

ALPHA PROJECT

Where Miracles Happen!



October 16, 2019

Eric Holmes, City Manager
City Hall
415 W. 6th St., 2nd Floor
Vancouver, Washington 98660

Dear Eric:

It is my pleasure to offer insights, observations and recommendations in the attached report in response to the City of Vancouver's request for an independent evaluation of its response to homelessness. I'm also pleased to tell you that in my honest opinion, and that of my staff who contributed to this report, the City is well ahead of a problem that has already overwhelmed most of Vancouver's bigger neighbors, including Portland and Seattle/Tacoma.

The elements included in this report will inform the City's strategic, focused plan to address what is still a manageable homeless crisis. Alpha Project has been involved in the development of many plans for multiple jurisdictions over the course of decades. A plan is an inert thing that, without consistent follow through and resources devoted to its implementation, becomes just another document forgotten in the archives. The City will address its homelessness crisis, serve its most vulnerable citizens and revitalize neighborhoods affected by homelessness through putting this plan into action.

While the contents of this report are ordered in accordance with the City's request for an independent evaluation and recommendations, in this executive summary we present the City with our recommendations in order of greatest importance.

Executive Summary

1. Opening a Temporary Bridge Shelter with a minimum of 150 beds for single adults, ages 18 and older, should be the City's paramount priority to address its current homeless crisis. The availability of shelter is essential to all other components of a working Homeless Crisis Response System. Without a place to stabilize people and engage them actively in preparing for housing placement, other system components cannot make an impact on the issues arising from concentrated populations of unsheltered homeless people in the City's neighborhoods, especially the area surrounding 2018 Grand Boulevard. The three programs at the core of this report, the Day Center, Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter should operate from a single site under a single operator as a seamless system.
2. The City must enforce contract standards and demand measurable outcomes in accordance with specific objectives included in a clear scope of work for all City-funded programs. This includes the Day Center and proposed Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter. Objectives should include performance outcomes in terms of housing placements

and other client-level impacts as well as outcomes measured by community engagement and mitigation of the current impact of homelessness on the neighborhood.

3. It is unclear that the City has an operator for the connected Day Center, Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter with the demonstrated capacity, experience and philosophy required to achieve the change desired in how the Day Center is operated and managed, as well as its impact on the neighborhood. Options to address this concern include a) putting the project out to bid, with all three programs connected under a single operator, and b) creating a nonprofit headed by community leaders, including private and public sector officials, with a passion for the work required to transform the status quo response to homelessness. However it chooses to proceed, the City must demand a much different operational approach and connection to the community.
4. The Police Department is committed, involved and eager to cooperate with service providers to make a difference in the community and the City should support the creation and roll out of HOT and HART teams to strengthen the overall response to homelessness City-wide. Law enforcement should be included in project planning and should be welcome at the facilities at all times. The contents of this report stress the need for a program operator to work hand-in-hand with law enforcement as good neighbors.
5. Community-oriented policing will be an important part of addressing the issues that currently affect the neighborhood around 2018 Grand Boulevard. Police officers are role models and visible representatives of the City's collective will to improve and maintain quality of life for all citizens. Officers should engage neighboring citizens proactively and should participate in neighborhood meetings, planning groups and other networks. This report recommends the formation of an Advisory Board with neighborhood representation to help connect the Day Center, Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter to the community in a positive relationship. The Police Department should be represented on that board.
6. The City's Homeless Resource Manager is a critical new addition to the Homelessness Crisis Response System and should be empowered to enforce City policy with clear lines of communication linking him up to City officials and also to program operators and all other stakeholders. Similar positions in many cities frequently provide convenient scapegoats when public officials are dissatisfied with the state of homelessness. Alpha Project urges the City to give the Homeless Resource Manager the authority, resources, time and support necessary to transform the status quo and demonstrate improvement in the current system and its impact on the community.
7. The City should ensure that the combined Day Center, Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter operate programs that save taxpayer dollars. This goal can be achieved in part merely by providing shelter as an alternative to the high cost of interventions with people in crisis living on the streets. However, the program operator

should also provide direct benefit to the community by operating programs that give homeless people a chance to engage in meaningful work of direct benefit to the City and the neighborhood around 2018 Grand Boulevard. The report includes many recommendations for community benefit programs.

We welcome any request from the City for further contributions to its strengthened response to homelessness. Likewise, we are available to provide any training, review or other service that can benefit the City's homeless programs during their design, implementation or operational phases.

In closing, again, my staff and I appreciate the opportunity to prepare this report and we commend the City for taking a strong leadership role in a commitment to address an issue that can be solved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Bob McElroy
President & CEO

Independent Evaluator’s Report to the City of Vancouver

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Outside Evaluation of the City of Vancouver's Response to Homelessness and Plan for Implementation of New Projects and Services

Background and Acknowledgments

Alpha Project is pleased to submit this report in response to the City of Vancouver's request for an independent and objective assessment of the City's response to homelessness and planned implementation of coordinated services at the current Day Center and adjacent Housing Navigation Center, as well as a possible Bridge Shelter program connected to both centers. The first section of this report includes observations and a general assessment of the City of Vancouver and Clark County's Continuum of Care (CoC) and an overview of the CoC's federally mandated role in a regional response to homelessness. The first section of the report also includes a snapshot of homelessness in the region, an inventory of housing and service resources for people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness, along with a description of observed gaps and unmet needs within the coordinated system.



Subsequent sections of the report offer specific recommendations for:

- Improving the City's response to homelessness,
- Improving the operation of the current Day Center,
- Improving security in the Day Center and surrounding neighborhood,
- Designing and operating the Housing Navigation Center,
- Designing and operating a Temporary Bridge Shelter,
- Mitigating neighborhood impacts,
- Overseeing and monitoring compliance and performance at City-funded facilities, and
- Conclusions and recommendations for the future.

Alpha Project's preparation of this report is built on extensive experience operating programs like those planned for Vancouver, as well as decades of policy development and program implementation that accounts for neighborhood impact. Alpha Project has operated community-service programs employing homeless people as a benefit to their neighborhood since the organization's founding in 1986. In the subsequent 33 years, Alpha Project has launched and operated day centers and housing navigation and bridge shelter programs like those planned for Vancouver, learning by direct experience how to engage homeless people in effective pathways to stability and how to ensure that programs serving the homeless also serve the communities of which they are a part.

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Alpha Project is particularly pleased to have this opportunity to share its experience as the operator of a Temporary Bridge Shelter in the City of San Diego. With a capacity of 324 beds per night, the program has transitioned over 400 participants into alternative housing options in 22 months. Of those, 74% were placed in permanent housing, 12% in alternate and longer-term housing programs, and 14% in other programs, including alcohol and drug treatment programs. In addition, Alpha Project has successfully engaged a hard-to-serve, highly vulnerable population, including 227 seniors, 174 transition-age youth, 172 veterans, and 120 persons fleeing domestic violence at the time of program entry. Equally important as all those outcomes, Alpha Project has made the Temporary Bridge Shelter an asset to its neighborhood and San Diego as a whole. Alpha Project's regular neighborhood patrols, community outreach, neighborhood services and other efforts to engage the neighborhood have ensured that the Temporary Bridge Shelter provides its intended levels of service while benefitting residents, merchants and other stakeholders in the program's service area.

Reflecting the success of the program, Alpha Project was recently selected by the City of San Diego to operate a second facility, providing 150 new beds of Temporary Bridge Shelter to continue reducing the incidence and impact of homelessness. The program is scheduled to open on November 1, 2019.



Bob McElroy, Alpha Project President and CEO, with one of the first residents of the bridge shelter. Photo by Chris Jennewein, *The Times of San Diego*.

The success of the program is built upon policies and procedures for evidence-backed, outcome-driven services to people experiencing homelessness including special needs populations. Alpha Project is committed to making the Temporary Bridge Shelter an effective component of the City and County's strategy for eliminating homelessness through a coordinated, multi-service, multi-provider system. Since commencing operation of the program, Alpha Project has hosted 78 delegations from more than 50 cities, counties, states, units of government and foreign countries, demonstrating its best practices and encouraging replication of such programs to bridge the gap between the streets and permanent, sustainable housing facilitated through a system of coordinated entry. Vancouver's Mayor, City Councilmembers and City Manager have toured the facility, as have the mayors of more than a dozen other U.S. cities, the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and dozens more elected officials and community leaders.

Notwithstanding its own experience and qualifications to prepare this report, Alpha Project is extremely grateful to a large and diverse group of stakeholders in Vancouver and Clark County for their invaluable contributions to the content that follows. Alpha Project wishes to acknowledge all of the following parties for their vital input.

Independent Evaluator's Report to the City of Vancouver

City of Vancouver

Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle
Mayor Pro Tem Bart Hansen
Councilmember Bill Turlay
Councilmember Ty Stober
Councilmember Linda Glover
Councilmember Laurie Lebowsky
Councilmember Erik Paulsen
Chief of Police James McElvain
Assistant Police Chief Mike Lester
Assistant Police Chief Troy Price
Police Commander Dave King
Police Officer Tyler Chavers
Police Officer Sammy Abdala
City Manager Eric Holmes
Deputy City Manager Lenda Crawford
Acting City Attorney Jonathan Young
Community and Economic Development Director Chad Eiken
Homeless Resource Manager Jackie St. Louis
Public Works Operations Manager Tim Buck
Public Works Operations Superintendent Brian Potter
Public Works Superintendent Ryan Miles
Affordable Housing, HOME and CDBG Program Manager Peggy Sheehan
Assistant Building Official Jeri Newbold
Neighborhood Liaison Judi Baily

Clark County

Community Services Director Vanessa Gaston
Community Services Program Manager Michael Torres

Vancouver Housing Authority

Executive Director Roy Johnson
Deputy Director Saeed Hajarizadeh

Council for the Homeless

Executive Director Kate Budd

Community Foundation of Southwest Washington

President Jennifer Rhoades

Share

Executive Director Diane McWithey
Deputy Director Amy Reynolds
Outreach Director Jillian Daleiden

Community Services Northwest

Behavioral Health Manager John Moren
Clinical Supervisor Jeni O'Neil
Case Manager Jamie Spinelli

In addition, Alpha Project appreciates the engagement of dozens of Vancouver residents, nonprofit leaders, educators, merchants, businesspeople, community organizers and other stakeholders, whose diverse voices and interests are an important consideration in this report's recommendations and should continue to inform the City in its implementation of a new, expanded and strengthened strategic response to homelessness.



Vancouver residents, providers, and other community members sharing concerns and observations.

Overview

While the City is to be commended for its sense of urgency, its commitment to addressing homelessness and its willingness to adapt and innovate in its response to the status quo, it is important to note that the City is one party in a multi-party system that, to some extent, is mandated and circumscribed by federal policies and standards. The City's resources will be critical to the implementation, sustainability and long-term success of the programs discussed in this report. However, a full-fledged, comprehensive, meaningful response to homelessness will necessarily include the coordinated inputs of County agencies, nonprofit providers, courts, educational institutions and other contributing parties. One of the most critical components of a multi-party system is the Clark County Continuum of Care, WA-508 (CoC), a collaboration of stakeholders convened in accordance with the policies of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a precondition of funding for homeless services under the terms of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a federal law adopted by the U.S. Congress in 1987 that was the first significant federal legislative response to homelessness. The Act has been reauthorized several times since its passage and was greatly amended by passage of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act in 2009.

Since the passage of the HEARTH Act, CoCs nationwide have been charged with addressing homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing, consolidation of housing programs, and new priority homeless sub-populations, which today include transition-age youth (18 to 24), people identifying as LGBTQ+, seniors, veterans, victims of domestic violence and the chronically homeless, among others. Complying with the specific terms of the HEARTH Act for adoption of Coordinated Entry System (CES) processes and procedures has been a challenge for most CoCs, as has the mandate to adopt an approach to services and housing that align with Housing First principles. Housing First is a philosophy rooted in several principles, the most challenging of which is providing low barriers to housing entry, forcing providers accustomed to moving people with special needs through progressive stages of treatment, stabilization and preparation for independence to shift their focus to rapid placement in permanent housing, even for those people with active substance use and other disorders.

