

## Homeless Emergency Shelter

The Task Force has agreed that a Homeless Emergency Shelter is a high priority. It is the first step in transitional housing. This is also where the office for a Navigation services will likely reside (see Navigation Center section).

Benefits of a Homeless Emergency Shelter:

a) Health & Safety of Homeless

- A shelter provides our homeless residents with a safe environment, while assisting them with a navigation bridge to an improved situation. This prevents potential violence between homeless residents and from any predators. The shelter will provide restrooms, showers, and other basic health needs to prevent bad situations from getting worse that would ultimately become a burden on society.

b) Health & Safety of Community

- Some Westminster residents have expressed safety concerns while homeless residents are at parks and other sites, especially the abandonment of encampment possessions, drug, alcohol and tobacco paraphernalia. A shelter should provide temporary storage for personal items, limited parking, and a place to rest without monopolizing other city parts, streets, etc.

c) Reduces blight in effort to improve economy

- Homeless encampments throughout the city causes an increase in blight, which adversely affects our city's economy and sense of well-being. City pride and moral drops and this creates a downward spiral to the economy including home sales, retention and expansion of new businesses, and the reputation of the city; all of which reduces tax revenue. Without temporary storage, homeless resident may steal shopping carts to transport possessions and create encampments throughout the city.

d) Provides centralized coordination

- See Navigation Center section.

e) Allows enforcement and prevents "city of least resistance"

- Some homeless residents do not want to use an emergency homeless shelter. Some drug and alcohol addicts prefer to reside where they can use drugs and alcohol without supervision. The Federal Court has ruled that being homeless is not illegal and that our Police Department have limited encampment enforcement if our city does not provide a shelter. If our neighboring cities offer emergency shelters prior to Westminster, their police departments will be able to better enforce loitering and encampment laws. Their homeless residents not willing to migrate to their city's shelter will seek the city of least resistance. That city of least

resistance will be Westminster, and our homeless population will continue to rise.

These three issues are not addressed in this section. Should we add them?

- "Not In My Backyard"
- Potential Locations
- Costs related to Emergency Shelters

### **Navigation Center**

The City of Westminster should offer a Navigation Center for homeless residents who wish to access shelter and support services. The Navigation Center will be accessible to individuals residing in the shelter, as well as Westminster residents and individuals with verified community connection who will benefit from the services provided. "Access Point" personnel will verify eligibility and provide connection to the Navigation Center that may include transportation to and from the location. Support Services may include the following:

- Basic needs – food, hygiene, clothing, transportation, pet supplies
- CalFresh
- CalWORKS
- Case Management
- Child Support Services
- Domestic Violence
- Employment support
- Health Care Agency (HCA)-Medical, dental, vision, etc.
- Housing Navigator to access transition/permanent housing
- Legal Resources
- Mental Health
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Substance Abuse
- Veterans Services
- Additional services to be determined

Support services will be established and coordinated by the designated service provider (contracted), and may be available on-site or by linkage to outside resource. Services will be scheduled with regularity per the need and availability of service and provider.

## **Mental Health and Alcohol/Drug Addiction**

- The city should partner with the Orange County Behavioral Health specifically the CAT/PERT Programs.

The crisis assessment and psychiatric emergency/response teams provide Hi Vivian,

- critical care to those in need.
- The city should also utilize the Westminster Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services. I would also recommend the use of Western Pacific Rehab who provide medication detoxification services to those in need.
- We must strive to help those who suffer from these afflictions in a compassionate way, instead of treating it like criminal behavior. We must also be proactive, rather than reactive. Education is the key to this complex lock on our society.

## **Regional coordination**

- Producing one or two regional shelters, instead of each city producing their own.
- Potential simplification of the Request for Proposals (RFP) process to find a provider.
- Better chance in locating/obtaining one of the 286 state properties, or the 100 emergency mobile housing trailers that Gov. Newsome offered in his State of the State speech.
- Sharing costs in the regional shelter based on the percentage each city needs to house.
- Gaining new ideas or insight from colleagues. Working together in applying for grants, or looking in to possibilities like Prop 63 (mental health services act).
- Sharing of nonprofit resources and better coordination with 211OC

*[Editor's note: link to website showing the State-identified sites has been added to the HTF webpage.]*

## **Community Engagement**

It is the recommendation of the task force that the city council enact steps to engage the community to fight homelessness. It is imperative that the entire community is included and activated. Engagement should happen through multiple sections of the community including: The business community, the faith-based community and the general public.

These tactics can be employed in as many areas of the community as is applicable.

- a) Written engagement should be given to as many community groups as possible.
  - a. New businesses should be given written engagement at the time of filing for business licenses. Existing business can be receive written engagement.
  - b. Written engagement should include instructions and protocols on dealing with the homeless population, contact information for resources, info on how to help, social media and Web-based links as well as contact info for law enforcement.
- b) Social Media and web-based platforms should be utilized to both give instruction to citizens on responding to the homeless population as well as to “tell the story” about our city’s victories regarding the lives of those who live here. Social media can also be used as a gateway to fund raising, as people hear of the success we are experiencing. These successes could include the creation of a shelter, local families finding help with food, clothing, or other personal necessities, etc. This should include the city website and links to other resources the community can use to help fight homelessness.
- c) Police Presence can be utilized through scheduling officers to host community talks in large gatherings of community members. This can accomplish through local church gatherings and public forums. Creating a more recognized police presence will also bring a sense of security as well as connection with and appreciation for law enforcement.
- d) Public Announcements are the most varied category. It includes things like, public service announcements on local T.V. and radio, partnership with OCTA to put pictures and info on busses, utilizing bus stops etc.

## **Designated Access Points**

Westminster residents and individuals with verified community connection may gain access to the Navigation Center through contact and approval from designated personnel, to include Westminster Police Department Homeless Liaison Officer and Family Resource Center Supervisor. Those designated will follow the established protocol to evaluate eligibility to gain access to the Navigation Center. Once approved, connected individuals will have access to the appropriate resources.

Designated personnel will provide eligible individuals with transportation to and from the Navigation Center. This will not be a “walk up” facility. Interested residents must be pre-approved by designated personnel then transported by shuttle, ride share, personal vehicle, and others to be determined.

## Funding

- a) Looking for funding for a temporary shelter there are grants we can apply for like the community development block grants. Also, California emergency solutions and housing, Emergency solutions program.
- b) If it's permanent housing, we could go to nonprofits like Salvation Army, habitat for humanity, rotary, lions, Kiwanis, elks lodge for example and form a partnership for charitable efforts and fund raising.
- c) Also, HUD is a good source.
- d) There are several other options like permanent local housing allocation and low moderate-income housing asset fund.
- e) While we believe the city may be able to cobble together enough money to produce an emergency shelter based on what we have said thus far it's going to take roughly upwards of one million dollars a year for every 50-beds, utilizing a system similar to that in Tustin, California. The good news is there are several ways to subsidize operations to effectively manage a shelter. One way would be to partner up with another city like Garden Grove to share the burdens of the cost. Garden Grove has expressed interests in working with us.
- f) We also believe we can do it through partnership and collaboration with the private industry. There are several Nonprofits and faith base groups we should partner up with to make this a reality. We realize there are a lot of laws in place that have to be followed in doing this partnership cause of Separation of church and state. The city should look into forming a 501 C3 nonprofit organization like the Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council model and of course tweak it for the situation we are in and start doing fund raising efforts and offering membership opportunities with donor level participation. Everyone from the average citizen up to all business entities can join and their dues and donations would be a tax write off. There is no reason why we cannot partner up with the chamber of commerce in this effort and utilize all the businesses in Westminster. We need to promote events and public relations events geared toward entertainment and tourism and use those proceeds to fund the shelter. In the end doing gala events and having entertainment is the key I believe that Little Saigon has access to said entertainers that are well known in the community. We also should consider reaching out to the Entertainment industry and getting into the studios they have many resources that they have to donate and get rid of after a production which we could use and so contacting organizations like Screen Actors guild would be a good start. Non-Profits have great programs. If we could form a coordination council and get everyone together, we could get a temporary solution.
- g) There are many venture capitalists out there that have in their operation budgets money allocated to certain charities, so we form our nonprofit and get access to these organizations and make sure we are in their fiscal budgets for a donation or membership in our nonprofits, a 501C3 that the city would form would be a great thing to execute to navigate around fund raising efforts. The best model I

have seen is Freemasons Masonic fraternity. Freemasons worldwide give 4 million dollars a day worldwide for their charitable efforts of which 2.85 million comes from the Shriners hospital for children. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has an amazing self-reliance and humanitarian program as well as other Churches that are prominent in the city. If we can get them involved in our nonprofit entity and put them on the board of Directors and use their expertise and resources this would be a great Public Relations and a win, win not only for the problem we have but also for the City of Westminster.

- h) The city is currently in negotiations to redevelop the civic center perhaps these negotiations can benefit us if the emergency shelter is negotiated into the civic center redevelopment. This would create another synergetic benefit in that the emergency shelter would be near other resources such as the Police department, the court houses, the community service center, the senior citizens center, the city library, the OC Health services buildings and the WIC services for the poor.

*[Editor's Notes: Funding is a complex topic, the burden of which cannot be summarized easily here. Please note that government funding options may include substantial restrictions due to State or Federal law, and in some cases, trade-offs for other programs/projects currently supported with these funds. As discussed, we will be strongest for competitive grants with a partner, a provider, and a site(s) as relevant.]*

### **Support Services Coordinator**

To decrease the cycle of homelessness, the city would hire a Coordinator Support Services Director. The coordinator would oversee the daily shelter operations if a shelter is available, and/or act as the resource navigator. The job would include working with the Police Department and City Net, who would refer clients to the shelter. After an assessment, the coordinator would then refer the client to appropriate resources. Some of their responsibilities would be: Staffing, security, policy compliance and resources, managing the needs of the individual in a compassionate and dignified manner. This position would work under Community Development, Grants and Housing division.