic zones in the Ramona and Alpine Form-Based Codes and for projects that comply with the General Use Regulations in Section 6911 of the Zoning Ordinance. These zones are intended to create and preserve areas where industrial uses with moderate to high nuisance characteristics may be located to minimize impacts on residential or commercial areas. Private emergency shelters will need to comply with Section 6911 of the Zoning Ordinance, which regulates number of clients and parking spaces, size of waiting and intake area, distance between other shelters, length of stay, security, and location of lighting.

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If the interested entity is located outside the unincorporated area of the County and within 18 city jurisdictions, they will need to follow any respective local zoning ordinances and any other applicable city jurisdictional rules and regulations pertaining to establishment of emergency shelters. Since the County will not be doing any site preparation or construction work, it is important to note that qualified entities will still be required to comply with State Department of Housing and Community Development requirements, local zoning ordinances, land use regulations, FEMA flood plain requirements and permitting to install shelter options on their identified property.

HSEC in partnership with DGS is working on developing the Siting Criteria relevant to this type of project to be presented at the 120-day return back. The HSEC and DGS teams will weigh a variety of factors, including locations that enable people to remain connected to the community in which they live, the impact on communities, accessibility of necessary health and social services and amenities, operational service delivery needs, practicality, speed of site readiness, cost, and environmental considerations.

Engage Local Private Companies that Have New and Innovative Solutions to Address Homelessness and Explore Public/Private Partnerships Between the County and Such Entities

HSEC will work in partnership with DPC to research and identify local private companies that may have new or innovative solutions to address homelessness. A Request for Information (RFI) will be posted publicly and DPC will conduct outreach to the companies identified to inform them of the RFI. This RFI will solicit feedback, gauge interest, and identify new and innovative solutions to address homelessness. Feedback received will assist HSEC in determining next steps, in partnership with DPC to identify the best procurement method and course of action. HSEC will also work with the County Communications Office to advertise the RFI via the County's social media and other networks. The results of the findings will be brought back to the Board.

Other considerations, which will be discussed with partner organizations is their ability to support essential infrastructure including utilities, water, and sanitation. Additionally, the largest piece of operating a shelter for these entities comes with the ongoing costs of case management, security, food, and other wrap-around services to support people experiencing homelessness.

Find that CEQA Does Not Apply

Today's actions are administrative and are not considered a project pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines sections 15060(c)(3) and 15387. The placement of future shelter facilities and any potential associated environmental impacts were not analyzed as part of the Zoning Ordinance amendment project. Any future decisions following outreach will be reviewed under CEQA.

Today's actions request acceptance of the analysis of the feasibility to purchase sleeping cabins or sprung shelters, approval of the stakeholder engagement plan, and approval of the plan to engage local private companies through a Request for Information seeking new and innovative solutions and find that today's actions are exempt from CEQA. If approved, a report will be submitted within

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120 days that includes outcomes of stakeholder engagement and information gathered through the Request for Information, including costs and potential funding sources in order to move forward. These actions support the County's Framework for Ending Homelessness and seek to expand options under the Emergency/Interim Housing and Resources domain through innovative and collaborative efforts with private entities.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's actions support the County of San Diego's (County) 2022-2027 Strategic Plan initiatives of Sustainability (Resiliency), Equity (Housing), and Community (Quality of Life), through the expansion of additional shelter options, which increase the County's capacity to respond to the immediate needs of individuals and families.

Respectfully submitted,



HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A