



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 23-028

MEETING DATE: 1/17/2023

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Al Zelinka, City Manager

VIA: Eric Parra, Chief of Police
Jason Austin, Director of Homelessness and Behavioral Health Services

PREPARED BY: Catherine Jun, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject:

Comprehensive report on City resources used to address homelessness and proposed 90-day plan to enforce City and State laws relating to homelessness

Statement of Issue:

On December 20, 2022, the City Council approved Mayor Pro Tem Van Der Mark's H-Item request for a comprehensive report on homelessness, including a full accounting of all City resources and facilities used to address homelessness and a proposed 90-Day Plan to enforce City and State laws on encampments and related concerns. This Request for Council Action provides the information requested for City Council's consideration.

Financial Impact:

If approved, the Police Department's (HBPD) proposed 90 Day Plan would require one-time costs.

One-time costs include overtime for additional staffing during the 90-Day Plan period (\$228,450) and three outfitted police trucks (\$270,000) for a total of \$498,450. If approved, the City would make a one-time appropriation of \$500,000 (rounded up) from the General Fund balance in this fiscal year. Following the 90 days, if the Council believes the increased staffing proved to be effective, HBPD can return to Council with a proposed plan and cost to continue this effort for a longer term.

Recommended Action:

A) Receive and file this report; and,

B) Approve the proposed 90-Day Plan and appropriate one-time funding of \$500,000 in the FY 2022/23 General Fund budget.

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve the proposed 90-Day Plan and/or receive and file this report. Direct staff accordingly.

Analysis:

Mayor Pro Tem Van Der Mark's request for a comprehensive report on homelessness included:

1. *A full report and accounting identifying all of the City's resources, including recently hired/appointed City personnel, County programs present in the City, and facilities like the Navigation Center, that have been employed or deployed to combat homelessness; and*
2. *A full report and accounting of the Navigation Center's use since it opened in December 2020, including the number of beds occupied over time (utilizing monthly data), where the clients/patrons are from (have they been Huntington Beach homeless or have they been brought in by the County or other cities), and average length of how long individuals stay and where they go once released (e.g., back on the streets, County facilities, or back home); and*
3. *A proposal that incorporates former Police Chief Handy's 90-day plan on how HBPD will enforce the City's and State's anti-camping and anti-loitering laws to get the City's public spaces free from the mentioned encampments, loitering, and their related health and safety concerns; and*
4. *A request for the Police Chief to give quarterly updates at City Council on enforcement of anti-camping and anti-loitering.*

This report addresses Items 1-3 above for Council consideration. Furthermore, Police Chief Parra will present Item 4 on a quarterly basis starting March 2023.

Background

The City's homelessness program is comprised of the City's Homelessness Team, Navigation Center, Be Well OC in HB Mobile Crisis Response Program, and outside resources when available. These components work together to support the City's efforts to address homelessness throughout the community.

Homelessness Team

The City's Homelessness Team is comprised of:

1. Homeless Task Force (HTF) Police Officers: Enforces City laws, responds to complaints; coordinates regularly with HTF outreach workers to provide street outreach, coordinate access to the Navigation Center (for individuals with HB ties) or other shelters, and Be Well
2. Homeless Task Force Outreach Workers: Engage with individuals to determine their needs, reunite with family, or match with housing; coordinate regularly with HTF Police Officers to provide resources to the homeless, incl. referrals to the Navigation Center and housing opportunities and linkages to support programs
3. Administrative Staff: Manage homeless policies and programs, including Navigation Center and Be Well operations; implement HB Cares Volunteer program; pursues funding, pro bono services and resources, and partnerships with local groups/agencies; coordinate with HTF to gather data/prepare reports In Fiscal Year 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23

An accounting of staff costs as well as their ongoing impact (seen in Total Outreach Contacts) is below:

Homelessness Team - Staff	2020-2021* (Actuals)		2021-2022 (Actuals)		2022-2023 (Estimated)	
Homeless Task Force - Police Officers	\$1,272,080	5.8 FTE	\$1,002,412	5.5 FTE	\$1,250,910	5.5 FTE
Homeless Task Force - Outreach Workers	\$94,611	2 FTE	\$135,249	2.0 FTE	\$149,423	3.5 FTE
Administrative Staff	\$12,191	0.25 FTE	\$237,756	2.25 FTE	\$373,063	2.0 FTE
Total	\$1,378,882	~8 FTE	\$1,375,416	9.75 FTE	\$1,773,396	11 FTE
Funding Source	84% General Funds 16% Restricted Funds (LMIHAF/CDBG)^		99% General Funds 1% Restricted Funds (LMIHAF / CDBG)		100% General Funds	
HTF - Total Outreach Contacts	2,381 Outreach Contacts Average: 150 per month		5,479 Outreach Contacts Average: 457 per month		Thru Dec. 2022 Only 2,401 Contacts or 400 per month**	

*In 2020 and 2021, Outreach Worker staffing varied; at most, included two part-time Case Managers and one full-time case manager.

** From May – November 2022, Outreach Worker positions were vacant, which temporarily reduced the total and monthly average contacts.

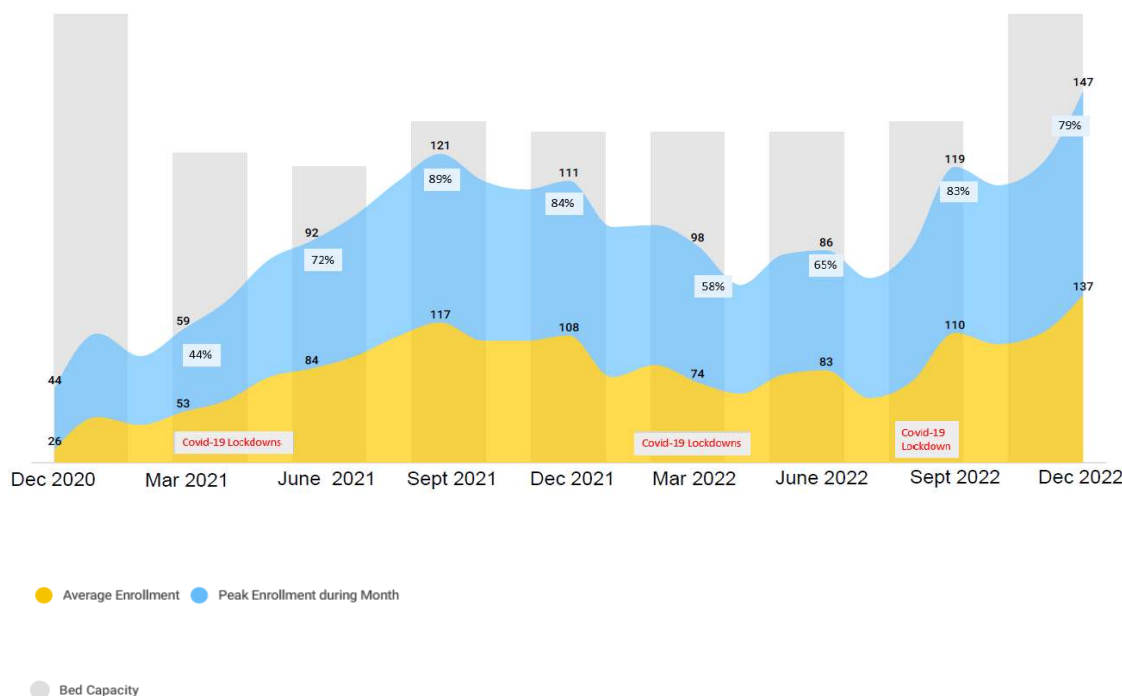
^ LMIHAF or Low-Moderate Income Housing Asset Funds can be used in limited amounts towards homeless services; CDBG or federal Community Development Block Grant funds administered by HUD.

Navigation Center

Built in partnership with the County of Orange during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Navigation Center opened in December 2020 and is managed by experienced shelter operators, Mercy House. In order to qualify for the Navigation Center, homeless clients must be referred in by the Homeless Task Force and must have a connection to Huntington Beach.

