

DATE ISSUED: November 19, 2003 REPORT NO. 03-236
ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of November 25, 2003
SUBJECT: FY 2004 Winter Shelter Program Expansion
REFERENCE: Manager's Report No. 03-227, dated November 12, 2003

SUMMARY

Issues –

- 1) Should the City Council approve the expansion of the Winter Shelter Program to include a fourth site that will shelter adult males with drug and/or alcohol dependency problems in accordance with the “shelter emergency” declared on November 17, 2003?
- 2) Should the City Council approve the location of the fourth program site at 120 Elm Street in the Uptown Community?
- 3) Should the City Council authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute agreements with the San Diego Rescue Mission for shelter operations?
- 4) Should the Council extend the declaration of shelter emergency to cover a one year period beginning November 30, 2003?
- 5) Should the City Council authorize the City Manager to lease two floors at the 120 Elm Street property from the San Diego Rescue Mission for the purpose of operating a homeless shelter?

Manager's Recommendations –

- 1) Approve the expansion of the Winter Shelter Program to include a fourth site that will shelter adult males with drug and/or alcohol dependency problems in accordance with the “shelter emergency” declared on November 17, 2003.
- 2) Approve the location of the fourth site at 120 Elm Street in Uptown Community.
- 3) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute agreements with the San Diego Rescue Mission for shelter operations.
- 4) Extend the declaration of shelter emergency to cover a one year period beginning November 30, 2003.
- 5) Authorize the City Manager to lease two floors at the 120 Elm Street property from the San Diego Rescue Mission for the purpose of operating a homeless shelter.

Fiscal Impact – The San Diego Rescue Mission agrees to operate a homeless shelter for adult males with drug and/or alcohol dependency problems at no cost to the City. The City will lease two floors at the 120 Elm Street property at a rate of \$100 for twelve months. This amount is available in the existing Winter Shelter Program budget approved on November 17, 2003.

BACKGROUND

On November 17, 2003 the City Council approved the operation of an emergency shelter program that supports the Continuum of Care model whereby, the City, in coordination with social service agencies, community groups, and other jurisdictions, assess needs and promote programs that restore people who are homeless to their optimum participation in the community. The program recommended by the City Manager in that report has three components: (1) A 200-bed shelter for single adults; (2) A 150-bed shelter for male veterans; and (3) A 55-bed shelter for woman with children. Each of these shelters will operate for 90 days.

The City of San Diego meets the requirements for declaring a homeless shelter emergency as specified in Government Code Section 8698-8698.2 by the following two conditions: (1) There is a significant shortage of shelter beds in San Diego to meet the needs of the homeless population; and (2) The shortage of shelter beds will result in a threat to the health and safety of the homeless population.

In a cooperative arrangement, the City, the County of San Diego and the United Way of San Diego created the Regional Task Force on the Homeless in March 1985. In August 1999, the Task Force issued a County-wide update on the state of homelessness at that point in time. As outlined in that report, there was an estimated homeless population of 15,000 within the region, of which 6,500, including farmworkers, were located in the City of San Diego. The Task Force further reported that, within the City of San Diego,

there were 2,331 shelter beds available at that time, leaving an unmet need of 4,169 beds. The current estimated homeless population in the City of San Diego has remained about the same with an estimated 1,887 beds currently available. This leaves an unmet need of 4,613 beds.

DISCUSSION

The San Diego Rescue Mission (SDRM) currently operates a state-licensed drug and alcohol treatment program and other social service programs at multiple locations in the East Village portion of downtown. The SDRM has acquired a vacant facility located at 120 Elm in the Uptown Community for the purpose of consolidating their programs and services into one larger facility. Over the last year, SDRM has attempted to relocate its program facilities at 11th and J Streets (men's program) and at 16th and National (women and children's program) to their new site. A group of citizens that live and work in the area of 120 Elm Street filed a lawsuit challenging the City's approval of the project on a number of regulatory grounds. In July, 2003, the San Diego Superior Court ruled that the approval of the project violated state and local regulatory requirements, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and provisions of the City's Land Development Code. The Superior Court's ruling is currently being appealed, and the City's approval of the project is on hold as a result of the appeal. However, pursuant to state law, operation of an emergency homeless shelter at the site during a declaration of shelter emergency does not trigger the state and local regulatory requirements that are at issue in the litigation.

The Rescue Mission has sold its downtown properties in anticipation of moving their programs to the new facility. Without the ability to move into their new facility they would be forced to release their clients no later than November 30, 2003. This would result in a net loss of 305 shelter beds, which represents 16% of the City's current shelter bed inventory.

There currently exists two completely renovated floors in the Elm Street building available for the men's program. These two floors could be leased by the City in order to preserve the 185 beds. SDRM has further agreed to operate this shelter in accordance with City contractual requirements.

Entry into the program will be limited to referrals from SDRM's outreach team, other homeless service providers, including the HOT Team, as well as the single adult and veteran winter shelters. Walk-in services, including, but not limited to, meals, showers, and clothing will be not be offered at this site. No lines for services will be allowed on public right-of-ways.

This component of the emergency shelter program will extend beyond the other 90-day programs, since it is a year-long, service-enriched program that will be operated by SDRM at no cost to the City. The other three shelters have a March closing date because of limited funding. The SDRM program has a targeted start date of December 1, 2003 and will continue for one year.

SDRM's treatment program has a phased structure aimed at helping substance dependent homeless men transition back into society. Once admitted to the program, and to ensure a drug-free environment, clients are drug tested monthly, drug dogs are used to survey the facility on a regular basis, and personal accountability is stressed at all times. During the first 6 months, clients can only go off-site after requesting and receiving permission based on program achievements. All clients must sign in and out and agree to a breathalyzer test upon re-entering the building.

Client classes include: job readiness, GED or High School Diploma, 12-step recovery classes, relapse prevention, individual and group counseling, life skills, and occupational therapy. These activities occupy approximately 8 hours of each weekday. Clients are provided three meals per day, showers and clothing. A full-time nurse is employed to manage the medically fragile population.

Residential staffing and security personnel will be onsite 24-hours per day, 7 days a week. SDRM will continue to meet with neighborhood representatives through its neighborhood advisory committee and will continue its litter and loiter control program.

ALTERNATIVE(S):

Do not expand the Winter Shelter Program.

Respectfully submitted,

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Homeless Services Program

Ernie Linares
Deputy Director
Community Services

Hank Cunningham
Director
Community & Economic Development

Approved: Bruce A. Herring
Deputy City Manager

CUNNINGHAM/EL/SRJ