



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmembers Jimenez

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 04.20.2020

Approved

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ACTIONS RELATED TO THE HOMELESS HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND PREVENTION GRANT FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

RECOMMENDATION

Accept staff recommendation and provide the following direction to the City Administration and the City Manager:

1. Limit Bridge Housing Communities and other emergency interim-housing developments to one per Council District unless respective Council representative is open to more locations.
2. Review and revise the evaluation criteria used to determine site viability and readiness, specifically to:
 - a. Reconsider all City sites that had been evaluated for BHC in 2017-2018 and deemed suboptimal; and
 - b. Open up additional potential sites that had not previously been considered.
3. Prioritize sites that equitably and fairly disperse Bridge Housing Communities and other emergency interim-housing developments across San Jose.
4. Provide a plan to each Council District that receives an emergency interim-housing development on how and when “enhanced services” will be implemented.

Enhanced services include, but are not limited to:

- a. Increased police patrol;
- b. Proactive parking enforcement;
- c. Increased litter and blight services;
- d. Increased homeless outreach and abatement; and
- e. Other actions and services that enhance the quality of life around BHC and interim-housing development locations, to be determined in collaboration with the Council office.

ANALYSIS

The City has rightfully responded quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic crisis, providing emergency funding to keep people in their homes and removing barriers that make it more challenging to create shelter for the unhoused, our most vulnerable residents. I am proud to have supported these efforts along with the Mayor and my colleagues on the City Council.

I am also proud to host in my District a successful safe parking site at Southside Community Center, which also previously served as an Overnight Warming Location. In addition, the recently approved Charities Housing project on Blossom Hill Road will add to the City's supply of much needed affordable housing. I remain committed to working with the City Administration and with my Council colleagues to meaningfully address the homelessness crisis in San Jose.

Homeless families and individuals live throughout the City, and all of us must play a role in finding solutions. Consistent with the direction that the Council provided when we discussed Bridge Housing Communities (BHC) on December 12, 2017, I recommend that we maintain the limit of BHCs to no more than one per Council District. This will ensure that there is an equitable distribution of these interim-housing developments citywide. Moreover, transitional housing opportunities must be made available to homeless people no matter their location. Clustering BHCs in one location limits opportunities for homeless people elsewhere to participate and transition out of homelessness.

We have taken bold action to temporarily eliminate General Plan, zoning, and other regulations that make it difficult to establish emergency shelter quickly. I recommend that we review and reconsider the evaluation criteria we used when we analyzed potential sites for BHCs in 2017 and 2018. The challenge is severe, and the need is urgent; we should not limit ourselves in evaluating potential locations for emergency, temporary housing solutions. We must provide ourselves the flexibility to consider places that once had been deemed suboptimal. In fact, we have already done so with the two current BHCs - both are located in industrial areas that are otherwise not considered suitable for habitation. We amended our Zoning Code to eliminate emergency shelter as a use in industrial areas back in June 2019, and yet we consider these locations suitable for Bridge Housing. Perhaps there are other opportunities to be more flexible and creative.

Finally, I recommend that the Administration work with Council offices to devise a plan to provide "enhanced services" in areas with BHCs and other temporary housing solutions. Although I expect there will be minimal negative impacts to the surrounding communities, we must acknowledge residents' expressed concerns about potential impacts, and we must be able to respond effectively to these concerns. Enhanced services not only improve the quality of life for adjacent neighborhoods, but also benefit residents living in Bridge Housing Communities.