



Office of the City Manager

ACTION CALENDAR

April 26, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Peter Radu, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject: Companion Report: Expansion of Storm Shelter Program to Emergencies not Otherwise Covered

RECOMMENDATION

The Homeless Commission's recommendation to expand the Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter (BESS) to emergencies not otherwise covered including outside the dates of the current contract with Dorothy Day House addresses a key need for our most vulnerable citizens. Therefore, staff recommends:

1. Referring this recommendation to the budget process; and
2. Referring this recommendation to staff for analysis of feasibility.

FISCAL IMPACTS of RECOMMENDATION

As the Homeless Commission mentions in their report, the additional budgetary commitment to implement this recommendation is unknown.

CURRENT SITUATION and ITS EFFECTS

Dorothy Day House has operated the Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter for almost 20 years, providing overnight shelter on a first come-first served basis for up to 45 people per night. The BESS shelter opens if rain or temperatures at or below 40 degrees are expected overnight. The Homeless Commission has recommended that the shelter be extended for additional emergencies beyond the current scope.

In addition to the need for additional shelter capacity during an emergency response, Dorothy Day House operates the Horizon Transitional Village Program shelter at 742 Grayson Street, the lease for which expires in September 2022. Additional shelter capacity will be required to house this vulnerable population that will otherwise be displaced to the streets. Therefore, staff recommend referring this recommendation to staff for analysis, as it should be considered alongside other pressing priorities for shelter space in Berkeley.

BACKGROUND

On November 15, 2021, the Homeless Commission passed a motion as follows:

That City Council refer to the City Manager to expand the emergency storm shelter program to emergencies not otherwise covered including outside the dates of the current contract with Dorothy Day House.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY and CLIMATE IMPACT

There are no environmental concerns impacting the issues in this recommendation. This recommendation is consistent with emergency preparedness needs for the unhoused community.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative sites could also be identified to expand shelter capacity. In addition, current shelter capacity will be expanded once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, which will help offset the need for additional emergency shelter resources.

RATIONALE for RECOMMENDATION

Additional capacity for shelter is required to respond to emergency situations as well as the impending lease expiration of the Horizon shelter.

CONTACT PERSON

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