The Center can shelter up to 174 adults. From December 2020 to December 2022, however, the County had reduced bed capacity or issued temporary lockdowns due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements, resulting in a lower number of clients in the Center. On December 6, 2022, the County lifted its restrictions and restored the Center's maximum capacity of 174 beds. A graph showing the Center's occupancy rate since it opened is below:

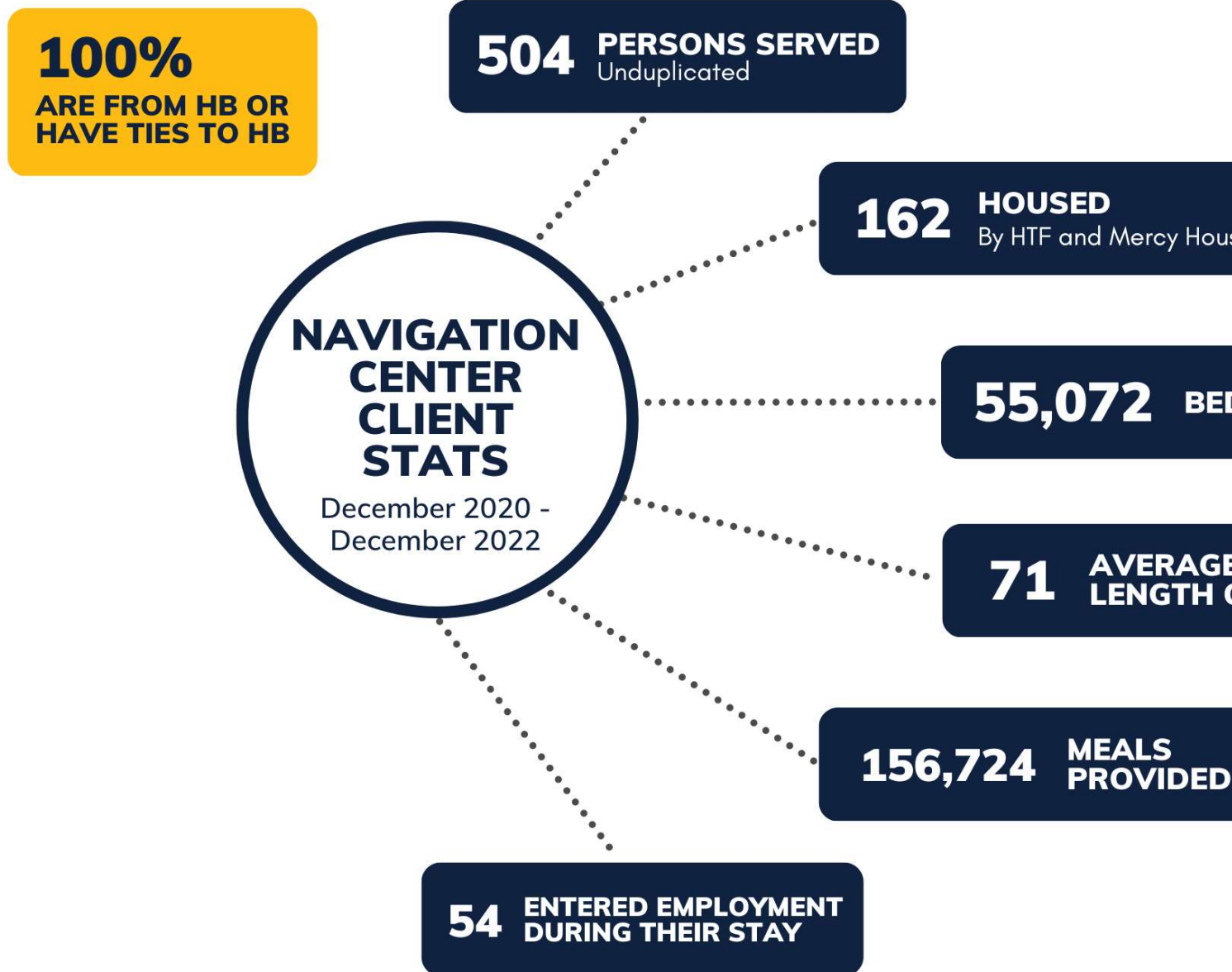
Navigation Center: Occupancy Rate to December 2020 - December 2022



Navigation Center: Client Data from December 2020 - December 2022

The Center also provides general and supportive services such as daily meals, showers, storage, housing navigation, mental health services, and employment services. Data gathered from our clients during their stay and utilization of the Center's services are below:

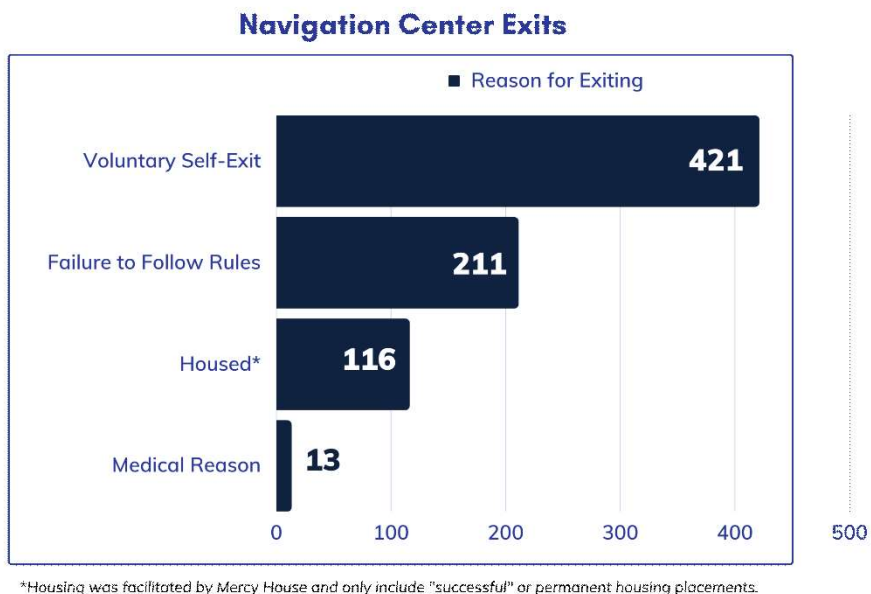
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504 persons (unduplicated) served

- 162 housed by HTF and Mercy House, combined
- 55,072 bednights provided
- 156,724 meals provided
- 71 days - average length of stay at the Center
- 54 persons held or found employment during their stay at the Center

Furthermore, the City regularly gathers information on Navigation Center clients' exits and reasons for exiting (see the next page):



Navigation Center: Cost Data from FY 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23

Before the Center opened in December 2020, the City has continually tracked costs related to both the Center's construction, its ongoing operating and maintenance costs, as well the funding sources used. It should be noted that a large majority of Navigation Center costs is funded with restricted funds (typically from outside agencies) that are intended for limited uses such as homeless services or affordable housing.

Navigation Center Capital Costs	2020-2021 (Actuals)
Land Acquisition	\$6,094,847
Construction	\$6,870,594
Total	\$12,965,441
Funding Source	- 96% <i>Restricted Funds</i> (Low-Moderate Income Housing Asset Funds, CARES Act funds, County Donations) - 4% <i>City Infrastructure Funds</i>

Navigation Center Operating Costs	2020-2021 (Actuals)	2021-2022 (Actuals)	2022-2023 (Estimated)
Mercy House (Operators)	\$1,262,938	\$2,495,236	\$2,781,000
City's Maintenance Costs	\$0	\$0	\$40,000
Total	\$1,262,938	\$2,495,236	\$2,781,000
Funding Source	- 100% Restricted Funds (CARES andf CDBG)	- 100% Restricted Funds (CDBG-CV and CV3, CDBG, Permanent Local Housing Asset, American Rescue Plan Act HOME, FEMA Funds)	- 82% Restricted Funds (CDBG-CV3, CDBG, Permanent Local Housing Asset, American Rescue Plan Act HOME) - 18% General Funds

Navigation Center Operating Costs	2020-2021 (Actuals)	2021-2022 (Actuals)	2022-2023 (Estimated)
Mercy House (Operators)	\$1,262,938	\$2,495,236	\$2,781,000
City's Maintenance Costs	\$0	\$0	\$40,000
Total	\$1,262,938	\$2,495,236	\$2,781,000
Funding Source	- 100% Restricted Funds (CARES andf CDBG)	- 74% Restricted Funds (CDBG-CV and CV3, CDBG, Permanent Local Housing Asset, American Rescue Plan Act HOME, FEMA Funds) - 26% General Funds	- 83% Restricted Funds (CDBG-CV3, CDBG, Permanent Local Housing Asset, American Rescue Plan Act HOME) - 17% General Funds

Be Well OC in Huntington Beach

Be Well is a mobile crisis response program that provides trained crisis counselors to respond to mental health and/or substance use calls. Anyone in Huntington Beach - regardless of income, location, health insurance status, or any other factor - can request Be Well services, if they are experiencing a non-emergency mental health, substance abuse, and other non-medical crisis.

