



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Rosalynn Hughey
Jill Bourne
Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: October 23, 2023

Approved

Date

10/24/23

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3, 7

**SUBJECT: ACTIONS RELATED TO ACTIVATE TWO OVERNIGHT WARMING
LOCATIONS DURING THE COLD WEATHER SEASON**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution:

- (a) Designating the following two City-owned facilities to be occupied as Overnight Warming Locations by individuals experiencing homelessness during the cold weather season:
 - 1. Roosevelt Community Center, 901 E. Santa Clara Street, San José, CA 95116;
and
 - 2. Tully Community Branch Library, 880 Tully Road, San José, CA 95111.
- (b) Authorizing the Acting Director of Housing or designee to negotiate and execute an agreement with HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County, in an amount not to exceed \$1,127,190 to implement the Overnight Warming Locations, retroactive to October 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

The City Council's approval of this recommendation increases shelter capacity in San José by adding 60 emergency shelter beds for individuals experiencing homelessness each night during the cold weather season, from November 27, 2023 through April 30, 2024.

BACKGROUND

The 2023 homeless census and survey counted 6,266 individuals¹ experiencing homelessness in San José, of whom 4,386 were unsheltered. This means that 70% of San José's homeless population sleeps outdoors, in encampments, vehicles, parks, tents, abandoned properties, bus and train stations, and on the street. The City of San José currently has a total of 1,916 emergency shelter beds for individuals experiencing homelessness, which is 81% of the total countywide emergency shelter beds (2,376). Given the high number of unsheltered individuals in San José and the lack of available shelter beds, the Housing Department proposes resuming two Overnight Warming Location (OWL) operations every night for approximately five months during the cold weather season.

On October 24, 2023, City Council adopted a resolution declaring the continued existence of a shelter crisis and proclaiming a local emergency caused by conditions of homelessness in San José. This allows the City of San José to continue to streamline the development of emergency bridge housing, as well as homeless shelters. The shelter crisis resolution and proclamation allow for the prioritization of homeless shelters, emergency bridge housing, emergency interim housing, and supportive parking. The City Council adopted an ordinance amending Title 5 of the San José Municipal Code to add Chapter 5.12, adopting reasonable local standards for homeless shelters. This ordinance will streamline the development of homeless shelters by adopting minimum health and safety standards for emergency housing programs, such as OWL and other types of emergency shelter.

Since 2015, the Housing Department has worked with HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County (HomeFirst), a leading provider of services, shelter, and housing opportunities for people experiencing homelessness in the Bay Area, to operate the OWL program. See the **Attachment** for a description of the OWL operations history in San José. The last time that the City Council approved an agreement with HomeFirst for the implementation of OWL was on November 8, 2022².

ANALYSIS

Shelter Capacity in San José

On any given night, there are 2,376 shelter beds countywide, of which 1,916 (81%) of those shelter beds are located in San José. However, despite this large inventory of shelter beds, over 4,000 individuals remain unsheltered. Although the 2023 homeless census and survey showed that there was an 11.3% decrease in San José's unsheltered homeless population, there is still a significant shortage of available shelter beds in comparison to the total number of unsheltered individuals.

¹ [2023 San José Homeless Census](#)

² [Actions Related to Continued Shelter Crisis to Activate Two Overnight Warming Locations During the Cold Weather Season 11/8/2022](#)

The City of San José has prioritized increasing the number of shelter beds through the development of six emergency interim housing communities and two converted motels. Since January 2020, a total of 689 beds have been added, which is approximately 70% towards the goal of adding 1,000 new beds by 2025. However, despite the expansion and increase in the number of shelter beds, the need for expanding shelter capacity remains, especially during the cold weather season when the unsheltered population is extremely vulnerable.

The Housing Department recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the OWL program to operate every night during the cold weather season, from November 27, 2023 to April 30, 2024, at one City-owned community center and one City-owned library. This will expand the City's shelter capacity by 60 additional emergency shelter beds for individuals experiencing homelessness. It will take HomeFirst up to eight weeks to secure staff and supplies and provide training for City staff at both program locations.

OWL Site Selection

Each year, identifying and securing locations to operate OWL requires multiple steps. The Housing Department partners with the Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) and San José Public Library (Library) departments to review the site selection minimum criteria, evaluate possible locations, and select from the recommendations.

The following minimum criteria is used to evaluate possible locations:

1. Proximity of known concentrations of unsheltered populations living outdoors in potentially unsafe and exposed areas;
2. Access to additional nearby supportive services and public transportation;
3. Impact to regular programming in the community centers and libraries;
4. Site accessibility and layout, including:
 - a. Two points of entry and exit;
 - b. Accessible restrooms;
 - c. At least a 1,500 square foot room (to serve 30 people); and
 - d. At least eight parking spaces for staff and equipment storage.

