



JOEL ANDERSON
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: February 28, 2023

18

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT:

IDENTIFYING ADDITIONAL SHELTER SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN EAST COUNTY (DISTRICTS: 2)

OVERVIEW

According to the 2022 annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count, there are over 8,427 individuals currently experiencing homelessness across San Diego County. East County is second only to the City of San Diego in the number of homeless individuals living in a particular area. Last year's Countywide PIT count numbers were ten percent higher than the 2020 figures, indicating that more people are continuing to fall into homelessness. According to local officials, that number is likely lower than the true number of people who are unhoused. The County's response to this situation has included the deployment of various creative solutions. These include the expansion of coordinated outreach regionwide, launch of the North Magnolia Safe Parking Program - the first safe parking site of its kind located in the unincorporated area of San Diego County, improvements to the hotel and motel voucher system through the Regional Housing Assistance Program (RHAP), the \$10 million Capital Emergency Housing Solutions Grant Program for the region's cities, and coordination with places of worship and community organizations to provide grant support to fund the use of cabins and sprung structures as temporary housing. Although these initiatives have helped move homeless individuals off the streets and into permanent housing, more action is needed to continue our efforts to reduce homelessness. We must explore additional solutions and leverage previous Board actions such as the Board's declaration of homelessness as a local public health emergency to usher in a renewed sense of urgency.

A new idea that could allow us to continue building on the County's efforts to address homelessness in East County is the use of a public-private partnership involving the County purchase of an existing hotel or the construction of a new facility that would be managed under contract by a private operator. This facility would accept RHAP vouchers from customers. To investigate this proposal, I am recommending that the County take the initial steps of conducting a feasibility analysis and issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to gauge the interest of the development and property management industry to enter into such a public-private partnership. Based on the response received, the County could move forward with a project that would help leverage the County's RHAP program for future participants.

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**RECOMMENDATION(S)
SUPERVISOR JOEL ANDERSON**

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to conduct a feasibility analysis to determine the potential to site or convert a hotel in unincorporated East County dedicated to addressing the lack of shelter capacity and reducing homelessness through the acceptance of vouchers.
2. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to issue a Request for Information (RFI) to gauge the interest of developers and potential hotel/program operators to manage the proposed hotel.
3. 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.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Additional shelter solutions would help to provide more people experiencing homelessness in East County with access to safe, stable, and dignified living arrangements, improving their overall health and well-being. East County has the second highest number of people experiencing homelessness compared to other areas in San Diego County. By providing more people with equitable access to shelter, additional shelter solutions can reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in East County. Overall, the implementation of additional shelter solutions for addressing homelessness can have a positive, equitable, and meaningful impact on individuals, families, and communities.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Providing additional shelter solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness will have positive impacts on the environment, society, and economy. By promoting sustainable living and reducing the negative impacts of homelessness, shelter solutions will have long-term benefits for the environment and those impacted by a lack of shelter.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2022-2024 Operational Plan in the Department of General Services. If approved, today's action would result in estimated costs and revenue up to \$150,000 to conduct a feasibility analysis. The funding source is an internal agreement with the Health and Human Services Agency. The acquisition of any sites and ongoing operations would likely incur substantial expenses in the future and a funding source would need to be identified.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

Additional options to address homelessness in public spaces will provide secure and unhindered access for both customers of businesses and the community's residents, while also addressing the underlying issues that contribute to homelessness. By implementing a comprehensive and compassionate approach to homelessness, communities can provide shelter, support services, and job training to help individuals and families transition into stable housing and independence. This

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will not only benefit those experiencing homelessness, but also enhance the overall safety, security, and well-being of the community and its businesses. By creating a safe and welcoming environment, businesses can attract more customers, improve employee satisfaction and morale, and contribute to the economic growth and stability of the area.

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The County has undertaken several major actions and implemented programs and systems during the past two years to enhance our efforts to address the region’s ongoing homeless crisis. These initiatives include approving the implementation plan for the *Compassionate Emergency Solutions and Pathways for People Experiencing Homelessness* policy I brought before the Board in 2021. The purpose of this initiative was to create shelter solutions, including safe parking lots, RV camping sites, and other immediate solutions to reduce homelessness. The North Magnolia Safe Parking Program in El Cajon, operated by Dreams of Change, has seen 100% capacity since its launch in August of last year, assisting a unique set of individuals experiencing homelessness. Of those individuals experiencing homelessness, data as of January 2023 shows that approximately 25% were successfully moved into permanent housing and another 25% to temporary housing. As that program continues to show success, we must continue to work with our communities to identify additional concepts and locations for increasing shelter capacity in East County.

The County has also acted to address the issue of homelessness by developing a Sleeping Cabin Grant Program following the approval of the *Building Partnerships to Prevent, Address, and Seek an End to Homelessness*, Board Letter I co-authored with Chair Vargas. This action authorized the County to work with places of worship and other community organizations to fund the purchase of sleeping cabins or sprung structure shelters. Our initiative will allow third parties to assemble and operate these structures on their property as emergency shelters, providing immediate housing for persons experiencing homelessness.

A new idea to continue building on the County’s efforts to address homelessness in East County is the use of a public-private partnership involving the County purchase of an existing hotel or the construction of a new facility that would be managed under contract by a private operator. To further investigate this proposal, I am recommending that the County take the initial steps of conducting a feasibility analysis and issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to gauge the interest of the development and property management industry to enter into such a public-private partnership. Based on the response received, the County could move forward with a project that would help leverage the County’s RHAP program for future participants.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today’s proposed action supports the County of San Diego’s vision of *Live Well San Diego* and align with the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan and Strategic Initiatives by providing dignified living environments to communities and improving the well-being of our residents and environments.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Anderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JOEL ANDERSON
Supervisor, Second District

ATTACHMENTS:
N/A