



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Sergio Jimenez

SUBJECT: Status of the Lease Negotiations with Caltrans for a Bridge Housing Community. **DATE:** November 4, 2019

Approved by:

Date: November 4, 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the staff report on the status of the lease agreement with Caltrans for the proposed Bridge Housing Community and direct staff to:

1. Modify the Zoning Code to allow emergency shelter, 50 beds or fewer, as a permitted use in all zoning districts, excluding R-1 and R-2, and return to Council for approval with the next routine update of the Zoning Code.
2. Identify any obstacles to the establishment of emergency shelter in the Zoning Code or in other City regulations and return to Council with recommendations for modifications intended to streamline and facilitate the establishment of emergency shelter, including the addition of beds to existing shelters.
3. Modify the Zoning Code to be more explicitly consistent with Senate Bill 2 (2007) by adding Supportive Housing and Transitional Housing, as defined in Ordinance No. 28680, to the land use tables for all Zoning Districts. Supportive Housing and Transitional Housing should remain permitted uses in all residential zoning districts, as required by Ordinance No. 28680, and be allowed as conditional uses in appropriate non-residential zoning districts, as determined by staff.

ANALYSIS

I would like to thank the Housing Department for their persistence in attempting to secure a second Bridge Housing Site on Caltrans property. It is disheartening to learn that Caltrans has not been a good partner in trying to solve our State's housing crisis, especially because homelessness impacts the safety and cleanliness of our highways and freeways just as much as it impacts our City.

This staff report illustrates how difficult it is to find locations for emergency shelter and transitional housing. We all remember the lack of community support received when we first started looking for BHC sites. Though the need for emergency shelter and transitional housing is exemplified everyday by the numerous unsanctioned encampments across the City, it is still difficult to find locations for shelter without creating controversy. Therefore, I am proposing that we modify our zoning code to facilitate and streamline both emergency shelter and transitional housing within San Jose. San Jose is a city with over 180 square miles of land. We can easily find locations to house our most vulnerable residents within our borders without needing to pander to other jurisdictions.

Only by reducing regulatory barriers, including those in our own zoning code, will we be able to meaningfully increase the creation of emergency shelter beds, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing. I strongly urge my colleagues to support these recommendations, we have little control over Caltrans, the County or the State, but we have full authority to modify our zoning code to accommodate our urgent need for shelter.