



## Staff Reports Details (With Text)

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

**From:** Rick Tooker, Community Development Director

**Prepared By:** Lark Ferrell, Housing Manager

### **TITLE:**

Homeless System Redesign

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Receive report providing an update on the homeless system redesign and provide direction to staff regarding next steps.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Currently, the shelter system is operated primarily by Community Action Napa Valley (CANV) and includes the following facilities:

- **Samaritan Family Center**, (building is owned by CANV), provides emergency homeless shelter services for families. The shelter can serve up to seven families at a time with additional emergency cots available on an ad-hoc basis when the shelter is full.
- **South Napa Shelter**, which is owned by the County, provides a 62-bed emergency shelter for individuals at least 18 years of age. It operates seven days a week, 365 days per year. The shelter is open from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 a.m. each morning. Guests are required to vacate the shelter each morning but may leave their belongings at the shelter. The shelter provides basic -needs services including showers, laundry, evening meals (provided by Salvation Army and the County), and on-site medical services from OLE Health.
- **Hope Center**, which is operated on property owned by the United Methodist Church, provides day services to homeless adults. Services include showers, toilets, clothing, laundry,

computers, phone, basic weekly on-site clinic services by OLE Health, and limited case management to assist Hope Center clients address their needs.

- **Winter Shelter**, which provides 55 beds, is operated from November 15 to April 15 and provides shelter to those who either or not eligible to be assisted by the other overnight facilities or need overnight shelter when the other shelters are full. Currently, the Winter Shelter is operated in space CANV rents at the Napa Valley Expo.

In addition to the shelter beds operated by CANV, there are also shelter beds targeted to special populations. NEWS operates a shelter for victims of domestic violence and the County operates some shelter and longer-term beds for those with serious mental health issues. None of these are funded through the joint City/County contribution to the shelter system - only the CANV operated shelters are part of this package.

Historically, with the exception of the Winter Shelter which has been funded entirely by the County, Napa's emergency shelter system has been jointly funded by the County, City, and CANV. In the past, CANV funded its share through grants from the State Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program. However, due to recent policy changes at the federal and State level, ESG is no longer a viable funding source for Napa's emergency shelters. This loss in grant funding placed the responsibility for an additional \$120,000 in funding each on the City and the County as CANV could no longer fund its historic third share.

### **City/County Joint Effort to Address Funding and Homelessness Issues**

Confronted with the need for increased funding, the knowledge that the shelters were not operating in a way that reflected national best practices, and the fact that the number of homeless in the community was increasing, in October of 2015 the City and County of Napa (the "County") formally began a process of transforming the way systems respond to and address homelessness. These efforts began with the City and the County jointly hiring consultants from the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) to examine and make recommendations for the improvement of both the "front door" operations of the shelter system in Napa County and the "back door" systems that support housing and homeless services.

In March 2016, CSH and NAEH jointly issued a report (see Attachment A) on the state of the housing and homeless services delivery system in Napa County. The report found that Napa's ad hoc homeless response system, which requires vulnerable individuals to navigate a complex and restrictive continuum, is not effective in ending homelessness for the growing population of vulnerable individuals. It also concluded that it is possible for Napa to end chronic homelessness in less than five years by implementing changes in five categories.

The NAEH/CSH report recommends changes to align the system with national best practices by redesigning community housing and homeless services systems to take a more strategic approach - one that coordinates entries into the homeless system, quickly connects the most vulnerable with housing opportunities, aligns resources to maintain housing stability, and uses the shelter system as a tool for quickly moving households out of homelessness. As part of the systems change process, Napa should more fully implement a Housing First philosophy and align the City and County of Napa Continuum of Care programming, services and resources with this approach. The six categories of change and their overall strategies include:

1. **Breaking Silos & Leveraging Resources:** Integrate siloed community support services and funding and leverage additional resources for affordable housing.
2. **Cutting Costs & Realigning Resources:** Cut unnecessary system costs and adopt a systems approach to better align resources and serve the most vulnerable, high-need individuals.
3. **Prioritizing Housing Resources:** Target housing resources to “right size” interventions based on household need and ensure the most vulnerable households are prioritized.
4. **Building Housing Capacity:** Build a pipeline for housing and serve the right people in the right way.
5. **Using Data:** Centralize the tracking of homeless system outcomes, flow, data quality, inventory and demographics into an easy-to-digest format.
6. **Identifying New Funding Opportunities:** Secure new funding opportunities including Medi-Cal.

Overall, there are 16 specific recommendations in the report. County and City staff have begun working to implement the recommendations.

