

April 26, 2005

Santa Monica, CA

INFORMATION ITEM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: City Staff

SUBJECT: Update on Current City Efforts to Address Homelessness in Santa Monica

Introduction

The following report provides a summary of efforts currently underway to address homelessness in Santa Monica.

Discussion

A community priority to address the impacts of homelessness in Santa Monica was adopted by Council at its February 8 City Council meeting. Current work efforts include the following:

New Local Projects

- **Best Practices Research for Sobering Center and Chronic Homeless:** Staff has researched sobering center best practices in communities in California and Oregon, including San Francisco, Santa Cruz, San Jose, Santa Rosa, Escondido, Santa Barbara and Portland. These communities were found to link sobering services to either the criminal justice system or to urgent care facilities. Both models offer benefits. Staff gathered information about program goals, activities, outcomes and funding via internet research and telephone contacts in the appropriate City or County departments. The information was disseminated to participants in the planning process in an effort to enter the process fully informed.

Staff is currently researching nationwide best practices in chronic homelessness initiatives. Staff is conducting research about San Diego, Boston, Chattanooga, Chicago, Denver, New York and Philadelphia. Staff will be exploring the nature of

the coordination and collaboration between city government, county agencies, non-profit agencies, the business community, and neighborhood groups in selected cities as they look to end chronic homelessness.

- **OPCC Cloverfield Project:** Through a Housing Trust Fund loan and grant, the City assisted OPCC in the purchase of property located at 1751 Cloverfield for use for a 55 bed congregate housing and emergency shelter project to be opened in early 2006. The Daybreak emergency shelter program will be relocated to this facility and expanded by ten beds to include a total of twenty congregate housing and ten shelter housing beds for homeless women with a mental illness. Safe Haven, a new program, will provide an additional twenty-five congregate beds for chronically homeless men and women, assisting the City's expanded efforts with that population. HSD and Housing and Redevelopment Division staff, facilitated the City's financial participation in the project and are now working to effect the development of the new facility and programs.
- **Sobering Center:** Since receiving Council direction in January, staff from Community and Cultural Services, Police, Fire and the City Attorney's Office have been working with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH), local hospitals, and non-profit service providers to examine the potential for both a regional out-patient psychiatric urgent care center and sobering station, and to begin planning for the possible development and implementation of co-located programs. Planning efforts included a survey of local hospital emergency rooms to determine how many emergency room visits over the course of one week could have been redirected to a psychiatric urgent care and/or sobering center, if those facilities had been available.

The initial site identified for this project by Exodus Recovery has fallen through (see attached letter from Exodus Recovery.) However, several additional sites are under consideration. City staff continues to work with DMH, other county agencies and local jurisdictions, and service providers to identify a new site, explore the feasibility of co-locating with a psychiatric urgent care center, develop operating protocols and budget, resolve legal and liability issues, and identify funding sources. In addition, City staff are actively pursuing stationing substance abuse outreach staff at the Santa Monica Jail as well as offering an interim sobering station at SAMOSHEL.

- **1616 Ocean:** Human Services Division and Housing and Redevelopment Division staff have met with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) to explore alternative housing and service options for the City-owned property located at 1616 Ocean Avenue. This includes an evaluation by CSH of the potential service and housing uses for the site that would best serve the homeless continuum of care, especially the chronically homeless, and the best methods for effecting those uses.
- **Homeless Court/Alternative Sentencing:** HSD staff is currently coordinating with Police and service providers to more effectively use the criminal justice system to divert homeless persons into services rather than incarceration. To date, these

efforts at coordination have yielded results when arrests and incarceration at the local jail, or coordination with mental health workers at the County jail, have allowed providers to reengage clients into service delivery, or when the mental health assessment has led to inpatient treatment. Unfortunately, the impact of alternative sentencing -- where the judge gives the offender the choice of services or jail time -- is limited at this time since the LA County Jail typically does not hold persons sentenced for non-violent misdemeanors longer than 72 hours, even if the judge has sentenced the offender to 180 days. Staff are investigating the feasibility of funding beds at the LA County Jail, so that for offenders facing real time in jail, services become a more attractive option.

- **Step Up on Fifth:** In addition to assisting with the coordination of the Shelter Plus Care (SPC) application (described below), HSD staff will continue to work with staff from the Housing and Redevelopment Division, Step Up on Second, and A Community of Friends to facilitate the development of a 45-unit permanent supportive housing project for persons with a mental illness on Fifth Street, expected to be completed in the fall of 2007. The City has already provided a loan of \$3.3 million in RDA and HOME funds to assist with the land acquisition and pre-development costs. Per SPC's funding requirements, 33-units must be used to serve homeless individuals. HSD staff will coordinate with Step Up on Second staff to ensure that participants in the chronic homeless pilot are well served.
- **Chronic Homelessness Pilot Project:** Over the past 10 months, City staff (Human Services, Police, Fire, Housing), service providers (OPCC, CLARE, St. Joseph Center, Step Up on Second) and the County Department of Mental Health (Edelman Mental Health Center and Countywide staff) have developed a pilot project to more effectively target services to those most difficult to reach and "service resistant" chronically homeless people who have been on Santa Monica's streets for an extended period of time. The goal of the pilot is to reach these chronically homeless people with a well coordinated, strategic, interdisciplinary and sustained effort - and get them off the streets permanently. To date, 19 people have been enrolled in this pilot project, 11 are off the streets, and all have a service plan. Currently, staff is planning for the expansion of the pilot.

