

## IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. **21-5187A**

### SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES BUDGET RESOLUTION REPORT

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Department: Planning, Development & Research

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#### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

On May 19, 2020, greater Portland voters approved Measure 26-210, establishing Metro's regional supportive housing services (SHS) program to address homelessness and help people find and keep safe, stable, affordable housing across the region.

This program brings a groundbreaking level of regional coordination and scale to address this region wide challenge. Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties developed local implementation plans which were high-level framework documents. Plans were developed through inclusive engagement that centered people with lived experience of homelessness and BIPOC communities, were informed by engagement with community and local practitioners, incorporated an analysis of local conditions and needs, and included an equity analysis to create the framework for programmatic strategies and investments. Plans were endorsed by local advisory bodies, boards of county commissioners, the SHS Regional Oversight Committee and approved by Metro Council.

The local implementation plans support a local response specific to the needs of each county. The measure also contemplated a regional nature of the SHS program and incorporated the Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) to strengthen coordination and alignment of program implementation across the Metro region.

Since the measure's passage, the visibility and impacts of homelessness have increased due in large part to the societal impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Addressing this crisis in our community requires a balanced and compassionate approach in order to end homelessness for thousands of individuals while simultaneously providing increased and effective options for safety on and off the streets. The SHS program and our local implementation partners incorporate a range of proven strategies to serve people experiencing homelessness, including safety-off-the-streets strategies such as a variety of emergency shelter options, with the ultimate goal of permanently ending their homelessness through safe, stable, and supported affordable housing.

Metro Council is committed to transparency, oversight and accountability and assuring that SHS implementation reflects the sense of urgency in action necessary to address the need. On June 17, 2021, the Metro Council passed Resolution No. 21-5187A, directing the Metro Chief Operating Officer to develop and coordinate analysis and assessment of supportive housing services strategies and programs to evaluate ongoing regional need. Staff will present report findings in response to Council Resolution No. 21-5187A.

## **ACTION REQUESTED**

Staff request that Metro Council to take the following informal actions:

- Direct Metro staff to submit a Site Development Analysis proposal that includes scope of work, staffing, timeline and budget to assess the feasibility of using Metro owned sites for emergency shelter. Completion of a site development analysis of Metro owned sites will provide the information required to answer the questions posed by Council and provide the information necessary for Council to make future policy decisions about usage of Metro owned sites for emergency shelter purposes.
- Affirm support for the Local Implementation Plans (LIP) approved by Council over the last six months. LIP's have created a pathway for the roll-out of safety-off-the-street and safety-on-the-street measures to provide new options for life saving services and emergency shelter this winter and over the fiscal year.
- Affirm efforts under way by counties, in partnership with Metro staff, to improve data capacity including the analysis of homelessness inflow and outflow data to better understand need for services.
- Leverage the future Tri-County Planning Body to address the regionalization of data practices and such as improving inflow and outflow data analysis.

## **IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

Supportive Housing Services Program implementation is guided by the following principles, which were developed by a stakeholder advisory table:

- Strive toward stable housing for all;
- Lead with racial equity and work toward racial justice;
- Fund proven solutions;
- Leverage existing capacity and resources;
- Innovate: evolve systems to improve;
- Demonstrate outcomes and impact with stable housing solutions;
- Ensure transparent oversight and accountability;
- Center people with lived experience, meet them where they are, and support their self-determination and well-being;
- Embrace regionalism: with shared learning and collaboration to support systems coordination and integration; and

- Lift up local experience: lead with the expertise of local agencies and community organizations addressing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Through these principles, implementation partners have committed to meeting the following goals for the ten-year program:

- Prioritize funding for households experiencing chronic homelessness, especially Communities of Color
- 5,000 households experiencing chronic homelessness connected to permanent supportive housing;
- 10,000 households at risk of or experiencing homelessness stabilized in permanent housing;
- Eliminating racial disparities in access to services and outcomes of supportive housing services programs;
- Reaching a milestone where there are enough supportive housing resources in the region to house more chronically homeless households each month than there are households experiencing chronic homelessness that month (also called functional zero); and
- Creating a regionally-aligned flexible rent assistance program and developing additional strategies to advance regional alignment and coordination via the Tri-County Planning Body.