Housing First is not the only model or approach to addressing homelessness supported by evidence. Service-enriched shelters providing a transitional path to low-income permanent housing are important components of a robust response system. The Housing First goal of rapid placement in permanent housing misses the fact that in virtually all jurisdictions in America, there are an insufficient number of low-income, sustainable permanent housing units available to meet the needs of unsheltered homeless people. It also overlooks the real needs of many homeless people who are not housing ready and whose needs must be met in a stable, sheltered environment prior to housing placement.

The work of a CoC is year-round and entails maintenance of a regional Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), reporting on multiple components of a coordinated system, and preparation of annual applications for funding through several federal and state initiatives. The remainder of this section includes a description of the Clark County Continuum of Care, as well as county-wide homelessness statistics, an inventory of programs and services including funding sources, and existing gaps in the CoC system.

Clark County Continuum of Care

The lead organization of the CoC is Council for the Homeless, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide community leadership, compelling advocacy, and practical solutions to prevent and end homelessness in Clark County. Council for the Homeless fills a required role in a county-wide system that meets federal mandates and implements and tracks standards, policies and procedures required of federally funded programs. Council for the Homeless maintains Clark County's HMIS, serves as the collaborative applicant and administrative entity for the entire CoC, prepares and monitors federal reports, and oversees the County's annual Homeless Point-in-Time Count, preparing a report that presents a year-on-year snapshot of homelessness. These essential functions, along with training, infrastructure support and oversight of a Coordinated Entry System (CES) are fundamental to the County's eligibility for and effective use of federal funding.

Maintenance of the systems, reports and processes of HUD's mandated CoC elements is one aspect of Council for the Homeless' designated function. The annual HUD CoC Program Competition requires the preparation of a 250-page application that addresses HUD's requirements in many areas and measures and documents the CoC's achievements. The application is probably the most accurate and complete overview of the regional system produced each year and is the source of approximately \$2 million in annual HUD funding.

The CoC's general membership, the Coalition of Service Providers for the Homeless, includes 68 active stakeholder members. The Coalition has five standing work groups and currently three ad hoc task groups. Each of those groups address priorities as identified by HUD and/or observed needs within the Clark County Homeless Action Plan, *A Framework for Action*, which was completed by Council for the Homeless in October 2018 and lays out a strategic approach to strengthening the Homeless Crisis Response System from 2019 to 2022.

Council for the Homeless performs its role under the oversight and at the direction of the Continuum of Care Steering Committee, consisting of:

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- Bunk Moren, Community Services Northwest,
- Amy Reynolds, Share,
- Saeed Hajaraizadeh, Vancouver Housing Authority,
- Michael Torres, Clark County,
- Peggy Sheehan, City of Vancouver,
- Sierk Braam, Housing Initiative, LLC,
- Tim Foley, Second Step Housing, and
- Scott Conger, Janus Youth Programs.

The Steering Committee is charged with administering the CoC Governance Charter, which entails:

- Setting policy direction for the CoC,
- Ensuring the CoC meets all of its HUD requirements,
- Facilitating the CoC funding Request for Application Process, including rating and ranking the project applications,
- Approving the CoC application,
- Working to meet the CoC application focus areas,
- Using a systemic approach to address the local homeless crisis response system,
- Increasing resources that reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness, and
- Improving system performance outcomes, as identified by HUD and tracked through the HMIS.

The scope of work for this report includes a request by the City that Alpha Project *“[i]dentify how Vancouver should systematically approach and respond to homelessness citywide including the best mix of facilities and supportive services that would help alleviate the impacts of homelessness...”* At the level of coordination, planning, administration, policy and analysis, it is fair to say the state of the CoC is consistent with federal expectations. CoC members have efficient inter-agency coordination and nearly universal use of the HMIS and a common assessment tool. Altogether, the fundamental elements of an efficient and effective Homeless Crisis Response System at the CoC level are present, active and well thought out. That fact alone, however, does not address the City's specific interests and priorities.

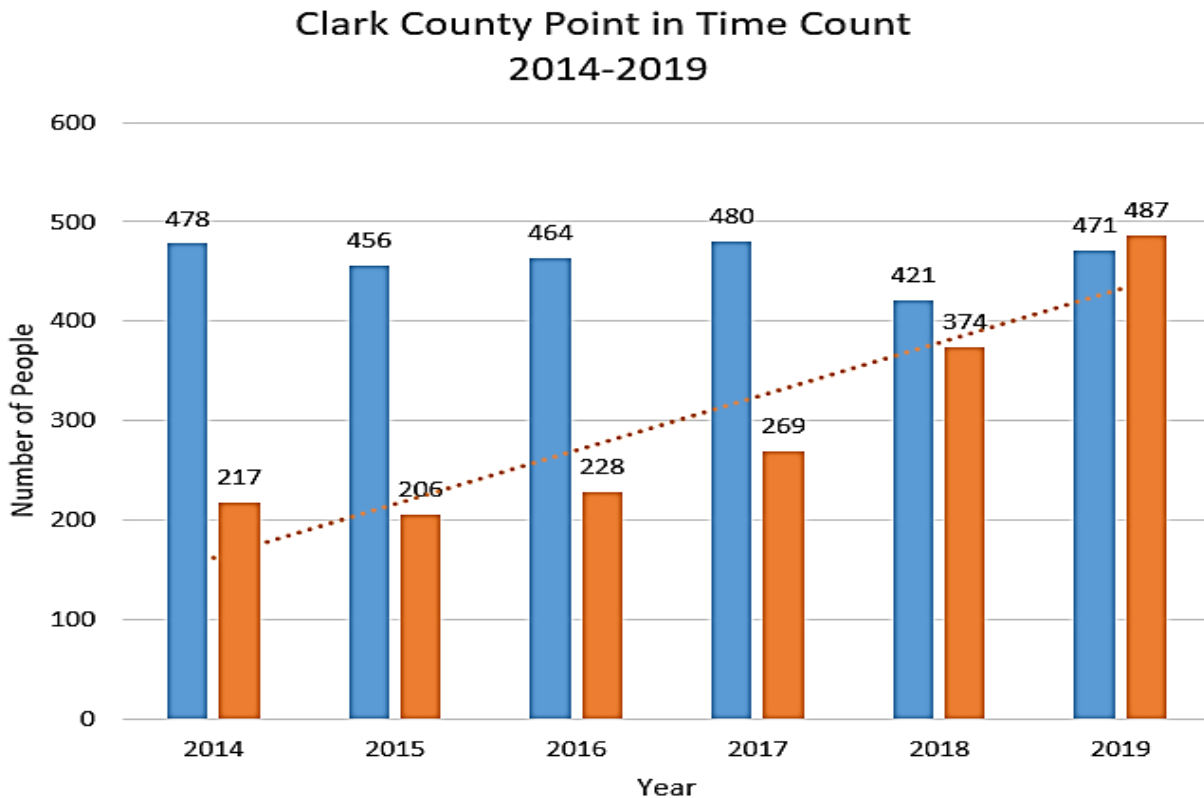
The Homeless Action Plan paints a clear picture of the system and identifies specific goals and targets for strengthening the system to address gaps and needs. The City clearly has a role to play in expediting and amplifying the rapid impact of a robust response. However, as described in the beginning of this section, the City's role is one of many and should be complimentary to other efforts, not duplicative or complicating. The statistics and observed gaps and needs described below come from the Homeless Action Plan, the 2019 Point-in-Time Count Report, a report on homelessness funding prepared by Clark County's Community Services Program Manager and additional inputs from the City's Homeless Resource Manager. The City can play a valuable role in closing the identified gaps. However, it should do so with full awareness of the much larger system already committed to addressing county-wide homelessness and it should do so in a supportive role, committing resources, technical assistance, infrastructure support and innovative components to the existing system.

Homelessness Statistics

On January 24, 2019, the Clark County Point-in-Time Count documented 958 people experiencing homelessness county-wide, an increase of 21% from January 25, 2018. There was an increase in people who were sheltered on the night in question, up 12%, and those who were not, up 30%. More than half of all homeless individuals counted were unsheltered, a total of 487 people, 47% of whom were individuals in families with children and 45% of whom were female. Other features of the overall homeless population included an increase in seniors, up 185%, and veterans, up 49%. The increase in unsheltered individuals is despite an increase in total shelter beds that were occupied county-wide, up from 421 in 2018 to 471 in 2019. In probably all urban areas of the country, the number of people counted in any Point-in-Time Count is far less than the known homeless people for whom data exists in the HMIS. As an example, in San Diego, the 2019 count documented approximately 9,600 total homeless people, while the HMIS includes 27,000 people who identify as homeless. The number of homeless people counted in Clark County is probably far short of the number of people who experience homelessness throughout the year.

People experiencing homelessness in Clark County are, for the most part, from Clark County. Nearly 80% of all homeless people encountered were last housed in Clark County before experiencing homelessness, including 71% who were last housed in Vancouver.

The chart below shows the five-year increase in sheltered and unsheltered homeless people county-wide.



Source: Council for the Homeless, (<https://www.councilforthehomeless.org/data-system-numbers/>)

Although the trend documented by Point-in-Time Count reports is an issue of legitimate concern, the City is to be commended for its sense of urgency and aggressive approach to addressing the issue. Such commitment is not universal among U.S. cities and counties, including many whose homelessness crises dwarf the status quo in Vancouver and Clark County. Imperial County, California, with a total population just 38% that of Clark County, documented 1,413 homeless individuals in its 2019 Point-in-Time Count, 1,225 of whom were unsheltered. Portland/Gresham/Multnomah County, Oregon, documented 4,015 individuals, 2,037 of whom were unsheltered.

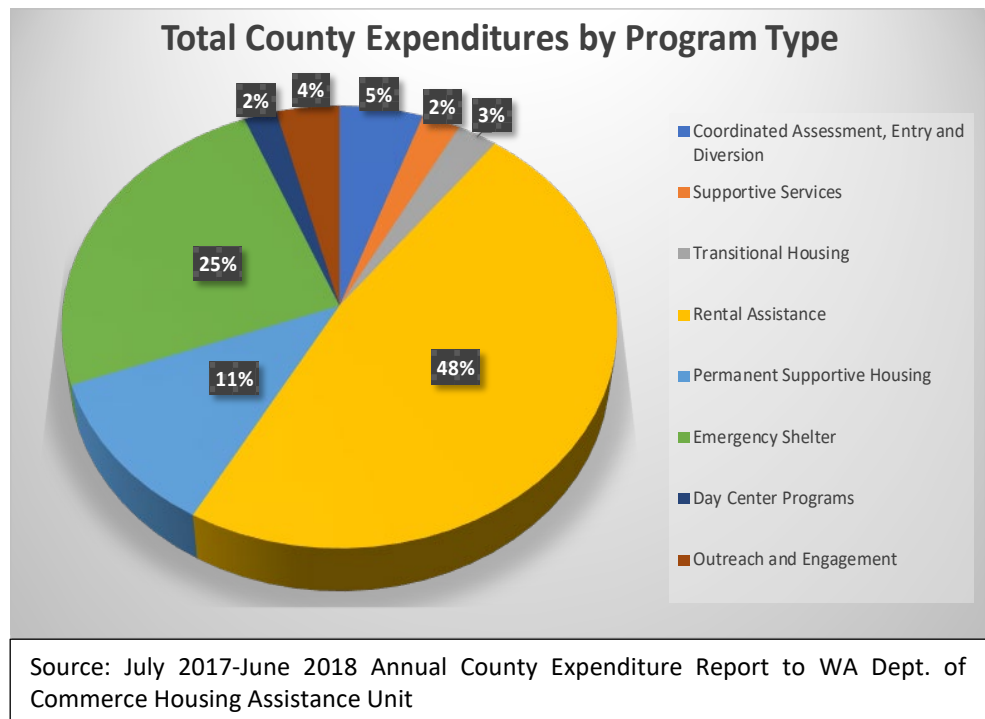
Alpha Project does not intend to diminish the importance of the City’s involvement in a stepped-up Homeless Crisis Response System. On the contrary; the City should proceed with its planned, urgent response to homelessness in part because the problem is, at this point, still solvable. From its meetings and correspondence with City staff and elected leaders, Alpha Project believes this is the shared perspective of all involved. Statistics tell part of a story, but they don’t need to dominate the narrative. Rather than focusing on what could or should have been done in the past, if the City can focus on identifying, implementing, monitoring and supporting effective, immediate additions to the existing CoC, it can achieve results in the short-term that dramatically change the numbers and their impact on the communities and neighborhoods most affected by homelessness.