Funding and Grants

- **Chronic Inebriate Grant for \$1M:** HSD staff is taking the lead in working with other City Departments and service providers to apply for \$1M in HUD funding available to provide rental assistance for chronic inebriates over 24 months. Applicants must match the rental assistance with service dollars (similar to Shelter Plus Care). Key to a competitive application is collaboration between service providers, law enforcement and the courts. The Notice of Funding Availability was recently released with a very short turn-around, and the work Santa Monica has done on the chronic homeless issue and sobering center concept should assist that effort.

- **New Shelter Plus Care \$1.7M for Step Up on Fifth:** HSD is working with the Santa Monica Housing Authority, Step Up on Second, and A Community of Friends to coordinate a Shelter Plus Care application for 60 months of project-based rental assistance as part of the funding package for Step Up's new development on 5th Street. The coordination of this application required HSD and Housing Authority staff to negotiate with County and LAHSA officials to secure an allocation of \$1.7M in Shelter Plus Care funds for the project. The LAHSA Commission is scheduled to review the allocation to the Santa Monica Housing Authority in May.
- **HUD Supportive Housing Program Funding for \$382,000:** Every year, HSD staff prepares a renewal funding application for \$381,941 in Supportive Housing Program (SHP) funds. This application is submitted as part of LAHSA's county-wide application. Funds from this grant support case managers at Ocean Park Community Center, St. Joseph Center, Chrysalis, New Directions, Step Up on Second, and the City's computerized case management system – Client Track. The funds requested in the current application are for the 2006-2007 program year (PY). At the same time, HSD staff is preparing the Technical Submission package for the SHP award for PY2005-2006, and is finalizing the budget and executing Sub-recipient Agreements for PY2004-2005.
- **HUD Shelter Plus Care Funding for \$1.6M:** Housing and Redevelopment staff are preparing \$1.6 million Shelter Plus care renewal application for HUD rental assistance funding to provide housing to 140 formerly homeless/disabled participants.
- **Administration of City General Fund Grants of \$1.7M:** In addition to SHP, the City supports 14 homeless programs in 8 agencies with funds from its general fund and the federal Community Development Block Grant program. For each of these programs a separate contract with an individualized work plan, service goals, outcomes and budget is developed. HSD staff review program and fiscal reports twice yearly, approve payments, conduct site visits and program and fiscal monitoring, and provide on-going technical support.
- **VA Funding of \$50,000 for SAMOSHEL:** Recently HSD staff identified potential funding for the Access Center/SAMOSHEL through the Veteran's Administration. Staff will provide technical assistance to the operator/applicant – Ocean Park Community Center.
- **Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63) Stakeholder Process:** Staff has been and will continue to participate in the stakeholder process to set funding priorities for the funds to be made available through the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63). Staff has been participating in all of the working groups: Children, Transition Age Youth, Older Adult, and Adult by attending regular meetings and participating in the identification of service gaps and funding priorities. In particular, the Adult Stakeholder working group has identified issues relating to homelessness, e.g., the need for mental health urgent care centers.

- **2005-2010 Consolidated Plan:** Every five years, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires jurisdictions participating in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME fund programs to complete a 5-year plan identifying community needs and outlining funding priorities, goals and objectives. Housing and the homeless continuum of care are key components in this document. HSD staff has solicited input from numerous City commissions and held a public meeting. The Consolidated Plan will be brought to the City Council for approval in June.