Once the Housing Department is provided with recommended locations from PRNS and Library that meet the site selection minimum criteria, the process of evaluation begins. Inspections are scheduled with department staff from the PRNS, Library, San José Fire Department, and Santa Clara County Public Health Department. The San José Fire Department inspector confirms site capacity and provides guidance and fire safety requirements. The Santa Clara County Public Health Department offers guidance and requirements for healthy operations. The site inspections inform the final selection process.

In July 2023, the Housing Department began discussions with PRNS and Library to identify and evaluate locations for the cold weather season OWL program. After reviewing the site selection minimum criteria, PRNS and Library recommended the Roosevelt Community Center and Tully Community Branch Library as the locations to evaluate.

Roosevelt Community Center

PRNS recommended the evaluation of the Roosevelt Community Center for the OWL program. The Roosevelt Community Center is centrally located near downtown San José with an adjacent park that unsheltered individuals and homeless outreach teams frequent. It has the nightly capacity to serve up to 30 individuals. The Roosevelt Community Center was a popular OWL in past years and was selected in the last cold weather season's evaluation process. Historically, the Housing Department rotated the OWL program each year with the intent of minimizing operational impacts to the sites. However, PRNS recommended designating the Roosevelt Community Center as the permanent OWL instead of rotating community center locations every cold weather season. PRNS recognized that there are efficiencies in identifying a consistent location, that may include making facility improvements specific to the needs of the OWL program and smoother program operations with trained PRNS staff. Additionally, having a designated location significantly reduces the staff time spent evaluating and securing a new site location, which requires an immense amount of staff time and coordination. PRNS is also balancing the needs of other community center/site designation priorities for emergency and inclement weather purposes, such as evacuation centers or cooling centers. These considerations further contributed to the selection of the Roosevelt Community Center as the permanent OWL program location.

Tully Community Branch Library

The Library recommended the evaluation of the Tully Community Branch Library for the OWL program. The Tully Community Branch Library was a popular OWL in past years, largely because of the high number of individuals residing in nearby homeless encampments. Executive staff from the Library also recommended the Alum Rock Branch Library and Santa Teresa Branch Library as alternative options. The Tully Community Branch Library was selected for this year's cold weather season OWL program location.

OWL Operations

Housing Department staff will work with staff from PRNS, Library, Fire, Public Works, and San José Police departments, and HomeFirst, to prepare the buildings and manage the program locations. PRNS and Library will absorb ancillary costs associated with operating the OWL program at their facilities, such as increased utilities and water use.

As the program operator and key partner, HomeFirst will provide the following at both OWL program locations in coordination with City departments:

1. Daily site set up and supervision;
2. Daily site break down and clean up;
3. Nightly security services with a professional and established agency at both sites;
4. Daytime case management services at both sites;
5. Onsite storage for program participant personal belongings;
6. Warm drinks, snacks, and meals each evening; and
7. Transportation resources for OWL program participants.

The Housing Department will coordinate with the Public Works department to provide janitorial services at both sites. Janitorial staff will clean each room utilized for the OWL program each morning so that the sites are returned to regular programming in good condition and without interruption or delay.

HomeFirst's operations manual provides details on all responsibilities related to the OWL program, including but not limited to, procedures for referrals, storage, and case management.

The OWL program will operate from 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., which is when the facilities are typically closed to the public. HomeFirst staff will be onsite daily from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. To minimize the impact on the daily operations and regular programming at each site, such as long lines of people waiting for a shelter bed, the OWL program will be a referral-based program. A referral-based program will assist individuals experiencing homelessness by providing them with certainty that a shelter bed will be available. Program participants will be referred for an OWL program shelter bed through HomeFirst's outreach teams, the onsite case manager, or the County of Santa Clara's centralized shelter hotline. Unsheltered individuals who stay close to each site during the non-cold weather months will be prioritized for referrals. Family referrals will be placed in the City-funded Motel Voucher Program. Referrals to the OWL program are valid for the length of the cold weather season, unless the program participant violates the program rules or is suspended as agreed upon between the Housing Department, HomeFirst, and the onsite staff from PRNS and/or Library. In addition, HomeFirst staff will facilitate isolation/quarantine placements as needed, which will include hotel placement and transportation for OWL program participants who test positive for COVID-19.

A storage container will be available at each site for OWL program participants to store their personal belongings. Providing onsite storage supports a participant's ability to work, attend appointments, and apply for jobs or housing without the risk of theft or causing blight. Additionally, HomeFirst staff will conduct perimeter checks each morning to identify and store personal belongings left behind by program participants. Personal belonging items will be held for up to 30 days for program participants who voluntarily leave or are removed from the program. A second storage container will be used at each site to store program supplies, including mats and bedding.