Existing Funding by Source and Project Type

HUD funding is the single largest component of overall funding for homeless service, shelter and low-income permanent housing programs in the City and County. In addition to the \$2 million in CoC funding described above, the City administers \$1.8 million in combined HOME and CDBG funds, the County administers another \$2.1 million from those combined sources, and the Vancouver Housing Authority administers \$28.5 million in combined HUD funds. Those figures total \$34.4 million in HUD funding, excluding Emergency Solutions Grants passed through the state. Additional sources of support for homeless programs include County and City departments, other federal sources and significant private philanthropy.

From all sources, Clark County expenditures on programs serving the homeless totaled \$5.3 million in 2018. Those expenditures by program type are shown in the graph to the right.

Taken together, the resources currently committed to combating homelessness still leave nearly 500 people unsheltered each night. The chart below is taken from this year’s CoC Homeless Competition



application and shows the current shelter and housing inventory in the County.

| Project Type | Bed Count |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Emergency Shelter | 192 |
| Transitional Housing | 181 |
| Rapid Re-Housing | 256 |
| Permanent Supportive Housing | 445 |
| Other Permanent Housing | 30 |
| Total Beds | 1,104 |

The inventory above excludes vast resources administered by the Vancouver Housing Authority, including Tenant-Based Section 8 Vouchers and other forms of rental subsidy that represent, in essence, homelessness prevention. At present, the Housing Authority manages 2,290 Housing Choice Vouchers and has 14 open waiting lists for housing of various types serving diverse populations, including persons with special needs.

Aside from shelter and dedicated housing for people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness, additional programs and services throughout the City and County play significant roles in the Homeless Crisis Response System. Some of those services are, in Alpha Project’s opinion, under-weighted in the current blend of programs. The following subsection lists observed gaps and unmet needs in the Homeless Crisis Response System, many of which are also described in Council for the Homeless’ Homeless Action Plan and in other reports and analyses from City and County staff, as well as the 2019 CoC Homeless Competition application.

Observed Gaps

As noted in the Executive Summary and elsewhere in this report, a Temporary Bridge Shelter is the most important resource currently absent from the City’s programmatic response to homelessness. The other gaps described below should be addressed but closing those gaps will still leave unsheltered homeless people on the streets of Vancouver without a large-scale shelter program. The City should identify a single operator for the facility at 2018 Grand Boulevard and should get that facility leased up, built out and operational with a Day Center, Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge shelter working in unison as soon as possible. Again, no amount of outreach and engagement by itself can make a difference to the City’s homelessness issue without an option to being homeless, namely, a Temporary Bridge Shelter for single adults, ages 18 and older.

The Homeless Action Plan notes eight other specific areas of increased focus to be addressed in the Homeless Crisis Response System by 2022. Alpha Project concurs with those focus areas and encourages the City to engage with Council for the Homeless, the CoC Steering Committee and other key stakeholders to support measurable progress toward the plan’s objectives. The plan’s focus areas are:

- Increasing outreach and engagement,
- Strengthening prevention and diversion practices,
- Meeting the basic needs of people who are unsheltered,
- Leveraging community resources and investments,

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- Increasing housing options and transition support for people exiting systems of care,
- Increasing low-income permanent housing options,
- Engaging the expertise of people with lived experience, and
- Providing community and system educational opportunities.

In Alpha Project's opinion, those focus areas are important and could be effective only to the extent that adequate shelter exists to make them so. Consequently, while the City should contribute to issues addressed in the plan, it should simultaneously work to provide a Temporary Bridge Shelter as an option to homelessness. From its communication with City staff, Alpha Project understands that the City currently contracts with Share through CDBG funds to provide outreach services with two case managers. Alpha Project also met with two outreach case managers from Community Services Northwest. City staff indicate that planning is underway to launch a Police Department Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) and Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART). In San Diego, the HOT/HART teams have been extremely successful in addressing unsheltered individuals in crisis and supporting their placement in shelter and other interventions.

While the City should invest in increased outreach and engagement efforts, the success of those efforts will require other system improvements. HOT/HART interventions, to be successful, require the existence of crisis stabilization beds and services. Alpha Project's recommendations regarding the Temporary Bridge Shelter include setting aside designated HOT/HART beds to provide the Police Department with an alternative to emergency rooms and jail cells for people in crisis.

Alpha Project also recommends that outreach and engagement teams use the existing Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), the CoC's common assessment tool for Coordinated Entry. The tool includes questions to assess acuity, length of homelessness, physical and other disabilities, mental and physical health, substance abuse disorders and other aspects of bio/psycho/social functioning. Assessments should be reviewed by professionals to ensure accurate scoring.

Outreach teams should be provided with agency or City-owned vehicles and should be able to provide transportation for individuals willing to engage in any needed service, whether at any provider facility within the Homeless Crisis Response System or at mainstream service sites, including healthcare facilities, public benefits offices, educational institutions, courts and others.

Regarding prevention and diversion practices, Alpha Project concurs with the wisdom of the Community Action Plan and believes preventing homelessness is vastly preferable to addressing it after it has occurred. The City should work with all providers and in particular with the Housing Authority to increase options for rental assistance and other interventions that can help individuals and families retain their housing or find alternative housing in the event of housing loss. Such work, however, encounters another gap in the current system, which is the simple shortage of available low-income permanent housing units.

A fully functional CoC and Homeless Crisis Response System requires balanced investments in and deployment of the following elements:

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- Homelessness prevention and diversion,
- Interim and bridge housing,
- Outreach and engagement,
- Housing navigation,
- Emergency shelter,
- Coordinated assessment, entry and referral, and
- Low-income permanent housing, including permanent supportive housing, for extremely low incomes.

All of the above elements should be connected through effective, seamless housing navigation. The planned Housing Navigation Center will facilitate close inter-agency coordination and build on Council for the Homeless’ Coordinated Entry for Shelter system.

The opening of a Temporary Bridge Shelter will alleviate pressures that currently hamper the delivery of coordinated services and will amplify the effectiveness of all elements of the Homeless Crisis Response System. Linking operations at the Day Center, the Housing Navigation Center and the Temporary Bridge Shelter under effective, coordinated management will make a rapid impact on the current state of homelessness in the City and simultaneously address quality of life issues in the neighborhood most affected by those programs.

Joint Executive Board on Homelessness

The CoC is in the process of reorganizing its leadership structure to include a Joint Executive Board as the highest-level authority in the system. Under the plan, the Joint Executive Board will include ex-officio members from the City, the County, the Housing Authority, Council for the Homeless and the Community Foundation of Southwest Washington (see table below).

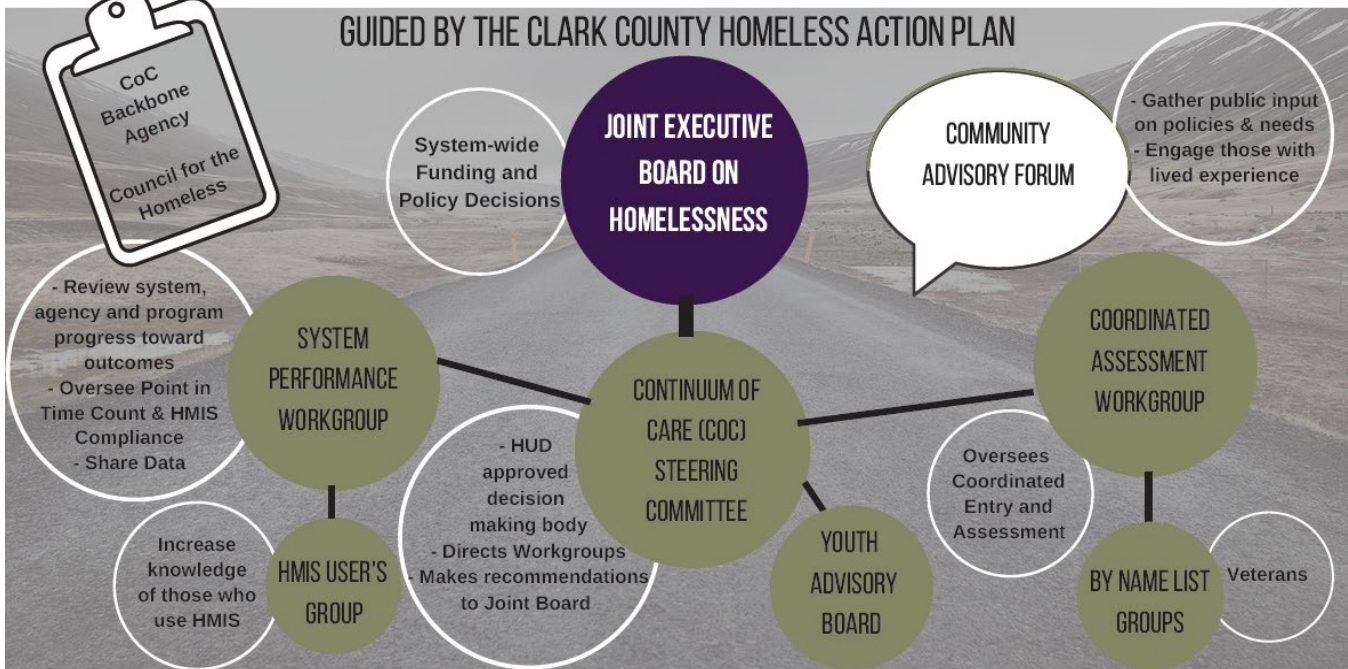
| Joint Executive Board Seats | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Board Entity | Board Elected/Appointed Member | Board Administrative Staff |
| City of Vancouver | City Council Member | Director of Community Development/Homeless Manager |
| Clark County | County Council Member | Director of Community Services |
| Vancouver Housing Authority | VHA Commissioner | Executive Director or Senior Staff |
| Council for the Homeless | n/a | Executive Director |
| Board Advisory Seats | | |
| Community Foundation of Southwest Washington | n/a | President or Program Officer |

In preparing this report, Alpha Project consulted with the City’s Homeless Resource Manager and Council for the Homeless’ Executive Director regarding the role and function of the Joint Executive Board, which is depicted in the graphic below, taken from the Community Action Plan.

CLARK COUNTY/VANCOUVER CONTINUUM OF CARE (COC) 2019 PROPOSED RESTRUCTURED HOMELESS SYSTEM CONTINUUM OF CARE



- Engages all major funders (Clark County, City of Vancouver & Vancouver Housing Authority) and the community in ending homelessness by making it rare, brief and one-time.
- Coordinates the delivery of service programs to people experiencing homelessness.
- Creates a Board focused on collaborative funding and policy decisions, therefore increasing transparency and community feedback.



For more information about the Continuum of Care or to get involved visit: www.councilforthehomeless.org/csp_docs

Source: Community Action Plan 2019-2022, A Framework for Action.

Current CoC leaders agree that the Joint Executive Board is needed in order to bring together elected officials and high-level administrators to facilitate agreement and cooperation on systemic policies, to plan and coordinate the implementation of new programs, and to combine and leverage resources. The current Steering Committee membership does not include decision makers with sufficient authority to ensure that information reaches elected officials or that such important issues are conveyed with sufficient urgency to mobilize resources and make any substantial change to the status quo. Alpha Project would caution against the Joint Executive Board becoming simply another layer of bureaucracy that could actually hamper the smooth functioning of the CoC. However, its intended role as a high-level body to advise, support and contribute leveraged resources to the CoC will strengthen the current system.