In the first program year (July 2021-June 2022), implementation partners expect to:

1. Expand shelter capacity by at least 900 beds
2. Connect 2,400 people to permanent housing, including:
  - 2(a) 1,300 chronically homeless households to supportive housing
  - 2(b) 1,100 households at risk of or experiencing homelessness to rent assistance and services
3. Prevent 1,000 households from eviction/becoming homeless
4. Grow the network of services providers, especially culturally specific providers
5. Integrate behavioral health services into outreach, shelter and housing programs

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

In response to the Council's request for information, staff recommend that counties continue to improve homelessness inflow and outflow analysis as proposed in local implementation plans (LIP's), which includes tri-county partnerships with third-party homelessness data analysis experts, increased jurisdictional data capacity and tri-county alignment in data practices. Staff also recommend that the Tri-County Planning Body incorporate data alignment and the improvement of inflow and outflow analysis into the development of a regional data framework for incorporation into the future Tri-County Regional Plan. Transparency and accountability in SHS implementation consistent with the approved LIP's will be key to showing we are acting urgently and effectively.

Quarterly progress reports to Council on all year-one goals, as well as an annual report on LIP progress from each county will support public accountability and transparency on programmatic progress in areas such as but not limited to increases in housing placements and shelter capacity.

Additionally, staff began the first phase of Metro site analysis for shelter use. Staff recommend that the Council initiate a phase two site analysis with the Metro COO and departmental staff by conducting a development analysis of Metro-owned sites to determine feasibility for future use as temporary emergency shelter and/or housing.

Staff also recommend that Council leverage the SHS Tri-County Planning Body to identify opportunities and issues of regional concern in SHS implementation.

## **STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

With the passage of Measure 26-210, the voters of the Greater Portland region entrusted Metro with addressing the region's housing and homelessness crisis. In its commitment to the responsibilities of transparency, oversight and accountability, Metro Council is requesting ongoing information and context as well progress data to assure that the SHS program is delivering on the promises made to voters. Resolution No. 21-5187A, directed the Metro Chief Operating Officer to provide a report and presentation to Metro Council that provides regional information concerning homelessness and emergency shelter, including current and planned shelter capacity; an inventory of Metro-owned properties that could be considered for siting shelter; and the current scope of unsheltered homelessness across the three counties.

The Metro Chief Operating Officer and Supportive Housing Services (SHS) staff thank Metro Council for this request. We recognize and appreciate the urgency and attention given to ensuring that the SHS program delivers housing and stabilization services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in our region, especially as we continue to face more unpredictable and extreme climate conditions.

The voters of the Metro region have opened an opportunity for transforming our ability to respond to a housing and homelessness crisis decades in the making and compounded by a global pandemic. The regional Supportive Housing Services program brings an unprecedented level of regional investment and coordination in addressing homelessness. The program creates great potential to meet short-term health and safety needs, as well as long-term permanent housing solutions.

Metro and our county partners are acting with urgency and working tirelessly to stand up new programming, while simultaneously expanding emergency responses such as shelter (increasing year-round and seasonal capacity by approximately 900 beds- more if COVID distancing restrictions change) in the first year of programming, and permanent housing options, including` permanent supportive housing for those experiencing chronic homelessness.

Housing is a critical component of shelter efficacy. More housing means more people leaving shelter, more shelter bed capacity, greater individual and community benefits from each bed, and better use of public dollars.

The key to understanding the potential impacts of adding shelter capacity depends on who shelter serves and how. Better understanding the complexities of inflow and outflow and how our homeless services system is responsive to those dynamics is critical to understanding any unmet need for housing as well as for shelter.

While our current data on the dynamics of homelessness, especially inflow, is limited, SHS will help improve our region's data tracking, quality, analysis and program evaluation capabilities to better understand the experiences of households experiencing chronic homelessness as they are served in homeless system programs, and how quickly the system can connect these households to permanent supportive housing.