OWL Coordination and Communication

Ongoing and regular coordination between staff from PRNS, Library, Housing Department, City Council District offices, and HomeFirst is required throughout the duration of the OWL program. Communication among program partners is critical to operating the OWL program nightly for approximately five months with minimal or no impact on regular services and programs conducted at these facilities. The Housing Department coordinates across departments daily to ensure minimal impact to daytime operations at the program locations. Before the OWL program launches, the Housing Department provides training for the onsite staff, including a general overview of homelessness and OWL program protocols.

Any concerns related to the OWL program that are identified by Library or PRNS staff will be addressed within the same business day by HomeFirst or the Housing Department. The Housing Department developed a desk guide for onsite PRNS and Library staff that outlines step-by-step processes in response to frequently asked questions about the OWL program and relevant contact information. The Housing Department OWL program email (owl@sanjoseca.gov) and telephone number (408-975-2695) will be shared with community members should they have any questions or concerns regarding the program. The OWL email and phone number will be checked daily by Housing Department staff, and concerns will be addressed within the same business day.

Operations Contract for the OWL

The proposed OWL program agreement with HomeFirst in the amount of \$1,127,190 will be retroactive from October 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. HomeFirst will be responsible for mobilizing and activating the OWL program daily at both the Roosevelt Community Center and Tully Community Branch Library between November 27, 2023 to April 30, 2024. HomeFirst will provide nightly low-barrier shelter, storage, meals, individualized case management to OWL program participants, and isolation and quarantine motel placements for participants who test positive for COVID-19. In partnership, the City and HomeFirst will coordinate staff training, site preparation, program implementation, and ongoing internal and external meetings.

Racial Equity Impact Analysis

The Housing Department's programmatic and policy work primarily focuses on ending and preventing homelessness and providing affordable housing for low-income populations. Because of this focus, many of the Housing Department's activities greatly benefit low-income and homeless communities and, in turn, communities of color and women-headed households, who are disproportionately low-income. However, the current resources do not meet the total outstanding need for affordable housing and services for low-income residents. Individuals experiencing homelessness and low-income residents who are unable to access affordable housing and services are burdened by this ongoing underinvestment.

In January 2020, Destination: Home released a report on [Race and Homelessness in Santa Clara County](#) that studied and analyzed the intersection between race and homelessness in Santa Clara County. The findings provided information that has been instrumental to the Housing Department's approach to strengthening existing programs and creating new ones in ways that promote racial and gender equity. The race and homelessness report guided the region in evaluating policies and programs to deeper understand disproportionate impacts. The report identified three guiding values for racial equity efforts:

1. Integrate people of color with lived experience of homelessness in all program, policy, and funding decisions;
2. Align racial equity work in the homelessness sector with other racial equity initiatives in Santa Clara County; and
3. Use a racial equity lens and data-driven decision making in the homelessness system and across other systems.

The guiding values from the race and homelessness Report were pivotal in developing the

County of Santa Clara's Community Plan to End Homelessness. The Community Plan called for bold strategies and partnerships to meet the scale of the homelessness crisis and racial equity in the region and specifically included a commitment to "address the racial inequities present among unhoused people and families and track progress toward reducing disparities." The Housing Department is committed to ensuring racial and gender equity in service delivery, housing placements, housing retention, changes in procurement, and/or other means of affirming racial and ethnic groups that are overrepresented among residents experiencing homelessness.

Within the Housing Department, there are several specific actions that ensure the department's focus on racial and gender equity across policies, procedures, and service delivery. These actions are discussed below:

- Provide funding to support the Lived Experience Advisory Board, a leadership development body consisting of members with current or past experience of homelessness. Members use this platform to learn about and evaluate the system of care, make recommendations for improvement on program design and operations; participate in procurement and staff interview panels, committees, and advisory groups; and convene meetings with policymakers and those with lived experience of homelessness.
- Provide a lived experience member seat on the Housing and Community Development Commission. The Housing and Community Development Commission's role is to review and recommend, to the City Council, funding proposals for programs that are designed to reduce or end homelessness in San José. New guidelines and resources for onboarding lived experience commission members were implemented and focus on equitable access to participation using technology, connectivity, information, and training.
- Convene Open House Quarterly Meetings, comprised of a broad base of community stakeholders committed to racial equity, will amplify the voices of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian American and Pacific Islander, People of Color, Women, LGBTQ+, disabled community members, and community members with lived experience of homelessness to provide feedback on Housing Department policies, procedures, and funding priorities. Meetings are intended to act as a system of reputation accountability to ensure the department centers equity in its work. The Open House Quarterly Meetings are a space for cross-collaboration amongst groups and to inspire organizing efforts that affect racial equity, housing, and homelessness in San José.
- Provide funding to C4 Innovations (formerly named Center for Social Innovation) to facilitate projects that support the Housing Department's racial equity, diversity, and inclusion work. C4 Innovations is a values and mission-driven, woman-owned small business that promotes recovery, wellness, and housing stability for people who are systematically marginalized. C4 Innovations supports local, state, and federal housing and homelessness agencies to facilitate inclusion, integration, and collaboration across initiatives and engagements. Building on more than a decade of experience leading

research, assessments, training, and consultation efforts to advance best practices and social change in homeless services and behavioral health settings, C4 Innovations supports agencies, systems, and communities across the United States to understand and document disparities and identify and implement equitable strategies. C4 Innovations supports the Housing Department to:

- Conduct a diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment of the department;
- Facilitate the development of a new department vision, mission, and values statement and policy affirming the priority of racial equity;
- Provide equitable results accountability and root cause analysis training;
- Facilitate the development of the department's first racial equity action plan; and
- Provide coaching or consulting hours to advise on racial equity for department projects related to human resources, strategic communications, community development policies, and community engagement.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The results of the OWL program will be provided in the City's multi-departmental annual homeless report.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

Funding for this agreement has already been appropriated in the General Fund through the Measure E Real Property Transfer Tax. There are no ongoing impacts to the General Fund as a result of the proposed actions.

1. AMOUNT OF RECOMMENDATION:

<u>PROPOSED USES</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
HomeFirst Agreement	\$1,127,190

2. **SOURCE OF FUNDING:** General Fund (001) - Measure E Real Property Transfer Tax
3. **FISCAL IMPACT:** This action will have no ongoing impact on the General Fund or other City funds.

BUDGET REFERENCE

The table below identifies fund and appropriation proposed to fund the actions recommended as part of this memorandum.

Subject: Actions Related to Activate Two Overnight Warming Locations During the Cold Weather Season

Fund #	Appn #	Appn. Name	Total Appn	Requested Budget Action	Amt. for Contract	2023-2024 Proposed Operating Budget Page*	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
001	227M	Measure E - Supportive Services - Overnight Warming Locations (15% HSP)	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$1,127,190	807	06/20/2023 Ord No 30933

*The 2023-2024 Adopted Operating Budget was approved on June 13, 2023 and adopted on June 20, 2023, by City Council.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council agenda website for the November 14, 2023 City Council meeting.

Housing Department staff will work with each respective City Council District office to be placed on recommended neighborhood association/community group meeting agendas prior to opening the OWL program at both locations. Additionally, Housing Department staff will work with each respective City Council District office to create a Community Advisory Committee, department staff will help facilitate Community Advisory Committee meetings with City Council District offices, and will coordinate with PRNS, Library, HomeFirst, and representatives from both the respective neighborhood associations, as well as nearby businesses, schools, and/or other stakeholders. These meetings will provide a forum to discuss daily operations, community concerns, successes, and any other issues that may arise. The cadence of these meetings will be decided by the committee members.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

No Housing and Community Development Commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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CEQA

Categorically Exempt, File No. ER22-243, CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities.

PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

/s/

ROSALYNN HUGHEY
Deputy City Manager and
Acting Housing Director

/s/

JILL BOURNE
Library Director



JON CICIRELLI
Director, Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services

The primary author of this memorandum is Kelly Hemphill, Division Manager. For questions, contact kelly.hemphill@sanjoseca.gov.

ATTACHMENT: History of Overnight Warming Location Operations

Attachment
History of Overnight Warming Location Operations

Year	Locations	Council District	Total Unduplicated Served	Activation
2015-2016	Bascom Community Center	6	216	Five inclement weather activation periods (14 days total)
	Tully Community Library	7		
	Washington United Youth Center	3		
	Bibliotheca Branch Library	3		
2016-2017	Bascom Community Center	6	340	Nine inclement weather activation periods (31 days total)
	Tully Community Library	7		
	Washington United Youth Center	3		
	Bibliotheca Branch Library	3		
2017-2018	Tully Community Library	7	321	10 inclement weather activation periods (36 days total)
	Southside Senior Center	2		
	Alum Rock Library	5		
	Roosevelt Community Center	3		
2018-2019	Bascom Community Center	6	416	Eight inclement weather activation periods (41 days total)
	Leininger Community Center	7		
	Alum Rock Library	5		
	Roosevelt Community Center	3		
2019-2021	Bascom Community Center	6	311	Nightly shelter by referral only seven days a week from November 2019 through August 2020
	Roosevelt Community Center	3		
2020-2021	South Hall	3	1405	Nightly shelter by referral only seven days a week from April 2020 through July 2021
	Camden Community Center	9		Nightly shelter by referral only seven days a week from April 2020 through October 2020
2021-2022	Evergreen Branch Library	8	242	Nightly shelter by referral only seven days a week from December 2021 through April 2022
	Leininger Center	7		
2022-2023	Roosevelt Community Center	3	304	Nightly shelter by referral only seven days a week from November 2022 through April 2023
	West Valley Branch Library	1		