Recommended Approach to Improve the City’s Response to Homelessness

The two critical components to improving the City’s response to homelessness noted in this proposal are a Temporary Bridge Shelter and a working Housing Navigation Center. In addition to these components, the City needs to dramatically improve the operation, management and community coordination of the Day Center.

The meaningful change necessary to improve the City's response to homelessness requires a philosophical shift and a change of attitude and approach that reflects different assumptions and expectations. Alpha Project believes it is important for the City to set the bar higher for its funded programs and contractors and for those programs and contractors to recognize the difference between low barriers and no barriers. Alpha Project was founded on the principle of caring so much about people experiencing homelessness that the organization will not be complicit in the causes and consequences of homelessness. Recognizing the difference between acceptance and enabling ensures that programs serving the homeless do not contribute to people dying on the streets.

Alpha Project believes the City should use performance-based outcome measures as the minimum standard in the selection of providers and that such measures should include not only numeric targets for moving people into sustainable housing, but also demonstrable contributions to the community and reduction in the impact of homelessness on neighborhoods and institutions. Programs like the Day Center, the Housing Navigation Center and the Temporary Bridge Shelter should be entry points for people to begin the process of healing and recovering from the experience of homelessness and they should set standards for behavior and conduct that help participants to regain dignity and respect.

The Housing First philosophy, which emphasizes immediate placement of individuals and families in permanent housing, overlooks two important factors: 1) not all people experiencing homelessness are capable of living independently without time to first stabilize and prepare for the transition from the street to permanent housing, and 2) there are not enough affordable permanent housing units available in the City's inventory to immediately house all people in need. Given both these factors, the City's contributions to the current Homeless Crisis Response System should include programs that give people a place to begin a process and to proceed at a pace appropriate to their individual capacities with the goal of housing placement that continues to address their needs with supportive services that ensure they do not return to homelessness.

The Day Center, Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter, working as an interconnected system, can make an immediate, observable difference in the City's homelessness issue, including how homelessness affects the City's neighborhoods.

System Coordination

The City's planned participation in the Joint Executive Board will improve coordination of City/County/CoC resources and contributions to the Homeless Crisis Response System. Ideally, the Homeless Resource Manager will contribute to stronger coordination of the City's various departments and agencies and will facilitate closer communication and help target priority issues for the City and all other stakeholders, including the Housing Authority, the County, and the full CoC membership. The Joint Executive Board and City leadership should empower the Homeless Resource Manager to communicate and monitor compliance with policy and priorities and should use his expertise to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support for provider agencies in the CoC.

As described above, the Homeless Crisis Response System is much bigger, more complex and more constrained by many forces than the City can change by its own will. The City's needs and priorities will not always align with system-level priorities. Therefore, while the City should be at the table for all CoC discussions, it will also need to coordinate its own internal resources to ensure its funded programs

address issues of particular importance to Vancouver. This could include the Homeless Resource Manager convening regular meetings with officials from City and County departments, including the City Manager's Office, the Police Department, Community and Economic Development, Financial and Management Services, Parks and Recreation and Public works.

Blend of Facilities and Services

The full blend of facilities and services required to address the City's current homeless issue are described above and include increased prevention, expanded outreach, engagement and assessment, improved Day Center services, implementation of coordinated services through the Housing Navigation Center, and opening of a Temporary Bridge Shelter. Those services should be linked to the county-wide Homeless Crisis Response System and to all mainstream resources and community-based services.

In its most simplistic form, the Housing First philosophy would require more units of low-income permanent housing, including permanent supportive housing, to be effective. In the short-term, such a goal is not feasible. Therefore, the City should move quickly to ensure that enough interim housing options, including Temporary Bridge Shelter beds are available to meet the needs of the City's unsheltered homeless population. From its experience, Alpha Project believes the Temporary Bridge Shelter could be brought online within 45 days of selecting an operator and within 60 days it could begin to house an initial population of some fraction of its intended full occupancy. The program could be fully operational within 90 days. Those timelines assume all permits, clearances and other occupancy requirements can be completed with the cooperation of appropriate City departments.

Stakeholders Involved

Achieving the system coordination described above will require the active participation of the City Council, City Manager's Office, Police Department and other City departments, with the support and advice of the Homeless Resource Manager. In addition, the City's coordination of programs and services should involve program operators and other nonprofits, neighborhood groups and associations, Council for the Homeless, the Housing Authority and relevant Clark County departments. Additional voices that should advise the implementation of new programs and contribute to ongoing policy and priority setting include business leaders, investors, private philanthropists, and other individuals with significant interest in addressing homelessness and neighborhood concerns.

It is also important that the inputs of people with lived experience, i.e. formerly homeless, be involved in advising the City regarding the effectiveness and relevance of new programs and services. Formerly homeless people can also provide important insights into weaknesses in the existing system, service gaps and flawed assumptions. Moreover, formerly homeless people can provide unique peer-to-peer connections at the direct service level, helping to overcome barriers to active engagement in homeless services, especially for individuals with special needs.

Alpha Project recommends convening an Advisory Board to provide regular, consistent feedback and input for all programs at 2018 Grand Boulevard. The Advisory Board should include the Homeless Resource Manager, a Police Department representation, merchants, residents and other neighborhood interests.

Building on Current Infrastructure

The most important addition to the current CoC infrastructure will be the Joint Executive Board, the role of which should include a process for overseeing programs and their performance according to contractual objectives. At the City level, the creation of the Homeless Resource Manager's position will provide City leaders with a constant, reliable source of information to improve program performance and address emerging and ongoing issues. As mentioned above, the Homeless Resource Manager should be supported and empowered to perform his function. It has been Alpha Project's experience that people in positions like the Homeless Resource Manager's are frequent and convenient scapegoats for policy makers. Without the support required to perform his role and implement needed changes, the Homeless Resource Manager will be unable to make the differences the City seeks.

A strengthened City infrastructure will also include incorporating greatly expanded outreach and engagement, as described above, expanding of prevention programs with funds to address housing crises for people at imminent risk of homelessness, and ensuring that all programs in the City employ a single assessment, referral and placement process. There should be no wrong door for people experiencing homelessness to access the system and begin the process of transitioning to permanent housing. The most important facilities and programs to achieve rapid infrastructure improvement will be an improved Day Center (see below), the Housing Navigation Center and the Temporary Bridge Shelter.

Achieving the Goal of Permanent Housing

Achieving the goal of permanent housing placement should begin with an operator of the Day Center, Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter programs identifying housing resources, both short-term and permanent housing options, for all subpopulations. Those options should include programs and housing units both within the current system and others outside the system. Identifying the full range of housing resources available will be critical to forming a strategy to create or leverage new housing stock to address the full extent of need in the City.

Leveraging new housing inventory can be expedited by:

- Implementing prevention and diversion techniques following best practices at all City homeless programs,
- Providing incentives to landlords willing to work with subsidy programs for the homeless,
- Master leasing multi-unit facilities,
- Implementing roommate matching programs,
- Increasing the availability of subsidies and other forms of rental assistance, both short and long-term,
- Partnering with alcohol and drug treatment programs, as well as other behavioral health service residential programs, and
- Taking advantage of the flexibility of the Housing Authority's Move to Work program.

Additionally, an operational Housing Navigation Center should welcome the presence of County staff and staff from all other contributing organizations, including the Police Department. As noted elsewhere, the concept of coordinated entry and Housing First overlooks the lack of housing

availability in Vancouver. Moreover, without a large, focused, collaborative staff of housing navigators, what resources might be available are at present under-identified and under-utilized.

The City should understand that CES, as defined by federal policy is permanent housing focused, despite the fact that permanent housing is not the appropriate first intervention for a large share of people experiencing homelessness. Therefore, it is important that the City and the CoC develop an expanded assessment tool and CES that is appropriate for the actual homeless population to be served and housing options available.

Changing Perceptions of Homelessness

The City is challenged by a prevailing perception of the current Day Center. The neighborhood around the Day Center is unduly affected by the concentrated presence of homeless people whose presence diminishes the area's quality of life in a variety of ways. Those people currently have no option but to leave the facility each afternoon and spill out into a neighborhood where they are not welcome and have no access to shelter. To change the current situation, the City will need to ensure that it selects an operator that is willing and committed to the desired change.

The operator of the three connected programs will need to be receptive and responsive to input feedback and, when appropriate, criticism of its operation and the programs' impact on neighborhood interest. The operator will need to be committed philosophically to the belief that it is a neighbor and should be a good one. It should operate programs in the neighborhood that are highly visible and directly engaged in community service. Those programs should include homeless people doing meaningful, dignified work to give back to the community that supports their presence at the Day Center, Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter.



Examples of activities to serve the neighborhood include, but are not limited to:

- Litter control,
- Peer-to-peer outreach and engagement,
- Graffiti removal,
- Security and perimeter patrols,
- Assistance to low-income residents, and
- Hosting special events.

The facility should also engage the neighborhood through collaborative activities, examples of which include, but are not limited to:

- Community meetings,
- Neighborhood watch and community policing meetings,
- AA/NA and other support group meetings,

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- Community events, including back-to-school drives, canned food drives and other support activities,
- Holiday celebrations, and
- Other special events.

In all ways, the programs should be responsive to the City and the City should set strict standards for accountability through its contract compliance enforcement. Monitoring and overseeing the operator will be particularly important in the initial phase of combined program operation and the City should be actively involved in coordinating the linkage of all three programs to neighborhood interests and stakeholders.



Light the Night Celebration at the Bridge Shelter, attendees include shelter residents, neighbors, Mayor, County Supervisor, District Attorney, sponsors, and more.

Managerial and Operational Practices for an Optimally Effective Day Center

In Alpha Project's opinion, the current Day Center is poorly managed. During a site visit to the Day Center on September 4, Alpha Project observed virtually no control over access to the facility, little client engagement, and an absence of any social modeling to shape and control client conduct. During the same visit, Alpha Project observed neighborhood impacts stemming from client conduct in the community and little effort to mitigate those issues or engage community interests in positive relationships. If the City has provided the resources necessary to effectively staff and manage the Day Center, it should be certain that its contract with the operator includes clear outcome measures and operational standards required for compliance with the City's expectations. The City should also ensure that its chosen operator has both the experience and capacity to operate the Day Center in accordance with the City's goals, objectives and broad vision for an improved response to homelessness. This could entail soliciting competitive proposals from all prospective operators or the creation of an entity to operate the program at the City's direction.

To improve the performance of the Day Center and mitigate the neighborhood issues that have arisen from its current operation, the program should:

1. Control access to the facility through a single point of entry,
2. Issue photo membership cards to all participants and use them upon entry and exit to provide an accurate picture of who is on-site and how frequently members access the facility,
3. Track member engagement in on-site services and document all services rendered in the HMIS,
4. Create and enforce a comprehensive policies and procedures manual,
5. Expand security to the neighborhood surrounding the facility,
6. Incorporate larger scale work programs with expanded services and deploy outreach and community service teams to the neighborhood,

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7. Increase staff engagement with members and add formal, housing-focused case management and housing navigation services,
8. Include new partners and increase the on-site availability of partner-provided services,
9. Model a code of conduct that makes Day Center membership valuable and contingent upon appropriate behavior and participation in housing-focused services, and
10. Participate in neighborhood associations and networks to create a process for regular input and feedback to the community, including input from the recommended Advisory Board, with the Police Department as an important contributor.

The above list is not all inclusive. Many other structural and service delivery changes are required to improve the Day Center and ensure it addresses the City's long-term interest in reducing homelessness and better serving all citizens and institutions. Below is an extensive description in several subsections, responsive to the City's request for this report. Among the recommendations below are recommendations for performance monitoring and enforcing contract compliance, which will be vital to the City's fulfillment of its objectives.