At this time, approximately 36% of clients are located in public spaces, 20% access services via telephone, 19% in private residences, 14% in Huntington Beach businesses, and the remainder at various other locations. The majority of clients are men ages 18-64. Furthermore, among all Be Well clients, approximately 59% are homeless; when the Be Well van is not responding directly to calls for service, it conducts proactive outreach to unsheltered individuals.

Since the program began in August 2021, Be Well has received a total of 3,793 calls or on average 223 calls per month - a number that has been increasing month over month and will continue to do so as a second Be Well van and additional hours are added to operations.

The City also continues to track program costs and funding sources below. A majority of costs are funded using either state or federal funds:

Be Well OC	2020-2021 (Actuals)	2021-2022 (Actuals)	2022-2023 (Estimated)
Be Well Operating Contract with Mind OC	\$24,286*	\$981,094	\$1,200,000
Funding Source	100% General Funds	50% Restricted Funds (PLHA) 47% General Funds 3% Police Development Impact Fees	92% Restricted Funds (PLHA and Federal Earmarks)** 8% General Funds

* These costs are related to the launch of the program in August 2021.

** Permanent Local Housing Asset (PLHA) funds are state funds for restricted purposes. Earmarks from Senator Feinstein's Office for Be Well.

Outside Resources

Outside agencies such as the County have also invested in homelessness initiatives in Huntington Beach.

County of Orange Initiative - Project Homekey:

This project included the redevelopment of the Quality Inn into 62 Interim Housing units that will be converted into Permanent Supportive Housing in the future. The development is open and operated by experienced non-profit, American Family Housing with 24/7 security and two support staff living onsite. This project is not a walk-up shelter. Supportive services will be provided on site. Lastly, the City has committed \$2.4M in restricted funds (Low-Moderate Income Housing Asset Funds) towards construction.

County of Orange Initiative - Point in Time Count:

In January 2022, the County of Orange conducted a Point in Time Count with the last one being conducted in 2019. The count in Huntington Beach showed that its total homeless count decreased from 349 in 2019 to 330 in 2022. This count was conducted at no cost to the City.

Police Department: Proposed 90-Day Plan

Huntington Beach Police Department's (HBPD) proposed 90-Day Plan includes a combination of outreach (as recommended by former Chief Rob Handy), education, and enforcement. To that end, HBPD proposes the following:

- Increase education and awareness about community resources and rights on private property
- Increase dedicated Homeless Task Force officer staffing
- Provide additional dedicated patrols to Downtown, City Beach and Sunset Beach areas
- Amend park-specific regulations to increase public safety
- Amend regulations related to activities occurring within the Main Promenade parking structure
- Initiate the procurement of three pursuit-rated police trucks
- Develop a mobile Huntington Beach Homeless Services application
- Coordinate with other City departments to address quality of life issues and public safety concerns

This plan will increase opportunities for proactive engagement and enforcement, particularly in the first 90 days of its implementation.

Furthermore, implementing this plan will require additional staffing and equipment to be effective. A summary of those items and costs is below. Should the City Council approve this plan and find that the increased staffing was effective, HBPD can return to Council with a proposed plan and cost to continue this effort for a longer term.

Approximate One-Time Overtime Costs	
HTF Business Outreach	\$23,660
HTF Officer Patrols	\$47,230
HTF Sergeant Staffing	\$15,600
Downtown / Beach Staffing	\$141,960
Total Overtime for 90-days	\$228,450

One-Time Equipment Costs	
3 Outfitted Police Trucks	\$270,000

Furthermore, HBPD's longer-term goal is to eventually add four Homeless Task Force police officers to achieve more proactive engagement and enforcement on an ongoing basis. The fully burdened cost for all four positions is \$777,084, at this time.

Costs for Unit Expansion	
4 Fully Burdened Officers	\$777,084

Environmental Status:

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment do not constitute a project.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Homelessness Response

Attachment(s):

1. PowerPoint Presentation