



Agenda Report

July 10, 2023

TO: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Department of Housing
SUBJECT: PASADENA AND SAN GABRIEL VALLEY COLD WEATHER RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

RECOMMENDATION:

The following report is for information only; no City Council action is required.

BACKGROUND:

Since December 2020, the City has funded the provision of weather-activated motel vouchers for the purpose of hypothermia prevention among residents experiencing homelessness. Although the Department does not directly administer motel vouchers, over the course of the past three years the City contracted with three nonprofit agencies, Friends In Deed, Union Station Homeless Services and Sycamores, and transferred funding to the Public Health Department to serve people experiencing unsheltered homelessness during inclement weather. The weather-activated motel vouchers were available when the overnight temperature was predicted to fall below 40 degrees, there was more than a 40% chance of rain, or winds were predicted to exceed 40 miles per hour. During the pandemic, non-congregate shelter, such as motel-based shelter was recommended as the preferred shelter model by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to mitigate the spread of infectious disease.

For the past three winter seasons, the City allocated and spent an estimated \$1.036 million across federal (ESG and ESG-CV), state (HEAP) and county Measure H grant funds on weather-activated motel vouchers. With less funding available to support weather-activated motel vouchers in the 2022-2023 winter season as a result of a federal emergency grant winding down, City Council committed \$375,000 of General Fund dollars to sustain the weather-activated motel vouchers provided by Friends In Deed and the Public Health Department. This past season, a total of 239 people were served through the weather-activated motel voucher program across 91 nights. On the busiest nights (February 24-26), 129 unsheltered residents stayed in motel rooms funded by the City. Despite the significant constraints faced by the City's shelter system through the pandemic, the Department has been able to sustain pre-pandemic emergency shelter bed inventory through the expansion of motel voucher programming.

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY WINTER SHELTER RESOURCES:

While the City mobilized to provide critical shelter resources to Pasadenans experiencing homelessness, bad weather resources in the greater San Gabriel Valley (SGV) were limited. A

relatively small number of weather-activated motel vouchers were difficult to access and no congregate winter shelters were available in Service Planning Area 3 (San Gabriel Valley). Countywide, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) made available 509 motel vouchers during weather activation, and LAHSA's only congregate winter shelters were in Service Planning Areas (SPAs) 1, 6, and 7. According to the 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count results released by LAHSA on June 29, 2023, homelessness increased by 7% in SPA 3 compared to data from 2022. The results also reveal that unsheltered homelessness is increasing across the County, therefore the need for increased winter shelter resources this season is even more crucial. It is the City's hope that the County will allocate additional winter shelter resources to SPA 3 that are accessible to unsheltered residents in order to meet the need.

WINTER SHELTER STATUS:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pasadena's seasonal winter shelter (the Bad Weather Shelter) was operated by Friends In Deed for over 30 years out of a local church gym. Friends In Deed lost its long-time lease of the church gym in March 2020. Since then, Friends In Deed and City staff have conducted an expansive search to locate an alternative location. Many sites have been considered, including City-owned properties and privately owned properties, but none have met the site requirements. Staff are currently in the process of identifying a conducive site to reinstate a congregate winter shelter for the 2023-2024 season, which will be taken to City Council for approval. The Department plans to supplement the capacity of a congregate shelter with motel vouchers to serve residents with various needs.

Staff are currently in the process of preparing a Request for Proposals to select a winter shelter operator that will be released in July 2023. The entity selected through this competitive process will be recommended as the program operator and brought forth to City Council for approval in summer 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

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