Notwithstanding the list above, the Day Center needs to be linked to a well-managed and fully operational Temporary Bridge Shelter in order to meet the City's goals. Without a shelter option, no matter how well the Day Center is run, when it closes it will return homeless people to a neighborhood already affected by homelessness.



2018 Grand Boulevard, October 2019

The City is the Day Center operator's customer and as such it must demand and enforce contract standards that Alpha Project is happy to share, based upon its decades of experience. Much of the change to be achieved in the current operation of the Day Center begins with the leadership of an operator that is committed to building relationships with homeless people in the neighborhood and working together with the community to respond to issues that affect the community. Responding to those issues effectively will require building trust and rapport with people experiencing homelessness as well as the, residents, businesses, institutions and diverse community interests affected by the Day Center's presence.

To increase the capacity of Day Center staff, all staff should be trained in best practices, including Motivational Interviewing, Trauma-Informed Care and other appropriate practices for reaching the target population in compassionate, culturally, linguistically and experientially appropriate ways. As part of the evidence-backed approach to staffing and training, the operator should consider a process for hiring and training people with lived experience of homelessness and provide internship opportunities and ongoing cross training for all staff. Additional trainings that would improve performance and increase staff capacity include, but are not limited to:

- Harm reduction,
- De-escalation,
- Critical time intervention,
- CPR and first aid,
- Staff and client safety practices,
- Confidentiality,
- Community case conferencing,
- Social modeling,
- Housing First with low barriers,
- Cultural competency,
- Client engagement techniques,
- Landlord engagement,
- Health and safety,
- Day-to-day operations, and
- Orientation to sub-populations, including TAY, LGBTQ+, seniors, veterans and victims of DV and other trauma.

These topics should be elements of training for not only Day Center staff, but also for the Housing Navigation Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter.

The Day Center's policies and procedures should include a clear code of conduct for members, staff and volunteers and should include explicit consequences for violations of the code of conduct. A Day Center membership card should be a privilege, not a right. Members should have access to a suggestion box and an easy-to-access grievance process for swift resolution of misunderstandings, disagreements, or other issues that affect members' ability to participate in the Day Center's full range of services. In addition to close monitoring of the facility's entries and exits, with photo membership cards, the building should be equipped with proper lighting and security cameras indoors and outdoors and videos should be reviewed regularly to note any unwanted activities in the facility and on its perimeter.

In addition to the basic services listed below (see page 23), an optimal Day Center needs to offer mail and message services and computer lab support with connection to the internet for members to connect with family and other support systems, apply for benefits, create resumes, perform job searches and engage in other online services to help resolve their homelessness. All services should be provided by staff or trained volunteers. During its visit, Alpha Project observed members doing their own laundry. That function, along with all others at the facility, should be performed by the operator's personnel.

The above issues and others are addressed in the following sub-sections.

Controlling Access

The importance of controlling access to the facility through a single point of entry and exit cannot be over-stressed. The right to enter the Day Center and partake of its services should be conditioned upon membership, which, in turn, should be offered to people experiencing homelessness who are willing to

complete an assessment, intake and orientation. The intake and orientation process should include an introduction to the facility's range of services and a review of the code of conduct for all members, staff, volunteers and partner providers (see below). Upon completion of a VI-SPDAT assessment and provision of other information required for intake, the orientation process should culminate in the issuance of a membership card. Ideally, membership cards should include sufficient member identification to allow easy tracking of facility access and utilization in the HMIS.

Upon accessing the facility, security staff should screen membership cards. An ideal process would include bar codes or other scannable data that can be passed through a card reader and connect with a database system to allow real-time tracking of all members on-site at all times. Membership cards should also be scanned upon exiting the facility to ensure accurate real-time data and that occupancy levels are not exceeded.

By whatever means possible within the City's budgetary means, the current lack of control over access to the facility must be addressed. If this means building or securing fences, gates or other security barriers, then such measures must be undertaken. At present, people can enter the property through a wide, unstaffed gate, putting security personnel at a disadvantage and ruling out any possibility of knowing who is on-site, whether they come and go, and what behaviors they may be engaged in on the edges of the property or in the adjoining neighborhood.

Business Hours

While 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. are typical hours of operation for human service programs, 7:30 to 5:30 would be better, to allow the neighborhood's high-travel times to be unimpeded by homeless foot traffic coming to and leaving the Day Center. The facility should be open 365 days per year.

No matter what operating hours the City establishes, Day Center security and neighborhood impact practices and protocols should ensure that the facility's closure does not result in a flood of homeless people emptying into the neighborhood with no oversight or expectations. Misconduct observed in the neighborhood should result in the same consequences as violating the code of conduct for the facility. This could include temporary or permanent loss of access, depending upon many circumstances.

In considering the optimal hours of operation for the facility, the City and the operator should consult with neighborhood interests and ensure all concerned parties feel heard. This will build greater trust with the neighborhood and diminish the sense that the Day Center was dumped on neighbors with no opportunity for input.

Closure Policy

The Day Center's closing policy should include detailed procedures for:

- Securing the facility including its entire grounds,
- Monitoring the neighborhood,
- Cleaning and preparing the facility for the next day's opening,
- Reviewing and updating the program logbook,
- Ensuring security cameras and lighting are functional, and
- Performing perimeter security checks.

All staff should wear readily identifiable uniforms with high visibility at all times as well as name tags with photos and position titles.

In addition, a program component like the Talking Trash program, but greatly expanded, should be used to deploy litter control teams at closure time each day to ensure the neighborhood remains clean and un-affected by Day Center members leaving the facility. The program should provide incentives for members to work on supervised crews to provide not only litter control, but also peer-to-peer outreach to encourage homeless people in the neighborhood to access services. Such a program would provide important social modeling to participants and increase their sense of connectedness to the community. Alpha Project's Wheels of Change and Take Back the Streets programs offer replicable models for such a program in Vancouver to offer vastly more opportunities to men and women seeking to reconnect with their community and gain valuable experience.

Monitoring Contractor Performance

The City's contract with the operator should include specific, measurable outcomes that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Number of assessments, intakes and orientations provided as well as number of membership cards issued,
- Number of people accessing the Day Center, with demographic and other data tracked in the HMIS,
- Number and type of services provided,
- Number of members increasing their incomes through employment, entitlements, or participation in work programs,
- Number of people linked to active housing navigation,
- Number of people placed in shelter or housing programs, including type of program,
- Number and type of neighborhood services provided,
- Number of community events attended with notes on neighborhood input and any program revisions or other responses to address concerns,
- Number of people retaining their housing, tracked through follow-up, and
- Outcomes for incentive and employment programs offered.

The operator should report to the City monthly on the above performance measures and should include in its reporting any additional contributions to the goals and priorities of the Homelessness Crisis Response System, which could include objectives established by the County, the CoC, of the Housing Authority and should note any client-level and program-level contributions to reduction in homelessness.

The City should ensure that it has designated a contract officer for review of monthly reports and should include in its contract with the operator provisions in the event of under-performance or non-compliance. This might entail re-issuance of a competitive request for proposals allowing the current operator or other entities to respond to a scope of work with quantifiable performance standards in each of the above categories.

Code of Conduct

The Day Center's code of conduct should be included in its policies and procedures and should include requirements for staff, volunteers, partner providers and members alike. The code of conduct should be posted and signed by all members at the time of intake and orientation. It should be built on a recognition of the difference between low barriers and no barriers and should be written to reflect the importance of social modeling by program staff with explicit rules for behavior in and around the Day Center.

Social modeling begins with the awareness that behavior is reflective of an environment through the process of observational learning. In other words, people behave in an environment according to what they observe. Observed individuals, i.e. models in Day Center programs include staff as well as peers. These models provide examples of behavior to observe and imitate. People are more likely to attend to and imitate those people they perceive as similar to themselves and, as research shows, they are more likely to imitate behavior modeled by people of the same gender. One implication of this fact is that if security staff, for instance, are all male, female clients will be less likely to connect with them. In any event, it is critical that security and service staff be consistent across the board in their modeling of appropriate Day Center conduct.



Moreover, influence can be both direct and observed. The people around the client (being directly influenced) will respond to the behavior they imitate when either reinforcement or punishment is administered. If a client imitates a model's behavior and the consequences are rewarding, not only the client but others around them are likely to continue the behavior.

The Day Center code of conduct should recognize all these facts and should include the following, at a minimum:

- No possession or of alcohol, controlled substances, weapons or other contraband,
- No threatening speech or behavior,
- No vulgar or offensive speech,
- No insensitive or intolerant speech that could threaten anyone based on gender, age, race, religion, orientation or other factor,
- No conduct that is destructive to the facility or disruptive to an appropriate, peaceful, professional human service milieu,
- No unwanted advances or solicitations of any person, and
- No nudity or offensive exposure.

In addition, members should be required to smoke only in designated areas and food and beverages should be consumed in an area of the Day Center separate from the designated smoking area. See also the Temporary Bridge Shelter rules on page 32-33 of this report, which should be adapted as necessary for the Day Center.

Day Center members should be actively involved in the daily maintenance and upkeep of the facility. Including members as valuable contributors to the program fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility and decreases the incentive to misuse the site or take its services and amenities for granted. Member incentives are effective motivators and can help facilitate members' willingness to engage with services in a mutually respectful relationship. As an example, see Alpha Project's Passport Program list on page 33.

Staff-to-Client Ratios

In most human service programs that work with people experiencing homelessness, an ideal ratio of service staff to client is 1:25. Obviously, funding is the limiting factor in maintaining such a ratio. That number should include direct service personnel and should be in addition to security staff.

Provision of Showers, Laundry, Storage and Other Basic Services

The basic services at the Day Center, which should be ADA-compliant, should include, but are not limited to:

- Showers,
- Restrooms and wash stations,
- Laundry facilities,
- Mail services,
- Telephone access and message services,
- Safe drinking water,
- Computer access,
- Personal storage,
- Refrigeration for medications,
- Access to testing for communicable disease,
- Transportation assistance,
- Access to employment services,
- On-site partners, and
- Community space for activities and group events.

All basic services should be facilitated by Day Center staff or on-site partner providers.

In addition to these basic services, the full range of services offered through the Day Center should be linked to a system of housing navigation, coordinated entry and housing placement and should include the program elements listed in the following section.

Additional Services Needed

The Day Center should offer enhanced services, including services provided by partner organizations and public agencies. Such services include, but are not limited to:

- Veterinary and other pet care services,
- Access to primary and mental health care,
- Health screenings for infectious disease and chronic conditions,

- Assistance with access to transportation resources,
- Housing navigation, unless offered at the Housing Navigation Center,
- Partnerships with behavioral health and substance abuse treatment providers, and
- A television and socialization area plus recreation and social activities to increase a sense of community

Beyond these direct member services, the Day Center should participate in multi-agency case conferencing both on- and off-site, especially for members with special needs, should incorporate work programs and direct service to the neighborhood, and should create incentive-based programs for engagement in services leading to stabilization and housing. As noted above, one example of such a program element is the Passport Program used at Alpha Project's Temporary Bridge Shelter to encourage willing participation in and completion of all phases of orientation, screenings, partner-provided services and other amenities offered on-site (see "Coordination of Services" on page 32). The program is privately funded and provides incentives in the form of a backpack with a running suit, gift card, hygiene packs and socks. Since implementing the Passport Program at the Alpha Project Temporary Bridge Shelter, participation in the services listed above has increased by approximately 80%. Residents who engage in services once are more likely to continue engaging once trust is established.