Service Restructuring

- **SAMOSHEL/SHWASHLOCK transition:** At the request of The Salvation Army, the current operator of SAMOSHEL and SHWASHLOCK, HSD staff is facilitating the transition of the operation of these programs to OPCC. This transfer of responsibility is also warranted because of the relocation of OPCC's Access Center to a parcel adjacent to SAMOSHEL/SHWASHLOCK. Part of the transition process included conducting a survey of homeless service providers to identify any service restructuring associated with the transition (e.g., re-examine entry criteria, length of stay, etc.). Staff is assisting OPCC with the design and budget for a restructuring of SAMOSHEL, helping to identify additional funding sources, and assisting with contractual and lease issues.
- **Relocation of Access Center and Integration of SHWASHLOCK on BBB Campus:** As part of a larger capital construction project to expand the City's Big Blue Bus (BBB) operations center, HSD is working with BBB and one of its grantee agencies, OPCC, to relocate the agency's Access Center program to an improved facility, and to consolidate this intake program, the entrance to the City's continuum of care, with SHWASHLOCK, a shower and locker program that has also been operating nearby. The new Access Center facility, located adjacent to SAMOSHEL, the City's 110 bed homeless shelter facility, will have sufficient space to provide food, clothing, shower, locker, laundry, case management, clinical, housing placement and other services designed to assist homeless individuals in moving into transitional and eventually permanent housing. HSD staff is working on coordinating improvements for, and relocating operations to, the temporary SHWASHLOCK facility at 612 Colorado, and the development of the new facilities for both SHWASHLOCK and the Access Center at 505 Olympic.
- **Assessment and Coordination of Existing Outreach Programs:** HSD and Police Department staff are coordinating a series of meetings with County and Westside homeless outreach teams to explore strategies for better coordination of regional resources in providing outreach and services to Santa Monica's homeless population, especially the chronically homeless population. One specific new strategy developed includes an "early notification system" for SMPD to contact an identified social service staff to begin appropriate service intervention while the

person is still in custody, as well as to establish better linkages with designated liaisons from the County Department of Mental Health and LA Sheriff's Department.

- **Comprehensive Program Evaluation:** HSD staff has initiated the planning process to hire an outside consultant to conduct a comprehensive, quantitative and qualitative evaluation of homeless service delivery in Santa Monica at the systems level. While delivering services to the chronically homeless would be the focus, the efficiency and efficacy of the entire service delivery system would be examined. Outcomes of the evaluation would be specific and actionable recommendations for taking advantage of existing strengths, identifying and improving areas for development, filling gaps, improving coordination and leveraging resources.
- **ClientTrack:** ClientTrack is the City-funded shared computerized case management and data collection system used by the homeless continuum of care providers to track unduplicated participants, their demographics and needs, and to record coordinated case management services and report service outcomes and levels to the City. The agencies are required to monitor the effectiveness of their services through progress reports to HSD generated on ClientTrack. HSD staff oversees the management and operation of the system along with a software/hardware consultant.
- **Coordinated Case Management:** The HSD-facilitated Coordinated Case Management meetings constitute bi-monthly meetings between the City and line staff from local non-profits. The meetings are an opportunity for the City and line staff to discuss service delivery and coordination, goal plans and outcomes in relation to the homeless population served.
- **Collaborate with Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH):** In addition to the project-specific collaboration mentioned below with 1616 Ocean, HSD and Housing and Redevelopment Division staff are currently exploring a collaborative relationship with CSH in the development and management of cost-effective affordable housing projects in combination with support services to help Santa Monica's homeless and at-risk population.

Open Space and Public Management

- **Ordinances:** On March 22, 2005, City staff identified possible local ordinances or policy changes which could be strengthened or enacted, including those relating to abandoned property, lying or sitting on sidewalks, sleeping in vehicles and showers at the Pier and Memorial Park. At the meeting, Council requested additional information from staff on several of these issues. Staff will provide Council with the information requested in May. In addition, HSD will work with the City Attorney's office, as needed, regarding the rules for public restroom use.

- **Reed Park:** Through coordinated efforts of the Human Services Division, Open Space Management and Santa Monica Police Department Homeless Liaison Program Team, and non-profits such as Ocean Park Community Center Access Center and Outreach Team and CLARE Foundation, staff have been successful in addressing community concerns regarding safety and open space issues at Christine Emerson Reed Park. This has been a special focus due to the reseeding project at the park.

OPCC's Outreach Team continues to engage individuals who stay around the perimeter of Reed Park and so far have been able to persuade and relocate about a dozen individuals who are now going to the Access Center during the days. The Outreach Team also continues to provide outreach to an additional 12-15 service resistant individuals currently located at Reed Park. OPCC Access Center staff has also secured a commitment from one of the two food distribution groups currently operating out of Reed Park, the students of Loyola Marymount University, to agree to leave Reed Park and bring their food distribution program to the Access Center starting Tuesday April 19 and every Tuesday afternoon at 1 pm.

- **Open Space/Public Safety:** Community and staff concerns are discussed during monthly Open Space Issues Group meetings. Meeting attendants include representatives from the City Attorney's Office, Human Services Division, EPWM, Santa Monica Police Department Homeless Liaison Program (HLP) Team, Open Space Management and City Manager's Office. Issues discussed include effective management of open space throughout the City and the impact and effectiveness of ordinances in mitigating socially unacceptable behavior.
- **HLP Team:** HSD staff coordinate closely with the Santa Monica Homeless Liaison Program Team, a four-member police team dedicated to responding to homeless related calls. The HLP Team acts as resource and referral to City staff and community members in addressing homeless-related calls for service. Members of the HLP Team participate in the Open Space Issues Group meeting, the Chronic Homeless Pilot Project, Bring LA Home and also work closely with various homeless outreach teams deployed in Santa Monica and on the Westside.