## Progress to Date

Since May 2016, the City and County have made significant progress on implementing the recommendations for Napa’s redesigned homeless system. Progress includes:

1. The hiring of a Homeless Programs Coordinator jointly fund by the County and the City
2. The formation of a Funders Collaborative with the goal of broadening the base of organizations involved in efforts to end homelessness. The Collaborative has been meeting regularly since May. Members include representatives from the City, County, the Vintners, the Community Foundation, the Gasser Foundation, Partnership Health Plan, Queen of the Valley Community Benefits, Visit Napa Valley, law enforcement, etc.
3. The issuance of a Request for Proposals and associated contract negotiations for a shelter and housing services provider. As a result of these efforts, the County anticipates bringing a contract with Abode Services, a nationally known and respected housing and homeless services provider to the County’s Board of Supervisors in April 2017. The City would in turn enter into an agreement with the County for its share of homeless service costs. Abode is expected to begin full operations in July when the current contract for shelter services with CANV expires.
4. The reduction of barriers to shelter entry, so that services at the community’s shelters can be available to those in need. In November, with assistance from NAEH, CANV eliminated drug and alcohol testing as a requirement for entry at the South Napa and Samaritan Family Shelters. Shelter rules were modified to focus on behavior (harm reduction) rather than on sobriety. In collaboration with Abode Services, the City and County is designing a shelter system that would ramp up over the course of 2017 to allow for 24/7 shelter operations at South Napa Shelter with a focus on connecting households to permanent housing and

coordinated care.

5. The creation of Napa's Flexible Housing Subsidies Pool. This virtual pool of housing and support funds will be key in effectively addressing the needs of homeless families and individuals.
6. The City, County, and community partners are working towards expansion of the community's permanent supportive housing inventory. This will require leverage local public resources with State and private resources to develop permanent supportive housing units to provide housing for the community's most vulnerable residents.

Additionally, in response to Downtown neighbors' concerns, Parks and Recreation crews have included the block surrounding the Hope Center in its morning trash clean-up and sidewalk steam cleaning. Police's Outreach team has also increased its presence in the downtown until Abode is under contract to provide housing-focused outreach and shelter services for the community.

### **Whole Person Care Pilot**

One of the recommendations for Napa's redesigned homeless system was to secure new funding resources to better serve the homeless population. The County of Napa applied for, and was one of 18 communities awarded, a grant through the State's Whole Person Care pilot program. Under this grant, Napa County received an \$11.5 million grant to deliver the pilot over four operating years from July 1, 2017 through December 31, 2020.

Napa's Whole Person Care Pilot targets homeless and at-risk-of-becoming-homeless Medi-Cal beneficiaries, prioritizing those who are also frequently using hospitals and emergency departments. The grant provides funding for three key components:

1. An increased level of mobile engagement and outreach
2. The launch of a coordinated entry system to prioritize households based on vulnerability and match them with housing and services
3. Case management and other supportive services, provided primarily by Abode, to help ensure clients housed through the homeless system remain housed. This "housing-related supportive services are separate from (although they can be in addition to) more traditional case management provided by the County Mental Health or Drug and Alcohol case workers. This is a critical piece of the system that has been missing from Napa's homeless system.

Additional services provided on an as needed basis by community partners including McAllister Institute (sobering center), Catholic Charities (respite care), and Ole Health (care coordination). Whole Person Care does not provide funding for housing, which will come from a number of grants and housing programs in the community, as well as from the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool.

### **Next Steps**

At an upcoming meeting, staff will bring an item to Council to approve an agreement with the County for the overall homeless system which will include the City's share of costs over the upcoming fiscal year.

Over the next year, Abode, the City, and the County will evaluate shelter operations and continue to incorporate the changes recommended by CSH and NAEH to ensure a coordinated, low-barrier, housing focused approach. As South Napa Shelter transitions to a 24-hour shelter, the City, County and Abode will jointly work to determine whether locations should be consolidated as a housing pipeline is established to minimize the time clients spend in shelters before moving towards permanent housing.

The City, County, and community partners will continue to focus efforts on expanding the supply of permanent supportive housing. As these projects require significant rental subsidies and supportive services, it will require leveraging resources to maximize the number of units made available.

Napa is in the process of cutting-edge, large-scale systems transformation efforts, many of which are best practices across the nation. Ending homelessness in Napa is truly a community-wide endeavor, and the successes thus far are due to the collective will to focus on homelessness and the collaboration and support across sectors, from the Board of Supervisors and City Council to the health and housing sectors. Already, Napa has attracted new resources into the community due to the City and County jointly taking a systems approach. Newly attracted resources include the Whole Person Care grant and the inclusion of the philanthropic and health sectors in the Funders Collaborative. Continued and future successes will require this continued collaboration.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACTS:**

This agenda item is informational and does not result in a financial impact without future Council action.

#### **CEQA:**

The Community Development Director has determined that the Recommended Action described in this Agenda Report is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c).

#### **DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:**

Attachment 1: Homeless System Redesign Report

#### **NOTIFICATION:**

Napa County Department of Health and Human Services, members of the Funders Collaborative, Napa Downtown Association, and participants at neighborhood homeless community meetings were notified about the agenda item.