Security in the Day Center and Surrounding Community

As described above in several sections, it is critical that the City enforce with the operator the importance of being a good neighbor, keeping the community clean and safe, and working to ensure that the Day Center's operation contributes to the neighborhood's quality of life, rather than diminishing it. This must include mitigating issues related to individual memberships by linking their conduct and behavior to their continued access to and use of the facility and its services. Issues including camping on the sidewalks, use, purchase or sale of alcohol or controlled substances or alcohol in the vicinity or any other behavior or conduct that would make the Day Center a bad neighbor must result in consequences. Specific recommendations to improve security for the Day Center and surrounding community include:

- Closing the main gate and keeping the entire facility gated and secure at all times,
- Making only one point of entry and exit staffed at all times by security personnel,
- Use of membership cards,
- Providing security staff with a golf cart or other vehicle to patrol the neighborhood,
- Adding security video cameras to the interior and exterior of the property, and
- Ensuring there is sufficient exterior security lighting to discourage unwanted activity in the area.

At present, the City contracts separately with the Day Center operator and security provider. While this practice does give the City direct control of the security contractor, it also means that the operator and security providers are not on the same page, programmatically. Moreover, it excludes security personnel from the trainings listed above, such as social modeling and trauma-informed care. Ideally, security personnel should be an integral part of the operator's team and should be part of community-based services, including security patrols, clean-up projects and other services that include Day Center members.

The operator's security staff should approach the Day Center with special attention to the program's impact on the surrounding neighborhood and should work closely with the Police Department including HOT and HART teams. Police officers should regularly visit the center and should be welcome at all times. Staff and members alike should establish relationships with officers through regular contact and free and trusting communication. The operator's executive leadership should remain in close contact with City officials to respond to emerging trends and events and to assist in the implementation of strategies to maintain an environment conducive to neighborhood well-being.

Entry and Exit Procedures

In addition to restricting access to a single point of entry and exit, monitored by security staff and restricted to members with rightful access to the property, Alpha Project recommends that the City require the operator to adopt a comprehensive entry and exit protocol to be included in its policies and procedures. Entry and exit procedures should include required safety elements, provisions for screening of all individuals seeking access, procedures for denying access, requirements for conduct upon entering or exiting, including initial entry, which should include the formal assessment, intake and orientation described above. As an example, the following text is taken from Alpha Project Temporary Bridge Shelter policies and procedures manual.

- *Initial intake and VI-SPDAT assessment done by Alpha Project Bridge Shelter staff. Intakes consist of completion of an intake form including resident's demographics and all mandatory HMIS Clarity questions, medication log, service animal/emotional support letter, certification of homelessness, signing of shelter rules and regulations (with a copy given to each client), bed assignment, distribution of blankets and hygiene packs. All required information will be entered into HMIS Clarity within 24 to 48 hours.*
- *Bridge Shelter staff will log all intakes and exits in the daily activity log.*
- *A daily bed list will be generated by Bridge Shelter staff.*
- *Disabled residents requiring a bottom bunk will be noted on the application form.*
- *Residents will be responsible for all medications, except those requiring refrigeration. Refrigerators will be provided.*
- *A sharps container will be provided for proper disposal of diabetic supplies.*
- *Staff will review Bridge Shelter rules with each resident and obtain a signed agreement of these rules upon intake. Residents will be provided a copy.*
- *Residents upon receiving a bed assignment will be issued an identification badge containing name, date of intake, bed number, and resident's signature.*
- *All residents entering the Bridge Shelter may be subject to a property search for the safety of staff and residents, if staff deems it appropriate. Examples would be reasonable suspicion of possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons.*
- *Bridge Shelter staff will perform a bed check at 8:00 p.m. each evening to determine how many beds are available. The program will always accept the most vulnerable first (i.e. medically frail, physically disabled, women and seniors). Outreach staff on second shift will ensure the beds are occupied each night.*
- *Security will be responsible for completing regular fire watches, security checks and securing the outside perimeter of the facility within the neighboring community.*

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- *Residents may be exited for violation of the rules of the Bridge Shelter or not being present for bed check. Exceptions will be made for emergencies and documented work schedules or prior authorization by Bridge Shelter staff.*
- *When a resident is exited for missing bed check, all property is bagged and labeled with name, bed number, date, time and total number of bags and logged.*
- *When a resident is asked to leave for non-compliance of rules, the resident must take all belongings with them. You may be terminated from the program for the following reasons, although not limited to fighting, stealing, and threatening behavior, bringing drugs and/or alcohol on site.*
- *Alpha Project will ONLY hold exited resident's property for 72 hours. If resident does not pick up belongings within those 72 hours all property will be discarded.*

Not all elements of the entry and exit procedures for a shelter program are applicable to the Day Center, a list of procedures like the foregoing should be developed and enforced for the Day Center.

Resources Required to Improve Neighborhood Safety and Quality of Life

The resources required to improve neighborhood safety and quality of life include both capital and personnel funds. As indicated above, a patrol vehicle, security cameras, adequate fencing and other barriers are all elements of addressing the City's objectives. So is the provision of a sufficient number of trained, engaged security personnel.

In addition to financial resources, the City should also facilitate closer coordination between the Day Center operator and other neighborhood stakeholders and should ensure that the Police Department works closely with the Day Center, including regular on-site visits and response to calls, to prevent or intervene in cases of criminal conduct or other behavior detrimental to the neighborhood.

These are essential resources needed to address the current situation. The outward-facing community programs and outreach and engagement programs are recommended to fully transform the status quo and incorporate the Day Center as a positive element in the community. The Day Center operator's current Talking Trash program, which deploys a supervisor and three homeless or formerly homeless community cleaners five days a week throughout the City to remove trash along a designated route, should be expanded with funding for more crews and activities. Litter and trash clean-up is an important community service, but crews could also work with the City to provide minor repair services, graffiti removal, weed and brush clearance and other highly visible community benefits. Alpha Project's work crews provide these services and more and also enlist homeless and formerly homeless people



Alpha Project work crew performing community service, San Diego.

as peer-to-peer engagement workers, helping to build a bridge to services for people reluctant to engage with outreach staff and/or service providers.

While the essential resources described in this sub-section are important to improving the operations and impact of the Day Center, still, the biggest neighborhood impact will come from successful operation of the Temporary Bridge Shelter, described below.

Operation of Outward-Facing Community Programs

As described above, the City should require the operator to participate in neighborhood networks, taskforces and other groups and should require reporting on that participation, input received and responses to feedback. The operator needs to be connected to neighborhood residents' and merchants' groups and should be involved in any neighborhood-wide initiatives. There should be an easy process for hearing and responding to neighborhood issues and concerns.



Shelter Residents, staff, neighbors, providers, and other community members gather regularly at the shelter to discuss best practices and community involvement, San Diego.

The Day Center should also include opportunities for members to participate in staff-led community clean-up projects and other neighborhood improvement activities. The goals of those projects and activities should be 1) to engage members in meaningful work and increase their connection to the community at large, and 2) to shift neighborhood perspectives by showing the contributions of people experiencing homelessness rather than the undesired impacts of their presence.

The Day Center should also be led with input from the Advisory Board, described above, and the facility should be available during non-operating hours to host community events and provide additional neighborhood benefits. These could include holiday events, neighborhood meetings, hosting community organizations, AA and NA groups and many more activities to make the Day Center an active, involved community-based center. The facility at 2018 Grand Boulevard can be a place for celebrations, recognitions and positive experiences for the community. Elected leaders and other officials should be invited to events to partake of the facility's positive energy and to develop a sense of connection to the site.

Outreach and Engagement Programs

The Day Center should be part of outreach and engagement activities as described above. Outreach programs should align with regional objectives and outreach personnel should contribute to the work of the Day Center through outreach to persons experiencing homelessness in order to facilitate their access to the Day Center and its housing navigators. Day Center staff should coordinate with outreach teams to prioritize bridge shelter placement, housing navigation services and stabilization assistance on a priority basis that best addresses documented gaps and needs. Outreach staff should maintain engagement with high-priority individuals by contacting them on the street and other service sites and

should encourage each individual's use of the Day Center's resources, including through warm hand-offs to Day Center staff and through continuing advocacy on behalf of people experiencing homelessness with service providers throughout the City and County.

Outreach teams should drive marked, readily recognizable vans, and should be able to provide transportation to people willing to engage in services at the moment they are willing to go. Outreach staff and all other program personnel should wear distinctive, easily recognizable uniforms at all times. Outreach teams should provide daily coverage of areas with large concentrations of homeless people. Outreach staff should be equipped with tablets or other mobile internet-connected devices to allow staff to access HMIS and CES records. If an assessment needs to be completed, mobile technology should allow staff to upload results to the system.



Identifiable Alpha Project outreach worker in a clearly marked van builds rapport with people living on the streets, San Diego.

Outreach staff should attend any and all community meetings, CoC meetings or other networks and meetings and should be available for presentations and education to businesses and residents. Outreach teams should work closely with partnering agencies and HOT and HART teams and should be available for business and residents to address immediate concerns. Outreach teams should also engage the community as they conduct outreach, eliciting feedback and input.

In the end, however, outreach and engagement efforts will require a Temporary Bridge Shelter to achieve their greatest impact.

Design and Operation of a Housing Navigation Center

The basic philosophy of the Housing Navigation Center should be to work with people experiencing homelessness as part of a coordinated system to move them with appropriate supports through the process of identifying, obtaining and retaining housing appropriate to their long-term needs. The Housing Navigation Center should focus on rapid placement of individuals and families in housing following individualized housing plans that identify each individual or family's unique needs, vulnerabilities, priorities and capacities. This should be done with the awareness that not all people experiencing homelessness can access or retain permanent housing without first stabilizing and addressing housing readiness objectives, a factor the Temporary Bridge Shelter is meant to address.

The Housing Navigation Center should offer adequate office space, one-on-one client meeting space, conference space and waiting room areas with minor amenities to serve the intended population and ensure service coordination from multiple providers, public and private. The Housing Navigation Center operator should have specific, quantifiable performance and outcome measures in its contract



Interior of proposed Housing Navigation Center space at 2018 Grand Boulevard.

with the City and should be required to report on those

measures with provisions for non-compliance or under-performance. The operator should be empowered to leverage multiple resources from partners in the CoC and from departments of City and County government.

The Housing Navigation Center should be an integral component of the CES headed by Council for the Homeless and should be the principle source of housing referral and placement in the City, with linkage to the Day Center and Temporary Bridge Shelter, as well as outreach and engagement programs and all other aspects of the CoC. The existing space could be quickly prepared, equipped and furnished to commence operation and its connection to the Day Center provides an ideal opportunity to begin serving high-need subpopulations and the largest daily concentration of homeless adults in Clark County.

Linking the Day Center to the Housing Navigation Center

The Day Center should be a direct portal of entry to the Housing Navigation Center and members should be incentivized to connect with the Housing Navigation Center to ensure they are engaged and actively using the services available from the combined 2018 Grand Boulevard programs. The Housing Navigation Center should NOT be an overflow space for the Day Center and access should be for those people actively working with or beginning the process of working with housing navigators to achieve placement. Housing Navigation Center clients should be a priority for Temporary Bridge Shelter placement and all residents should be connected to housing navigators at the Housing Navigation Center.

Providers and Services Needed at the Housing Navigation Center

Services at the Housing Navigation Center should be comprehensive and should be coordinated in each individualize housing plan to address impediments to housing access and retention. In addition to housing navigation, the full array of partner provided services should include, but are not limited to:

- Benefits enrollment,
- Vital records (IDs, birth certificates, etc.),
- Legal assistance,

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- Transportation assistance,
- Emergency food, hygiene items, clothing and other in-kind supports,
- Childcare and school placement assistance,
- Translation and interpretation services,
- Physical and mental health care,
- Substance abuse treatment,
- Veterans services,
- Domestic violence and other crisis services,
- LGBTQ-focused services,
- Services for transition-aged youth,
- Senior services,
- Family reunification and other shelter diversion interventions,
- Education and training programs, and
- Employment placement assistance.

All services should be provided by culturally and linguistically competent providers and should be based in best practices, including Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trauma-Informed Care and other models.