Regional Coordination

- **Bring LA Home:** City staff (and members of the City Council) have been actively participating in drafting the Bring LA Home Report spearheaded by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. This report will set-out regional strategies for ending homelessness over the next ten years in Los Angeles County. City staff has participated on the Chronic Homeless and Resources Development Groups, and assisted LAHSA with the County-wide homeless count. LAHSA staff recently requested that Santa Monica submit a summary of our Chronic Homeless Strategy as a model response to the issue.

- **Westside Council of Governments (COG): Westside Council of Governments (COG):** The COG cities (West Hollywood, Culver City, Beverly Hills, and Los Angeles) agreed to bring a resolution to its City Councils for collective action regarding homelessness. The resolution, approved by the Santa Monica Council in March and planned for consideration by other COG cities in April and May, calls for creation of a regional year-round shelter (including pursuing capital, operating and program funding) and continued advocacy to both secure funds and needed legislative reform to realize this vision. Better use of the VA property is a centerpiece of this effort. The proposed resolution represents the policy framework for joint action and is complemented by formation of a subcommittee of the COG, in addition to the staff working group, charged with developing next steps.
- **Urgent Care Facility:** As described earlier in this report, efforts for a regional out-patient psychiatric urgent care center and sobering station have been underway with a range of government and non profit partners for several months. The County Department of Mental Health and Supervisor Yaroslavsky's Office have indicated that they expect a regional urgent care facility to be open on the Westside in 2006.
- **VA site for shelter:** City staff will continue to advocate for the allocation of a building on the West Los Angeles Veteran's Administration campus for a regional, year-round emergency shelter. This will involve working with Federal, County and local jurisdictions to monitor the CARES process, identify potential funding sources and a shelter operator.
- **Year-Round Shelter Beds:** City staff will continue to examine the feasibility of a regional, year-round emergency shelter. This could include a site at the Veteran's Administration, as well as an alternative/additional site for non-veterans. This will involve working with the County, local jurisdictions and services providers to plan and site the shelter. A volunteer consultant is now working for the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition on a feasibility study.
- **Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition:** The Coalition is an association of more than twenty-five local human service providers, faith-based organizations and government agencies. The Coalition coordinates services, education and advocacy on behalf of homeless and hungry people in the western part of Los Angeles County. The City of Santa Monica has been an active member of the coalition for the past twenty years with HSD staff attending the monthly meetings.

Federal, State and County Advocacy

- **CDBG, HOME and Section 8 Advocacy:** HSD staff and staff from the Housing and Redevelopment Division have been keeping abreast of changes at the Federal level which potentially affect the City's allocations for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME and Section 8 funds, both of which can be used to serve the homeless population. This includes coordinating with other jurisdictions and public

sector associations (e.g., the U.S. Conference of Mayors), and supportive advocacy efforts conducted by the Mayor and the City's lobbyist.

- **State Laws:** Staff has researched State law, such as Laura's Law, for relevance to Santa Monica's efforts to address homelessness, and will continue to identify areas for potential advocacy by the City.
- **County:** As mentioned above, HSD staff continues to work with the County on issues including Proposition 63 funding, the urgent care facility, early release at LA County Jail, coordinating funding issues through LAHSA, and other issues. Recently HSD staff accompanied staff from the City Manager's office to discuss the urgent care and sobering center projects.

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Attachment : Letter from Exodus Recovery **(next page)**

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April 26, 2005

Julie Rusk
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VIA FEDEX

Dear Julie:

First, we wish to thank the Santa Monica City Council for their approval of funds to help us secure a site to house an Urgent Care Center serving the mentally ill in our region. We appreciate Santa Monica's commitment to providing services to this and other homeless populations.

The funds were to be used to secure a building located on the border of Culver City and Los Angeles. Unfortunately, a zoning issue has arisen which precludes the use of this building. With finalization of this project delayed, we feel the appropriate action at this time is to return the funds to Santa Monica. Enclosed, please find a check in the amount of \$10,000.

Exodus Recovery and the Los Angeles County, Department of Mental Health are fully committed to opening the Center and are aggressively working to secure a site that will serve all local communities efficiently and effectively. The continued feedback from the participants of the Urgent Care Center Committee, in which you and your staff are involved, is crucial in obtaining this goal. We will keep the Council informed of our progress.

Again, we offer our sincere thanks to the City Council for their commitment and support of this project. We look forward to continuing our relationship with you and the City of Santa Monica in helping those individuals in our communities that greatly need this regional center.

Sincerely,

Luana Murphy, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

LM:las

Enclosures

cc: Robin Kay, PhD, DMH