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CITY OF LODI

2015 "Wine Region of the Year"

Community Development Department
Neighborhood Services Division
CITY HALL, 221 WEST PINE STREET
P.O. BOX 3006
LODI, CALIFORNIA 95241-1910
(209) 330-8890/ FAX (209) 333-6842
www.lodi.gov
NeighborhoodServices@lodi.gov

STEPHEN SCHWABAUER
City Manager

JENNIFER CUSMIR
City Clerk

JANICE D. MAGDICH
City Attorney

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LODI, CA –

An Access Center provides a gateway to:

All
Community
Counseling
Employment/Empowerment
Sobriety
Shelter/Support Services

"Helping create a Win/Win for the City of Lodi community"

The City of Lodi ("City") Community Development Department, through its Neighborhood Services Division, has engaged in a citywide informational campaign, broadcasting information and gathering feedback instrumental to developing long-term solutions to homelessness in our City. A vital ingredient, and considered as the first component of a long-term solution, centers on the development of an Access Center. This Release is the fourth in a series to provide information about the Access Center to the Lodi community.

Community Survey FAQ

City Staff have reviewed all questions and comments received from community members in response to the survey and via Facebook posts and have organized these questions and comments into representative areas to limit repeated answers. These common types of questions and comments have been provided below. Do note, the questions and comments listed below are either verbatim per the survey/Facebook post, or were paraphrased if part of their comment or question had already been addressed in a previous response to eliminated duplicate responses. Thank you to everyone that completed the survey and provided input, we had an overwhelming response.

Questions/Comments Received from the Public and City's Responses:

1. I don't believe this program solves the homeless problem in Lodi. You need to find a way to stop other municipalities from sending their homeless to Lodi. The majority of the homeless people are NOT from Lodi.

Response: The City collaborates with other municipalities and shares strategies for ending and preventing homelessness within each jurisdiction. The City is not aware of any other agency transporting unsheltered individuals outside of their own area, nor is there evidence that other cities are dropping their unsheltered off in Lodi.

- Based on information obtained through outreach efforts, many of our unsheltered population have ties to Lodi through family, friends, employment, or long-term residency; they have not come from other cities to seek out resources in Lodi.
 - The San Joaquin County 2019 point in time count survey shared that 72% of

respondents reported being continuously homeless in San Joaquin County for longer than one year.

2. I think a centralized facility at the County Seat that can provide education, re-entry to the workplace guidance, sober living, access to rehab/medical facilities would be ideal.

Response: A centralized County-wide location for the homeless would limit the overall resources available to cities. Moreover, we cannot force anyone to go to another City to seek resources for social services. If the individual does not want to leave their home and community in Lodi and all of the resources are allocated to a centralized location in another City, there would be minimal resources available locally and we could potentially see our unsheltered count increase.

3. Apartments need to be built that are affordable. Currently in Lodi, rent is higher than a mortgage on a large home. If there is no affordable housing, then facilitating an access center to assist in homing the unsheltered is almost pointless. The access center will be a long term housing unit.

Response: As a City, we understand the importance of the development of more affordable housing. We are working on opportunities to increase the affordable housing stock in Lodi. This will require strong public-private partnerships as a key component to successfully implement a housing program that meets the needs of the community. As opportunities arise, staff will bring forth plans to City Council.

4. They do not want help! I don't know when you guys are going to get that, they want nothing to do with Laws, and do not want to conform to rules.

Response: We understand that there are some unsheltered persons that may not want assistance, but a great majority do. If we are able to provide sufficient resources and shelter for those that do want assistance, we feel there will be a significant reduction of those that you see on the streets.

- Additionally, we have made great progress with our mobile Access Center volunteers receiving over 80 referrals in just two months for assistance, demonstrating the need and want for assistance locally. Unfortunately, current resources are limited and wait lists are long for those in need of housing, treatment services, or job readiness training. Having these resources available locally would allow us to expedite services to those in need.
5. We need buy in from local business owners to help with supplies. (food, clothing, etc). Take a look at Lodi House & how a good program is ran. Look at partnering with Delta College to develop on-site training (Workforce Development Dept). Delta is deeply committed to the community & can provide education for both short-term & long term programs. There are many community members who will volunteer if a well organized program is in place.

Response: We agree, and will be looking to include many of these aspects into a Lodi Access Center.

6. How will security be handled in and around the facility including neighborhood businesses, properties, alleyways, etc.?

Response: Any site chosen will implement a good neighbor policy. This means 24/7 monitoring by private security, discourages loitering by clients, and responds promptly to any neighborhood concerns about the Access Center. Routine patrol of the entire Access Center campus will occur to ensure the safety and security of residents and that house rules are followed.

7. What funding is involved with this project?

Response: Current funding involved is American Rescue Plan Act Federal funds, Local Early Action Planning grant, and Permanent Local Housing Allocation grant.

8. Where will the services come from? Mental health services, addiction clinic services as

well as the operation of the building, food, site personnel? Who will doing these jobs? Social services from Stockton? Who will be paying their salaries and retirements? Also listed are some job training programs, carpentry, automotive etc. where will these trainers come from and at what cost to Lodi residents?

Response: The City recognizes we are not the expert. We would be looking to hire a shelter operator that has extensive experience in managing a shelter, providing case management, housing resources, mental health and substance abuse treatment services, job readiness programs, diversionary services, etc. Long-term plans and partnerships with non-profits, county, volunteers, and other community resources will be essential to the success of an Access Center in Lodi.

- We hope to engage local businesses to assist with job training programs on a volunteer basis to provide comprehensive job readiness programs, teach trades (Welding, woodworking, mechanic, plumbing, etc.), as well as computer training to help individuals meet the demand of the local job market.

9. Why can't we just ship the homeless to another city? That would solve our problem.

Response: The City received many comments suggesting transporting Lodi's unsheltered resident to another City as a solution. However, this is not only inhumane; it is not a true solution to the issues faced by the unsheltered. Many of Lodi's unsheltered residents have ties to the community and want to remain in the area and would return to those connections if moved elsewhere. Further, many comments stated that other municipalities "dumped their homeless in Lodi"; we have found no evidence to substantiate these claims.

10. Why can't the City just remove homeless from public spaces?

Response: The Martin v. City of Boise ruling provides that homeless persons cannot be prosecuted for merely sleeping outside on public property in the absence of adequate shelter alternatives. This ruling limits what the City is able to enforce in response to unsheltered persons if there are not sufficient resources and bed spaces.

- An Access Center low-barrier emergency shelter in Lodi would provide adequate shelter alternatives, which would allow the City to focus enforcement efforts on reducing the occurrence of camping in public right-of-ways, parks, in front of businesses, alleyways, etc. because unsheltered individuals could utilize the Access Center's shelter facilities.

11. What is the purpose of the Access Center and how is it going to help reduce our homeless in Lodi?

Response: The goal of an Access Center is to move individuals through programs and have them reach a level of self-sufficiency that they would no longer need to be housed at the facility. We know that this is not an overnight solution, however if nothing is done, nothing will change. An Access Center allows the community a gateway to much needed resources that otherwise either would not be available or would be insufficient to meet the needs of our growing unsheltered population.

For more information, contact the Community Development Department, Neighborhood Services Division at NeighborhoodServices@lodi.gov. For updates on the Lodi Access Center Engagement Process, please visit the City website at <http://lodi.gov/1037/Lodi-Access-Center>

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