



Staff Report

File #: 21-551

Version: 1

Date: 1/24/2022

Item #: 5.c.

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Gretchen Bennett, Homelessness Liaison

SUBJECT:

City service and investment in response to the homelessness emergency

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Safe Community; Welcoming and Livable Community.

SUMMARY:

The City expends resources managing the impacts caused by living outdoors, providing shelter and micro shelter options, and adding housing and support services to end homelessness. Additional resources are needed to improve the City's response to managing homelessness and reduce the impacts of unmanaged sheltering.

ISSUE:

Shall City Council allocate \$200,000 of the State Sheltering grant for towing services, authorize use of the NW corner of Front St. and Hood St. NE property, 1280 Center St. NE, and 2410 Turner Rd. SE, for micro sheltering, and allocate \$392,000 of the State Sheltering grant to extend the Village of Hope micro shelter village through June 30, 2022 at one of these locations?

RECOMMENDATION:

Allocate \$200,000 of the State Sheltering grant for towing services, authorize use of the NW corner of Front St. and Hood St. NE property, 1280 Center St. NE, and 2410 Turner Rd. SE, for micro sheltering, and allocate \$392,000 of the State Sheltering grant to extend the village of Hope micro shelter village through June 30, 2022 at one of these locations.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Funding the City received from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and from the Oregon

Legislature provide the means to improve the City's response to unmanaged camping in natural areas, parks, and on City rights-of-way. Recreational vehicle living in unauthorized spaces is common. To support safe RV sheltering, the City supports the Safe Park program, which is currently at capacity with a significant wait list. The City also supports a small mobile mechanic program in partnership with NW Human Services. In some cases, the City supports fuel card distribution for those in need in partnership with Salem Housing Authority.

Some unmanaged RV camping situations are unsafe given mold and failing flooring. Other vehicles are abandoned in neighborhoods and other public spaces. Others do not leave despite formal notifications to do so. Our response is falling behind community expectations to enforce code compliance to maintain and preserve these spaces.

Area towing companies report being at capacity for the receipt of abandoned RV's. A local dismantle and recycle strategy is not available. Increasingly, to access removal of RV's the cost is about \$3,000 to \$4,000 per vehicle to deliver to Portland for dismantle and recycle. Long term, the City is seeking a local, financially sustainable alternative solution. Short term, funds are needed to ensure ability to access towing services.

Micro shelter services provide a temporary safe, sanitary and supported option to transition from street homelessness to a next positive destination, ranging from housing to treatment services. The Village of Hope micro shelter village, located at 2640 Portland Rd. NE, concludes on May 15, 2022 due to a property deed restriction.

City Council authorization of the use of properties at Center St., Front St. and Turner Rd. for micro sheltering is requested. At this time, the City is intending to use one of these sites to relocate the Village of Hope micro shelter village. Anticipated costs include up to \$200,000 for site start up expenses and an up to \$192,000 for 1.5 months of operations. The funding for this site will be the State Sheltering grant. This action will not increase the total shelter sites. The remaining two sites would be available for future micro shelter sites.

BACKGROUND:

The City has received a one-time \$10,500,000 allocation for sheltering within our community appropriated from the 2021 Legislature and is also administering \$8,055,390 one-time ARPA dollars for the purposes of managing and responding to issues facing our community with our regional unsheltered emergency.

Gretchen Bennett
Homelessness Liaison

Attachments: