

Kriss Worthington

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CONSENT CALENDAR
 December 15, 2009

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington
 Councilmember Jesse Arreguin
 Councilmember Linda Maio

Subject: Endorse Concept of Comprehensive Homeless Service Center: Berkeley HOPE

RECOMMENDATION

Endorse the CONCEPT of a comprehensive specially designed service center unifying the multiple services provided by an interagency coordination of Berkeley Food and Housing Project, Rubicon Services, Lifelong Medical, and Options Recovery.

BACKGROUND

Multiple services have been created at scattered locations throughout the City including: Downtown, Dwight Way, and the Southside. In the past, it was great to get any site for homeless services. Now, we have a chance to provide temporary shelter with multiple services as a gateway to permanent housing, employment and self-sufficiency. This would include, but not be limited to: men's shelter, and administrative offices.

In addition, organizational efficiencies can be obtained to a location specifically designed for better services and administration. Bringing together a permanent housing component with the men shelter is a fundamental tool to ending homelessness. The partnership of multiple service organizations is extraordinary. This visionary project is an exciting opportunity to maximize services to the homeless while increasing efficiencies and economies of scale.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Minimal.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Kriss Worthington 510-981-7170

See attachment

Berkeley H.O.P.E

Background

In the mid 1980's the City of Berkeley located the Berkeley Food and Housing Project's (BFHP) rotating men's shelter, "temporarily" into the Vet's Building at 1931 Center Street. After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the City of Berkeley deemed the building seismically unsafe. Since that time, the City has not been able to commit the necessary funds to retrofit the building. Though it has tried numerous times, it has not been successful in finding any solutions to rectify this critical situation of sheltering poor and homeless men in an unsafe building. In response to this situation, BFHP Board and staff have felt compelled to take the lead in trying to permanently relocate the Men's Shelter Program to a clean and safe new building.

Eighty percent of the homeless in Berkeley are men and the majority of homeless men are **chronically** homeless. Consideration of a new site creates the opportunity to design a new program that would enhance the services provided to men and move them toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

In order to move forward, BFHP must secure a building site for new or rehab construction that can house 50-60 men. Our ideal site would have at least 7,500 square feet inside per floor with at least 4 floors. We need space for training rooms, clinic rooms, case workers offices, storage area, kitchen and dining room, lobby area, meeting space and an outdoor area for sitting and gardening and growing our own vegetables. We envision a green building that has much natural light, areas for planting and that uses solar energy for heating and electricity. We believe the site should primarily offer supported housing and co-located multi-services. There is also a need to provide temporary shelter as a gateway to permanent housing, employment and self-sufficiency.

Program Description

BFHP is creating Berkeley HOPE (**H**ousing **O**pportunities **E**xpanded). Our new Men's Housing and Services project will be a multistoried building which will house case management, cooking and dining facilities, men's short term and long term (permanent supportive housing). The program staff will teach men necessary skills to move into their own independent housing while giving them a safe and supportive place to live. Men will be able to gain employment or training opportunities through Rubicon Services, receive mental health or substance abuse services, receive necessary medical or dental care through an integrated services model developed with Lifelong Medical, Rubicon and Options. They will work with BFHP case managers to find suitable housing in the community to meet their personal goals. We envision working with men from a broad spectrum of strengths and needs. Whenever possible we will provide "rapid rehousing services" (a program model which provides move in assistance and short term rental subsidies), helping men find permanent solutions to their homelessness.

If possible, we envision this facility also having a permanent housing component for both men and women. This separate program will house those men and women who need more ongoing daily support, and is in alliance with the Every Home plan to add additional permanent supportive housing in Berkeley.

The delivery of services at the site would be a collaborative activity with participation of key public and nonprofit agencies who would locate outposts in the building so that clients could easily access necessary services and supports in one convenient location. We believe this best practice model of homeless services would become a regional exemplar harnessing the talents of Berkeley agencies, service professional, community volunteers and University researchers to constantly refine and improve the intervention. Through the concern and generosity of city leaders and community members Berkeley will further enhance its role as a regional leader in permanent housing and effective services to help formerly homeless persons lead satisfying, independent, productive lives.