Focusing on Housing Placement through Coordinated Entry and Assessment

The Housing Navigation Center should employ shelter diversion as an approach to help individuals identify resources and options for immediate alternative housing arrangements. Shelter diversion and prevention should help to ensure that the Temporary Bridge Shelter's beds are being held for those individuals who do not have another safe housing alternative. Prior to placement in shelter, Housing Navigation Center staff should utilize shelter diversion strategies to prevent long-term, repeated shelter stays by quickly placing individuals into permanent housing, or pursuing other avenues as appropriate for each individual, including family reunification or assistance returning to a home out of the area.

The Housing Navigation Center's housing navigation services should employ Motivational Interviewing, Trauma-Informed Care, multi-party Community Case Conferencing and other best practices to ensure equitable treatment of all participants and to maximize the program's effectiveness in preparing residents for placement in appropriate permanent housing and long-term housing retention. Program staff should attend and contribute to any meetings or trainings required by the CoC and should partner with the City in a collaborative improvement process by identifying and implementing improvements indicated through program data and regular reporting.

As indicated elsewhere in this report, it is important to note that the permanent housing focus of a CES and the Housing First philosophy discounts the very real fact that a significant portion of people experiencing homelessness cannot function in independent housing. For some people, permanent supportive housing is an option. However, given the shortage of permanent supportive housing units in the City and County and the need for people to stabilize and prepare for housing, when it becomes available, the placement focus of the Housing Navigation Center must include Temporary Bridge Shelter and other shelter placement options.

Connection to Temporary Bridge Shelter

As in the case of the Day Center, the effectiveness and outcomes of the Housing Navigation Center will be dependent on the availability of shelter through the directly connected Temporary Bridge Shelter. In fact, without an adequate supply of shelter beds, neither the Day Center nor the Housing Navigation Center can achieve the City’s desired results. The same is true for outreach and engagement, coordinated entry and all other integral components of the CoC. Given the space available in the current facility and the unmet need in the City and entire CoC, Alpha Project recommends opening a Temporary Bridge Shelter at 2018 Grand Boulevard. The Temporary Bridge Shelter is described in the following section.



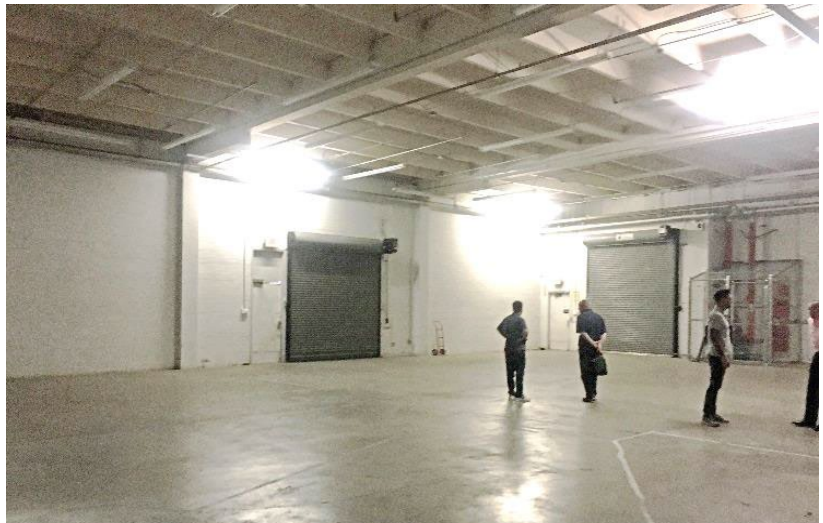
Identifiable Alpha Project outreach worker and client, San Diego.

Appropriateness of Temporary Bridge Shelter Connected to the Day Center and Housing Navigation Center

As mentioned in the initial section of this report, Alpha Project has hosted 78 delegations from more than 50 cities, counties, states, units of government and foreign countries. Those delegations represent communities that face challenges like those facing Vancouver. Each has come to observe a program that can be replicated in their jurisdictions to address the critical gaps left behind by Housing First, coordinated entry and other federally driven focus areas for homeless CoCs. The proposed Temporary Bridge Shelter in Vancouver will be the linchpin in the City’s response to its current homeless crisis. It should be directly connected to the Day Center and Housing Navigation Center and it should follow best practices and demonstrated evidence from programs of its type, including Alpha Project Temporary Bridge Shelter in San Diego.

Design and Usage of 2018 Grand as a Temporary Bridge Shelter

The warehouse space adjacent to the intended Housing Navigation Center at 2018 Grand Boulevard offers the City an ideal option for siting a Temporary Bridge Shelter. As noted above, with reference to the Day Center, locating such a facility outside Downtown is unusual. However, the structure itself is most likely unique and with minimal retrofitting can easily accommodate all the intended programs, services and functions described throughout this report.



Interior of proposed Temporary Bridge Shelter space at 2018 Grand Boulevard.

Alpha Project recommends a capacity of at least 150 shelter residents, divided by gender in accordance with the Point-in-Time count's observed percentages of unsheltered men and women (54% and 46%, respectively). Additionally, the total bed count should include safe space for transition-age youth, seniors, the disabled, gender nonconforming individuals and individuals in crisis placed by the Police Department's HOT and HART teams. There should be space included for one-on-one consultations between residents and staff, along with space for partner providers, case conferencing, communal dining, television and leisure activities. The Temporary Bridge Shelter should be open around the clock, 365 days a year.



Alpha Project staff and Temporary Bridge Shelter resident, San Diego.

The facility should include men's and women's showers and restrooms, meals, space for safe storage of personal belongings refrigerator for medications, along with other basic services.

Coordination of Services

Each resident's stay in the program should begin with an assessment using the VI-SPDAT described above, if one has not already been administered, followed by an intake process that ensures all HMIS data is gathered and included in the database. Following intake, the orientation process for each resident should include familiarization with the program's code of conduct, which should include the following rules.

Rules for Temporary Bridge Shelter Residents

1. Staff members and other residents are to be treated with respect at all times. Violence and /or threats of violence are not allowed; neither are aggressive behaviors, including use of profanity, racial slurs, sexual or inappropriate comments and/or remarks, shouting or fighting.
2. Use or possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia and/or alcohol are not allowed at any time on the property.
3. Staying out overnight, without prior written approval from the case manager is not allowed and will result in loss of your bed.
4. No weapons may be in residents' possession on the property at any time. Knives and other weapons must be checked in with security.
5. All residents are required to submit to a search upon request by security.
6. No resident may steal from either the shelter or its residents.
7. No behavior is allowed that could jeopardize the safety of any other resident or staff (including but not limited to burning candles or incense, causing fire hazards and any and all safety violations)
8. Residents must smoke only in designated areas.
9. Residents must comply with staff direction to maintain cleanliness and sanitary conditions daily.
10. Residents may not misuse or destroy shelter property.
11. [Operator] will not be responsibility for any lost, stolen or damaged property.
12. Showers are open from [hours] unless prior arrangements have been made.

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13. Residents are permitted to possess a maximum of two bags, which must be kept under their assigned bed.
14. Residents may not hang items on beds or bed posts.
15. Residents may not tamper with bed numbers or other people’s property.
16. Residents must wear their ID badge at all times while inside the shelter.
17. Residents must keep their sleeping area neat and clean.
18. Women and men may not loiter in each other’s sleeping areas.
19. Meals are served at [hours]
20. Bicycles must be kept in designated area at all times.
21. [Operator] will only hold personal property for 72 hours, after which unclaimed property will be disposed of
22. Curfew is at 8:00 p.m. to reclaim beds. Lights out is at 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Residents must remain on-site after 8:00 p.m.
23. No loitering is permitted outside the perimeter of the shelter. The perimeter must be kept clean at all times.
24. Residents may not use or possess illegal drugs at the shelter and clients must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
25. Residents may not possess alcohol on the premises at any time.
26. Residents must maintain possession of all prescription medication. Shelter staff is NOT permitted to hold or dispense medication, with the exception of medications requiring refrigeration.
27. All animals must be on a leash at all times and residents must clean up after their pets. Animals may not be bathed on site. The shelter only accepts service animals.
28. To preserve confidentiality and privacy, residents may not video or photograph any resident, staff member or community partner while on the property.








As described on page 23, new residents should be given an incentive to complete all wellness objectives, with services provided either by Clark County Public Health or a private healthcare partner. To the right is an example of the Passport checklist provided to all residents of Alpha Project’s Temporary Bridge Shelter.

The Temporary Bridge Shelter should have a procedure for linking residents to active, effective housing navigation through the Housing Navigation Center and should provide case management and advocacy, crisis intervention, basic hygiene and shelter services, linens and other bedding, laundry service, message and personal storage services, meals served on-site and access to a range of other on-site supportive services provided by the operator and its partners. Additional services to benefit residents and the community as a whole should include infectious disease testing, neighborhood security patrols and clean-up services, and opportunities for residents to participate in meaningful work projects.

WELLNESS PASSPORT Adult Tent: Alpha Project

Collect all 7 stamps and get an incentive at the table near the entrance.
This Passport needs to be completed within 30 days of the date of intake.

| | | |
|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Last Name | First Name | Date of Intake |
| | | |

| STAMP | STOP | LOCATION | BY |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Initial Screen | Entrance |  <small>ALPHA PROJECT</small> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Clothing/Laundry | Behind Tent |  <small>ALPHA PROJECT</small> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Connected with a Case Manager | Behind Tent |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Review Eligibility for Medi-Cal | FHCSD - Behind Tent County- Front of Tent | County Public Health  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Vaccinated for Influenza & Hepatitis | Front of Tent | County Public Health  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Medical Screening | Tuesdays & Thursdays Front of Tent |  Mobile Medical Unit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mental Wellness Screening/AOD | Behind Tent |  |

Once completed, return this Passport to the FHCSD Homeless Services Case Manager to pick up your incentive.

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The program should coordinate with and provide referrals to and advocacy with County, State, and federal programs, as well as nonprofits and social service agencies, as appropriate. The program should also provide assistance in locating safe and affordable permanent or other longer-term housing residents, including determining diversion opportunities or housing interventions outside of CES when appropriate. Case Managers and additional support staff should provide support to the Housing Navigation Centers personnel as necessary to assist residents with housing applications and supportive and subsidized housing paperwork. The operator should provide information and referral services to all member organizations of the CoC and to mainstream benefits and resources, landlords and nonprofit housing providers, as well as a range of adjunct services including legal assistance, individual and family counseling, domestic violence interventions, veterans' healthcare and other benefit programs, transportation options and all other community service options. Case Managers should serve as the primary point of contact for all resident referrals, unless that function is provided by staff at the Housing Navigation Center. Information should also be available via print materials, hand-outs, flyers and other literature, which should be available on-site at all times.

The operator's policies and procedures should ensure that all services are coordinated and that all partner providers are connected through multi-agency case conferencing. Some services may be provided by Housing Navigation Center personnel and/or partner providers working from the Housing Navigation Center. The important, essential aspect of coordinating multiple inputs is working from individualized housing plans developed for each resident in accordance with their complete needs and optimal housing goals.

Policies, Procedures and Operational Guidelines for a Temporary Bridge Shelter

At a minimum, the Temporary Bridge Shelter's policies and procedures manual should address all of the following elements:

- Program overview,
- Operational guidelines,
- General intake policy,
- Intake prioritization and selection policy,
- Coordinated entry, outreach and placement,
- Outreach activities,
- Housing navigation,
- Procedure for turnover beds,
- Routine sanitation and infectious disease prevention and mitigation,
- Daily schedule of operations,
- Confidentiality and release of information policy and procedures,
- Disclosures required by law,
- Internal and external incident reporting,
- Grievance procedure,
- Laundry procedures,
- Meal and food service procedures,
- Guidelines for volunteers,
- Provisions for on-site service partners,
- Safety procedures,

- Evacuation procedure,
- Emergency contact information, and
- Code of conduct.

