



Department of Housing

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY COMMISSION

September 29, 2011

The Honorable Mayor Chuck Reed and City Council
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara Street, 18th Floor
San José, CA 95113

RE: PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST FUND RECOMMENDATION – 10/04/2011 CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

Dear Mayor Reed and City Council members:

At its regular meeting on August 11, 2011, the Housing and Community Development Advisory Commission (HCDAC) overwhelmingly supported the Housing Department's recommendation to approve Housing Trust Fund grants to Destination: Home for salary and related costs for three intensive case managers to serve chronically homeless clients. Destination: Home is a community-wide, public-private partnership with the goal of ending chronic homelessness through the provision of permanent housing infused with services.

The three case managers which the Housing Trust Funds are proposed to support are critical to the implementation of Destination: Home's Housing 1000 Campaign. This Campaign uses a nationally recognized survey and vulnerability index to "rank" residents according to their length of homelessness and risk of mortality. Based on the "housing first" model, this list will be used to prioritize housing and services to residents who are most in need.

The HCDAC is concerned that many of our local homeless residents, especially those who are chronically homeless, are unable to maintain their health or employment because they do not have a stable living situation. By addressing the underlying issue first – the need for permanent housing – combined with supportive services, other issues such as mental health and employability reportedly become easier and more cost-effectively treated. This "housing first" model differs from the traditional "continuum of care" (CoC) model that progressively "rewards" homeless individuals with more permanent forms of housing depending on their response to mental health or substance abuse treatment, for example. Experience and analyses have shown that the housing first model is significantly more effective in ending homelessness and treating associated health problems from both a reduction and cost perspective.

The Honorable Mayor and City Council

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With the ranking of over 1,000 of the County's homeless residents by vulnerability, Destination: Home has completed the first stage of the Housing 1000 campaign. However, additional case management services are critical in ensuring that the second stage of the campaign – the implementation of the housing first model – is successful. The proposed funding recommendation would provide Destination: Home with the added staffing capacity needed to support the community's most vulnerable homeless residents to become and stay housed, and to ultimately realize the City's visionary and ambitious goal of ending homelessness.

At the August 11 meeting, the HCDAC voted to approve Housing Trust Fund expenditures in support of these goals, and to provide the City Council a letter of support to strongly endorse this funding recommendation. The HCDAC was impressed by the reports of concrete progress being made towards helping the neediest, of which Destination: Home has been an instrumental part. We look forward to future reports of ongoing progress in helping those in San José who need our help the most.

Thank you for considering the recommendation made by the Housing and Community Development Advisory Commission. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (408) 269-7872 if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Darrow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brian Darrow, Chair
Housing & Community Development Advisory Commission