SHS will also expand our ability to move people out of homelessness and into permanent housing by bringing on more outreach, housing placement and case management staff into the community and allowing us to expand our rent assistance funding including the launch of a local regional longterm rent assistance program for those with longterm barriers to permanent housing stability.

## **BACKGROUND**

In May 2020, voters approved Measure 26-210 to “prevent and reduce homelessness in Washington, Clackamas and Multnomah counties.”<sup>1</sup> The Metro Council has directed that implementation partners must have an approved Local Implementation Plan in order to receive Supportive Housing Services funds. Metro's adopted Supportive Housing Services work plan (Resolution No. 20-1548) further defined Local Implementation Plans' purpose, process of development and review, and required elements, including "local housing and homeless service needs, current programming and unmet programming capacities, and proposed use of funds in accordance with the purposes of the regional Supportive Housing Services Program."

Council's direction established Local Implementation Plans as high-level frameworks that set local priorities and actions based on identified gaps and regional outcomes. Recognizing how systemic racism is reflected in racial disparities in the region's homelessness and housing crisis, the plans were required to be developed through inclusive community engagement that centers the voices of Black, Indigenous and people of color communities as well as people with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability. The plans also commit Local Implementation Partners to be accountable for tracking and reporting on regionally-identified outcomes, particularly racial equity outcomes.

County partners developed their plans between fall 2020 and winter 2021. As required, the plans were developed through inclusive engagement that centered people with lived

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<sup>1</sup> [Ballot Measure 26-210](#) as it appeared on ballots in the Multnomah County May 2020 Primary

experience of homelessness and BIPOC communities, were informed by engagement with community and local practitioners, incorporated an analysis of local conditions and needs, and included an equity analysis to create the framework for programmatic strategies and investments.

By spring of 2021 all Local Implementation Plans had been approved locally, by the Supportive Housing Services Regional Oversight Committee and by Metro Council. By July 2021, program funding was made available to county partners and programming officially began.

This program brings a groundbreaking level of regional coordination and scale to address the regionwide challenge of homelessness. The LIP investment strategies create a path for our region to simultaneously address emergent life and safety needs of thousands of people while creating pathways out of homelessness and into permanent housing for thousands more. The plans call for significant expansion of immediate and long-term strategies for safety on and off the streets, including shelter, outreach and housing program expansions.

Even while navigating the ongoing operational demands of the pandemic, county partners have been hard at work with system expansion, ramping up to deliver over **900 new shelter beds** and **2,400 permanent housing opportunities** within this first program year. This includes a “no turn away” shelter policy in Multnomah County during severe weather events.

By next summer, when the risk of severe heat looms, the region will have expanded its shelter capacity by 40%. Counties will pair this added capacity with housing-focused services, which, along with flexible rent assistance resources, will improve outflow from shelter to permanent housing, ending homelessness for those who secured housing and freeing up more shelter beds for households experiencing homelessness.

Shelter is an emergent response that functions most effectively as part of a larger system focused on connecting people experiencing homelessness to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Shelter serves people coming from a variety of situations including, but not limited to, those living unsheltered. However, it is not a viable option for every person or family experiencing homelessness; and moreover, entering temporary shelter is not a requirement for accessing the safe, supportive and permanent housing that Metro and our partners are working to create.

Therefore, an effective strategy to meet the needs of those living outside also involves support that can be brought directly to encampments, including help to find housing. This kind of outreach is an important part of the SHS vision, our county partners’ plans and in meeting the expectations of voters. County partners are using SHS to expand outreach teams to bring behavioral health and housing services directly to the places where people are right now.

Finally, the best way to end homelessness is by helping people stay in their homes to begin with. SHS will bring resources that prevent homelessness thereby reducing the demand for homeless services in the future.

The attached report provides additional context and detail on the region's shelter response system, including current capacity, the scale of added capacity, services enhancements, and most importantly, the expansion of permanent housing resources to address and reduce homelessness.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

[Identify and submit any attachments related to this legislation or presentation]

- Memorandum to Council in response to Resolution 21-5187A and its exhibits

[For work session:]

- Is legislation required for Council action? " Yes " **No**
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? " Yes " **No**
- What other materials are you presenting today? [INSERT]