



Good Neighbors

San Diego
Housing Commission

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REPORT

DATE ISSUED: December 5, 2003

ITEM 104

REPORT NO.: HCR03-111

SUBJECT: Continuation of Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Seniors
(Council Districts 2, 3)

SUMMARY

Issue: Should the Housing Commission support ongoing participation in the City's Transitional Housing Program for homeless seniors by:

- 1) Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to continue leasing up to 35 downtown Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel rooms for homeless seniors capable of living independently and up to five rooms in assisted-living facilities for homeless seniors needing these expanded services; and
- 2) Authorize revision of the FY03 Housing Commission Budget to incorporate \$105,000 from Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) to fund the program through June 30, 2004?

Recommendation: Authorize the actions necessary to continue the Housing Commission's participation in this program, subject to General Counsel approval of all agreements.

Certificate of Funding Availability:

Certificate No.: 04-088
Amount: \$105,000
Revenue Sources: CCDC
Department: Housing Finance and Development
Line Item: Grants

Affordable Housing Impact: Approval of the recommendations will allow the City to provide transitional housing for up to 40 very low income seniors left homeless as a result of being economically displaced from their previous housing, through the remainder of FY04.



Environmental Review: Grants funding operations are exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Previous Related Actions: On November 9, 2001 (HCR01-124), the Housing Commission approved expenditure of \$168,000 of Housing Trust Fund money and authorized the Chief Executive Officer to take the necessary actions to lease rooms for homeless seniors during calendar year 2002. CCDC later approved funding for the program and transferred \$168,000 to the Housing Commission to replace the Housing Trust Funds.

On January 10, 2003 (HCR03-002), the Housing Commission authorized the Chief Executive Officer to secure 35 SRO rooms and five assisted living rooms for the program, using CCDC and City funds.

Future Related Action: During the fourth quarter of FY04, Housing Commission and Housing Authority approval will be sought to move the program from a calendar year to a fiscal-year basis and to provide ongoing support from CCDC and the City through FY05.

BACKGROUND

San Diego's increasingly expensive and tight housing market has precipitated an increase in homelessness among seniors with very limited, fixed incomes. In response, the City of San Diego, Senior Community Centers (a private nonprofit devoted to assisting seniors), the Housing Commission, CCDC, the County and others collaboratively initiated a transitional housing program in 2002. Under the program, homeless seniors are placed in downtown SRO rooms with intensive case management to help them regain independence in permanent housing. The City provides overall coordination and some funding; Senior Community Centers, Traveler's Aid, the San Diego Reach Program, and the San Diego (Police) HOT Team provide outreach and case management; CCDC provides the funds to lease rooms; the County provides funding for case management; and the Housing Commission serves as the leasing agent.

During 2002 and most of 2003, rooms were leased and clients were placed at the Sara Frances Homotel and the Capri Hotel (both SROs). The federal government had purchased the Capri in anticipation of building a new federal courthouse and master-leased it back to its former owners, from whom the Housing Commission leased rooms through October 31, 2003. In the few months preceding October 31, the program gradually decreased the number of rooms leased at the Capri and increased the number of rooms at the Sara Frances Homotel until all 35 rooms now under lease are at the Sara Frances Homotel.

In 2003, CCDC and the City added funds for five rooms in assisted living facilities for those seniors too frail to live in SRO rooms. The Housing Commission developed an agreement with St. Paul's Senior Homes and Services whereby St. Paul's provides assisted-living rooms on an

as-needed basis. St. Paul's provides meals and personal care in addition to meeting the seniors' basic housing needs.

DISCUSSION

During the time a senior resides in housing supplied by the program, social workers provide intensive case management to assess the individual's needs and resources, arrange for additional resources to which a client may be entitled, counsel the client regarding money management and any other issues that may be evident, and help the client find stable, permanent, affordable housing. Follow-up case management, at a less intense level, is provided after clients successfully transition to permanent housing. The preponderance of clients in the program are placed and served by Senior Community Centers (SCC). SCC also coordinates room availability for all the providers.

As of October 31, 2003, the program had served a total of 261 homeless seniors, for a total of more than 19,000 "bed-nights." The clients' average length of stay in transitional housing was 74 days. A high proportion of clients who remain in the program until the agency placing them determines they are ready to be on their own have succeeded in or are continuing to work towards moving on to stable permanent housing. For Senior Community Centers' clients, that proportion is now 82 percent.

The Housing Commission's role has been to serve as the program's leasing agent on behalf of the City and CCDC. If continuation of that role is approved, staff would enter into a new lease with the Sara Frances Homotel (for 35 rooms) and would renew its agreement with St. Paul's (and possibly would enter into similar "as-needed" agreements with other assisted-living providers). The continuing cooperation of the management of both the Sara Frances and St. Paul's is anticipated.

Assuming CCDC approves funding for the six months from January 1 through June 30, 2004, CCDC would transfer \$105,000 to the Housing Commission to cover expenses for the rooms at the Sara Frances. Since use of the assisted living rooms was substantially less than anticipated during 2003, sufficient funds remain to cover the expected funding needs for that component of the program through the balance of FY04.

Approval of the staff recommendation will help meet a housing need of very low income seniors who are among the most vulnerable to upward pressure in the San Diego rental housing market. There would be no cost to the Housing Commission other than a small administrative burden.

Staff expects to bring the program in line with the budget cycle of all the agencies involved by transitioning from a calendar-year to a fiscal-year basis before the end of FY04 (June 30, 2004).

ALTERNATIVE

Do not authorize the Housing Commission to serve as the leasing agent.

Respectfully submitted,

**Signature on File
With Original Document**

Approved by,

Jack D. Farris, Manager
Housing Finance and Development

Elizabeth C. Morris
Chief Executive Officer

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