Essential Services and Housing Placement Goals

Essential basic services should include, but are not limited to:

- 150 beds for single adults 18+ experiencing homelessness in an ADA-compliant facility,
- At least two (2) meals per day,
- Showers, wash stations, restrooms, laundry facilities, and storage
- Routine operating supplies, including but not limited to hygiene products,
- Telephone access and message services
- Janitorial and routine maintenance services,
- Waste removal and disposal services,
- Refrigeration for medication,
- Regularly laundered linens, and
- Access to testing for communicable diseases augmented by health services through a partner provider.

Additional services should include case management, with multi-party case conferencing, along with use of Motivational Interviewing and Trauma-Informed Care approaches. Staff should provide immediate and short-term emergency crisis intervention to individuals in order to restore stability. The operator should work with partners in the community to provide resources needed to individuals in crisis. Such crisis situations may include domestic violence, suicidal thoughts, mental or physical health issues, or other risks to an individual's well-being. All staff should be trained to identify a crisis situation, assess situational needs, apply techniques to stabilize or diffuse the situation, including the principles of trauma-informed care, and to encourage utilization of coping skills. Staff should be trained to identify special domestic violence needs and treatment considerations. All personnel should complete crisis intervention training, including any trainings provided by and/or required by the RTFH and the Housing Commission under the terms of the proposed contract.

Initial case management meetings for each resident should occur within 48 hours of admission to the program, at which time staff should determine that residents have been routed to the appropriate housing intervention according their assessment score. Case Managers or equivalent staff should be active listeners and should encourage residents through motivational interviewing techniques to identify and express their own housing goals. Case Managers should fully inform residents of the program's complete range of services, including employment opportunities, and should document and address any critical issues identified at the time of admission. While maintaining a low barrier to program participation, Case Managers should schedule follow-up meetings with residents on a regular basis to ensure progress is made rapidly toward a permanent housing placement or other longer-term placement appropriate to each resident's unique needs and abilities.

The overall objective of the program should be to offer a safe place for adult single men and women experiencing homelessness to receive bridge housing and appropriate services while preparing for permanent housing placement. The program should contribute to the City's goal of ensuring instances

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of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring. All services should be easily accessible and evaluated for effectiveness on a regular basis.

Through provision of coordinated, comprehensive services, the program's goals should include achievement of the following outcomes and targets:

Outcome: Low barrier to entry

Measure: Assessed resident needs and HUD homelessness categories

Target: 100% of residents

Outcome: Access to resources/services to move into permanent housing and stabilize

Measure: Average length of stay

Target: A goal of 120 days or less

Outcome: Exits

Measure 1: Exits due to non-compliance with program rules

Target: Less than 20% of residents

Measure 2: Positive exits for residents remaining in the program 30 days or longer

Target: At least 30% of residents remaining 30 days or longer will exit to permanent housing

Measure 3: Positive exits for residents remaining in the program 30 days or less

Target: Undetermined, but to be documented in program reporting

Measure 4: Recidivism

Target: Of residents exiting to permanent housing, 15% or less should return to shelter within 12 months

Outcome: Efficient and effective use of resources

Measure: Monthly average occupancy rate

Target: The program should maintain an average occupancy rate of 90% from the date of full operational capacity

Outcome: Data Quality

Measure 1: Missing or incomplete data

Target: No more than 5% of program and client-level data should be incomplete in the HMIS

Measure 2: Timeliness of data entry

Target: 100% of data should be entered in the HMIS within three days

Outcome: Customer Service

Measure 1: Shelter resident satisfaction

Target: Operator should administer satisfaction surveys and document satisfaction levels in its periodic reporting to the City

Measure 2: Critical incident reports

Target: Operator should document all critical incidents in its periodic reporting to the City

Outcome: Demographics

Measure: Program residents

Target: Operator should document resident demographics and demonstrate diversity in its periodic reporting to the City

Outcome: Community Outreach

Measure: Community meetings and feedback solicited

Target: Operator should document its participation in community meetings and other outreach activities and provide a summary of its activities in its periodic reporting to the City

Mitigation of Neighborhood Impacts

The operator should understand its role as a neighbor in a mixed-used community, the need for coordination with law enforcement and the philosophical approach needed to deal with the issues affecting the neighborhood around the 2018 Grand Boulevard. Selection of an operator should include assessment of a prospective operator's commitment to the neighborhood and willingness and ability to engage community leaders through an Advisory Board.

Appropriate and informed Temporary Bridge Shelter personnel (along with City staff and Police Department liaisons) should attend community meetings to ensure participation of neighborhood stakeholders and to ameliorate any concerns regarding siting and operation of the program. The operator should provide access to and channels for community feedback, commentary and expression of any concerns and should demonstrate to the City's satisfaction that community input has been heard, documented and incorporated in the program's policies and procedures manual.

The program should incorporate community service projects through a process of resident engagement, as described elsewhere in this proposal, and those projects should allow for peer-to-peer engagement of people on the streets while providing direct, visible benefit to the neighborhood. The program should collaborate directly with the Police Department's HOT and HART teams and should be an active participant in neighborhood networks, as well as provide community policing. The program should also accept and encourage outside entities to provide congregate feeding and other activities in lieu of such activities being conducted on the streets.



Response to Criminal Activity

Along with the recommendations included in previous sections, Temporary Bridge Shelter security staff should be visibly present in the neighborhood through regular patrols and should notify the Police Department of any observed criminal activity. Police officers should be welcome at on-site meetings and should be included in the Advisory Board described above. The neighborhood should be aware of

the security measures implemented at the site, including exterior lighting and security cameras, and program staff should welcome all input from the neighborhood through a well-publicized, easily accessed process for complaints, suggestions or other input. Police Department data should be analyzed regularly following commencement of Temporary Bridge Shelter operation to assess the program's impact on the neighborhood.

Reducing Neighborhood Impact During Day Center Hours of Non-Operation

The existence and proper management and operation of a 150-bed Temporary Bridge Shelter will be the most important element of a comprehensive approach to reducing the impact of homelessness on the neighborhood 24 hours a day. Security staff should be trained in the best practices described above and should include individuals with lived experience of homelessness. Security should patrol the perimeter of 2018 Grand Boulevard and the adjoining neighborhood and should maintain close relationships with the Police Department. The code of conduct for residents should include a prohibition of loitering, littering and disruptive behavior in the neighborhood and security staff should document all occurrences of any deleterious neighborhood impact. As in the case of the Day Center, the facility should be well lit and should be equipped with video security cameras.

The Advisory Board should discuss the implications of any policies or procedures that could affect the surrounding neighborhood. The wisdom of law enforcement should be actively sought out and should be incorporated in the program's policies and procedures.

Options for Shelter Placement

In addition to the Temporary Bridge Shelter, all other providers of shelter in the City and County should accept referrals of assessed individuals and families referred through the Housing Navigation Center according to each program type, target population served and the unique needs of those individuals and families. It is important that the City's contributions to the current Homelessness Crisis Response System include awareness that permanent housing placement is not always optimal, timely or even possible. Consequently, the full range of shelter options should be available to expand the effectiveness of the Temporary Bridge Shelter and placements of residents in non-permanent housing options should be considered a successful outcome.

Additional components of a coordinated system should include any seasonal or emergency shelter programs along with the use of motel vouchers, roommate matching programs and other alternatives to placement in single-resident or single-family permanent housing.

Engagement of Community Interests

As discussed extensively in this report, the program operator needs to be connected to all community groups and should enlist them as allies, not antagonists. The neighborhood impact from the initial roll out of the current Day Center program can be reversed and implementation of the full range of programs and services recommended for 2018 Grand Boulevard can be a benefit to the neighborhood, not a detriment. The City and the operator should be at the forefront of an effort to change perspectives, address current issues and prevent new ones.

Compliance Oversight and Other City Responsibilities

The City needs to be clear with any prospective operator that contractual terms and objectives are minimal requirements and that compliance with those requirements is not optional. The City should tie funding to performance, demonstrated through accurate and timely outcome reporting, including outcomes that measure the reduction in neighborhood impact from the status quo. If necessary, the City should provide formal training with the operator to ensure its expectations are understood and that the overall goals for an improved response to homelessness are embedded in the operator's policies and practices.

Performance Monitoring

The operator should be required to participate actively in compliance and performance monitoring and improvement activities required by the City. The Temporary Bridge Shelter should be monitored internally by executive staff as part of the operator's quality control procedures and its performance should be tracked and recorded through full, timely participation in the CES, HMIS and any other networks or shared databases required of programs in the CoC.

The operator should be required to attend and contribute to any meetings or trainings required by the City or the CoC and should partner with public agencies in a collaborative improvement process by identifying and implementing improvements indicated through program data and regular reporting.

Maintaining all appropriate documentation in the HMIS is critical. Staff should provide all required data entry, analysis and reporting in the HMIS for timely assessment of the program's status and performance and access to client-level data. Additionally, reporting should incorporate data from individualized case files, partner provider service summaries and other client-level documentation of engagement and outcomes. Reporting should include the number of service contacts, successful housing placements and a summary of performance regarding all required elements of the City's contracted scope of work.

Outcome reporting should inform the operator's continuous improvement process by indicating rates of progress toward program objectives and client willingness to engage in available services. The program's manager or equivalent position should oversee internal and external reporting and should review performance data with staff to direct course changes as required during the contract term. The operator's executive leadership should work with program management to identify needed resources, emerging best practices, innovative service delivery models and other opportunities for program improvement and to address gaps or weaknesses in the program's design or impact.

The program should document all program progress to the City through monthly and term-end reports in the form, format, and submission timeline determined by the City. The HMIS will provide much of the data for performance monitoring but documenting neighborhood impacts and mitigation will require regular observation and give-and-take with the operator to properly orient them to their expected role as a neighbor answerable to the City. Neighborhood law enforcement statistics, incident reports and other data should be included in regular reporting.

Meeting General Overhead and Administrative Costs

The operator's scope of service and consistent operation of a high-quality program will require maintenance, finance and contract management, management staff, communications, utilities and other basic costs of doing business that a base contract needs to include. Sufficient overhead funding will be needed for any operator in Clark County, especially given the scope and scale of the intended three inter-connected programs. Not all prospective operators have the capacity to meet the demands of the program that a City contract as described above will include. The City should be realistic in allotting a budget for the Temporary Bridge Shelter as well as the Housing Navigation and Day Center.

Leveraging Additional Resources

The City should work with its own staff and the operator to identify additional funding sources to support the program. The City can front the funds necessary to launch and begin operation of the program but there are many other sources of potential support that should be approached, including Clark County, the Housing Authority, state and federal sources and private philanthropy. Although, not an exhaustive list, other leveraged resources should include partnerships with other providers, businesses, educational institutions, staffing agencies, and other resources.

Contract Enforcement

The contract with an operator should include clear conditions for non-payment or solicitation of a new provider, as well as reporting requirements, deadlines and other standards the City can enforce.

Conclusion and Further Recommendations

In addition to the points emphasized in the Executive Summary, Alpha Project recommends that the City identify ways to best use its funds to close gaps in the existing CoC and to match other resources in a way that synergizes the impact of blended funding. This could include joining with the County and/or Housing Authority in joint requests for proposals, matching private philanthropy, applying for federal and state funding as a direct applicant or using new initiatives, bond measures or other opportunities to create new sources of City funding.

Alpha Project believes a Temporary Bridge Shelter could be fully operational within 90 days of contracting with an operator and that should be the City's first and foremost goal to improve its current response to homelessness.

Alpha Project also encourages the City to be firm and demanding in its role of contract oversight and enforcement. The City's obligation to its homeless citizens is no greater than to its citizens as a whole and the City has a right to require any contracted operator to be responsive to contractual demands and to the neighborhood affected by the programs described in this report.

As described in the Executive Summary, the City is ahead of its homeless problem in many ways. The commitment of City leadership and of private funders and supporters to address the problem proactively and responsively is to the credit of all involved. Alpha Project remains available to the City to provide any further advice that could be of benefit, to provide training or presentations, or to share materials that can maximize the benefit of the proposed programs and mitigate the current impact of homelessness on the City of Vancouver and its wonderful people.